

Part I

What Are the Issues in the Economics of Gender?

This introductory part defines the realm in which economists discuss gender issues. Chapter 1 discusses the economic perspective on gender issues, both by comparing it with the perspectives of other academic disciplines and by considering some of the debates about the causes and effects of gender in which both economists and noneconomists are engaging. The appendix to Chapter 1 outlines the fundamental concepts of economics that we will draw upon and add to throughout the book. Chapter 2 presents basic data from the U.S. economy on gender differences and gives an idea of how wide-ranging economic differences by gender are by highlighting some less-well-known differences. These two chapters lay the groundwork for the more detailed work undertaken in future chapters: the tasks of accurately describing gender differences in the economy and developing theoretical frameworks that will lead to an increased understanding of why these differences arise.

Introduction

How and why are men and women different? These are questions that almost everyone has thought about. Many scientists have devoted large parts of their careers to attempting to answer them. Since you are reading this book, you have probably wondered about these questions yourself, and may have come to some conclusions already.

The goal of this book is to explain how gender differences lead to different economic outcomes for the sexes, measured in terms of earnings, income, poverty rates, hours of work, and other standards used by economists to determine economic well-being. The field in economics known as the "economics of gender" encompasses this study. This chapter first introduces the field, then contrasts the ways in which different academic disciplines have addressed the area of gender differences. The *how* question will be addressed very briefly in this chapter—just enough to set the tone for the debates to follow. The *why* question will be answered somewhat more in depth as we review the different disciplines' approaches to gender differences. As you will see, people do not always agree, so the basic debates over the nature and influence of gender differences have not been resolved within the boundaries of particular academic disciplines, let alone a consensus achieved among the natural and social sciences.

What is the Economics of Gender?

Economic agents can be male or female, and they interact in families as well as in firms and in markets. This book explores those areas of economics in which these two facts must be explicitly included for the analysis to be valid. Three types of economic inquiry are discussed: (1) theoretical models that include two sexes, (2) empirical work that addresses similarities and differences between the sexes, and (3) analysis of economic policies that affect the sexes differently. Each chapter in the book generally considers all three types of inquiry.

The questions of how and why men and women are different are amplified throughout this book. Racial, cultural, and class differences in gender patterns are discussed. Although the text focuses on contemporary U.S. patterns, sections are devoted to the comparative study of other developed countries and developing ones, and to gender patterns through history. We take a current perspective in Parts II and III, examining the situation in the United States in depth for the time period since World War II and using the most current data available. In Part IV, we take a cross-cultural perspective and consider conditions in other societies, categorized as

industrialized capitalist, industrialized and nonindustrialized socialist, and nonindustrialized nonsocialist societies. In Part V, we consider the historical situation in the United States, going back as far as the available data allow us and relying on more anecdotal sources of evidence for the earliest times.

Why Study the Economics of Gender?

The economics of gender is an interesting and relevant field to study for several reasons. In all societies, people wonder how and why women and men are different. This book provides accurate and recent information about gender patterns to help inform the debates that arise frequently in modern life concerning roles and rewards for women and men. For instance, did you know that:

- In 1815, U.S. working women made 29 cents for every dollar a man earned; by 2004 they had worked their way up to 76 cents on the dollar, averaging a gain of a fourth of a penny a year.
- Many occupations that are now essentially 100 percent female, such as bank teller and secretary, were for many years 100 percent male.
- A man in his early thirties now is more than four times as likely to have become divorced as in 1950, even though it is more than twice as likely that he has not yet married at all.

Economics offers an approach to the broad questions of how and why men and women are different. A number of interesting related questions arise in the course of studying the economics of gender, including:

- Why do women earn less than men?
- Why is there so much occupational sex segregation, and how does segregation relate to the earnings difference?
- Do changes in female labor force participation lead to changes in the home environment (i.e., labor-saving devices, divorce, fewer children) or vice versa?

Economic analysis is a useful investigative tool for analyzing the evidence for these questions. Although this book has many references to work by noneconomists, the basic assumptions of neoclassical economics as customarily presented in introductory microeconomics classes will be maintained. At various points, reference will be made to the alternative theories of institutionalists, radical economists, and feminist economists, as well as to theories from other disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology.

Economic analysis is also a useful tool for analyzing policies that affect men and women differently. It does not necessarily resolve questions, but it can help elucidate the main points involved. Examples of policy-related questions include:

- Do anti-discrimination policies work?
- What are the pros and cons of implementing comparable worth?
- What are the effects of welfare programs?
- What are the effects of pronatalist and antinatalist policies?
- What are the differential effects of development policies on women and men?

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How are Men

Differences between on the one hand, natural differences, on sex and gender. Sex we will define *women* adult persons having logical differences from milk.² We will define their biological characteristics associated with being female to classify them as women. This is true for most there may be ambiguous persons from a different possible to refer to.

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Economists' ways are often at odds with the ways of most people approaching various gender issues. This point will be brought out especially in the discussions of discrimination, of whether or not to implement comparable worth, and of how occupational segregation has arisen. The philosophical and methodological underpinnings of economics will be discussed at more length below and contrasted to those of other disciplines. The appendix to this chapter provides a more formal discussion of the terms and analytical tools commonly used by economists.

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Debates between academic disciplines often boil down to disputes over appropriate methodology, and different disciplines focus on different aspects of gender differences—staking out territory, so to speak. Economics is a particularly provocative discipline, in that it is often seen as attempting to encroach on other fields' traditional territory. Economists have only recently started to study gender issues, and many people, both within and without the economics profession, question the appropriateness and applicability of economic assumptions and techniques to gender issues. But this controversy is partly what makes the study of the economics of gender interesting. After you have finished this book, you can decide for yourself whether economics has brought insight into the nature of gender differences—or not.

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How are Men and Women Different?

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Differences between men and women can be divided into biological, or sex-linked, differences, on the one hand, and everything else, variously construed as psychological, social, and/or cultural differences, on the other hand. One way to think about this split is to differentiate between sex and gender. Sex can be either female or male; gender can be feminine or masculine. Here we will define *women* as those adult persons having two X chromosomes, and *men* as those adult persons having an X and a Y chromosome.¹ This chromosomal difference leads to biological differences between the sexes, such as women's abilities to bear children and produce milk.² We will define *sex characteristics* as attributes of men and women that are created by their biological characteristics, and *gender characteristics* as attributes that are culturally associated with being female and male. Feminine persons look and act in ways that lead observers to classify them as women without directly observing their chromosome pattern; the same assumption is true for masculine persons. This classification can vary in details across cultures, and there may be ambiguity in determining a person's gender (particularly when one is observing persons from a different culture), while there is no ambiguity in determining his or her sex.³ It is possible to refer to a woman as being a masculine woman and a man as being a feminine man. A person has numerous characteristics, and observers may note some incongruities in the set of characteristics but nonetheless decide to classify the person as being either a woman or a man.⁴

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Throughout this book, numerous differences between women and men will be presented. In a statistical sense, the distinction between sex and gender is unimportant in making a statement such as, "Women earn less than men"; this also implies that females earn less than males, because the number of misclassified persons is so small. However, the interpretation of the implications of these differences depends on whether one believes that they are sex or gender characteristics.

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Some natural and social scientists argue that there is really no difference between sex and gender, so that the terms may be used interchangeably. Other people argue that the terminology is important, and that the choice of concept—sex or gender—entails an intellectual commitment as to whether or not the terms can be separated. This argument cuts across academic disciplinary boundaries, although it rages more within some disciplines than in others.

