

Gender and Economic History

The Story of a Complicated Marriage

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Abstract

This chapter explores the complicated marriage between economic history and history of women and gender – disciplines that have not optimally reaped the benefits of each other's results. This overview of developments in women's and gender history over the past century analyses the relationship and offers suggestions for intensifying it. Although international in outlook, the focus lies on Dutch historiography. Recently, Dutch economic and gender historians have contributed greatly to international debates on economic development since the Middle Ages, especially in Western Europe. In this chapter, it is proposed that studying historical economic development on a global scale from a gender perspective can benefit both economic and gender history. Although still relatively unexplored territory, many Dutch scholars are increasingly engaging in relevant research questions, hopefully providing the empirical foundations for long-term global socioeconomic histories that are gender sensitive.

Keywords: women's history, gender history, economic history, historiography

Man (M/F) seeks woman (M/F)

Contrary to what the title of this section may suggest, this is *not* an advert in a newspaper 'personals' column, but a genuine academic introduction. Why then, the serious economic historian might irritably wonder, such

¹ The author wishes to thank the editors of this volume, as well as Sheilagh Ogilvie, Anton Schuurman, Jenneke Quast and Corinne Boter, for their useful suggestions regarding earlier drafts of this chapter. Note that this is not intended as an exhaustive account of all the literature that has appeared in the field of gender and economic history. I have tried to select the publications that I believe are the most important for my argument, but I undoubtedly have my own biases and blind spots. In addition, this does not mean that I believe that any omitted work is unimportant. Moreover, the article focuses mainly on Anglo-Saxon and Dutch historiography.

banal references to relationships and marriage? This chapter argues that the relationship between economic history on the one hand, and the history of women and gender on the other, has resembled a complicated marriage over the past century. The allegory of a relationship can be made both literally and symbolically. Gender was introduced in the 1980s as an analytical category, not simply as a more neutral synonym for 'women', but – more importantly – to signify that we cannot know much about women (in history, for example) without also knowing about men, and vice versa. In addition, gender is used to 'designate social relations between the sexes',² and marriage remains a strong metaphor for the male-female relationship.

Moreover, one could argue that economic history is often implicitly viewed as a 'male' discipline: quantitative, social-scientific and engaging many renowned male scholars, whereas the history of women and gender tends to be viewed as 'female', being generally more qualitative, socio-culturally oriented and with many renowned female specialists.³ Nevertheless, to move away from simple binary stereotypes and to acknowledge that labels of 'male' and 'female' are to a large extent our own social constructs – think of renowned female economic historians such as Ivy Pinchbeck, Julia de Lacy Mann, Claudia Goldin, Jane Humphries and Wantje Fritschy⁴ – I use (M/F) affixes in the title. In addition, these serve to emphasise that the (recent) history of marriage offers alternatives to the traditional husband-wife conjunction.

In the sections that follow, I try to explain how and why this complex relationship came about and what may be the way forward in order to achieve a long-lasting and mutually productive liaison. By way of 'getting acquainted', the next section will give an overview of the field of women's and gender history as it has developed over the past century as a historical discipline *in general*, accordingly not necessarily connected to economic historiography. The subsequent section will focus on the relationship between the two fields, by exploring some spheres in which the history of women and gender on the one hand, and economic history on the other, have and have not benefited from each other. Although the scope of this historiographical overview aims to be international, special attention is

2 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A useful category of historical analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986) 1053-1075, 1056.

3 The table of contents and author list for this special issue may be indicative of the state-of-the-art in this respect with regard to Dutch economic history. For instance, it would be hard (though not impossible) to find a male expert on gender and economic history in the Netherlands.

4 For more on the history of (British) female economic historians, see Maxine Berg, 'The first women economic historians', *The Economic History Review* XLV 2 (1992) 308-329.

paid to Dutch contributions over the past decades and how these studies relate to international debates. Finally, I offer some suggestions as to how I believe the disciplines of economic history and the history of women and gender may benefit from each other in the future, in terms of concrete research questions and projects. In this way, I envisage to contribute to the hard work it takes to maintain an enduring love affair.

Making the acquaintance: a historiography of the history of women and gender

In her 1988 presidential address to the Social Science History Association, Louise Tilly considered 'all women's history [...] feminist and related to the feminist social movement, at least in its roots'.⁵ While I believe this statement is overly holistic, it is undeniable that women's history, and later gender history, was closely related to the First and Second Feminist Waves, in chronology, certainly, but often also in terms of content. Many women active in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British women's movement, such as Alice Clark, Barbara Drake and Sylvia Pankhurst, wrote pioneering historical studies of women's work and female activism.⁶ In the US, Mathilda Joslyn Gage was an influential feminist historian, who explored the influence of the Catholic Church on the negative stereotyping of women in European history. In the Netherlands, female activists such as Johanna Naber and Anna Polak wrote the first important works on the history of women's lives and work in the early twentieth century.⁷ Moreover, in 1935, together with Willemijn Posthumus-Van der Goot and Rosa Manus, Johanna Naber established the International Archives of the Women's Movement in Amsterdam, aiming to collect and preserve for future historians the heritage of women workers and activists from all over the world.⁸

5 Louise A. Tilly, 'Gender, women's history, and social history', *Social Science History* (SSH) 13:4 (1989) 439-462, 442.

6 Alice Clark, *Working life of women in the seventeenth century* (London 1919); Barbara Drake, *Women and trade unions* (London 1920); E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette movement* (London 1931).

7 Maria Grever, 'Het verborgen continent. Een historiografische verkenning van vrouwen-geschiedenis in Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 12:3 (1986) 221-268, 235-237.

8 Posthumus-van der Goot was the wife of N.W. Posthumus. *Biografisch Woordenboek van de Arbeidersbeweging*, <http://search.iisg.nl/search/search?action=transform&col=biographies&xsl=biographies-detail.xsl&lang=nl&docid=goot> (27 May 2013). See also Jan Lucassen's contribution to this special issue.

