

Sara Cantillon  
Odile Mackett  
Sara Stevano



# Feminist Political Economy

## A Global Perspective



Pluralist Economics  
Certificate Project





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The course is based on the book by

Sara Cantillon, Glasgow Caledonian  
University, UK

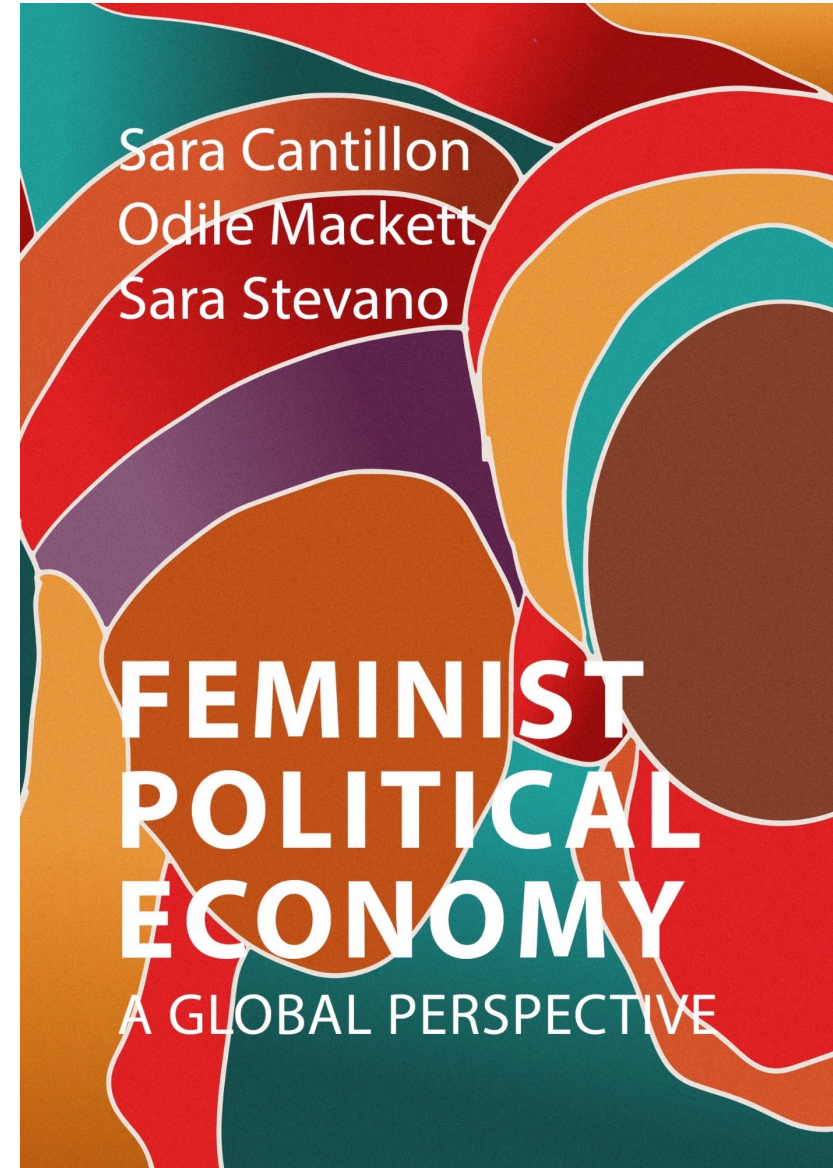
Odile Mackett, University of  
Witwatersrand, South Africa

Sara Stevano, SOAS University of  
London, UK

and was produced in collaboration  
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part of Network for Pluralist  
Economics Germany