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In economics, no strong opinion about appropriate terminology has developed, and the terms are used interchangeably with no particular thought about whether they refer to the same concept

or not. I chose to use “gender” rather than “sex” in the title of this book because I think that use of “gender” does *not* imply an automatic embracing of the environment side of the debate, but rather implies an open-mindedness as to whether or not gender is separable from sex. In practice, at the level of analysis where economics operates, the difference between sex and gender is generally unimportant, and I often refer to sex differences rather than gender differences, in conformity with whatever source I am using at the moment.

Focus I

Gender, Gender, Everywhere

The number of ways in which men and women differ are practically uncountable. This is the case partly because the number of things that psychologists, pollsters, and other observers of society think of to study are practically uncountable. But in considering differences, it is important to differentiate between “statistically significant” differences and “significant” differences. Given a large enough sample of persons, almost any difference, no matter how small, can be said to be measured with confidence as existing. On the other hand, a difference of one percentage point in the answers between women and men may not be much evidence that men and women have different motivations or circumstances. The following are some examples of gender differences, all using recent U.S. data:

Living habits⁵

- 8 percent of women, 10 percent of men are left-handed.
- Women watch 14 hours, men watch 16 hours of television a week.
- 35 percent of women, 17 percent of men stayed indoors for an entire day in the past week.
- 43 percent of women, 51 percent of men enjoy or look forward to being by themselves.
- 13 percent of women, 8 percent of men frequently talk to themselves.
- 20 percent of women, 18 percent of men frequently sing, hum, and/or whistle.

Dying habits⁶

- Of those who die in accidents, 35 percent are women, 65 percent are men.
- Of those who die from assault/homicide, 23 percent are women, 77 percent are men.
- Of those who commit suicide, 20 percent are women, 80 percent are men.

Crime and criminals⁷

- Of those who are robbed, 39 percent are women, 61 percent are men.
- 37 percent of women, 50 percent of men report having a gun at home.
- Of those in prison, 7 percent are women, 93 percent are men.

Risk-aversion differences

- 89 percent of women, 75 percent of men believe in heaven; 73 percent of women, 65 percent of men believe in hell.⁸
- 43 percent of women, 56 percent of men have bought a state lottery ticket.⁹

And finally, some similarities

- Of those who own corporate stock, 50 percent are women, 50 percent are men.¹⁰
- 90 percent of women, 90 percent of men consider themselves happy people.¹¹

Why are Men and Women Different?

The heredity versus environment—or nature versus nurture—debate that frames much of scientific discourse is directly relevant to the debate over why men and women are different. The nature side says that gender differences are sex differences: all observed gender differences are biological differences and are therefore traceable to the genetic and hormonal differences between

women and men. The differences and that they are so early in child development, cultural nonetheless.

A useful way to frame the debate would be like asking, “Which side has the implications of the debate, if not impossible—to say that there are no immutable gender differences?”

Consider the wider implications. The nature side says that and genetically programmed. In the area of pronatalist brainwashing, baby dolls to play with, and a wide range of maternal behavior, at least one study suggests that the ability to have a baby is

Different academic disciplines use different methodological tools. In the area of the natural sciences, the field of biology, which includes disciplines like psychology and the social sciences, then take up, in turn, the social sciences (or branches of biology, anthropology, sociology, respectively, as the social sciences and of markets.¹⁴

Biological perspective

The field of biology has long been concerned with gender aspects of nature. The range of behavior about sex-related differences is wide, while it is clear that many sex differences exist. Scientists would agree that there are “rather minor” differences between men and women we observe among people. If, in fact, the ability of sexual differences

On the nature side of the debate, the entomologist says that the basis of all forms of behavior in this field are in applying the extreme viewpoint (behavior) is biological.

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women and men. The nurture side says that gender differences are separable from sex differences and that they are determined by cultural influences. Some of these influences may occur so early in child development as to be hard to distinguish from sex differences, but they are cultural nonetheless. While simple in its dichotomy, the nature-nurture division may not be a useful way to frame the debate over gender differences. One psychologist points out that it may be like asking, "Which determines the area of a rectangle, the length or the width?"¹² However, the implications of these two views are quite strong. For the nature side, it is very difficult—if not impossible—to alter gender differences in fundamental ways. For the nurture side, there are no immutable gender differences.

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Consider the widely held belief that motherhood is an important experience for all women to have. The nature side would argue that women are both biologically capable of having babies and genetically programmed to want to have babies. The nurture side would argue that the depth of pronatalist brainwashing/social control that women undergo is truly intensive.¹³ Girls are given baby dolls to play with, are made to help with the care of younger children, and are subjected to a wide range of media messages implying that motherhood is, if not the ultimate goal for a woman, at least one of the goals she must achieve to be fulfilled as a woman. While the ability to have a baby is biologically determined, the desire to have one is instilled by the society.

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Different academic disciplines have approached this debate using different theoretical and methodological tools, but no consensus has been achieved either within or between disciplines. In the area of the natural sciences, most of the debate has, not surprisingly, occurred within the field of biology, which is the study of the structure and processes of living organisms. Hybrid disciplines have sprung up, notably biopsychology and sociobiology, that attempt to bridge biology and the social sciences. We will first look at biologists' views on gender differences and then take up, in turn, some views of gender emanating from different social sciences. The social sciences (or branches of knowledge dealing with humans) that we will consider are psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science, and economics. These can be loosely defined, respectively, as the sciences of the mind, of culture, of society, of government (or of the state), and of markets.¹⁴

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Biological perspectives

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The field of biology has been the scene of much of the most acrimonious debate over the gender aspects of nature vs. nurture. While biologists are the source of most of our knowledge about sex-related differences, after the most obvious physiological differences have been noted, the range of behavior that could be considered "purely biological" is hotly debated. Additionally, while it is clear that men and women have some definite differences, such as different sex organs, many sex differences must be described as ranges or averages, such as height and weight. Many scientists would agree with the statement by Jerre Levy, a biopsychologist, that sex differences are "rather minor compared to differences between people of the same sex: of all the variations we observe among people, eighty to ninety-five percent of them are *within* men and *within* women."¹⁵ If, in fact, the sexes are more alike than different, this fact would cast doubt on the ability of sexual difference to explain much of gender difference.

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On the nature side of the debate, the field of sociobiology has developed. Its best-known proponent, the entomologist E.O. Wilson, defines sociobiology as "the scientific study of the biological basis of all forms of social behavior in all kinds of organisms, including man."¹⁶ The roots of this field are in applying principles derived from animal and insect behavior to human behavior. The extreme viewpoint held by some sociobiologists is that all animal behavior (including human behavior) is biologically based, or determined. This is the belief of *biological determinism*.

In the area of male-female relationships, sociobiologists point out the widespread nature of male dominance, both in the animal kingdom and throughout human cultures, and argue that male dominance is biologically based.¹⁷ Arguments for the basis of this male dominance can be grouped by certain common themes:¹⁸

- aggression arguments: males are more aggressive, due, in humans, to the preponderance of the hormone testosterone in males; inevitably they come to dominate the less aggressive females.
- male bonding arguments: males are able to band together to dominate females; this tendency towards working in groups is a genetic trait that women do not have.
- physical strength arguments: men are stronger than women, so are able to dominate them physically; this leads to social domination as well.
- reproduction-related arguments: women and men take on different gender roles because they support their different roles in reproduction of the species, and specialization of reproductive roles is adaptive for survival of the species.

In each case, sociobiologists back up the argument with the principle of natural selection: males who are weak, submissive, less oriented towards reproduction, and/or less group-oriented are less likely to mate and pass along their characteristics; over time these characteristics are bred out of the males of the species. Women who are weak, submissive, and/or more oriented towards breeding are not killed off in dominance struggles and/or are more popular as breeding partners, so their characteristics persist as well.

