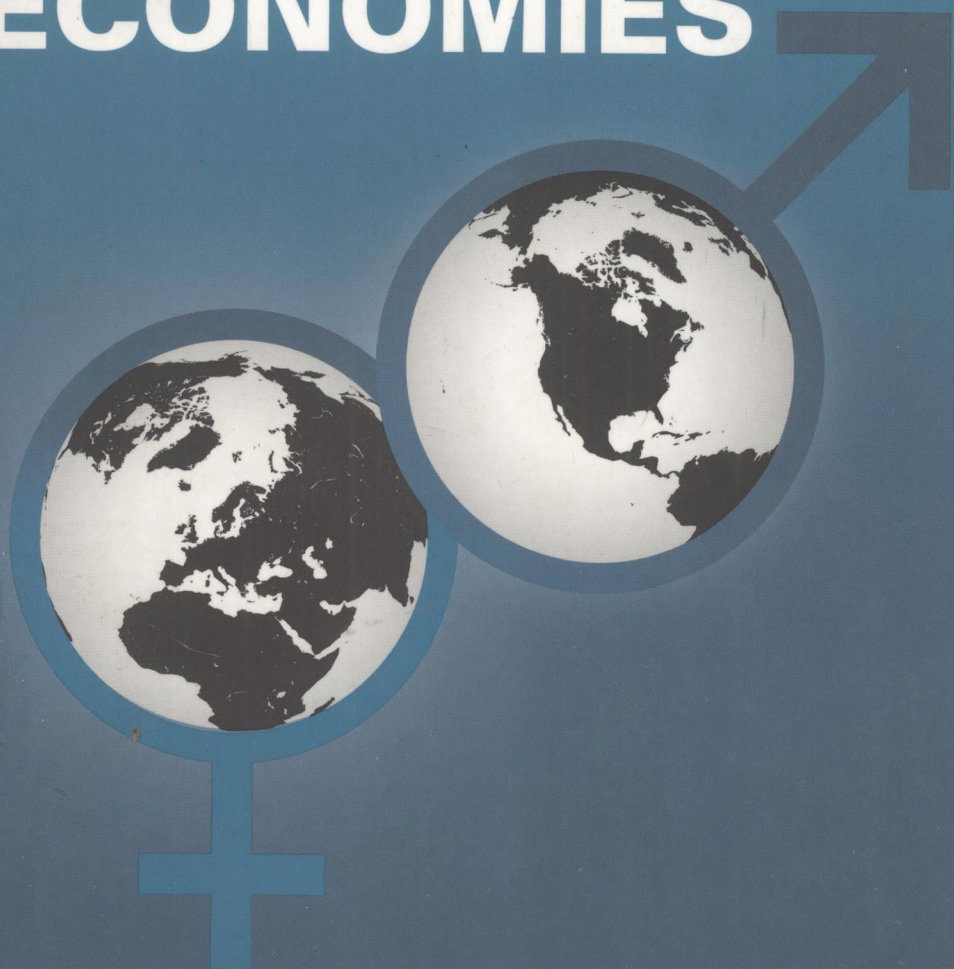


GENDER-CLASS EQUALITY IN POLITICAL ECONOMIES



LYNN PRINCE COOKE

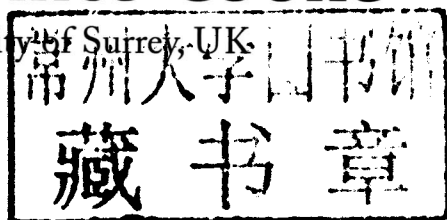
ROUTLEDGE



GENDER-CLASS EQUALITY IN POLITICAL ECONOMIES

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GENDER-CLASS EQUALITY IN POLITICAL ECONOMIES

Gender-Class Equality in Political Economies offers an in-depth analysis across six countries to reveal why gender-class equality in paid and unpaid work remains elusive, and what more policy might do to achieve better social and economic outcomes. This book is the first to meld cross-time with cross-country comparisons, link macro structures to micro behavior, and connect class with gender dynamics to yield fresh insights into where we are on the road to gender equality, why it varies across industrialized countries, and the barriers to further progress.

Lynn Prince Cooke is a professor of sociology at the University of Surrey, UK. Her research, exploring policy effects on group outcomes, has appeared in *American Journal of Sociology*, *European Sociological Review*, and *Journal of Marriage and Family*, for which she co-authored the 2010 decade review essay on cross-national research.

