

BOOK REVIEWS

theory and the Law and Economics school. Some of the individual articles could be assigned to undergraduates, although most of the volume is aimed at the graduate level. As a feminist economist following this debate among legal scholars, I gained fresh perspectives on issues within our own discipline. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the policy implications of feminist economic theorizing in the US.

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Gender and Development: The Japanese Experience in Comparative Perspective, edited by Mayumi Murayama. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 352 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-4039-4944-8, ISBN-10: 1-4039-4944-1 (hbk.). US\$90.00.

What can we learn from Japan's history about how economic development affects the well-being of women? Does economic development and growth automatically translate into the betterment of women's lives, or is there a gendered asymmetry in the distributional consequences of growth? Does Japan's growth experience provide some guidance to developing countries seeking policy models for a more gender-egalitarian development path? Research analysts at the quasi-governmental Institute for Development and Economics in Tokyo, Japan have produced an edited book – with chapters mostly by women – seeking to address this broad topic of whether and how development affects men and women differently and what to do about it. This is an encouraging theme because it promises to move beyond the overly general question of whether or not economic development is good for women to ask under which conditions and through which mechanisms development might occur, leaving open the possibility that these processes can vary in their effects. To the extent that the book only partially delivers on its promise, it is a call for more studies of this kind to help isolate the causal mechanisms and interaction effects that the authors suggestively raise here.

The book divides its task into three parts: the first part is a historical review of Japan's development process and the experience of women along the way. The second compares Japan's development process to those of some developing countries today. The third part of the book, which is also

the concluding chapter, considers how globalization affects the economic well-being of women.

Mayumi Murayama, the book's editor, has written a sensitive and nuanced introductory chapter, entitled "An Attempt to Integrate Gender and Development Issues of Japan and Developing Countries," that sketches out her ambitions for the book. She notes that, for all of the research on Japan's development model, no scholarship exists on how women fared in Japan's "economic miracle." Her most powerful point shows with a scatter plot of twelve countries that the Gender Development Index (GDI) tends to fall systematically behind the Human Development Index (HDI).¹ This cries out for explanation, and though Japan's historical experience can shed light on why women do not enjoy development's more positive effects, the book does not attempt to clarify this discrepancy in Japan's development indices. Unfortunately, the editor spends significant time considering whether it is possible to conduct "objective" social-scientific inquiry, but I would have preferred her to make more of an effort to engage competing theoretical approaches to investigate why women have tended to fare worse than men.

In "Economic Development and Gender Disparities: The Japanese Experience," Hiroki Nogami provides one of the most useful analyses of the book. She attempts to construct a historical series of the GDI for Japan, which seems so welcome and obvious an exercise that one wonders why it has not been done before and why these historical measures do not exist for more countries. The author's strenuous efforts give us some clue as to why the GDI is not more widely available: health and education data are difficult to obtain, and one might worry that education has causal arrows running in both directions. A lively debate surrounds the question of how to measure the gender wage gap in aggregate because it is not obvious how to handle unremunerated family work. Nogami opts to exclude the non-agricultural gender wage gap on grounds that it fails to include unpaid work; but that can, of course, introduce other distortions, particularly because the industrial sector is precisely where the diminishing advantage to male brawn begins to increase the demand for female labor.

Not all of the chapters raise profound theoretical issues. The following chapter by Yasuko Hayase, "Gender Perspective in Family Planning: Development of Family Planning in Postwar Japan and Policy Implications from the Japanese Experience," provides a useful history of the Japanese government's approach to population and family planning. It is interesting to note that the Japanese government's pro-natalist policies during World War II failed, and I would have liked to see more discussion of the government's current desire to spur fertility as a way to grapple with the looming insolvency of the public pension system. Kan Sato's chapter, "'Livelihood Improvement' in Postwar Japan: Its Relevance for Rural Development Today," provides a brief historical review of the government's

Livelihood Improvement Program, designed to help housewives deal with life's various miseries including fleas, mosquitoes, and boring housework. It would have been nice to include who conceived of this plan, for what purpose, and what, if any, effects such a program has had on females' perceptions of their own welfare.

The following chapter by Kazuko Kano, "Entrepreneurship and Rural Women's Empowerment: Some Japanese and Thai Cases," tells of a program in contemporary Japan to assist women who have entrepreneurial aspirations. The program, *michi no eki* (literally, roadside stops), provides rural women with financial and marketing assistance in selling flowers, processed foods, or other byproducts of agricultural production. Kano visited over a hundred of these "roadside stops" and concluded from her interviews of women entrepreneurs that having an outside source of income enhanced considerably their bargaining relationship at home. This is anecdotal evidence for a bargaining perspective on gender, and the author is content to note the empirical findings without theorizing from them.