There are legions of critics of these views, both within biology and outside it.¹⁹ Problems spotted by critics in arguments for biological determinism include the systematic selection of supporting examples, misrepresentation of examples, improper extrapolation of evidence, and poor theory.²⁰ Three prominent biologists—R. C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin—have criticized biological determinism both because they think it is inaccurate and because they find it dangerous in that it politically supports those who seek to justify and maintain the status quo, whom they term the New Right. They characterize the New Right view thus:

Not only is the [gender] division of labor given by biology, but we go against it at our peril, for it is functional. Society needs both dominant, productive men and dependent, nurturative, and reproductive women. . . . [If] sexual divisions have emerged adaptively by natural selection, as a result of the different biological roles in reproduction of the two sexes, and have evolved to the maximal advantage of both, the inequalities are not merely inevitable but functional too.²¹

While most biologists would not agree with strict biological determinism, in general they are unlikely to fall solidly onto the nurture side in the nature–nurture debate. Instead, they are more likely to espouse *biological potentiality*, the idea that biology shapes our potential, but not our outcomes.²²

Psychological perspectives

Many studies of sex differences are not obvious in their underlying orientation—that is, are they studying biology, or psychology? Many of the most interesting studies of sex differences bridge this gap. Studies focusing on physiological sex differences are clearly biological in nature. But some biologists are addressing the questions of how thought and actions apparently undertaken under free will are actually affected by biological factors. A field of biopsychology has developed that attempts to synthesize the theory and methods of the two fields, but that by its

very existence implies biology and psychology.

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Focus — Why are Women

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very existence implies that psychology has some grounding in biology. Another field that links biology and psychology is evolutionary psychology.²³

Take, for example, studies of intelligence, or scholastic ability. One study gave the math SATs to a group of eighth-grade students who scored high on a standard intelligence test, thereby attempting to control for both IQ and knowledge of mathematics before math coursework patterns by sex began to diverge in high school.²⁴ Of this sample, over 40 percent were girls, and they were girls who said they liked math. However, there were many more high-scoring boys on the math SAT. This led the researchers to conclude that math ability is biologically linked to sex. This result implies that human ability, while channeled through education, is to a large degree predetermined and linked to sex.

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Focus

Why are Women Underrepresented in Science?

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There are proportionately fewer women in science and math careers, both in academia and in private industry. In early 2005, economist and president of Harvard University Lawrence Summers sparked an enormous public debate over why this is the case, when he made some remarks at an academic conference on diversifying the science and engineering workforce.

angered a number of the women scientists attending the conference (including MIT biology professor Nancy Hopkins, who was instrumental in a 1999 study of inequalities for women scientists at her institution²⁵) and the public debate began.²⁶ The women scientists argued that Summers had discounted discrimination and social factors in general, including opportunities and encouragement for women to enter scientific careers, instead jumping to a biologically based explanation for the observed pattern.

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In his comments, Summers indicated that he believed that men are more likely to be on the tails of the bell curve of mathematical ability, both among the very high scorers and the bottom performers. Assuming that professional scientists would be drawn from the high scorers, this implies that men would outnumber women in the mathematically oriented professions. He also cited the reluctance or inability of women with children to work 80-hour weeks. His focus on innate ability

Summers apologized publicly and profusely for his comments. The fallout from this incident, along with other issues regarding his outspokenness and an eventual no-confidence vote by the Harvard faculty of Arts and Sciences, led to his resignation as Harvard's president in 2006.

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Consider another interesting pattern at the border of biology and psychology. Many more women than men become mental patients. One study found that of the first admissions to private, state, and county mental hospitals in the United States, 139 are women to every 100 men. When Veterans Administration hospitals are included (where the data are considered to be an overestimate of male mental patients), the ratio is still 121 women to 100 men. Among all patients under psychiatric care in general hospitals (including both chronic patients and first admissions), the ratio is 168 women to 100 men.²⁷ This study does not lead to as strong a biological implication as the former. For instance, women may be more likely than men to be diagnosed as mental patients if they deviate from behavioral norms for their gender.

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Two psychologists, Eleanor Emmons Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin, have conducted a thorough review of the psychological literature on sex differences.²⁸ They come down firmly against biological determinism, and they also argue that the number of firmly established psychological sex differences are few and are outnumbered by beliefs that are unfounded or find only partial support. They found fairly well-established evidence for the beliefs that girls have greater verbal ability than boys, while boys have greater math and visual-spatial abilities and are more aggressive than girls. Differences where evidence is mixed include tactile sensitivity,

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In recent years, psychologists and other social scientists have devoted much attention to the question of whether there are sex differences in reasoning, particularly in moral reasoning.²⁹ While no clear answer has emerged, this topic has been of great interest in the academic feminist community. If women indeed have "different ways of knowing" or "a different voice," as some researchers argue,³⁰ and if neither sex's way of knowing can be determined to be better or worse, but just different, then there may be strong political arguments for maintaining joint representation of the sexes in critical decision-making positions in society.

Anthropological perspectives

Maccoby and Jacklin note that most psychological studies of sex differences have used white middle class U.S. subjects. Nevertheless, conclusions about universal sex differences have been drawn from these studies. In order to check the validity of these conclusions, there is a need both for cross-cultural work in psychology and for the anthropological viewpoint, which specifically considers cultural differences as an important determinant of human behavior.

Anthropological field work has been an important source of data on the extent and nature of the gender division of labor. A point of general agreement among anthropologists is that evidence for matriarchy, past or present, is lacking; in other words, male dominance is and has been very nearly universal. While there are examples of matrilineal societies (societies where descent patterns are reckoned by mothers rather than by fathers), and while these societies tend to have advantages for women relative to patrilineal societies, men in these societies still hold the prized offices and exercise basic control over resources.³¹ However, some anthropologists and others still disagree on this point, arguing either that the data are incomplete or that interpretations of what occurred in particular past societies are biased by the male viewpoint held by most past observers. In fact, anthropology as a field has come under criticism—mostly internally—for showing bias by ignoring women and their activities. Anthropologists have become more sensitive to the importance of both describing and evaluating the importance of women's activities.³²

In general, anthropologists side with the nurture side of the heredity versus environment debate. As a paradigm for anthropology, more and more anthropologists have espoused the theoretical viewpoint of "cultural materialism,"³³ which one proponent defines as the view that "explanations for cultural similarities and differences lie in the material conditions of human life: how people make a living, how they relate to their environments, and how they reproduce themselves."³⁴ Therefore, biology, rather than being destiny, is just one factor determining cultural patterns. Ernestine Friedl, an influential advocate of cultural materialism, makes some basic propositions about gender differences that she judges are supported by substantial evidence:³⁵

1. The subsistence technology of a society and its social and political organization have crucial consequences for:
 - the sexual division of labor,
 - the differential allocation of power and recognition to men and women, and
 - the quality of relationships between the sexes.
2. The spacing of children and the patterns of childrearing are adjusted to whatever level of work women customarily do (as opposed to vice versa).

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We will consider these particularly in Chapter

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ice, and nurturing. The right to distribute and exchange valued goods and services to those outside one's domestic unit confers power and prestige (i.e., it is better to give than to receive); consequently, gender roles are influenced not only by the division of routine labor but also by extraordinary occasions (because those times are when extradomestic exchange occurs most frequently).

uch attention to the moral reasoning.²⁹ We will consider these assertions and their relationship to economic theory later in the book, particularly in Chapter 12.