Perspectives on Gender

Edited by Myra Marx Ferree, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Black Feminist Thought

Patricia Hill Collins

Black Women and White Women in the Professions

Natalie J. Sokoloff

Community Activism and Feminist Politics

Edited by Nancy Naples

Complex Inequality

Leslie McCall

Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism

Melissa W. Wright

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For Richer, for Poorer

Demie Kurz

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Global Gender Research

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**Understanding Sexual
Violence**

Diana Scully

When Sex Became Gender

Shira Tarrant

**Making Transnational
Feminism**

Millie Thayer

Gender and Judging

Sally Kenney

SERIES FOREWORD

From the time that the Perspectives on Gender series began in the 1980s, it was dedicated to presenting feminist research on gender that was oriented to change. Its enduring commitment has been to highlight the specificity and dynamism that characterize the social relations of gender, and to do so with special attention to the interactions of race, class and gender in a way that has since come to be called intersectional.

Many of the early books in the series focused on the United States alone and explicitly drew out the dynamics of race and gender, such as Natalie Sokoloff's *Black and White Women in the Professions*, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*, Mary Romero's *Maid in America*, and Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang and Lynne Forcey's *Mothering*. Others, such as Wendy Luttrell's *School-smart and Mother-wise*, Nancy Naples' *Grassroots Warriors* and Peggy Nelson's *Working Hard and Making Do*, foregrounded the experiences of working-class women and the particular challenges facing them because of the combination of their limited economic resources and the pervasive social devaluation of their knowledge, labor and identities.

However, the series has always understood gender relations as dynamic, and not just changing over time of their own accord but as a result of struggles for greater social justice. Thus books in this series took up issues of transformations in gender relations across multiple dimensions and sites. Studies that focused on the US in analyzing change included those considering the relation between feminist identity and political parties (Sue Tolleson Rinehart's *Gender Consciousness*

and Politics) and the roots of 1970s feminist consciousness in women's research and gender theories of the 1950s (Shira Tarrant's *When Sex Became Gender*) as well as studies of the activists and their allies in movements around women's health (Verta Taylor's *Rock-a-bye Baby*) and violence against women (Patricia Yancey Martin's *Rape Work*).

Although understanding gender relations in the US is important, it has been the aim of this series also to make clear that understanding the challenges of feminist transformation and applying an intersectional analysis demands looking beyond the boundaries of the US. One of the earliest scholarly books to engage with feminism as a transnational movement was Angela Miles' *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions*. Miles brought her perspective as a Canadian engaged in transnational women's movements to set the tone for considering how feminist politics develops and travels across national borders, while focusing on the "two-thirds world" that is neither affluent nor Western. More recently, Christine Bose and Minjeong Kim, in *Global Gender Research*, take up the challenge of understanding the particular international contexts for the issues with which feminists engage both as activists and as scholars. Bose and Kim's wonderful collection of regionally situated essays illuminates the similarities as well as differences in problems facing women in specific parts of the world, and stresses activist research done by feminists in these countries to explain and transform gender relations accordingly. The global perspective of the series has also been evident in case studies of feminist mobilization in Australia (Cheryl Hercus' *Stepping out of Line*) as well as Millie Thayer's innovative recent study of intersectional issues and international funding as gender relations theory and intersectional practice comes to women's mobilization in Brazil (*Making Transnational Feminism*).

The series has also been methodologically inclusive, highlighting excellent quantitative work as well as ethnographic studies. One such brilliant quantitative study, Leslie McCall's *Complex Inequality*, broke new ground in intersectional feminist analysis of social stratification by offering a grounded account of gender, race, and class inequalities as interacting with particular local economies in the US. Like Sokoloff's earlier analysis of gender and race interactions, McCall's study used

complex quantitative data to make her theoretical points but made her analysis accessible through well-organized tables and charts and highly readable prose.