After a period of relative silence, a revival of interest in the history of women occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, coinciding with the Second Feminist Wave. The front runners were, among others, the American historians Louise Tilly, Joan Scott, Alice Kessler-Harris and Nathalie Zemon Davis. The important topics were the history of women's work and women's family roles, but also women in the public sphere.⁹ Nevertheless, the subject was not exclusively addressed by feminist historians; it also gained ground due to the rise of the new social history, which aimed to study the lives of 'ordinary people' – men, women and children – in the past. First, there was the neo-Marxist school that appealed to feminists' emancipatory aims. Both workers and women constituted 'forgotten groups' in the historiography and needed to be rehabilitated.¹⁰ Second, the fields of family history and historical demography emerged. Demographers such as Peter Laslett and Tony Wrigley at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, started large-scale historical reconstructions of household patterns in Western Europe.¹¹ Historians of Belgium, England and Germany developed the concept of proto-industrialisation, in which the work roles and income pooling of the entire household were taken as a starting point. The German theory of proto-industrialisation explicitly used the concept of '*das ganze Haus*' (the whole house).¹² Feminist historians were often somewhat suspicious of this latter strand of literature, because they regarded historical demographers as tending to neglect power relations between the sexes and claiming to provide unbiased statements about the social position of women.¹³

Women's history was closely related to, though never fully integrated with, women's studies. Women's studies (later termed gender studies) developed in the US and Britain during the 1970s in departments of anthropology and sociology. They aimed to study women in an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing from economics, law, history, and other social sciences. In the

9 For good historiographical overviews of the 1970s to early 1980s, see Olwen Hufton, 'Women in history. Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present* 101 (1983) 125-141 and Joan W. Scott, 'Women in history. The Modern Period', *Past and Present* 101 (1983) 141-157. For the Netherlands, see: Wantje Fritschy, *Fragmenten vrouwengeschiedenis* Vol. 1 & 2 (The Hague 1980).

10 In the Netherlands for instance: Joyce Outshoorn, *Vrouwenemancipatie en socialisme: Een onderzoek naar de houding van de SDAP ten opzichte van het vrouwenvraagstuk tussen 1894 en 1919* (Nijmegen 1973).

11 E.g. Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and family in past time* (Cambridge 1972).

12 See Ad Knotter, 'Problems of the family economy. Peasant economy, domestic production and labour markets in pre-industrial Europe', *Economic and Social History of the Netherlands* 4 (1994) 19-60, for a good historiographic overview on the concept of the 'family economy'.

13 Grever, 'Het verborgen continent', 242.

Netherlands also, a number of courses for women's studies were proposed, with a view to integrating them into academic programmes in the mid-1970s. At Leiden University, following the International Year of the Woman (1975), the secretary of state Jan Pronk established the first Department of Women's Studies.¹⁴

In the early 1980s, the concept of gender, which had been used for some years by (mostly American) scholars of women's studies, was also introduced into women's history. In a seminal article in 1986, Joan W. Scott proposed that gender – alongside class and race or ethnicity – should be used as an analytical category in history. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, gender is a *relational* category, which departs from the premise that men and women are, and have been throughout history, defined in terms of one another and that accordingly one cannot be studied without studying the relationship with the other.¹⁵ Thus, the term gender rejects fixed notions of 'men' and 'women', instead regarding masculinity and femininity as cultural constructions that are adjusted to what particular societies believe are appropriate roles for both men and women. According to Scott, using gender also had a strategic goal, in the sense that many women's historians wished to abandon a singular – and often very descriptive – focus on women in the past. In what might be termed the 'quest of feminist scholarship for academic legitimacy',¹⁶ gender historians attempted to make their discipline more analytical as well as more appealing to mainstream social and political history.

Ironically, at least in large parts of Europe and certainly in the Netherlands while perhaps less so in the US, the opposite seems to have happened. This might be related to the fact that the study of masculinity and femininity, with its focus on social construction, the body and sexuality, tends to be aligned with somewhat postmodern historiographical currents, often inspired by Foucault. Although cultural history, most notably in the US and France, was very much influenced by postmodernism, political, social and – as I will argue in the next section – economic history generally were not.

By the late 1980s, the history of women and of gender had become recognised historical fields. Many universities – particularly in the US, but also increasingly in Europe – had begun to offer relevant courses or specialisations, and some had even created departments of women's history

14 Gerdien Steenbeek, 'Gender in het curriculum: een geschiedenis van een noodzakelijke strijd', *De Ware Tijd, Genderoptiek*, 3, 2 oktober 2006 <http://www.lovanetwerk.nl/index.php/geschiedenis> (30 May 2013).

15 Scott, 'Gender', 1054.

16 *Ibidem*, 1056.

and/or gender history. The establishment of the history of women and gender as a separate field of interest can also be seen from the fact that in this period, several international peer-reviewed journals emerged around the field: the *Journal of Women's History* (spring 1989), followed shortly after by *Gender & History* (1989) and later the *Women's History Review* (1991).¹⁷ In the Netherlands, the annual *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* and the quarterly *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* (in 1998 changed into *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*) had already been in existence since 1980.

Nevertheless, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, women's and gender historians were debating seriously among themselves about the extent to which their field had 'arrived', in the sense that women and gender had become important topics for most historians. Gay Gullickson noted in 1989 that 'women's historians are like unexpected and un-invited guests. We have arrived, but we have been left to fend for ourselves, unfeted and unwelcome'.¹⁸ In the same issue of *Social Science History*, Judith Bennett warned that while 'overt institutional hostility [is], in most places, gone', women's history ran the danger of becoming divided by Joan Scott's advice to abandon the (in her view) descriptive social history approach and by requests from both Scott and Tilly for 'more analytical' histories of women.¹⁹ Bennett argued that such appeals for more analytical approaches ignored the fact that many studies in women's history were already both descriptive and explanatory. In her opinion, Scott's and Tilly's recommendations denied women's and gender historians the right to develop their own questions and historiography, forcing them to focus on mainstream questions that were often, according to Bennett, male centred.²⁰

I doubt whether such a debate on the integration of the history of women and gender into 'mainstream history' indicates the way forward. In practice, what has often happened is that many historians – both from inside and outside the discipline – have all too easily substituted 'gender' for 'women'. This has even led many gender historians to approach their historical subjects, men and women, as fixed binary categories: in the words of Jeanne Boydston, 'too often, we assume that whatever female people do

17 Earlier, there had been more general journals on women's and gender studies that also devoted much attention to the history of women, e.g. *Feminist Studies* (1972) and *Signs* (1975).

18 Gay Gullickson, 'Comment on Tilly: Women's history, social history, and deconstruction', *SSH* 13:4 (1989) 463-469, 464.

19 Judith M. Bennett, 'Comment on Tilly: Who asks the questions for women's history?' *SSH* 13:4 (1989) 471-477, 471-472.