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Sociological perspectives

While anthropology appears to be moving towards acceptance of a paradigm, sociology has long been a field without an established central core of belief. As one sociologist has written, "Sociology's problems stem from its own inability to decide exactly what its subject matter should be."³⁶ One sociologist has proposed a definition of sociology that attempts to both absorb the lost turf of moral reasoning and to define it relative to economics and political science: it is the social science that teaches both that social practices create moral rules and that "society" is an alternative to markets and states.³⁷ Other sociologists prefer a definition of the field based on methodology rather than subject matter.³⁸

In general, sociologists are inclined to consider environment as more important than heredity and to look for explanations of gender differences that are rooted in social/cultural forces. One view would be that three sociological processes generate observed gender differences: (1) children are socialized into gender roles, which happens at the individual level; (2) gender differences are socially constructed; and (3) socially constructed ideas of gender differences are institutionalized at the societal level.³⁹ Sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein has synthesized and reviewed the sociological literature on gender differences much as Maccoby and Jacklin did for the psychological literature.⁴⁰ In her evaluation, she comes down heavily against biological determinism, although she does not claim to speak for all sociologists,⁴¹ and she decides that women and men are really much more "same" than different. In a vein similar to cultural materialism, some sociologists have focused on the relationship between power and domination and the need to create resource surpluses for survival. One sociologist argues that there is an ongoing tension in dominance relationships due to the economic aspects of the relationships: powerless, slavish, ignorant women (and men) are easier to exploit but do not yield much surplus product for the exploiter; freer, more productive women are more resistant to domination.⁴²

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Political science perspectives

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Political scientists have also considered the causes and implications of gender differences. In particular, political philosophers have considered the question of whether gender differences are just or unjust and what role, if any, the state should have in reshaping gender differences. Susan Moller Okin, in her analysis of the gender implications of recent influential political theories, rebuts two claims made by several political philosophers (all male): (1) the claim that justice is not a primary virtue for the family, that the family is "beyond" justice; (2) the claim that the "nature" of sexual differences makes the demand that families be just not only unreasonable but harmful to society.⁴³ She argues that political forces generally operate against women, the less powerful of the sexes, at both the family and societal levels. Therefore, a just state would attempt to correct this power balance, in large part through legislation and enforcement that would lead to direct intervention by the state in family situations that are determined to be unjust.

Another group of political scientists reasons that in order to argue that political change can and should have an effect on gender differences, it is necessary to assume that women can shape their circumstances rather than having them determined through biology.⁴⁴ In this case, they argue that the government/state should take the role of ensuring that women and men are treated in the public realm as deserving of equal liberty. Under this assumption, the state should have the goal of making the public realm as gender-neutral as possible, rather than allowing special privilege and/or protection for either sex.⁴⁵

We will consider both of these points—whether or not the state should interfere with family situations, and whether or not the state should maintain equal treatment or preferential treatment by sex—throughout the book. Given that a large focus of this book is on policy applications of economics in the realm of gender issues, it is important to keep these basic questions from political science in mind.

Economic perspectives

We now turn at somewhat more length to the economic approach to gender differences, since it is the focus of this book. Economics can be broadly defined as the science of decision making under constraints. Economists stress the concept of scarcity—the need to weigh alternatives with regard to cost, due to an inability to afford everything—as the main constraint affecting individual and societal decision making. Additionally, economists regard humans as rational, in the strongest view, assuming that rationality underlies all human behavior. Rationality involves persons reacting to current conditions in making decisions, using all available information in the decision-making process. Rationality implies both consistency (persons will always act in the same way in identical situations) and foresight (persons will consider long-run implications and indirect effects of their behavior). While people do not need full information and perfect foresight in order to be rational, economists often assume these factors anyway in making predictions about how a person will act. What are the alternatives to rational behavior?

1. Irrational behavior: has no pattern and is apparently completely random in nature, or responds erratically to outside influences.
2. Command-following behavior: is responsive to the desires of others; behavior that does not lead to maximizing one's self-interest but that may be a result of self-interest on the part of others.
3. Customary/traditional behavior: uses one's own past behavior and societal custom as a guide to current behavior, regardless of changing circumstances.
4. Heuristic behavior: routines, "standard operating procedures," and rules of thumb that are acted on but not reflected upon.

One could argue that it may be rational not to disobey a command or custom because one prefers to obey, but then rationality becomes a tautological concept. One could argue that it is rational to follow custom or heuristics so as to reduce the costs of gathering more information, but for particular heuristics that do not appear to have grounds in fact, this is problematic.

In order to contrast these types of behavior, consider how a man might react to having a head cold. A command-follower might do whatever his roommate suggests, even if it is something blatantly silly, such as staying out all night dancing. A man exhibiting customary behavior might do whatever he did last time he had a cold, such as taking the same medication, regardless of how the symptoms of this new cold might vary from the last one. An irrational person might do just about anything, including overdosing on a medication. A person following a

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heuristic might remember the rule, "Feed a cold, starve a fever," and order a pizza for delivery. And a person behaving rationally would analyze the current cold, determine if a new medication (or a visit to the doctor) is needed, and purchase it if necessary.

Economists have skirted the edge of the nature-nurture debate. While they would like to rely on natural selection arguments to argue that rational behavior will generally be favored over other forms of behavior, they also want to argue that people are flexible enough in their behavior to be able to respond to changing conditions. The debate over whether the sexual division of labor is biologically or culturally determined has been of less interest to them than figuring out why segregation is an apparently equilibrium, or economically stable, situation, regardless of the origin of gender roles.

Methodologically, economists rely heavily on statistical data over case studies. This reliance is in strong contrast to the situation in anthropology and political science, which tend to be case-study oriented, and in weak contrast to sociology, whose practitioners rely both on statistical data and on case studies. The economic approach is to have lean theories, with few variables included. Economic theories are not meant to capture all the relevant explanatory elements for a phenomenon, just the most important ones; they are not meant to be fully descriptive theories. While some people consider this characteristic a flaw of economics, economists consider it an asset to have simple analytical models. Additionally, while the models may be simple analytically, they are often fairly complicated statistically, unlike the modeling techniques used in the other social sciences (and in biology).

Recently, economists (and other scientists, both natural and social) have spent a great deal of time considering how to deal with the general and pervasive problem of *sample selection bias*, which occurs when an unobserved variable influences selection of who is observed in a particular category. For example, working women may be significantly different than non-working women in terms of their motivation and ability to perform paid work. Therefore, results obtained from studying only working women may not apply to all women. These problems are pervasive in economic empirical work because economists try to develop simple models (where they, for instance, do not include measures of motivation) and because of data limitations, but economists have also attempted to develop statistical methods for overcoming them. This issue will come up over and over again in the book as a critique of various interpretations of results from statistical studies.

Economists generally hold that people will act so as to maximize their own outcomes—that is, act in self-interested ways. However, there are several distinct schools of economics that vary mainly in their thinking as to the kinds of constraints people face in their ability to act in their own interests. Neoclassical economists see no constraints other than income, or the ability to earn income. Marxian economists see limits on the ability of most people to further their self-interests due to their position in the class system. Only capitalists have the ability to create enough income through ownership of capital to further their self-interests; working-class persons are able only to earn enough to stay alive, never to move beyond their basic survival level. Feminist economists see limits on women's full participation in the economic system. Institutional economists see constraints in the form of institutions such as governments, unions, and legal and traditional systems; therefore institutions are created not to help people further their self-interests but to satisfy other social goals. Neoclassical economists are more inclined to see institutions as furthering self-interests, at least for particular social groups.