Kuniko Funabashi, the only author who is not associated with the Institute for Developing Economies, departs from the rest of the book in "Women's Participation in Politics and Women's Movement: The History and Background of Recent Successes of Women Candidates in Local Elections" by considering how politics impacts women's welfare. Her data are examples from local politics in Nagano prefecture, where a larger number of female legislators seems to result in greater financial support for childcare and other policies relating to women. This raises the intriguing possibility Murayama mentions in the introduction: even if economic development may improve the welfare of women by increasing the demand for female labor, increasing their political representation may have a separate effect by giving them access to policies that can shape market incentives. To the extent that this is true, it provides a glimmer of hope for women in countries that, by virtue of economic structure or low levels of economic development, have a relatively low demand for female labor. But here, too, I would have liked deeper and more self-conscious theorizing. The model of politics Funabashi adopts here brings to mind the "politics of presence" as developed by Iris Young (1990) and Anne Phillips (1999), based on the premise that politicians who don't share their identity with voters cannot fully represent them. This stands in contrast to the conventional Schumpeterian or principal-agent view of politics where competition for votes forces representatives to be accountable. In the latter view, women gain political currency once they get the right to vote; in the former, it is not until they are represented by women like themselves. Although the evidence Funabashi presents here resembles identity politics, this kind of study is just the beginning, and we need more systematic tests and evidence. We know, for example, that women in the labor force are more likely to vote to the left of men, presumably because they value

childcare and other support that would allow them to stay in the workforce. If this is true, it may be as important to consider the interests that politicians are competing to satisfy as it is to know the politicians' stance.

The following two chapters provide illuminating comparisons between Japan and Cuba, and Japan and Turkey, respectively. In "Has Socialism Contributed to Gender Role Changes? A Comparison of Gender Roles in Cuba and Japan," Kanako Yamaoka's comparison with Cuba suggests that the socialist economy in Cuba provides women with a measure of bargaining power in the home by making women economically viable on their own. Tellingly, divorce rates declined after 1993 when the drop in Soviet aid forced the Cuban government to cut large numbers of female public employees.

The comparison with Turkey by Kaoru Murakami offered in "Nation-State, Family and Gender: Recent Studies in Japan and Turkey" considers conceptually difficult issues such as how the nation-state's inclusion of women in the nation-building process might have had a narrowing effect on the ideological space of women's mobility in subsequent generations. She notes that Japanese scholars since the 1980s have shifted from seeing women as victims of wartime mobilization to collaborators, and readers are left wanting to know more. This chapter seems to be part of a general reckoning with Japan's culpability during its imperial period, but the suggestion of moral culpability cuts interestingly across the concerns raised by Amartya Sen and others that the powerless tend to internalize their constraints (see, for example, Sen 1994).

In the concluding chapter, Murayama addresses the debate about the effects of global economic integration on women through the lens of Japanese women's experience as factory workers in the textile industry throughout Japanese economic development. She argues that requiring developing countries to adopt "fair" labor standards and wages helps women in the developed world as well by slowing the hemorrhaging of jobs, though it is not clear how this is to be accomplished or how we should weigh the trade-offs between employment and wages and between women in the global North and South.

A great body of literature and thought explores the interaction between economic development and women's welfare. In her classic book *Who Pays for the Kids* (1994), Nancy Folbre provides one very useful template that still inspires much contemporary debate about how much hope for female betterment should be placed in economic development. Schools such as Marxism and its kissing cousin, world systems theory, warn that economic development deepens the division of labor that subordinates women to immiserizing market forces. Neoclassical economic theory, on the other hand, offers an optimistic counterpoint: deeper and more extensive markets will root out discrimination because it is inefficient. Related are principal agent models, along the lines of those found in the work of Rick

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Geddes and Dean Lueck (2002), arguing that industrialization helps women by increasing the demand for female labor and inducing men to make women the residual claimants of their own labor. In the bargaining models of the sort suggested by Shelly Lundberg and Robert Pollack (1996), Siv Gustafsson (1997), and Elissa Braunstein and Nancy Folbre (2001), greater demand for female labor helps women by giving them improved exit options in the event that marriages fail.

I sense that the authors of this book see themselves as standing somewhere in the middle ground between Marxist and neoclassical economics but don't look for engagement in causal paradigms in an explicit way. Although this book does not place Japan's experience in a theoretical context, it provides much textured description of Japanese women's experience over the course of a century of economic development. The overall message seems to be that economic development has helped women in Japan, but the "trickle down" has been slow and is still incomplete. In summary, this is a fascinating book for scholars and practitioners interested in the effects of economic growth on the welfare of women because the scholarly research on this topic is scandalously thin. This book, with all its merits and limitations, strikes me as an invitation to other scholars to join in theoretically informed empirical work on this topic. It would certainly be a useful reference book in undergraduate or graduate level courses on gender and development, but how much better if it could find a place on syllabi for mainstream courses on economic development. The experience of Japanese women is too little noticed or understood, as the authors amply demonstrate.

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NOTE

¹ Mayumi Murayama uses the following twelve countries in the scatter plot: Bangladesh, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Norway, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, UK, and the US.

The HDI is a composite measure that includes measures for school enrollment, schooling years, life expectancy at birth, and gender-adjusted income. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) constructed the HDI to provide a measure of overall welfare from development. Unfortunately, as Hiroki Nogami points out in the first chapter, the HDI cannot be used as a comparative measure, as the HDI scales are set by the worst and best performances by a country over a year.

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