20 Bennett, 'Comment on Tilly', 474.

is “femininity” and whatever male people do is “masculinity”.²¹ Gender history has continued to be a largely separate historical research field, with its own questions and historiography. This is in itself good and yields many interesting results, but it is not likely to change other historians’ way of thinking. I believe that it is not the *field* of gender history that ought to be integrated into other fields of history, but rather that the *approach* of gender analysis, in the sense of formulating research questions and hypotheses from a gender perspective, should be recognised as valuable in other fields of history.

All in all, since the early 1990s the generally postmodern twist to gender history has, to say the very least, not furthered the relationship with other historical disciplines – including economic history. It is fair to state that this separation has generally been reciprocal. In the early twenty-first century, numerous economic historians still quietly or openly ask the question ‘What difference does it make?’ judging the history of women and gender to be either too qualitative or too postmodern.²² Conversely, however, women’s and gender historians often regard economic historical topics as not relevant enough, as in recent years they have sought explanations rather in terms of culture and politics. The socio-economic approach has generally fallen out of fashion among gender historians since the 1990s. Although new and important topics have emerged, such as the history of non-white and migrant women, male and female sexuality and women’s role in imperial history, these studies have generally focused more on women’s familial, cultural and, to a lesser degree, political role than on their economic activities.²³ In addition, masculinity – gender not necessarily being restricted to women – is not a focus generally applied in economic history.

Economic history and gender: a laborious honeymoon?

The final part of the previous section serves to make a justified point, but obviously does not do justice to the many valuable studies of women’s

21 Jeanne Boydston, ‘Gender as a question of historical analysis’, *Gender & History* 20:3 (2008) 558–583, 559.

22 Tilly, ‘Gender’, 439.

23 See e.g. Kathleen Wilson, *The island race: Englishness, empire and gender in the eighteenth century* (London/New York 2002); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power. Race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley 2002); Martha S. Jones, *All bound up together: The woman question in African American public culture* (Chapel Hill 2007) and many others. Another important topic in gender history has been ‘masculinity’, which allows us to look at the role gender has played for men and masculinity throughout history.

historical economic contributions published over the past century. Nor does it capture the work of the – admittedly fewer – historians who did try to address questions in economic history using a gender perspective. This section provides an overview of what, in my opinion, have been the most important contributions over recent decades and the extent to which these found their way into economic historiography. I do not claim to provide an exhaustive account here, and of course one can always disagree about what is important. Moreover, while acknowledging that significant works have appeared in languages other than English and Dutch, for the purpose of this special issue I focus primarily on Anglo-Saxon and Dutch historiography. This section concentrates on three, partly overlapping themes of women and gender in economic history: gender and work, gender and economic development, and gender and capital.

Gender and work

Many of the first (often female) historians writing about women's role in economic history were engaged with issues of women, work and industrialisation. This is not particularly surprising, as the 'first generation' of women's historians, as mentioned above, was active in the women's and suffrage movement around the time of the First World War, connecting class issues with gender issues both in their lives as activists and as historians. In the UK, many of them, for example Alice Clark and Eileen Power, were also active members of the Fabian Women's Group that debated women's economic position in contemporary society. As historians, they were inevitably curious to find out about the background of this position.²⁴ In British academia, the London School of Economics (LSE) played a pivotal role in the careers of women economists and economic historians. Whereas there were few female students and staff in Oxford and Cambridge universities and their numbers grew slowly,²⁵ the LSE attracted female students soon after its establishment in 1895. The first women obtained degrees in economics at the LSE in 1903. In addition, of the 200 faculty members working there between 1895 and 1932, more than 20 per cent (43) were women.²⁶

Another stimulus for the first women economic historians was the Economic History Society, of which Eileen Power and Ivy Pinchbeck, for example, were active members. Power was a medievalist, not restricting herself to women's history, but paying attention to the position of and ideas

24 Berg, 'The first women economic historians', 310-313.

25 Women could only get a degree in Oxford after 1920, in Cambridge after 1923, and in Cambridge could not become full members of the university before 1948.

26 Berg, 'The first women economic historians', 317-318.

about women in the Middle Ages.²⁷ Clark and Pinchbeck were far more exclusively focused on women's economic position and the role of industrialisation. Clark contended that whereas the economic role of women in the *pre-industrial* family economy had been important because work was often performed in the home, industrialisation and the separation of work and the household had worsened women's economic position and confined them to the domestic sphere.²⁸ A few decades later, however, Pinchbeck concluded that while industrialisation had indeed affected women's economic opportunities negatively, in the end it had mostly worked as a catalyst for female emancipation.²⁹ Whereas later generations of women's and gender historians gratefully refer to these classic works, economic historians in general seem to have largely forgotten about them.³⁰

In the US, the American Historical Association, founded in 1884, was explicitly inclusive towards women historians. While women frequently experienced discrimination and sometimes even outright exclusion in their professional lives, some of them, for example Lucy Salmon, gained professional prominence during their lifetimes and helped promote women's interests in academia. Salmon had also written one of her first treatises (1897) on women's work, specifically on domestic service, which she believed to be an economic as well as a political phenomenon.³¹ Another excellent example is Elizabeth A. Dexter, who in 1924 published her book *Colonial Women of Affairs: A Study of Women in Business and the Professions in America before 1776*. In this study, Dexter concluded that women had played a much larger public and economic role than historians had previously thought. She did not attribute this to extraordinary American feminine freedoms. Instead, the pioneer conditions in American society at large had stimulated (and expected) women as well as men to provide their share of services, both to the household and to the wider community.³²

In the Netherlands, the previously mentioned historians such as Naber and Posthumus-van der Goot published works on the economic role and

27 E.g. Eileen Power, 'Medieval ideas about women', *Cambridge Magazine*, 2 November 1918; Eileen Power, 'The position of women', in C.G. Crump and E.F. Jacobs (eds.), *The legacy of the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1926) 401-433; Eileen Power, *The wool trade in English Medieval history* (Oxford 1941).

28 Clark, *The working life of women*.

29 Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (London 1930).

30 Berg, 'The first women economic historians', 308.

31 Joan W. Scott, 'American women historians, 1884-1984', in: idem, *Gender and the politics of history* (New York 1988) 189, 227. Lucy Maynard Salmon, *Domestic service* (New York 1897).