The institution of the family is, perhaps, the area over which the four groups of economists disagree the most as to role and impact. Neoclassical economists tend to analyze the family as if it were one unit maximizing the joint well-being of its members; individual self-interests combine seamlessly into family self-interest. More recent work has considered how bargaining is

carried out within families. We will consider alternative interpretations of what happens within families in Chapter 3.

Critiques of the Economic Approach

The economic approach—in particular, the assumption of rational, self-interested behavior—has been criticized both inside and outside the profession. Much of the criticism from outside the profession, particularly concerning the areas covered by the economics of gender, has taken the form of questioning whether economic analysis is an appropriate tool for studying particular phenomena at all. Also, the hegemony of neoclassical economics and its perceived lack of openness to input from other fields and from alternative approaches within economics has been perceived as a drawback.

Is economics an imperialist science?

Has economics been attempting to take over the traditional subject matter of other disciplines? It is clear that economists have increasingly ventured into studying areas that were traditionally considered to fall within other disciplines. The economic theory of politics, which argues that policymakers continue to act in self-interested ways rather than for the public good, dates from the late 1950s. The economic theory of education, which argues that education is an investment good of which individuals rationally decide how much to purchase, dates from the early 1960s. The economic theory of marriage and divorce, which argues that family formation and dissolution are affected by rational self-interest, dates from the early 1970s. Today, economists routinely write about practically every topic in the social sciences, including sports, crime, poverty, the legal system, and sexuality. But not all economists, including many who work on these “fringe” topics, argue for the universal applicability of the rational self-interest model. However, the Chicago school of economics has been characterized as a “revolutionary movement,” in which rational-choice egoism is applied to everything within sight. One critic states that “from the perspective of the Chicago school, there is no behavior that is *not* interpretable as economic, however altruistic, emotional, disinterested, and compassionate it may seem to others.”⁴⁶

What determines the boundaries between disciplines, and are there rules that should not be crossed? Ronald Coase, a Nobel prize winner in economics, argued that the binding forces that create a discipline are one or more of the following:⁴⁷

1. Common analysis techniques/methodology.
2. Common theory or approach to problems.
3. Common subject matter.

However, he believes that, in the long run, common subject matter defines the discipline. In other words, while currently people who call themselves economists are making forays into areas traditionally considered to fall in sociology or political science, what will happen is that people who call themselves sociologists and political scientists will increasingly adopt the methodology and theory that economists have been using. In this sense, the disciplines will move closer together in terms of type of methodology and theory used, but people will still define themselves by what they study.

Clearly, then, we also need a definition of economics (and also a definition of sociology and of political science). While many different definitions have been proposed, Coase leans towards

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what happens within the use of a somewhat nebulous definition, such as economics as the study of human actions in the ordinary business of life, or economics as the study of the operation of economic organizations, though he realizes that these definitions depend on a shared understanding of what particular terms such as "ordinary business" mean and that they tend to be somewhat circular in nature (for example, what is an economic organization?). He shies away from some of the even broader definitions proposed, such as economics as the science of human choice. This definition, which one that I favor, implies that the existence of scarcity is the constraint on topics of interest to economists. For example, if there is no shortage of love, then love is not a topic of interest to economists.

Interested behavior—criticism from outside of gender, has taken for studying particular its perceived lack of economics has been Nevertheless, even if Coase is right in the long run, why is it that economists are making forays into other fields, rather than other social scientists foraying into economics? Reuven Brenner, another eminent economist, argues that this is related to the strength of the central theoretical paradigm of rational self-interest in economics.⁴⁸ Partly this is just a matter of having the available bodies to lead forays. He argues that, "in fields lacking a paradigm, scientists have to start each time from the very first principles."⁴⁹ This is naturally going to be more time-consuming and will lead to the feeling that the field is not building on itself. By contrast, most economists who write research papers assume that all their readers share the same basic understanding of concepts, and they proceed to develop new concepts and expand on the basic ideas of the field. This is a "survival of the fittest" argument: those academic disciplines that are not subject to constant self-doubt have the energy to expand their boundaries and are better able to recruit new followers.

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While some critics have characterized economists as being unconcerned with morality and disrespectful of constraints on self-interest, such as love and respect for tradition,⁵¹ most Coase leans towards economists in fact believe both that a world composed solely of rational, selfish individuals

would be a bad place to live and that the world we live in is not so composed. Additionally, most economists would disagree with the assertion that they are making the world a worse place to live in through espousing basic economic principles. However, they generally do believe that neoclassical economic theory is a useful conceptual starting point for thinking about the world. They disagree about whether it is also an ending point and to what degree evolutionary biology can be coupled with economics in order to strengthen economic predictions. The Chicago school of economics, which has been at the forefront pushing out the boundaries of economics, has also contained the strongest advocates of the general applicability of neoclassical economic theory. However, over time, as other economists enter the boundary areas of which the economics of gender is one, the monoculture of neoclassical economic theory in these areas is weakened. In fact, as you will see in this book, many economists use concepts that originated with sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and political scientists.

This book attempts to tread the middle ground by presenting a consistent picture of how neoclassical economic theory can be applied to gender issues but also making clear at which points the available empirical evidence does not lend solid support to this body of theory. Additionally, there are many points at which neoclassical economic theory does not give a clear-cut prediction or interpretation of events. For some of these topics, such as labor market discrimination and the role of the family, alternative explanations are available, both within and without economics, and they will be discussed as well.

Other academic perspectives

Researchers in other fields, including geography, history, the humanities, and the natural sciences other than biology, also have theories and evidence to offer about gender differences. Additionally, other fields have constituted an integral part of the interdisciplinary field of women's studies. We will consider geographers' perspectives on gender at several points in the book, as well as historians' perspectives at length in Part V.

Communication between Academic Disciplines

In general, communication between academic disciplines is limited by the ability of people to comprehend jargon across fields, invest time in reading different academic literatures, and generally overcome the current academic training system, which requires a person both to identify with a particular discipline and to become knowledgeable in only a certain area of that discipline (particularly, given the current criteria for receiving tenure). Nonetheless, most people studying gender issues recognize that knowledge of how other disciplines approach the questions of gender differences is required in order to make real progress in one's own area. Interdisciplinary contacts have become widespread, and the label of "academic feminism" has served as a rallying flag under which people in different academic disciplines have gathered.

The rise of academic feminism

Academic feminism has three main accomplishments to date: (1) it has documented the extent to which academia has excluded women, both as researchers⁵² and as subjects; (2) it has begun to redress these shortcomings;⁵³ and (3) it has opened up the question of how gender shapes scientific inquiry and thought in general. In fact, one prominent academic feminist, Evelyn Fox Keller, argues that "both gender and science are socially constructed categories."⁵⁴

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Academic feminism has led to the creation of women's studies as an interdisciplinary field. This has allowed the three parts of the academic feminist research agenda to be brought together, emphasizing the similarity in feminists' approach, regardless of academic discipline: namely, the primacy of gender as a category affecting both human thought and behavior. This has been an extremely successful interdisciplinary field because it combines coherence of subject matter (namely, redressing the lack of attention to women's experience as different from men's experience in the different academic disciplines) with the existence of a central paradigm.

