

Feminist Economics

CALL FOR PAPERS

A Special Issue on: Feminist Economic Perspectives on the Covid-19 Pandemic
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Submission deadline: May 31, 2020

Much of what is happening in the world with the Covid-19 pandemic is deeply connected with the kinds of issues that feminist economists have long engaged with. The crisis has drawn attention to “essential workers,” those whose services are not only necessary to sustain life and health but also to help maintain the basics of everyday existence. There are the professionals among these workers, the doctors, scientists and public health officials; but the vast majority of those on the front line are made up of low-wage service workers. These service workers, both men and women, normally deemed “low-skilled,” are now recognized as essential to ensure the sales and deliveries, cleaning services, home health assistance, garbage disposal, transport, and so on. Women tend to be over-represented among such frontline service workers and hence are most likely to be exposed to the risk of contracting the disease. Women’s risks of unemployment are also likely to be higher in many contexts, given their over-representation in retail, food service, and hospitality, some of the industries facing the most widespread business closures. In other contexts, where men make up the majority of those in precarious work, male unemployment is far more visible. Regardless of context, it will be men and women from the lowest-income households and socially marginalized groups who will bear the brunt of the economic crisis that is accompanying the pandemic.

Feminist economists have also spent decades examining women’s unpaid work within the home, an issue that has gained attention during the crisis with lockdowns and stay-at-home orders around the globe. Here it is clear that, regardless of context, women do relatively more unpaid care work than men, and this care work is systematically undervalued and invisible. The Covid-19 outbreak has amplified the need for caring labor within the home not only due to school closures, but also due to the large number of people contracting the virus and requiring care at home. The crisis has also made visible the “essential” nature of this work.

The home, usually a black box in neoclassical economics, has been a sphere of close scrutiny in feminist economics not only around caring labor, but also its power relations. Feminist economists have done extensive research on women’s empowerment and bargaining power, and how their agency affects outcomes such as healthcare seeking behavior, reproductive health, and domestic violence. These issues have gained the spotlight during the Covid-19 crisis as domestic violence has intensified due to increasing financial insecurity, rising tensions, fear, and seemingly endless confinement within the home. Class is likely to intersect with these gendered responses since confinement is far more stressful in cramped homes in overcrowded slums. Some governments are cutting back on reproductive health care services deemed as nonessential in an effort to divert resources toward Covid-19 care.

The purpose of this special issue is to provide original research on the gendered dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemic in both the global North and South, with a focus on how gender differentiates the experience, impact and risks associated with Covid-19, how the hardships that women and men face may be mitigated as governments work to contain the virus and rebuild their economies, and how public health systems may be reformed to prevent such wide-scale losses from happening again. We are particularly interested in how using a feminist economic lens can afford a deeper understanding of the crisis itself (especially the gender dynamics of work, agency, and well-being), and of policies designed to alleviate its harmful consequences.

Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Impact of Covid-19 on labor market experiences: gender and the intersection of inequalities;
- Intrahousehold power relations during stay-at-home and lockdown orders: Care, stress and domestic violence;
- Gendered experiences of those on the healthcare and personal care front-lines;
- Feminist economic analysis of government stimulus packages;
- Feminist economic analysis of social policy/social protection responses to Covid-19;
- Shifting priorities and women's reproductive healthcare provision;
- Analysis of differences in Covid-19 infection and mortality rates by gender, race/ethnicity and class;
- Covid-19 and income inequality across and within countries;
- Theoretical pieces on how the feminist economics of care provides insights into the crisis;
- Feminist perspectives on opportunities for transformation presented by the crisis.

Submission details and deadlines

We seek relatively shorter pieces, with a strict limit of 5,000 words (excluding references) and no more than four tables/figures and twenty references. The submission deadline for full papers is May 31 for a print publication date in the fall (though pieces will be published online first). Submissions should be based on original research or analysis. They should make an important contribution to feminist economic scholarship and be oriented to the journal's international audience. We are creating a pool of reviewers so we can use a fast-track review process, with the final selection of articles depending on reviewer feedback and the decisions of the guest editors. **Complete manuscripts should be submitted by May 31 via the journal's Scholar One portal, <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rfec>.**

A note on future opportunities

A key purpose of this special issue is to organize and highlight the participation of feminist economists in current global discussions around Covid-19. But the advantages of timeliness may exclude important work that will emerge later as the crisis unfolds. We anticipate additional venues for publication and exchange later on, both in terms of journal print and online publications, as well as in collaboration with LAFPE conferencing and webinars. Updates on these to come.