32 Louise Kellogg, Review of *Colonial women of affair*, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 11:3 (1924) 438-440.

position of women in contemporary times as well as in history. In 1913, in the wake of the exhibition on 'The Dutch Woman (1813-1913)', a lavish edited volume appeared on the lives and work of Dutch women in the Netherlands and its colonies in the previous century. Contributors included, among others, Johanna Naber and the women's activist Jeltje de Bosch-Kemper.³³ In 1928, Anna Polak wrote a historical account of Dutch women's labour after the late nineteenth century, while some of her colleagues went back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition, works on Dutch women's role in agriculture appeared, notably by Clazine Regtdoorzee Greup-Roldanus and Wietsche Nelly Schilstra. Nevertheless, as Maria Grever argued in 1986, their work remained unknown by the larger historical readership, thus suffering a similar fate to that of, for instance, Alice Clark in Britain.³⁴

From the 1930s to the 1960s, relatively few works appeared in the Netherlands on women's economic role in history. This changed with the upsurge of second-wave feminism and the new social history, including demographic and family history, during the 1960s. Moreover, development economists as well as anthropologists and sociologists in this period became increasingly interested in the role of women in developing countries, often focusing on women's activities in subsistence and market work.³⁵

In 1968, the French sociologist Evelyne Sullerot published *Histoire et sociologie du travail féminin* (*History and sociology of women's work*), in which she used longitudinal statistical analysis to show how women's work in Europe had changed over the preceding decades, in the sense that wage work had tremendously expanded. Nevertheless, labour market segmentation continued to exist, as women's work was predominantly concentrated in services and the public sector. Sullerot argued that men's fear of women in the labour market resulted in a lower evaluation of women's economic contributions and that it underpinned this dual labour market.³⁶ Other, more historically oriented scholars claimed that women's work had been important since prehistoric times, but that patriarchy had prevented women

33 A. van Hogendorp et al., *Van Vrouwenleven, 1813-1913. Ontwikkelingsgang van het leven en werken der vrouw in Nederland en de koloniën* (Groningen 1913).

34 Grever, 'Het verborgen continent', 235-236, 254. It must be stressed, however, that J.L. van Zanden did use Schilstra's dissertation for his study of the economic development of nineteenth-century Dutch agriculture, so Grever perhaps overstates her claim. Jan Luiten van Zanden, *De economische ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse landbouw in de negentiende eeuw, 1800-1914* (Wageningen 1985) 68-76, 114.

35 See the next subsection.

36 Evelyne Sullerot, *Histoire et sociologie du travail féminin* (Paris 1968).

from entering into most of the higher-skilled occupations, thus leading to occupational crowding and labour market segregation.³⁷

Another influential work, which appeared the late 1970s, was the study *Women, work and family* by Louise Tilly and Joan Scott. In this book, Tilly and Scott tried to capture the substantial changes that had taken place in Western women's economic roles. Along the lines of Clark, they assessed women's work as having been very important in the pre-industrial *family economy*, a period when much of the production had taken place in the home. This radically changed when industrial capitalist production relations appeared from the late eighteenth century onwards. A *family wage economy* emerged, in which large numbers of men, women and children started working in factories independently from each other, each bringing in their own wages. For married women, this separation of household and (wage) labour also meant an increasing withdrawal from the labour market. In the early twentieth century, this family model again changed. A *family consumer economy* emerged, in which the wife generally adhered to her role as manager of the household, children went to school and the husband brought in the breadwinner wage.³⁸ Although there has been plentiful criticism of Tilly and Scott's work – for instance because it oversimplified the history of women's work, it equated 'women' with 'family' and was too focused on particular regions in the West³⁹ – it had a great impact and was quoted frequently in much subsequent historical work.

Many interesting case studies of women's work and industrialisation appeared during this period.⁴⁰ Some of these, for example Goldin and

37 Heidi Hartmann, 'Capitalism, patriarchy, and job segregation by sex', *Signs*, 1 (1976) 137-169; Merry E. Wiesner, 'Spinsters and seamstresses: Women in cloth and clothing production', in: M.W. Ferguson, M. Quilligan, and N.J. Vickers (eds.), *Rewriting the Renaissance: The discourses of sexual difference on Early Modern Europe* (Chicago 1986) 191-205. For an overview of the debate on segmented labour markets, see: Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Segmentation in the pre-industrial labour market: Women's Work in the Dutch textile industry, 1581-1810', *International Review of Social History (IRSH)* 51:2 (2006) 189-216.

38 Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, work and family* (2nd ed. New York/London 1987 [first edition New York 1978]) 12, 60, 104, 144-145.

39 E.g. Patricia Hilden, 'Family history vs. history of women: A critique of Tilly and Scott', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 27 (Spring 1985) 30-34; Knotter, 'Problems of the family economy'.

40 For the United States e.g.: Thomas Dublin, *Women at work: The transformation of work and community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York 1979); Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to work: A history of wage-earning women in the United States* (New York 1982); For Europe e.g.: Theresa McBride, *The domestic revolution: The modernization of household service in England and France, 1820-1920* (New York 1976); Patricia Branca, *Women in Europe since 1750* (London 1978); Pat Hudson and W.R. Lee, *Women's work and the family economy in historical perspective* (Manchester 1990).

Sokoloff's article on industrialisation in the American Northeast, stressed that particularly during early industrialisation the demand for female wage labour rose. This could be explained by a number of factors, but most decisive was that technological change and the increasing scale of production, with an increasing division of labour, led to a greater demand for unskilled workers, notably women and children.⁴¹ When relative wages for women started to rise after the 1840s, their participation rates again declined, pointing to the validity of the demand-driven explanation. In 1995, Horrell and Humphries, studying a large sample of local household budgets, came to similar conclusions regarding industrialising England.⁴² Dutch studies on women's work in the period of industrialisation have mainly focused on the question of why women in the Netherlands had so much lower participation rates than in other Western nations.⁴³ In 1993, the economist Hettie Pott-Buter specifically attributed the particularly low labour market participation in the nineteenth century to the relatively early trickling down of the ideal of domesticity to labouring households in the prosperous seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.⁴⁴

In addition to studies relating to women and industrialisation, a renewed interest in women's role in the pre-industrial European economy has occurred since the 1980s. Important studies have been published on France,⁴⁵ Germany,⁴⁶ and of course England.⁴⁷ Women's economic activities in 'the

41 Claudia Goldin and Kenneth Sokoloff, 'Women, children and industrialization in the early Republic: Evidence from the manufacturing censuses', *Journal of Economic History* 42:4 (1982) 741-774, 757.

42 Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries, 'Women's labour force participation and the transition to the male-breadwinner family, 1790-1865', *EHR* XLVIII (1995) 89-117, 113.