NETZWERK  
Plurale Ökonomik





Sara Cantillon  
Odile Mackett  
Sara Stevano



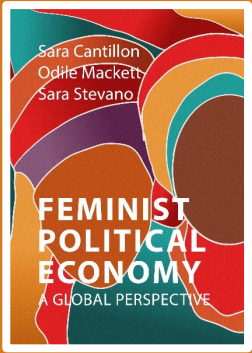
# Chapter 6

## IntraHousehold Inequalities



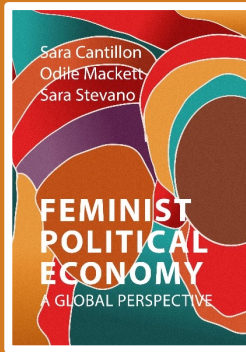
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# Lecture Outline



- **Introduction**
- **Part 1:** Conceptual Frameworks/Household Surveys and Data
- **Part 2:** Income Pooling/Financial Management/  
Differences in Living Standards
- **Part 3:** Implications and Data Challenges





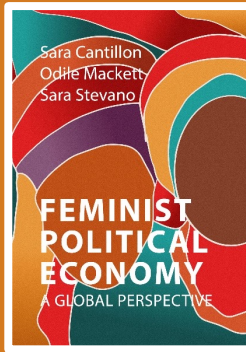
# Introduction

Household as a 'Black Box' - difficult to investigate the internal material aspects of family life

Resource-Sharing Unit: Household or Individual?

Assumption that re all members benefit equally and incomes are pooled. Decision-making and processes mechanisms remain unexamined. **But**

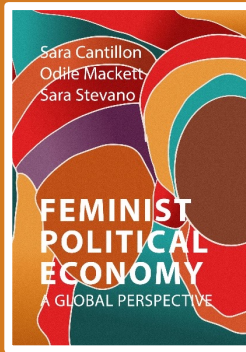
- process of resource allocation and consumption needs to be scrutinized.
- money has a social meaning - ideological significance, impacting well-being assessments and the emotional economy of family life.
- mechanisms of control need to be examined especially in relation to financial management, decision making, and power differentials.





# Introduction

- Research tends to be outcome-focused (expenditure, living standards) whereas FPE perspective also interested in process (financial control). In understanding outcomes in relation to the processes that produced them.
- Importance of money source, labelling, and recipient: Perceptions of value and use, and impact on household inequalities.
- Conceptual issues: Gender and poverty, implications of using the household as a measurement unit.
- Methodological considerations: Household surveys, definitions, and data collection methods
- Need for comprehensive understanding: The complexity of intrahousehold dynamics and the limitations of current research.







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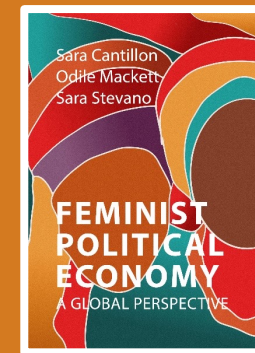
# PART I

Conceptual Frameworks, Measurement, Data



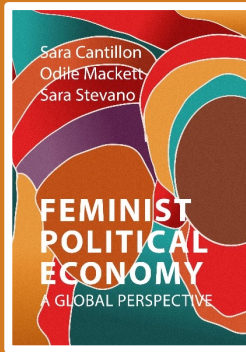
# Household as a Unit of Analysis

- Conventional poverty and inequality analysis takes the household or family unit as the sharing unit.
- Galbraith calls this a 'heroic assumption' as it assumes all members within a household are equally poor or non-poor. Moreover, it may obscure gender disparities. individual experiences, and the extent of women's poverty especially those with limited independent financial resources.
- Need for a more nuanced analysis that captures intra-household dynamics and gendered poverty.





# Women and Poverty



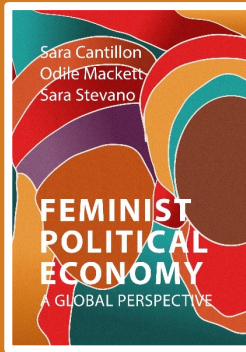
- Higher risk of poverty or social exclusion: Women have a higher risk compared to men, with rates at 22.7% for women and 20.7% for men in the EU (Eurostat, 2022).
- Single female households: Single mothers and women in one-parent families are particularly vulnerable, with high risk-of-poverty rates - 48% for lone mothers (Eurostat, 2022).
- Gendered poverty experiences: Women experience higher poverty rates, material and social deprivation, and dependency on income support (Botti et al., 2012; Rowntree Foundation, 2022).
- Gender disparities in access to resources: Women face inequalities in labor market opportunities, wage differentials, part-time work, and the impact of unpaid domestic work.