Women's studies has generally remained women's studies rather than gender studies, a fact partly due to the subject emphasis, partly to political constraints. Most of the people working in women's studies are women, and few people are interested in documenting male experiences, arguing that the traditional academic disciplines have been doing just that.⁵⁵

Focus I

Gender and Metaphor in the Language of Economics

Economists have only recently begun to consider how gender has shaped their discipline.⁵⁶ For example, in a session on "feminism and economic argument" at the 1989 American Economic Association meetings (the first ever devoted to the topic at this annual national convention), three economists gave papers arguing that male domination of the field of economics has led to the masculinization of the language and methodology used in economics. The following are some excerpts from their papers:

As *social science*, economics takes a "feminine" role vis à vis mathematics and the physical sciences. Human behavior is a "softer" subject than abstract math or the natural world, less amenable to quantitative (as opposed to qualitative) description or formulation in terms of "laws." This presents a problem for those economists who, perhaps to maintain a clear-cut gender self-image, need to see their work as consistently masculine. Consider the language used in the statement of purpose of the Econometric Society, which can be found inside the back cover of every issue of *Econometrica*:

The Society shall operate as a completely disinterested, scientific organization, without political, social, financial or nationalistic bias. Its main object shall be to promote studies that aim at the unification of the theoretical-quantitative and the empirical-quantitative approaches

to economic problems and that are penetrated by constructive and rigorous thinking similar to that which has come to dominate in the natural sciences.

Translated, I suggest that this says, "Hey guys, we want to penetrate and dominate, too!"⁵⁷

What is dear to male economists is not the thing itself but their model of the thing. Disproportionately they scorn the rich and multiple stories of the thing itself. They want to impose their favorite metaphors on the world... Male economists sneer at the anecdote, though it gives them most of their factual beliefs... self-consciousness about analogizing and storytelling are feminine in our culture; literalism, a belief in The Reality of this or that analogy or story, is masculine.⁵⁸

In the early neoclassical labor supply literature, there was no question of incorporating the concept of gender into the theory because there were no women... prior to the 1960's women and the economic activity of women were virtually invisible... The definition of labor, coincided with men's economic activity. The alternative was called leisure, which ignored the household and childraising activities of women. The very term "women workers" indicates an exception, or an anomaly, requiring a modifier. The term "men workers" seems awkward.⁵⁹

Divisions in feminist thought

The two broad feminist perspectives on gender divisions in society have been termed the "maximalist" and "minimalist" perspectives.⁶⁰ The maximalist perspective, also called *essentialism*, holds that there are basic differences between the sexes. Some proponents believe these differences are biologically determined; others believe that "they are a product of social conditioning (typically set early in life) or lodged in the differing psyche of the sexes by the

psychoanalytic processes that create identity";⁶¹ still others are willing to give partial credit to all of these factors. In any case, proponents believe that these differences are deeply rooted and result in different approaches to the world, in some cases creating a distinct "women's culture." The political implications of this view are that these differences benefit society and ought to be recognized and rewarded; an extreme view is that "women's culture" is superior to, or at least less dangerous than, the current "men's culture" that society is subject to, and that women's culture should supplant men's culture, a situation that may require separatism on the part of women.⁶²

The minimalist perspective, also called *constructivism*, is that the two sexes are fundamentally similar, and that gender differences linked to sexual functions (e.g., reproduction) are not invariably or necessarily related to psychological traits or social roles. In Fuchs Epstein's words, "This perspective suggests that most gender differences are not as deeply rooted or immutable as has been believed, that they are relatively superficial, and that they are socially constructed (and elaborated in the culture through myths, law, and folkways) and kept in place by the way each sex is positioned in the social structure. This perspective is critical of the notion of a separate women's culture and of the idea that women's psyches or values are different from men's. This view ascribes observed differences in behavior to a social control system that prescribes and proscribes specific behaviors for women and men."⁶³

Maximalism/essentialism has also come under attack from feminists who are concerned that race and class differences are obscured by the focus on gender as the critical source of human differences. If, for instance, black and white women differ in many ways, then it becomes less likely that there is a specific women's culture, let alone that it would be desirable to act as if there were one. We will consider the validity of essentialism and minimalism throughout the book, particularly in Chapter 15, which considers different cultural and racial experiences in U.S. economic history.

Summary

The economics of gender is the area in economics that explicitly considers the effects of having two genders as they interact in families, firms, and markets. Economics and many other academic disciplines have considered gender differences, including the question of whether or not gender differences are distinct from sex differences. Two debates run throughout discussions of gender differences: the heredity vs. environment debate about the causes of gender

differences and, more recently, the essentialism vs. minimalism debate about the depth of gender differences. When the adage, "Economics is what economists do," can be applied to all the disciplines considered herein, there are useful insights to be gained from considering the bodies of knowledge generated by members of the different disciplines from thinking about how to define the different fields, and from thinking about how the different fields interact.

Endnotes

1. Adulthood varies in definition across cultures, but the lower limit on adulthood can be set as the onset of puberty.
2. Genetic sex, determined by the chromosomes, is overlaid during human development by hormonal sex, which is determined by the ratios of androgens to estrogens. Hormonal sex is normally, though not always, appropriate to genetic sex. Sex characteristics are therefore determined by both genetic and hormonal sex.

3. I choose not to deal with the rare cases in which a person may have an extra chromosome.
4. There are, of course, many cases, both actual and literary, of persons who manage to pass as a member of the opposite sex. There are fewer cases in which

observers are unable to do so. In the early 1990s, the television show *Night Live* had a recurring theme involving the inability to determine whether a character name

5. Handedness: "Left-hand

The Economist (February 1990) watching figures are from *Love My TV*, *America* (September 1990): 27, at (undivided attention) amount 18–64 in 1985. The other Weiss, *The Great Divide Really Differ* (New York: 244; original source is 1988, December 1988, February

6. Figures are for 2002; see data/dvs/LCWK10_2002. Figures are for 2003; see Justice, *Sourcebook of Online* (www.albany.edu, 3.4, 6.22.

Harris Poll (February 26,

9. *Gallup Poll* (December 1,

10. Weiss, *op. cit.*: 108; original source, *Shareowners* data (e.g., *Shareowners* separately by gender.

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16. See E.O. Wilson, *On Hu*

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17. Cf., Steven Goldberg, *The*

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are fewer cases in which

5. Handedness: "Left-handedness: Sinister Origins," *The Economist* (February 15, 1997): 80. Television-watching figures are from John P. Robinson, "I Love My TV," *American Demographics* 12, no. 9 (September 1990): 27, and refer to primary viewing (undivided attention) among men and women ages 18–64 in 1985. The other figures are from Daniel Evan Weiss, *The Great Divide: How Females and Males Really Differ* (New York: Poseidon, 1991): 179, 242, 244; original source is *Roper Reports* (September 1988, December 1988, February 1989).
6. Figures are for 2002; source is www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/LCWK10_2002.pdf. Figures are for 2003; source is U.S. Department of Justice, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online* (www.albany.edu/sourcebook/): Tables 2.57, 3.4, 6.22.
9. *Harris Poll* (February 26, 2003).
9. *Gallup Poll* (December 11–14, 2003).
10. Weiss, *op. cit.*: 108; original source is New York Stock Exchange, *Shareownership 1985*. More recent data (e.g., *Shareownership 2000*) are not shown separately by gender.
11. Weiss, *op. cit.*: 151; original source is R.H. Brustein Associates Market Research, *America in the Eighties* (1985). See also Richard Layard, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
13. Personal communication with Marcia Walton, Psychology Department, Rhodes College.
13. See Ellen Peck and Judith Senderowitz (eds.), *Pro-natalism: The Myth of Mom & Apple Pie* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1974).
14. *The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary* (New York: Signet, 1981).
15. Quoted in David L. Kirp, Mark G. Yudoff, and Marlene Strong Franks, *Gender Justice* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1986): 53.
16. See E.O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978): 222. See also *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).
17. Cf., Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: Morrow, 1973).
18. Margot I. Duley, Karen Sinclair, and Mary I. Edwards, "Biology Versus Culture," *The Cross-Cultural Study of Women: A Comprehensive Guide*, eds. Margot I. Duley and Mary I. Edwards (New York: Feminist Press, City University of New York, 1986): 3–25.