43 Francisca de Haan, *Sekse op kantoor: over vrouwelijkheid, mannelijkheid en macht, Nederland 1860-1940* (Hilversum 1992); Hettie Pott-Buter, *Facts and fairy tales about female labor, family and fertility* (Amsterdam 1993); Janneke Plantenga, *Een afwijkend patroon: honderd jaar vrouwenarbeid in Nederland en West-Duitsland* (Amsterdam 1993); Bertheke Waaldijk and Maria Grever, *Feministische openbaarheid. Nationale Tentoonstelling van Vrouwenarbeid in 1898* (Amsterdam 1998).

44 Pott-Buter, *Facts and Fairy Tales*, 48.

45 An early and seminal article is: Olwen Hufton, 'Women and the family economy in eighteenth-century France', *French Historical Studies* 9:1 (1975) 1-22. See also the work by Crowston, e.g. Clare Crowston, *Fabricating women: The seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675-1791* (Durham 2001).

46 Heide Wunder and Christina Vanja (eds.), *Weiber, Menscher, Frauenzimmer. Frauen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft. 1500 - 1800* (Göttingen 1996); Sheilagh Ogilvie, *A bitter living. Women, markets, and social capital in Early-Modern Germany* (Cambridge 2003).

47 E.g. Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge 1981); Bridget Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics in eighteenth century England* (Oxford, 1989); Penelope Lane, Neill Raven and Keith Snell, *Women, work and wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge

first modern economy', the Dutch Republic, have also not gone unnoticed. For example, Jenneke Quast described the role of early modern Dutch women in urban areas, most notably in guilds. Els Kloek scrutinised the Leiden textile industry, and concluded that a pronounced gendered division of labour had come into existence in the sixteenth century, in which women were mostly confined to the less skilled and badly remunerated processes of textile production. Further, Lotte van de Pol studied a more contested form of women's work; prostitution in Amsterdam, where the metropolis attracted many immigrant women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Prostitution formed one of the many strategies for (often young) women to gain an income in what was probably the most urbanised region at the time.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding these studies, in their classic economic history of the early modern Northern Netherlands (published in Dutch in 1995 and in English in 1997), Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude did not include an analysis of women's (or children's) work in their chapter on the labour market. They stated that it would have been impossible to make a serious analysis of women's participation in the Dutch labour market, because the sources were inadequate for a quantitative approach. Therefore, in their book they tended to describe women's work as a social phenomenon rather than as an activity of economic importance.⁴⁹

De Vries and Van der Woude's approach seems quite remarkable, because at practically the same time, De Vries developed the 'industrious revolution' thesis, in which women's and children's work – at least in theory – play an important role. According to De Vries, between around 1650 and around 1850, labouring households became more hard working: not out of necessity, but because of their changing consumption desires. The reallocation of the available time of all household members was crucial to this growing industriousness. Male workers shifted from leisure to more work, and women and children increasingly became involved in market activities. Particularly in the Dutch Republic, with its highly developed economy

2004); Amy Erickson, 'Married women's occupations in eighteenth-century London', *Continuity & Change* 23:2 (2008) 267-307.

48 See e.g. Jenneke Quast, 'Vrouwenarbeid omstreeks 1500 in enkele Nederlandse steden', in: *Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis* 1 (1980) 46-64; Els Kloek, 'De arbeidsdeling naar sekse in de oude draperie', in: J. Moes and B. de Vries (eds.), *Stof uit het Leidse verleden. Zeven eeuwen textielnijverheid* (Utrecht 1991) 67-76; Lotte van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams hoerdom. Prostitutie in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 1996).

49 J. de Vries and A. van der Woude, *Nederland 1500-1815. De eerste ronde van moderne economische groei* (Amsterdam 1995) 689-690.

and already a large percentage of the population working for wages in the seventeenth century, this industriousness would have been pronounced.⁵⁰

While De Vries's work is very important in acknowledging the role of the household as the crucial unit for economic analysis of production as well as consumption, his theory pays little attention to the *restrictions* and power relations that households – and especially women and children in these units – faced. De Vries in principle presupposed equality and almost unlimited free choice, whereas many social actors and groups did not enjoy full access to all consumer goods, new or old. Further, conflicting interests and unequal access to resources for different sexes and generations often occurred within the family. This is where the application of a gender perspective may be very informative.⁵¹ Moreover, recent years have seen the publication of studies that provide an increasing amount of empirical data on women's work relative to men's in the early modern Dutch labour market, most notably related to the project 'Women's Work in the Early Modern Netherlands', conducted at the International Institute of Social History from 2002 to 2009.⁵²

These studies have shown that, corresponding with the contemporary observations of foreigners travelling to the Dutch Republic, women in the Northern Netherlands were remarkably economically active in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. High urbanisation rates and the early-capitalist structure of the Dutch economy, with a large share of wage labour and a pivotal role in world trade, opened up opportunities for women in industry, commerce and (domestic) service.⁵³ The evidence

50 Jan de Vries, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution', *Journal of Economic History* 54 (1994) 249-270.

51 See for a good example of such a perspective: Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Consumption, social capital, and the "Industrious Revolution" in Early Modern Germany', *The Journal of Economic History*, 70:2 (2010) 287-325.

52 E.g. Ariadne Schmidt, 'Vrouwenarbeid in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2:3 (2005) 2-21; Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Segmentation'; Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, *De draad in eigen handen: Vrouwen en loonarbeid in de Nederlandse textielnijverheid, 1581-1810* (Amsterdam 2007); Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and entrepreneurship: Female traders in the Northern Netherlands c. 1580-1815* (Amsterdam 2007); Ariadne Schmidt, 'Women and guilds: Corporations and female labour market participation in Early Modern Holland', *Gender & History* 21:1 (2009) 170-89; Manon van der Heijden and Ariadne Schmidt, 'Public services and women's work in Early Modern Dutch towns', *Journal of Urban History* 36:3 (2010) 368-85; Ariadne Schmidt and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Reconsidering the "First male-breadwinner economy": Women's labor force participation in the Netherlands, 1600-1900', *Feminist Economics* 18:4 (2012) 69-96.