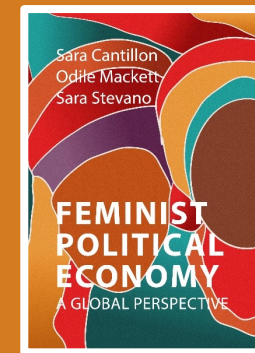


# Challenging the Household Unit in Poverty Analysis

- Importance of joint consumption: items contributing to the living standards of all members.
- Economies of scale
- Women's contributions to poverty reduction are undervalued.
- Restrictive nature of household measures
- Intra-household investigations: income pooling, resource control, material deprivation, and decision-making within couples and intergenerational contexts.



# Household Surveys

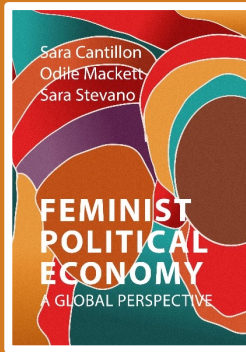


- Surveys provide crucial data on income, consumption, welfare, employment, and living standards, shaping economic analysis and policy.
- Trade-off between comparability and accuracy: Operationalizing households in surveys involves a balance between standardization for comparability and accurately representing the complexity and heterogeneity of households.
- National and multi-country surveys aim for standardization and comparability, managed by national institutes of statistics or international organizations and donors. Smaller surveys offer more flexibility in defining households and tailoring questions to specific contexts, allowing for data collection that may not be available through standardized approaches.
- Variation in household definitions: Different definitions of households lead to variations in measuring assets, income, consumption, and other variables.
- Simplifying household definitions and complementing with additional questions can capture important aspects of household composition, such as remittances and contributions from migrant members.





# Data and Measurement Challenges

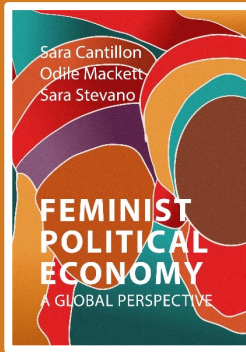


- EU-SILC is an annual micro-data source for EU social indicators, collecting information on income, material deprivation, and household characteristics, with flexibility in methods and data collection design. This data set, including ad hoc modules such as the 2010 module on income pooling and child deprivation, allows for comprehensive exploration of intra-household issues in Europe.
- Difficulties in measuring individual well-being
- Need for more regular intervals of data collection to capture changing household dynamics and societal shifts.
- Measurement gaps: The collected variables need to be enhanced to align with current demographic and societal changes, including the inclusion of multi-unit households, single-parent households, single households, and blended families.



# Feminist Methodological Perspectives

- Household head bias
- Power relations within households
- Limited information on sharing
- Addressing bias and boundaries - bias in economic data collection, advocating for mixed methods, primary data collection, and alternative theories of knowledge
- Transcending quantitative-qualitative divide - mixing quantitative and qualitative methods, expanding economic quantitative methods to capture power dynamics and complex realities.







