

Gender and COVID-19: a feminist economics lens

Professor Naila Kabeer

(Departments of International Development and Gender Studies)

Lecture in memory of Professor Sylvia Chant organized by the
Departments of Geography/Environment and Gender Studies

Structure of lecture

- Remembering Sylvia (Hazel Johnstone, Diane Perrons, Sylvia and myself in Sylvia Chant's 'enchanted garden')
- Useful references and link to forthcoming special issue of Feminist Economics on Gender and COVID-19)
- **COVID-19 and the new fault-lines in the economy**
- Disrupted labour markets and livelihoods:
- Effects of lockdown
- Vulnerable workers
- **Co-operation and conflict in the domestic domain**
- Negotiations around care
- Stress and violence
- **Reflections on policy**
- Does gender of the leader matter
- Interrogating current responses
- Building back fairer



Some references

FEMINIST ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SPECIAL ISSUE OF FEMINIST ECONOMICS (IN PRESS) EDITORS: NAILA KABEER, SHAHRA RAZAVI AND YANA MEULEN RODGERS

OPEN ACCESS TILL JULY 2021 <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfec20/current>

UN Women (2015) Realizing Rights, Transforming Economies (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2015>)

Nancy Fraser (2014) Can society be commodities all the way down? Post-Polanyian reflections on capitalist crisis, *Economy and Society*, 43:4, 541-558

The Care Collective (2021) Care Manifesto (Verso Pamphlets Series) see <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4617-covid-19-pandemic-a-crisis-of-care> for blog

The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/17/magazine/waged-housework.html?referringSource=articleShare>)

For more resources:

(<https://www.genderandcovid-19.org>)

(<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/internationaldevelopment/2020/06/10/zooming-in-with-professor-naila-kabeer-social-protection-and-covid-19/>)

(<https://www.odi.org/60/global-reset-dialogue>)

COVID-19 and the new fault lines in the economy

- Essential workers who must continue working and non-essential workers who face lock-down and stay-at home orders
- Paid essential workers and unpaid and invisible essential workers
- Non-essential workers who can continue working from home and non-essential workers whose work has been halted
- Non-essential workers without work in countries where they can rely on some government support and non-essential workers without work in countries where they must fend for themselves

Building back fairer: recognizing labour, valuing labour

‘One day our society will come to respect the sanitation workers if it is to survive, for the first person who picks up our garbage is in the final analysis as significant as the physician, for if he does not do his job, diseases are rampant. All labour has dignity’
Martin Luther King Jr. (1968)

‘In one of the most famous sentences in the history of economic thought, [Adam Smith] wrote, “it is not from that the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from the regard to their self-interest”. Smith neglected to mention that none of these tradesmen actually puts dinner on the table; ignoring cooks, maids, wives, and mothers in one fell swoop” Nancy Folbre (2009).