Lynn Prince Cooke's current book follows in this tradition of presenting a complex argument simply and effectively, as well as offering a truly integrated account of social policy origins and outcomes across class and country. Cooke manages to use qualitative, comparative historical process-tracing models of policy development to ground a quantitative analysis comparing the economic effects of such national policies on individuals with different personal choices and histories within each different system. The book follows McCall's injunction to place gender inequality in a context that is shaped by the intersections of multiple inequalities and the particularities of the place itself. But while the variation that McCall explored was between the economies of the Rust Belt and Sun Belt in the US, Cooke tackles a more ambitious agenda in comparing the forms that gender and class inequality take in relation to each other across six complex and historically shifting political economies: Germany (East and West), Spain, Australia, the UK and the US. Moreover, Cooke takes on the further challenge of addressing these policy systems as equally shaped by state concerns about reproduction as they are by the more classically studied politics of production.

This volume thus picks up the challenge that Bose and Kim set for feminist scholarship: to locate the specificity of gender relations in their appropriate local contexts, and to understand contemporary transformations shaped by both the problems and opportunities produced in the past. While Bose and Kim present the diversity of regions in a set of local cases, Cooke integrates the case studies of policy histories with a grounded comparative analysis of women's and men's economic outcomes as shaped by the particularities of national reproductive politics and economic development in advanced industrial democracies. This is a uniquely powerful tool for unpacking the processes underlying the outcomes, and there are many fascinating correspondences that Cooke unearths. For example, her analysis of the structures of educational systems and their effects on class and gender inequalities points to the

similar problems facing Australia and the US in delivering state-funded education to a far-flung, sometimes sparse, and racially stratified population, compared to the different challenges faced by Germany and the UK in educating their dense but highly class-stratified populations.

Cooke does a splendid job here in combining the structures that have developed historically with the contemporary choices facing women and men as individual actors attempting to make it in these systems. But in addition to the balance between structure and agency that her analytic strategy achieves, her understanding of the relevant policy structures is feminist in its integration of systems of reproduction (population policies and education as systems of institutionalizing nations and group differences within them) and systems of production (with education, employment and wage-setting systems in the center of these stratification processes). By taking this approach, Cooke no longer “adds gender and stirs” it into the customary male-centered story of stratification, but rethinks the fundamental processes of inequality as being simultaneously about production and reproduction. The challenge of intersectionality to feminist theory has long been to go beyond additive models, such as the classic “dual systems” theories of the 1980s, to understand the mutual co-construction of inequalities. Cooke succeeds so well in placing reproduction—as both a policy structure and an individual choice of childbearing and a household division of unpaid labor and of time—in an integrated and important position in the overall story of stratification that one might wonder how the old-style production-only accounts ever seemed plausible. The opportunities and lack thereof for women and men are far more understandable when time and money, work and family are part of the story of how states shape fates.

Finally, Cooke’s account is feminist also in considering her purpose not merely to describe inequalities but to end them. Because education figures centrally in the systems of both reproduction and production, and education policy plays a key role in the particular constellations of both family and employment opportunities, it is appropriate that her conclusion emphasizes ways that education systems might be transformed to create more fairness for men and women at all class levels.

The critical first five years of a child's life has implications for the opportunities for equality for the parents as well as for the children, and the way that education connects—or fails to—with the labor force is similarly powerful for shaping class and gender inequalities for each cohort coming to adulthood. While also emphasizing that individuals in each national system are making choices, Cooke presents clearly how those choices are enabled and constrained by the systems that make particular options attractive or difficult, and that everything is connected to everything else when it comes to having, raising, educating and supporting children. But as policy-makers are increasingly coming to realize, there is no future without children to carry it on. By focusing many of her conclusions on the role of educational systems as such, Cooke offers a constructive way to think about this future that challenges both the nationalistic pronatalist and economistic human capital approaches. Although placing social justice in the center, her vision of the opportunities for gender-class equality is solidly grounded in the actual systems she so carefully and thoroughly examines throughout the book. I hope that future authors in this series will take up her challenge to expand and deepen this type of intersectional feminist analysis of inequalities, as she has taken up the gauntlet thrown down by previous authors we have had the pleasure of publishing.

Myra Marx Ferree
Series Editor

PREFACE

The academic world reveres the people who drill deeper and deeper into a narrowly defined topic. I am a woman prone to saying, “yeah, but . . .,” and asking where specific research findings fit in the big picture. I cannot even stay within the confines of a single discipline. Where does sociology of gender fit with class analysis? How do these mesh with comparative politics? How does history inform modern social relations? Can the parsimonious models of labor economics be contextualized to offer more accurate pictures of divisions of labor in the home and across countries? These are the questions I ask my colleagues when they present their research at conferences. These are the questions I ask my students after summarizing what an eminent scholar has to say on a topic.