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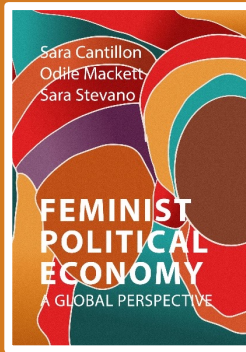
# PART 2

Income Pooling/Financial Management/ Differences in Living Standards



# Allocative Systems

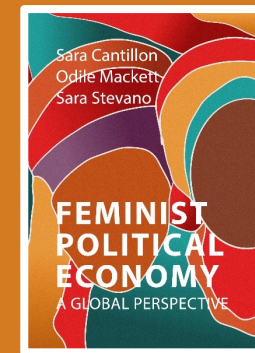
- Importance of understanding how couples organize their finances and the degree of income pooling or separate management.
- Empirical studies reveal various allocative systems, highlighting unequal power and control dynamics within couples.
- Impact on consumption ‘Wallet to Purse’ experiment
- Unitary models assume equal outcomes without capturing power differentials and decision-making processes within households.
- Studies focusing on what money is spent on and by whom reveal differences in access to resources and decision-making power.





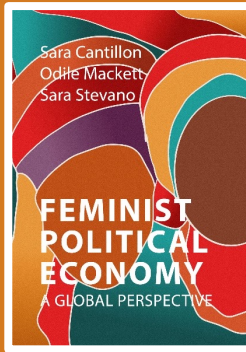
# Pahl's Taxonomy

- Pahl's typology of money management systems provides insights into the allocation and control of household resources.
- 4 allocative systems : Whole wage system; housekeeping Allowance system; shared management or pooling system; Independent management system
- Additional refinements -partial pooling system allows for a mix of personal and joint income management



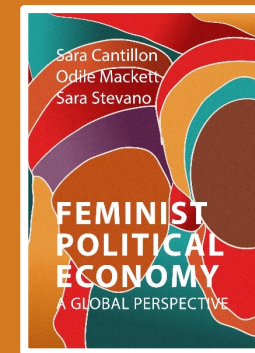
# Gender and Financial Decision-Making

- Financial decision-making influenced by gender dynamics and power relations.
- Studies show that unequal financial decision-making can lead to disparities in resource allocation and access to financial resources.
- Gender inequality in financial decision-making can contribute to women's economic dependence and limited financial autonomy.
- Empowering women in financial decision-making can lead to more equitable distribution of resources and greater financial well-being for individuals and families.





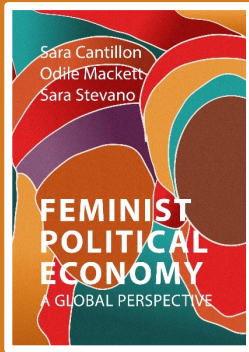
# Differences in Living Standards



- Surveys and data collection methods have traditionally focused on measuring household-level living standards but recent explorations of within-household differences in living standards through the use of individual-level non-monetary indicators.
- Non-monetary indicators provide direct evidence of unequal standards of living within couples and households. These indicators consider access to resources other than income.
- The items included in non-monetary deprivations indicators reflect household consumption rather than individual consumption, focusing on basic needs and family-related items.
- Non-monetary indicators are often used as a complementary measure to relative income lines in measuring poverty.



# Gender Differences in Individual-Level Deprivation



- Individual-level non-monetary deprivation indicators reveal gender disparities in living standards within couples.
- Analysis of individual-level deprivation data from surveys such as EU-SILC indicates a gender deprivation gap, predominantly disadvantaging women. The deprivation gap is particularly significant for items related to leisure activities and personal spending money.
- In couples where at least one partner lacks an item, women are more likely to experience enforced lack compared to men.
- In multi-family households, the percentage of adults living with inequalities in deprivation outcomes is even higher.
- The findings reinforce the need to address gender inequalities in resource allocation and decision-making within households.





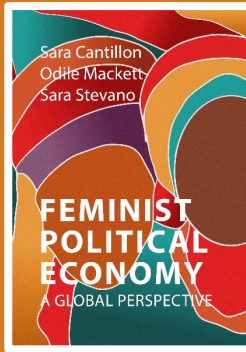
# Empirical Evidence

See

Case Study 6.1 Intra-Household Inequalities – Studies from the  
Global South 1990-2020

and

Case Study 6.2. Income pooling in Same-Sex Couples







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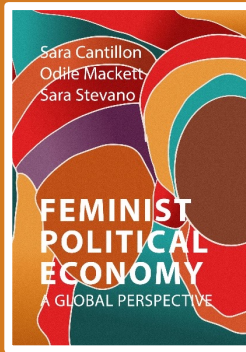
# PART 3