53 Van Nederveen Meerkerk, *De draad in eigen handen*; Van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship*; Ariadne Schmidt, 'Managing a large household. The gender division of work in orphanages in Dutch towns in the Early Modern Period, 1580-1800', *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly* 13 (2008) 42-57.

of the widespread presence of women of all social classes and all marital statuses in the Dutch labour market, revived the debate on the supposed 'return to patriarchy' that many historians have suggested took place after the Reformation.⁵⁴ Another, perhaps more important, issue that has been shown in a different light because of these new results, was the supposed early withdrawal of Dutch women from the labour market. Apparently, their participation rates were not lower and perhaps even higher than in many other West-European countries until the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ This finding calls for new explanations for the rapid decline of women's labour market participation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which may partly be found in the fact that in this period the Dutch economy became increasingly dependent on its overseas colonies.⁵⁶

Apart from the unbalanced attention to women's labour market participation, recent research on historical wages and living standards has also tended to overlook women's contributions to the (family) economy. Robert Allen, for example, based his calculations of pre-industrial family income on the earnings of the male household head, while he derived the costs of his consumption basket from the needs of an entire (nuclear) family.⁵⁷ However, such constructions of longitudinal wage series suffer from a severe methodological flaw: the presupposition that the male breadwinner model was already prevalent at the time.⁵⁸ Recently, Jane Humphries has criticised Allen's methodology on several accounts. Most importantly, Humphries questioned certain of Allen's underlying assumptions in terms of women's and children's calorie intake, average household size and the male breadwinner income.⁵⁹ In a recent article, Eric Schneider also pointed

54 Manon van der Heijden, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Ariadne Schmidt, 'Terugkeer van het patriarchaat? Vrije vrouwen in de Republiek', *TSEG* 6:3 (2009) 26-52. See the debate about this position between these authors and Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden in *TSEG* 9:1 (2012) 61-72.

55 Schmidt and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Reconsidering'.

56 Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Industriousness in an imperial economy. Delineating new research on colonial connections and household labour relations in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies', *Workers of the World* 1:3 (2013) 102-117.

57 Robert Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in global perspective* (Cambridge 2009) 38.

58 See e.g. Angélique Janssens (ed.), *The rise and decline of the male breadwinner family? Studies in gendered patterns of labour division and household organisation* (Cambridge 1998).

59 Jane Humphries, 'The lure of aggregates and the pitfalls of the patriarchal perspective: a critique of the high wage economy interpretation of the British Industrial Revolution', *EHR* 66:3 (2013) 693-714.

to the importance of adding the earnings of women and children to the household income, but postponed this for future research.⁶⁰

It should be clear by now that over the past three decades, many useful historical studies have appeared on women's work and the role played by gender in the labour market. It can no longer be claimed, as economic historians have done, that there are no data or methodologies for longitudinal and quantitative analysis. Nevertheless, economic historians and historians of women and gender still seem to be on different sides of the fence much of the time. With some notable exceptions, economic historians and economists adopt seemingly neutral, yet male-centred assumptions about the operation of the labour market, whereas many historians of women and gender choose not to relate their interesting findings to wider economic theories, debates and research questions.

Gender and economic development

In her renowned study *Women's Role in Economic Development*, the Danish economist Ester Boserup was the first systematically to address the role of gender and economic development in a global perspective. Her study included extensive literature research and fieldwork from many parts of the world, including Asia, Africa and Latin America. Boserup came to two substantive conclusions. First, modernisation, largely imposed by European colonising powers, was normally geared towards men, who therefore tended to dominate modern sectors of developing economies. However, in many traditional societies such as sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, women played important and even dominant roles in agriculture and handicrafts. Modernisation in these societies thus often resulted in a sharp decrease in the importance of female activities, which were confined largely to the traditional sector. Subsequently the process of economic development widened rather than narrowed the gap between male and female in terms of productivity, work opportunities and incomes. Second, Boserup argued that increasing migration to cities in developing countries hampered women in securing employment. Social values, family duties and lack of vocational training partly explained their difficulties, but the main reason according to Boserup was men's anxiety that women would deprive them of positions in urban labour markets that were already under pressure. This further devalued women's work and caused their crowding into activities such as

60 Eric Schneider, 'Real wages and the family: Adjusting real wages to changing demography in Pre-modern England', *Explorations in Economic History* 50:1 (2013) 99-115.

peddling and other 'informal' work. The solution Boserup proposed was to increase women's education levels in the less-developed world.⁶¹

The economic historian and labour economist Claudia Goldin has, since the 1980s, sought to evaluate the quantitative relationship between women's economic activities and economic development. Using both cross-sectional analysis across many economies in the 1980s and longitudinal analysis for the US, Goldin concluded that there was a U-shaped relationship between female labour force participation and economic development. Women's (recorded) labour force participation – while undeniably varying over time, region and developmental stage – displayed quite a strong relationship with the stage of economic development. In pre-industrial societies, Goldin argues, participation was generally high, most often in (frequently unpaid) subsistence agriculture. In economies moving towards a more developed stage, female labour force participation tended to decline, often in the context of increasing male wages in a segmented labour market in which high-status jobs were ones for which women's education was generally insufficient. In developed post-industrial societies, in which women's human capital formation generally increased, the participation of women again increased markedly.⁶² To date, Goldin's model largely seems to be confirmed – or at least not refuted – by subsequent studies of female labour force participation.⁶³

In both Boserup's and Goldin's work, education, or human capital formation, is viewed as the key to improvement both in the position of women and to the development of the economy. However, access to education and the labour market are of course only specific aspects of human well-being. In his lifelong study of inequality and economic development, Amartya Sen argued that economists and policy-makers should be concerned with people's *capabilities* rather than solely their resources or their level of welfare. Sen proposed that some types of inequalities have not yet been studied as systematically as have inequalities in class and wealth. One of these important under-studied issues, Sen argued, is gender inequality.⁶⁴

Compared with social scientists, economic historians have not yet been eager to take up the issue of 'capabilities' and 'agency' in relation to gender

61 Ester Boserup, *Women's role in economic development* (London 1970).

62 Claudia Goldin, 'The U-shaped Female Labor force function in economic development and economic history', *NBER Working Paper Series*, no. 4707 (online access: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w4707>) (4 June 2013) 8-10.

63 Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasua, 'Off the record: Reconstructing women's labor force participation in the European past', *Feminist Economics* 18:4 (2012) 39-67, 44.

