

perspectives on the origins of the gender divide in care, and the economist discussion helps readers understand the implications for overall economic gender inequality. However, they fall short of offering a deeper moral account of the issue of care work and of the rights and duties connected with it, as these remain underdefined.

Having discussed the key arguments and main takeaways from Folbre's book, there is also room for more specific criticism. While the main argument can be traced throughout the book, it is also surrounded by many smaller and often unfinished ideas, and the relevance of each of these to the main story is not always clear. In this sense, the book could have profited from a leaner approach that also leaves room to develop ideas in more detail. One example of this is the development of Western economies after the Second World War. This period was characterised by several trends. First, women joined the formal labour force, mostly in addition to their non-market work. Second, real wages across the economy rose. Third, the bargaining power of workers increased. Finally, the economy saw strong increases in the gross domestic product (GDP). Folbre argues that a non-negligible share of the GDP growth can be attributed to the movement of a large amount of labour power (women) moving into the *official* market. What is missing here, however, is a discussion of how these trends fit together. Both Marxist and neo-classical approaches would, at first sight, likely associate rising labour supply with decreases in bargaining power and not the opposite. The matter is obviously more complicated than that, and one could consider trends of technological change, the expansion of education, Keynesian demand politics and other factors. Without much discussion, however, the relevance of these trends is lost. Another example is Folbre's proposition that the undervaluation of care work would continue even in the context of gender equality. While this ar-

gement would continue to subsidise capital accumulation, how this scenario fits into the theoretical model that Folbre constructed is vague. If capitalists benefit from non-class cleavages and 'institutional hierarchies that inhibit the development of class solidarity' (p. 158), it is unclear why the disappearance or weakening of a central cleavage should not affect the ability to coordinate collective efforts.

Overall, *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems* offers a convincing approach to an intersectional political economy that connects different institutional hierarchies and lines of collective conflict. Folbre achieves this by connecting older Marxist ideas with theoretical insights from different streams of economics. While the book remains unfocused at some points, the added value is that it brings to the fore ideas that have been more or less ignored in mainstream economics for the past decades, and it offers a more differentiated perspective on both capitalism and patriarchy. In this capacity, it can be a helpful and educational guide for reformers and scholars alike.

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Minouche Shafik: *What We Owe Each Other: A New Social Contract for a Better Society*

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In this book, Minouche Shafik points to the broken fabric of today's society and offers an outline of a renewed social contract to repair it. She argues in favour of three core principles: a guaranteed minimum income for a decent life for everyone, a maximum investment in citizens' productivity and capabilities, and more collective and effective risk-sharing within society. These ideals are developed throughout the chapters, which are organised according to policy

areas: children, education, health, work, and old age. In the second half of the book, the focus shifts from specific topics to the economics and politics of the proposed social contract and its sustainability across generations. What do we owe each other right now, Shafik asks, as well as across time?

The book identifies four main culprits for the state of the current social contract. Evolving gender roles, aging populations, climate change, and technological development have all caused notable changes in both the public and private spheres of society, and their effects are intertwined. Advances in technology together with longevity and globalisation have shaped the labour market and the family unit into something very different from those of the last century. Changes in technology and manufacturing have led to a new type of job market, in which the most educated workers and urban citizens benefit, while other groups are seeing their jobs being taken over by automation or their wages stagnating. In this new work environment, new types of employment have emerged to supplement the conventional arrangements. Shafik suggests that the new social contract would benefit from reimagining careers as climbing trees rather than ladders. In the future, as skills become obsolete at a faster rate while general life expectancy increases, building a single lifelong career will become unattainable and undesirable for more and more people. Society therefore needs to offer them incentives and opportunities to retrain, change jobs, and work more flexibly. People are not simply climbing up and down but also moving sideways, and the order and distance between the steps is not always straightforward.

