

Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality. Two Different Models



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1 Introduction

This is a methodological work which follows some of our preceding articles about the same subject matter (Serafini, 2016a, 2016b; Serafini & Paoloni, 2018, 2019). They dealt with economic terms and variable definitions and critiques, related to gender issues. In this case, we present a critique about the definitions of Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality as research fields. Economic literature refers to these locutions as if they were interchangeable. This maybe because Gender Diversity relates to gender differences in economic contexts—and the same presence is pursued, in terms of number of individuals—where Gender Inequality relates to an analogous object but focusing on diverse opportunities each gender faces in the different economic environment under investigation. The article has three main goals.

The first goal is about the recognition of the different concepts at the base of Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality constructs, in order to highlight the different postulates and methodological consequences deriving from the postulates. Whereas Gender Diversity literature implies, as we will see, an irreducible difference between (at least) two genders, Gender Inequality states that different opportunities and different starting points are unacceptable between genders, implicitly maintaining that individuals are equal.

The second goal consists of the different human behaviours' explanation, connected to these concepts. When you have different concepts about individuals' nature, so that in one case humans belong to different genders, whereas in the other

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case they are mere individuals with possible different opportunities, one economic research task is to identify the related different economic behaviours' features. The methodological point is then the identification of the different behaviours connected with the different concepts of really existing economic subjects.

The third goal is about the explanation of the different economic models of the mind, which are implicit in the two different humans concepts. If economic subjects are individuals, they possibly act being reciprocally independent. If, on the other hand, their behaviour can be classified in relation to their gender belonging, minds cannot be considered as independent but, precisely, dependent on gender. Where, in the first case, economic subjects individually relate and gender differences can be an obstacle for individuality realization, in the second case, economic subjects relate as different gender members, so that gender is a central and unerasable element of the economic behaviours' qualification.

In the case of individual economic subjects, equal opportunities can allow the evolution and development of personal features; in the other case, gender differences have to be investigated in order to clarify which different specifications could be considered as the facilitators of the evolution and development of every gender qualified subject.

In the next two sections, we will analyse, respectively, methodological assumptions of Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality. Subsequently, in Sect. 4, we will explain the different behaviours related to the different gender concepts, and in Sect. 5 the different models of the mind.

2 Gender Diversity

According to economic literature (Ciavarella, 2017; Arnaboldi et al., 2020; Wang & Clift, 2009; Gregory-Smith et al., 2014; Charness & Gneezy, 2012; Nielsen, 2013; Gupta et al., 2015; Bruno et al., 2018; Filippin et al., 2017; Fisher et al., 2017), Gender Diversity relates to the presence of diverse genders (in particular, but not solely male and female) in the same (leading) position. International regulatory bodies documents too, analyse the reasons, features and consequences due to quantitative and qualitative presence differences between genders in economic contexts. In particular, the Comitato di Basilea (2015), the EBA (2016) and the Banca d'Italia (2013), for example, study the differences about presence, competences and companies performances related to these aspects. Independently of the results of the studies, sometimes contradictory, what is important is the methodological aspect of the literature: that is, the complex of theoretical foundations over which the method is built, where method is the research orientation. As for Gender Diversity, researches are about the causes of the different quantitative gender presence in the leading positions analysed, and about the consequences this difference may determine. Differences are analysed between countries, economic sectors and different periods of time. Consequences are not unequivocal, because different studies, due to the way they are conducted, or the matter analysed, show different

consequences, in quantitative and qualitative terms. Anyway, the studies focus on gender differences and different gender presences, in a particular economic position, highlighting the different features of the situations and possible consequences that will stem from these differences. What is important, in our methodological point of view, is that this literature qualifies different genders, both recognizing genders by difference, and recognizing different economic consequences due to the first difference. Gender differences are therefore related to non-economic features and to economic performances. It would be then appropriate to classify different research objects in relation to the gender and consequently build scientific researches about the causes and consequences of these quantitative differences in economic areas. This means that, independently from particular causes and consequences, differences would be only related to gender diversities. The result is an essential conceptualization of individuals depending on the gender. Gender differentiation is then the methodological base of the Gender Diversity researches.