64 E.g. Amartya Sen, *Inequality reexamined* (Broadbridge 1995).

and historical economic development. Nevertheless, some interesting projects on this subject have recently been started, most notably by Dutch scholars, studying for example marriage patterns and gendered patterns of human capital formation. This has led some historians to link pre-industrial economic development to, for example, the literacy and numeracy rates of men *and* women.⁶⁵ Many of these recent studies depart from the idea that also in the more distant past, women's agency may have been pivotal to economic development in Western Europe. The European Marriage Pattern (EMP) – in which women and men marry relatively late – and the nuclear family were prevalent, implying that young people in Northwest Europe worked (for wages) for a period of time to save for their (often neolocal) marriage. This crucially influenced medieval and early modern commercialisation and economic development more in general, most notably in the regions surrounding the North Sea.⁶⁶ As this head start for the Western economy was so important for future developments, these first results call for comparisons between the EMP and marriage patterns in other parts of the world.⁶⁷

In addition to labour markets and demographic factors, the role of consumption was important in economic development throughout history. From the 1990s onwards, this topic has been increasingly studied by economic historians, but also by social and cultural historians. These studies have not always paid much attention to the role of gender in consumption and material culture. The impressive, more than 550-page volume

65 Margaret Spufford, 'Literacy, trade and religion in the commercial centres of Europe', in: Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds.), *A miracle mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European perspective* (Cambridge 1995) 229-283, 260. Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Every woman counts": A gender-analysis of numeracy in the Low Countries during the Early Modern Period', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41:2 (2010) 179-208.

66 Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, *Vrouwen en de geboorte van het kapitalisme in West-Europa* (Amsterdam 2006). Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'Girlpower. The European Marriage Pattern (EMP) and labour markets in the North Sea region in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period', *The Economic History Review* 63:1 (2010) 1-33, 27. For a recent critical assessment of the link between the EMP and economic growth see: Tracy Dennison and Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Does the European Marriage Pattern explain economic growth?' CESIFO WORKING PAPER NO. 4244 (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2274606) (28 January 2014).

67 E.g. the NWO-funded *Agency, gender, and economic development in the world economy 1850-2000*, led by Jan Kok and Jan Luiten van Zanden http://www.collective-action.info/Aff-Proj_AgencyGenderEconomicDevelopment (28 January 2014). Specific parts of the ERC-funded project "United we stand". *The dynamics and consequences of institutions for collective action in pre-industrial Europe*, led by Tine De Moor, are also concerned with economic development related to women's agency in the past http://www.collective-action.info/projects_ERCGrant (28 January 2014).

Consumption and the World of Goods only makes 20 references to 'gender', 25 per cent of which are found in the footnotes and index. Some of the authors use the word because they mean to say 'sex', while other contributors state that gender analysis is desirable, but not (yet) possible.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, more recent work has shown that men and women indeed displayed different roles as consumers and that women – who are known to have often managed the family budget – may have even been more decisive in affecting both daily and luxury consumption patterns than men.⁶⁹

Gender and capital

While the term 'capital' immediately brings to mind Karl Marx, in fact he wrote little about women, and when he did, only as subjects of working-class oppression. Marx supposed that the proletarian family was destroyed by exploitative industrial capitalists, leaving working-class women too little time to devote to their household and nurturing duties. Friedrich Engels paid somewhat greater attention to women's role in the industrial revolution, stating that their position in the family deteriorated because of the increasing separation of public and private spheres, giving working-class women a lower status than before, not only in society but also inside the family. However, such references to 'golden ages' for women in the past have been heavily criticised by feminist historians, who argue that women's position had always been inferior.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, capitalism was not supported only by men. In relation to *physical* capital, recent research has shown that women may have played a much larger role in financing and investment than previously thought. Especially in regions with developed capital markets, such as the early modern Dutch Republic and industrialising England, the proportion of women investors was considerable, regardless of whether they acted within

68 Digital analysis of John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the world of goods* (London 1993).

69 See e.g. Maxine Berg, 'Women's consumption and the industrial classes of eighteenth-century England', *Journal of Social History* 30:2 (1996) 415-434; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution. Consumer demand and the household economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge 2008) 47-48; 141-143. See also the five-year ESRC research project at Cambridge University, 'Human well-being and the "Industrious Revolution": Consumption, gender and social capital in a German developing economy, 1600-1900' http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/Ogilvie_ESRC/index.html (28 January 2014).

70 See footnote 36 and e.g. Martha Gimenez, 'Marxist and non-Marxist elements in Engels' Views on the oppression of women,' in: Janet Sayers, M. Evans, and N. Redclift (eds.) *Engels revisited. New feminist essays* (London 1987) 37-56.

the context of the family business or on their own behalf.⁷¹ Nevertheless, in 2006 Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutherford concluded that despite the growing body of literature on the history of investment, ‘the role played by women as investors has been almost wholly ignored’.⁷² Their analysis of gender differences in investment behaviour suggests that women typically displayed a more conservative attitude to risk, held investments for longer terms and were excluded from networks that exchanged advice and opinions. This calls for further investigation into this relatively important and distinct group of investors and their more general function in companies’ financial strategies.⁷³

With regard to the generally acknowledged role of women in (micro) finance and business relating to economic development in the Global South,⁷⁴ researching these topics in a historical perspective seems worthwhile. In recent years, many social scientists have seen microcredit as a rewarding strategy in the redistribution of wealth and power, offering women economic leeway for their own businesses and thus narrowing the gap between the sexes. Moreover, women are seen as more inclined to redistributing economic means fairly among different members of their family than are men.⁷⁵ However, feminist scholars have recently started to criticise this rosy picture of the influence of microcredit on women’s economic position. They suggest that providing women with microcredit is only a neo-liberal strategy of ‘new imperialism’, imposed on the weakest elements in developing countries: women. Instead of liberating them,

71 Northern Netherlands: Van den Heuvel, *Women and entrepreneurship*; Van der Heijden, Van Nederveen Meerkerk and Schmidt, ‘Terugkeer van het patriarcfaat? Vrije vrouwen in de Republiek’, esp. 47-49; Jan Luiten van Zanden, Jaco Zuijderduijn and Tine de Moor, ‘Small is beautiful: The efficiency of credit markets in the [sic] late Medieval Holland’, *European Review of Economic History* 16 (2012) 3-22. England: Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family fortunes. Men and women of the English middle class, 1750-1850* (London 1987); David Green and Alastair Owens, ‘Gentlewomanly capitalism: Widows and wealth-holding in England and Wales c. 1800-1960’, *EHR* 56:3 (2003) 510-536.

72 Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutherford, ‘“She possessed her own fortune”: Women investors from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century’, *Business History* 48:2 (2006) 220-253, 220.