This book reflects my own search for answers to some of these questions, a search that has taken me across careers and continents, as well as academic disciplines. The search began in a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest, where I worked in the early 1990s with community leaders to research and develop programs in school-to-work, work-based training, and other policies that affected what the politicians called “workforce capacity.” In our search for policy possibilities, a group of area business, labor, non-profit, and education leaders took a study tour of Denmark, Germany, and Sweden. This was my first exposure to how other countries organized their divisions of labor in society and it would profoundly shape my subsequent personal and professional life. In homage to lifelong learning, I returned for a doctorate in midlife to compare German and US policy effects on employment across the life

course. A four-month stay in Florence as a guest researcher of the European University Institute sparked my interest in Mediterranean countries. I transferred from my US university to Nuffield College, Oxford University, to be in the middle of my European comparisons. In the midst of the Nuffield focus on British class stratification, I became fascinated by gender and family as sources of stratification. Eighteen months on, a postdoctoral fellowship in Brisbane, Australia, revealed just how different the Anglophone countries were from one another.

Living and learning in so many places has given me a distinctive appreciation of how our lives are embedded in our social categories within different countries. This book offers a synthesis of this knowledge, presented so that the story can unfold for a variety of readers. The book format lends itself very well to teaching, since it builds up a model of how gender-class inequality is constructed over time and then shows how it works today. Instructors can assign individual chapters for specific areas of sociology, such as sociology of education (Chapter 4), sociology of work (Chapters 5 and 6), or sociology of gender (Chapters 3 and 7). Chapters 3 through 5 could be used in labor economics, political science, or sociology courses that use historical comparisons. The book as a whole presents an excellent primary reading in any foundation course on gender or comparative social policy.

For undergraduates, the story is how important the social context is to their experience of daily life, and how their todays are the sum of yesterdays that started long before Twitter. For graduate students, the synthesis of cross-national literature and comparative evidence highlights the many holes in our knowledge to be filled by future scholars. The book also drills down to make its own contribution to our knowledge of the gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work in context. Gender researchers in the 1980s concluded that the gender revolution in paid and unpaid work had stalled. Most explanations focused on women's and men's individual choices, either as rational strategies or as a way of "doing" gender to fit with conventions. This book offers a structural examination of these conventions. I demonstrate how state policies and the institutions they support reinforce gender differences in conjunction with class differences across the life course. The book offers

insights into these intersectional effects through a distinctive multi-method approach: historical policy comparisons of six countries are coupled with rigorous multivariate comparisons of current gender-class inequality in paid work hours, wages, and housework. The book thus uniquely offers both breadth and depth to understanding gender-class equality, intersectionally and in context.

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It takes a virtual village to write a book. This particular book would not have emerged from the writing process without the unwavering, if at times exasperated support of Myra Marx Ferree. Many thanks are also owed to Heike Trappe, who clarified endless details on East and West Germany. Invaluable advice at critical junctures was given by Michaela Kreyenfeld, Margarita Leon, Rob Mare, Charles Ragin, and Chiara Saraceno. Thanks also to Jennifer Hook for running overviews of multinational time use data for Spain and Germany, and Liana Sayer for doing so for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Adam Burgess, Ruben Flores, and Sarah Moore made useful suggestions on earlier versions of some chapters. The then-blind reviewers of the project provided very constructive comments on both content and style; I'd like to now thank:

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- Janet Holland of London South Bank University
- Susan Mannon at Utah State University.

I trust Steve Rutter, the Routledge Sociology editor, has survived the process with his reliably good humor intact.

Luxembourg's La Fond supported the earliest of stages of this research as it blossomed from my 2004 doctoral thesis. The British

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Equally important has been my steadfast cheering squad during the moments of existential angst that occur for all writers. My bevy of beauties included Belinda Hewitt, Edie Lewis, John Goldthorpe, Olli Kangas, and John Western, all of whom offered food, wine, and/or intellectual solace as necessary.

In the end, however, writing a book is a solitary process. So there is no one else to blame but me for any remaining errors, omissions, or misrepresentations of the complex social worlds in which we live and labor.

Lynn Prince Cooke
July 2010

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