Implications and Data Challenges



# Implications of Research on Income Pooling and Resource Sharing

- Research and data on income pooling, financial management, and material deprivation within households challenge the traditional assumption of a 'single unit' in measuring poverty and income inequality.
- Intrahousehold resource inequalities are more complex than commonly assumed, with important implications for economic and social policy measures.
- Ignoring intrahousehold resource inequalities can lead to underestimation of poverty, deprivation, and financial autonomy levels, particularly for women.
- Findings emphasize the importance of independent income for women in terms of access to activities and reducing the deprivation gap.
- Misdirection of funds in targeted policy initiatives can occur when the poverty of individuals in need is obscured by the relative wealth of the family unit.



# Methodological Challenges

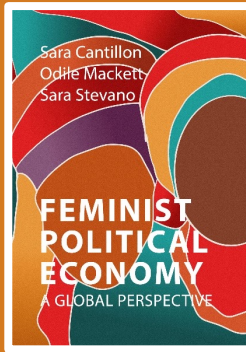
Difficulty of researching behind closed doors. perception of the household as a 'private sphere'.

Appropriate indicators and heightened awareness of sensitive questions needed.

Mode of data collection, (face-to-face interviews vs. individual vs. joint interviews) can have significant ramifications on response rates and on responses.

International organizations like the EU Commission, the OECD, and the UN can play a role in promoting the use of existing data and indicators.

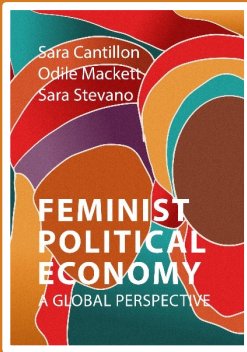
Deprivation indicators based on individual-level items, indicators on empowerment, as well as resource pooling offer promising avenues to complement existing indicators on gender inequality.





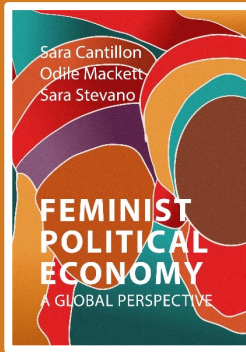
# Conclusions

- Investigating the processes and attributes of sharing, management, distribution and expenditure of household resources is critical to understanding the wellbeing and capabilities of individual household members.
- If different individuals within households do experience different living standards, this has significant policy implications, not least for our understanding of poverty and for the way anti-poverty policies are framed.
- Getting inside the 'black box' of the household to examine differences is conceptually and methodologically challenging.
- The presence of children and independent income are key determinants of how resources are shared within the household.
- What goes on within households is becoming even more important in the light of current demographic and societal changes, including the formation of more blended families and multi-unit, single parent and single person households.



# Discussion Questions

- What are the implications of using the household as a unit of measurement in poverty research?
- How useful an explanatory framework are Pahl's four systems of money management?
- What methods have researchers employed to explore within household differences? How useful is the individual-level nonmonetary indicator approach?
- How has the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC) Special Module shed light on the ways resources are shared between household members in the EU? What are the main findings and challenges?
- What do you think could serve as useful indicators for assessing intrahousehold inequalities?





# Resources

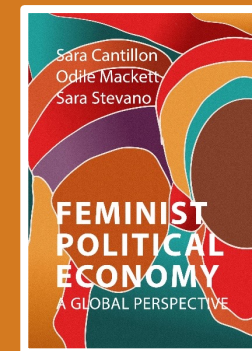
European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC)  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>

World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)  
<http://surveys.worldbank.org/lsms/about-lsms>

Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) <https://dhsprogram.com/>

International Household Survey Network continuing all household surveys conducted across the world <https://ihsn.org/>

Statistics on Households and Families by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/family/>





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**Thanks for watching! 😊**



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