Since untraditional forms of work often offer less security and may leave workers outside of some traditional safety nets such as insurance and pensions, Shafik argues that public action is needed to make

them more sustainable. Everyone needs to be guaranteed a minimum income that is supplemented by support from society when they encounter economic shocks. Importantly, supporting people so that they can form more flexible attachments to the labour market creates new jobs and allows more people to participate in the job market.

Increasing numbers of women are being formally employed worldwide; however, the ratio between young and senior citizens continues to be skewed towards the latter in many advanced economies, and much care work risks being left unmanned and underfinanced. Shafik proposes a solution in the form of public investments to maximise the utilisation of human capital and tax revenue by educating and employing people from the groups that are often overlooked by the labour market – women, the elderly, people of colour, and the children of poor families. While this strategy will clearly produce notable benefits for society, it also calls for the restructuring of the social contract between the state and the family. To maximise the inclusion of human potential, investments in early childhood education, informal care, and a gender-neutral labour market will become necessary. Further, Shafik advocates for the responsibility for unpaid care to be shared collectively and for childcare, in particular, to become part of the “public-service infrastructure”. When it comes to taking care of the aging public, the question remains: Who is going to pay? Automation can help ease the public cost by lowering the physical requirements of manual labour and thus allowing people to work longer. Other solutions explored here include importing immigrant workers and incentivising people to save for their retirement.

It is relatively easy to argue that the current generations who are sharing a society need to look after one another, but what about the needs of those yet to be born? Shafik discusses the burdens of cli-

mate change, growing public debt, and future technologies along philosophical and economic lines with respect to how and to what extent society needs to account for the demands of tomorrow. What follows is an interesting discussion on the premise of compensating future generations for resource and natural capital losses, some of which cannot be repaired or substituted.

By creating a balance between a personal narrative and a descriptive mapping of policy areas with examples from all over the world, Shafik offers a coherent and approachable view of what the renovated social contract may look like. While acknowledging that countries differ in their demographic structures, political priorities, and the challenges they face, Shafik turns the discussion into general guidelines accompanied by some specific reflections, including such topical policies as carbon taxes and universal basic income.

One area that is missing the attention it arguably deserves as the largest part of most educational systems is basic education. Apart from criticism of traditional education systems that focus too heavily on rote memorisation instead of creative thinking skills, almost no related policies are discussed in the book. Additionally, some of the questions propounded by Shafik, including those regarding carbon taxes, technology regulation, and the righting of historical wrongs, would benefit from being examined in a global setting while also considering actors like the EU and OECD. Further, this social contract framework could have benefited from the inclusion of the complicated questions surrounding the defence of a state, including both law enforcement and armed forces.

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John Wall: *Give Children the Vote: On Democratizing Democracy*
 Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, pp. 256

This well-written and thought-provoking book addresses central questions relating to voting exclusions based on age. Currently, most democracies do not allow children and adolescents below the age of 18 to vote. Wall argues that the democratic ideal requires the removal of age exclusion to vote. Expanding the democratic system to include children may sound anarchical to some. However, when the arguments in favour of the disenfranchisement of children are carefully scrutinised, John Wall elegantly and meticulously demonstrates that there are very few, if any, reasons in favour of disfranchising children.

Wall argues that the case for children's suffrage is about basic democratic justice. Historically, democracies have, from their foundation, only allowed a select few landowners or aristocrats the right to vote. Over time, the right to vote has expanded to include non-landowning men, peasants, minorities and women. However, one group is still systematically disenfranchised based on the number of years lived. Wall argues that the exclusion of children from voting is based on much of the same grounds on which previously disenfranchised groups, such as women or minorities, were excluded. He points out that currently, we discriminate and apply a double standard to children, barring them from holding political actors and governments accountable through voting. Children's suffrage is the best way to improve the lives of children and strengthen our democracies.

To analyse these new proposals, Wall suggests that we must view them from a childist perspective, which aims to transform societal structures and norms in response to the various lived experiences of children. As an example of the difference in lived experiences, Wall mentions the