73 Maltby and Rutherford, ‘She possessed her own fortune’, 246. In 2000, Francisca de Haan also pleaded for more extensive research on the role of gender in business history. See Francisca de Haan, ‘“Homo economicus” of pater familias? Een pleidooi voor meer cultuur in de bedrijfsgeschiedenis’, *NEHA-Bulletin voor de economische geschiedenis in Nederland* 14:2 (2000) 276-283.

74 See e.g. World Bank, *World Development Report 2012: Gender equality and development* (2012) 6.

75 See e.g. Muhammad Yunus, *Nobel Prize Lecture* (2006) http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2006/yunus-lecture-en.html (28 January 2014); Robert B. Potter et al., *Geographies of development. An introduction to development studies* (Harlow 2008) 203.

microcredit only burdens the women even more, or as one scholar expressed it: 'credit is debt by another name'.⁷⁶ In order to define in what specific socioeconomic and cultural contexts the specific role of gender in finance did and did not have beneficial effects for women and economic development, we may want to look to the past.

While I have already briefly described the relationship between gender and *human* capital above, another form of capital needs to be discussed here: *social* capital. Social capital refers to a store of shared information, norms and sanctions, created by closely-knit social networks. It is regarded by some social scientists, historians and policy makers as being favourable to economic growth. However, as Sheilagh Ogilvie has argued, historical analysis shows that building social-capital also tends to induce the exclusion of particular groups, most notably women. The gendered nature of these forms of social capital formation may, Ogilvie suggested, have restricted rather than stimulated economic development.⁷⁷ While Ogilvie's stance with regard to specific social networks such as guilds has been vigorously debated by other economic historians,⁷⁸ the wider effects of women's exclusion from participating in many economic institutions still remain highly unclear, which in itself justifies further investigation.⁷⁹

Where do we go from here? Towards a sustained relationship

This article has shown that over the past century, the history of women and gender has been a lively field of study, including women and gender in economic history. Nevertheless, many women and gender historians have complained that women and gender have largely been overlooked by mainstream historians, including economic historians. I have argued here that this has in fact been out of *mutual* discomfort. Not only have many

76 Christine Keating, Claire Rasmussen and Pooja Rishi, 'The rationality of empowerment: Microcredit, accumulation by dispossession, and the gendered economy', *Signs* 36:1 (2010) 153-176.

77 E.g. Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'How does social capital affect women? Guilds and communities in Early Modern Germany', *AHR* 109:2 (2004) 325-359. Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Whatever is right is right? Economic institutions in pre-industrial Europe', *EHR* 60:4 (2007) 649-684, 670-673.

78 See e.g. S.R. Epstein, 'Craft guilds in the pre-modern economy: a discussion', *EHR* 61:1 (2008) 155-174.

79 In their introduction to a special issue on guilds, for instance, the authors do note that guilds all over the world generally formally excluded women, but the economic impact of this exclusion is not systematically addressed. Jan Lucassen, Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'The return of the guilds: Towards a global history of the guilds in pre-industrial times', *IRSH* 53 Supplement (2008) 5-18.

economic historians neglected the topic of gender, but in their turn many gender historians have not addressed topics and questions aligned with important issues in the history of economic development.

Why should the partners even want to have a relationship? First, because women – constituting over 50 per cent of the historical world population – have indeed had an impact on economic development, albeit often in different ways than men. Second, because economic development has at times had a completely different impact on women's lives than on men's, although usually in close relation to each other. Thus, for instance, if we want to understand how and why economic development has occurred in the past and how it has differed across societies, we should include in the equation not only men's, but also women's economic contributions, the latter often in terms of unpaid value added. This will help further the debate on the Great Divergence, in making much clearer what the actual labour productivity was in different parts of the world.⁸⁰ On the other hand, including economic indicators in gender history may help explain better how and why women and men have had such different experiences, for instance resulting from the globalisation process.⁸¹

Accordingly, covering worldwide historical economic development by integrating a gender perspective can benefit both economic and gender history. For example, we can think of long-term series of family income on a global scale, gendered differences in human capital formation, or the impact of household formation on economic development.⁸² We can ask to what extent colonialism had an impact on the livelihoods of households, in the colonised regions as well as in the metropolises.⁸³ I am fully aware that this chapter still provides a very Western-centred historiographical

80 Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence: China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy* (Princeton 2000). See for a nice recent attempt at including women's earnings in both East and West: R.C. Allen, J.-P. Bassino, D. Ma, C. Moll-Murata and J.L. van Zanden (2011), 'Wages, prices, and living standards in China, 1738-1925: In Comparison with Europe, Japan, and India', *EHR* 64 (2011) 8-38.

81 See e.g.: Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Lex Heerma van Voss and Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, 'Covering the world: Some conclusions to the project', in: idem, *The Ashgate companion to the history of textile workers, 1650-2000* (Aldershot 2010) 773-792, 780-781, 785-786.

82 For nice examples of recent research on this latter topic, see the special issue of *The History of the Family*: Sarah Carmichael, Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden (eds.), 'Marriage patterns, household formation and economic development', *History of the Family* 16:4 (2011).

83 See my own recently started NWO-funded research project *Industriousness in an imperial economy. Interactions of households' work patterns, time allocation and consumption in the Netherlands and the Netherlands-Indies, 1815-1940* <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Rural-and-Environmental-History-Group/Research/Industriousness-in-an-imperial-economy-1.htm> (7 June 2013).

overview that is by no means fully global. First and foremost, this is because the majority of studies of women's historical economic role over the past century have both regarded and been carried out in the Western world. Fortunately, studies of the history of women in non-Western countries are on the rise.⁸⁴

As I hope to have shown above, Dutch scholars are also engaging increasingly in this line of research. Results from finished projects as well as new research projects recently started on marriage and household labour relations for example, include women (and children). Over the last decade, these results have already contributed greatly to international debates on economic development since the Middle Ages. Hopefully, in a few years' time new research will continue to provide sufficient empirical material to enable both qualitative and quantitative analyses allowing for long-term comparative studies that are gender sensitive.⁸⁵ May the marriage be long, happy and fertile.

About the author

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84 Some recent examples are: Peter Alexander, 'Women and coal mining in India and South Africa, c. 1900-1940', *African Studies* 66:2-3 (2007) 201-222; Marjorie K. Mackintosh, *Yoruba women, work, and social change* (Bloomington 2009); Jacob Eyferth, 'Women's work and the politics of homespun in socialist China, 1949-1980', *IRSH* 57:3 (2012) 365-391.

85 For instance, in the context of the Clío-infra project. See: <http://www.clío-infra.eu/> (7 June 2013).