19. Cf., Ruth Blier, *Science and Gender: A Critique of Biology and Its Theories on Women* (New York: Pergamon, 1984); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
20. According to R.C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin in *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature* (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 158, there are three general areas of difficulty in using analogies to male dominance in other species as supporting evidence for the theory of a biological basis of male dominance in humans:
 - (i) Inappropriate labeling of behavior; e.g., lion and "harem," where the lionesses are not dependent on the male (the opposite is true).
 - (ii) Partial observations by observer of social interactions; e.g., the position along one dominance continuum need not imply a matching position on other continua.
 - (iii) We have only small numbers of observations on a small number of species in a limited range of environments.
21. Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin, *op. cit.*: 135.
22. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, in *Deceptive Distinctions: Sex, Gender and the Social Order* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988): 6, cites well-known (now deceased) biologist Stephen J. Gould as one holding this view.
23. See David J. Buller, *Adapting Minds: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2005), for an excellent discussion and critique of this field and its application to explaining gender differences in behavior.
24. C.P. Benbow and J.C. Stanley, "Sex Differences in Mathematical Ability: Fact or Artifact," *Science* 210, no. 4475 (December 12, 1980): 1262–1264.
25. See <http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html>
26. The Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison put up a web page containing links to documents and news items concerning this controversy (<http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/news/Summers.htm>); see also Marcella Bombardieri, "Summers' Remarks on Women Draw Fire," *Boston Globe* (January 17, 2005); "Women and Science: the Debate Goes On," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 4, 2005): A1, A12.
27. Walter R. Gove, "Sex Differences in the Epidemiology of Mental Disorder: Evidence and Explanations," *Gender and Disordered Behavior: Sex Differences in Psychopathology*, eds. Edith S. Gomberg and Violet Franks (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979): 23–68. Women outnumber men in both psychosis and neurosis admissions.

28. Eleanor Emmons Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974). See Anne Fausto-Sterling (1985), Chapter Two, for a re-evaluation of Maccoby and Jacklin's discussion of sex-related cognitive differences.
29. The seminal work in this area that has spawned much subsequent debate is Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). See Carol Tavris, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992): Chapter Two, for a critical assessment of Gilligan's findings and subsequent work in this vein. See also Rosalind Barnett and Caryl Rivers, *Same Difference: How Gender Myths Are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children, and Our Jobs* (New York: Basic Books, 2004) for a broad-based critique of the genre of "difference" books.
30. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). For a discussion of the influence and critiques of this book, see Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies* (New York: Basic Books, 1994): Chapter 7.
31. Ernestine Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984): 4.
32. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture, and Society* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974), is an early attempt to correct bias in anthropological teaching materials towards ignoring women and their activities.
33. Cf., Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Random House, 1979).
34. Maxine L. Margolis, *Mothers and Such: Views of American Women and Why They Changed* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984): 3.
35. Friedl, *op. cit.*: 7–10.
36. Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1989): 191.
37. Wolfe, *op. cit.*: 188.
38. Personal communication with Victoria Alexander, Sociology Department, Harvard University.
39. Personal communication with Victoria Alexander, Sociology Department, Harvard University. See also Amy S. Wharton, "The Social Construction of Gender and Race in Organizations: A Social Identity and Group Mobilization Perspective," *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 10 (1992): 55–84.
40. Epstein, *op. cit.*
41. Epstein, *op. cit.*: 15, disapprovingly remarks that "an insistence that gender differences are rooted in the most basic nature of men and women still colors the work of respected scholars in such disciplines as economics, sociology, psychology, and the hybrid field of sociobiology."
42. William J. Goode, "Why Men Resist," *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*, eds. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom (New York: Longman, 1988): 131–150.
43. Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).
44. Kirp, Yudoff, and Franks, *op. cit.*: 63; 81.
45. Kirp, Yudoff, and Franks, *op. cit.*: 203.
46. Wolfe, *op. cit.*: 31–32.
47. Ronald H. Coase, "Economics and Contiguous Disciplines," *Journal of Legal Studies* 7, no. 2 (June 1978): 201–211.
48. Reuven Brenner, "Economics—An Imperial Science?" *Journal of Legal Studies* 9, no. 1 (January 1980): 179–188.
49. Brenner, *op. cit.*: 184.
50. Barry Schwartz, *The Battle for Human Nature: Science, Morality and Human Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986).
51. Wolfe, *loc. cit.*
52. For the case of economics, see Mary Ann Dimand, Robert W. Dimand, and Evelyn L. Forget (eds.), *Women of Value: Feminist Essays on the History of Women in Economics* (Aldershot, U.K.: Edward Elgar, 1995).
53. Cf., Dale Spender (ed.), *Men's Studies Modified: The Impact of Feminism on the Academic Disciplines* (Oxford, U.K.: Pergamon, 1981).
54. Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985): 3.
55. An early exception to the general focus on women is James A. Doyle, *The Male Experience* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1983), which contains chapters on historical, biological, sociological, and psychological views of male experience.
56. See Frances R. Woolley, "The Feminist Challenge to Neoclassical Economics," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 17, no. 4 (December 1993): 485–500, for relevant listings in the readings list at the end of this chapter.
57. Julie A. Nelson, "Gender, Metaphor, and the Definition of Economics," *Economics and Philosophy* 8 (April 1992): 108–109. Reprinted with permission of Deirdre N. McCloskey, "A Feminine Economics," *American Economic Association* (1989): 17–18, 23. Reprinted with permission of Lisa Jo Brown, "Gender and Economics: A Feminist Perspective," *American Economic Association* (1989): 6–8. Reprinted with permission of Epstein, *op. cit.*: 25, and Catherine Stimpson, *Ibid.*
58. An early and influential work is Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Radical Feminism* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

Further Reading

For a more comprehensive overview of feminist economics, see Drucilla K. Butler, Drucilla K., and Susan J. Stein, *Feminist Economics: Feminist Perspectives on Economics, Globalization, and the Environment* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). Helpful for accessible to college students. Current interest in feminist economics is reflected in the work of Ferber, Marianne A., and Julie A. Nelson, *Beyond Economic Man: A New Economics* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993). This first published collection of tenets of economics from a feminist perspective (2003). *Feminist Economics: A New Economics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press. The follow-up on the collection, with some essays by predecessors and others: *Feminist Economics: A New Economics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press. Folbre, Nancy (1994). *Who Pays? The Structures of Constraint in the Household*. Routledge. Wide-ranging a political economy and gender relations of the different economic systems.

Discussion Questions

Consider the Focus on these strike you as significant manifestations of deeper and men? Consider the Focus on women. At your school, are there any factors in the math and science departments that women major in math and science? Do you think there are these differences?

- pective," *Research in* 10 (1992): 55–84.
- approvingly remarks that differences are rooted in biology and women still colors scholars in such disciplines psychology, and the hybrid.
- Men Resist," *Rethinking the* eds. Barrie Thorne (New York: Longman, 1989).
- Deirdre N. McCloskey, "Some Consequences of a Feminine Economics," paper presented at 1989 American Economic Association conference (December 1989): 17–18, 23. Reprinted with permission.
59. Lisa Jo Brown, "Gender and Economic Analysis: A Feminist Perspective," paper presented at 1989 American Economic Association conference (December 1989): 6–8. Reprinted with permission.
60. Epstein, *op. cit.*: 25, attributes this terminology to Catherine Stimpson.
- Ibid.*
- An early and influential book espousing this view is Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The*

Further Reading

- conomics and Contingency," *Legal Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 1993): 203–20.
- conomics—An Imperialist Project," *Legal Studies* 9, no. 1 (January 1995): 1–15.
- Struggle for Human Nature: The Human Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989).
- see Mary Ann Dumas, and Evelyn L. Forget (eds.), *Essays on the History of Economics* (Aldershot, U.K.: Edward Elgar, 1994).
- Women's Studies Modified: The Academic Discipline* (1981).
- Reflections on Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
- general focus on women's experience (Dubucq, 1993), which contains chapters on sociological, and psychological.
- "The Feminist Challenge," *Cambridge Journal* (September 1993): 485–500.
- Findings list at the end of the book.
- Under, Metaphor, and the Economics and Philosophy of Science. Reprinted with permission.
- er, Drucilla K., and Susan F. Feiner (2004). *Liberating Economics: Feminist Perspectives on Families, Work, and Globalization*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press. Helpful book written at a level readily accessible to college students, covering major topics of current interest in feminist economics.
- Ferber, Marianne A., and Julie A. Nelson (eds.) (1993). *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press. The first published collection of essays to "examine central tenets of economics from a feminist point of view."
- (2003). *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press. The follow-up on the editors' earlier pathbreaking collection, with some essays explicitly building on their predecessors and others expanding the field into new directions.
- Folbre, Nancy (1994). *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint*. London and New York: Routledge. Wide-ranging and stimulating discussion of political economy and gender, including useful comparisons of the different economist paradigms.

Discussion Questions

- Consider the Focus on gender differences. Which of these strike you as significant? Which appear to be manifestations of deeper differences between women and men?
2. Consider the Focus on women's representation in science. At your school, are there fewer women professors in the math and science departments? Do fewer women major in math and sciences? Why do you think there are these differences, if they exist?

- Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Morrow, 1970).
63. Epstein, *loc. cit.* One might still ask why social control exists, but the answer need not be based in biology.
64. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; reprinted in New York by Dover, 1994): 3.
65. "The Trouble with Men," *The Economist* (September 28, 1996): 19.
66. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World: or Our Andocentric Culture* (New York: Charlton, 1911): 250.
- Kuiper, Edith, and Jolande Sap (eds.) (1995). *Out of the Margin: Feminist Perspectives on Economics*. London and New York: Routledge. The second published collection of essays in feminist economics; very thought-provoking.
- Nelson, Julie A. (1995). "Feminism and Economics," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9, no. 2 (Spring): 131–148. Useful introductory essay on feminist thinking applied to economics.
- (1996). *Feminism, Objectivity and Economics*. London and New York: Routledge. Interesting discussion of whether and how the study of economics is gendered.
- Peterson, Janice, and Doug Brown (eds.) (1994). *The Economic Status of Women Under Capitalism: Institutional Economics and Feminist Theory*. Aldershot, U.K. and Brookfield, Vermont: Edward Elgar. A set of essays exploring the connections between institutionalism and feminism.
- Peterson, Janice, and Margaret Lewis (eds.) (1999). *The Elgar Companion to Feminist Economics*. Cheltenham, U.K. and Northfield, Mass.: Edward Elgar. Comprehensive reference work with ninety-nine short essays on aspects of feminist economics.

3. Institutional economist Thorstein Veblen wrote in 1899: "There is in all barbarian communities a profound sense of the disparity between man's and woman's work. His work may conduce to the maintenance of the group, but it is felt that it does so through an excellence and an efficacy of a kind that cannot without derogation be compared with the uneventful diligence of the women."⁶⁴ What does he mean by this? Is this true in current society?

4. In an editorial on the topic of men's future usefulness, *The Economist* said: "in terms of cultural evolution, men may well have done their job: they have pretty much set up modern civilisations and technologies; they may not be needed to keep them going. Knowledge-based societies, with their stress on brain not brawn, may be safer in women's hands."⁶⁵ What types of evidence might lead a journalist to make this sort of statement? Is this an assertion that an economist would make? How might an economist counter this claim?
5. Feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote in 1911: "We can make no safe assumption as to what, if any, distinction there will be in the free human work for men and women, until we have seen generation after generation grow up under absolutely equal conditions."⁶⁶ Is this an assertion that a scientist would make? Is it true? Could conditions ever be absolutely equal?
6. Do you think that the institution of the family is a constraint or a help for individuals in attaining their self-

interests? Is it more or less helpful compared with other social institutions?

7. What do you think it means to say that the family is "beyond justice?"
8. Give examples from your life of when you might see traditional, command-following, heuristic, irrational, and rational behavior.
9. What other criteria besides scarcity do you see as affecting individual and societal decision making?
10. What do you see as the major similarities and differences between academic disciplines in their approach to gender differences? If you had to classify disciplines as being more supportive of nature or nurture theories of human differences, how would you rank them?
11. Consider the Focus on gender and metaphor in the language of economics. Is it inevitable that domination by one gender would affect the language and methodology used in a field of study? What factors might this depend on?

would have gained from the lack of enjoyment of

The Marginal vs.

An important concept in the idea of using *marginal* is much of a good or service the last unit purchased.

Marginal benefits a

It is important to distinguish of the total action. The last (marginal) unit of the Only when marginal benefits consider a firm deciding whether benefit minus the change would generate, where an increase in profit, the each additional worker unit in profit.

Appendix: The Repercussions of Scarcity

In order to discuss gender-related issues from an economic point of view, some terms must first be introduced. This appendix is the first of the set of appendices in this book that develop the theoretical apparatus necessary to understand economists' views at relevant points in the text. It contains fundamental concepts of economic theory that will be used in the chapters to come.

The basic concept underlying the field of economics is that humans have limited resources but unlimited wants. This leads to the problem of how to allocate those resources—at the individual level, the family level, the societal level, and the world level. This fundamental idea, that there is a problem of *scarcity*, is then expanded into a theory of how to efficiently allocate resources so as to best choose between competing uses. Concepts that then arise include *opportunity cost*, *marginal benefit* and *marginal cost*, *marginal utility*, and the tools used to describe market interactions: *supply* and *demand curves* and *competitive* and *noncompetitive markets*, such as *monopolies* and *monopsonies*. These concepts are introduced herein and will be reinforced in future chapters with additional examples and applications.¹

Marginal utility

A person's satisfaction, although we can discover alternatives. Nevertheless, total and marginal satisfaction allocation of a person's increment to happiness of money. The general rule to make sure that the marginal of that dollar. In other divided by the price (P)

Opportunity Cost

To economists, the cost of allocating a resource to a particular use is the lost benefit that would have come from using the resource in its next best alternative. This idea of *opportunity cost* can be readily applied to both time and money, the fundamental resources to be allocated by individuals. In fact, the opportunity cost of time can be measured in monetary terms, and the opportunity cost of money can be measured by how long it took you to earn it. For instance, as students, you are constantly faced with the decision of how to spend your time. Should you spend an evening studying, or watching a movie with friends, or working at your part-time job? If you decide to study, you have determined that the value of the time spent in studying, in its impact on your grades and therefore your eventual probability of getting a well-paying job, is higher than its value in terms of either the money you could earn by working or the enjoyment you forego by not joining your friends at the movies. If you also would have chosen to work over going to the movies if those were the only two choices available, then we can say that the opportunity cost of the time spent studying is equal to the foregone wages plus whatever enjoyment (if any) you

$$\frac{MU_{\text{apple}}}{P_{\text{apple}}} = \frac{MU_{\text{orange}}}{P_{\text{orange}}}$$

If this equation did not that is generating more

The number of units the concept of *decreasing* the additional utility gets and smaller. This psychology diversify their consumption several apples, we would applying this concept to likely to decide to do so seen any movies today.