3 Gender Inequality

Literature about Gender Inequality (Alesina et al., 2013; Branisa et al., 2013; Hiller, 2014; Mulder & Rauch, 2009; Torres et al., 2021) considers its research field as an analogous research field to the Gender Diversity, because it deals with causes and consequences of the different gender qualification. Precisely because researchers, in this field, deal with inequalities, in order to understand their nature and consequences, they concentrate on aspects related to the lack of equalities.¹ Terms concerning equalities and inequalities are expressed in order to evaluate causes to address and consequences to remove, determining that inequality is in this case intended as loss of equality. Limitation, reduction or removal of inequality should be the ultimate goal, because natural constitution of human relations would be made by their essential equality. In this framework, inequality is therefore considered as a separation from equality, the latter intended as the congenial condition between humans. Gender inequalities are then considered in the same way as ethnicity or wealth inequalities. They are elements, whose origin are to be traced, causes are to be found and consequences are to be outlined, ever considering inequality as a juxtaposed condition as compared to natural equality. Gender equality is considered as limited and distorted by different causes having different consequences. Gender inequality is, therefore, the situation in which different genders are not treated as equals as they should be. Considering inequality as not a natural gender condition implies that genders are traced back to their common human nature. In doing so, gender members are considered as part of the same equality matrix and every human is traced back to the parity and equality that should characterize its relation in every

¹The United Nation Organization, for example, considers this issue under this perspective: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>. URL displayed 06.21.2021.

social, economic, family and working conditions. In this research field, methodological base concerns equality between humans but it is worth noting that they are at the same time classified by the term gender. This word is then used to state an overlapped condition, compared to the natural condition that would be removed in case of lack of inequalities. Latter are recognized not because they are at the base of a different human condition related to gender but, on the contrary in this case, genders are recognized because over them inequalities are founded, with the same moral vileness than inequalities based on ethnic, religious or census conditions.

This kind of literature also reveals its approach when dealing with equal opportunities.² In this case, literature focuses on how the natural and effective equality is opposed by lack of basic opportunities, intended as discriminations. It is worth noting that, in this case, there is the risk of a contradiction if equal opportunities would be intended as to be applied to different genders. Actually differences between genders would be recognized when they evolve over time, and equal opportunities would mean equal starting points for different genders. If starting points have to be equals, because of equal opportunities, but genders are recognized as differently evolving, not every difference between genders could be considered as a discrimination. In order not to be contradictory, equal opportunities have then to be applied to all the differences between humans, whereas “gender” would be an improper way to categorize humans.

We can conclude, by summarizing that Gender Diversity literature essentially postulates gender differences, whereby Gender Inequality literature maintains essential equality between humans, regarding gender differences as a result of a discrimination process.

4 Different Behaviours

Notwithstanding Gender Diversity and Gender Inequality recognize gender differences, the first approach considers them as insuperable, while the latter criticizes them and deals with solution in order to overcome their consequences. In both cases differences are detected to deal with, but in the first case they cannot be overcome and researches in this fields are mainly qualitative and comparative, dealing with gender qualities in different territories and social or economic contexts. Differences are analysed and evaluated in order to identify causes and consequences linked to their change in intensity.

Gender Inequality, on the other hand, maintains that gender differences have social, cultural and education origin, learnt and transfused in different behaviours. Essential equality between genders inspires the analysis of the causes of actual differences in different human contexts. Differences are then analysed as discriminations, regarded as a practice that systematically tends to impose a benefit that

²See UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality>. URL displayed 06.21.2021.

advantages one gender over another, reflecting inequalities on individuals that are unreasonably based on gender inequalities. Gender differences, as ethnic, religious, sexual orientation discriminations, are then referable to individuals who are characterized by their common belonging to human gender. It is useful to make it clear that both the research fields aim at improving human relations, reducing discriminations, increasing economic system's productivity. As a matter of fact, Gender diversity could be the grounds in order to value differences and improve different everyone's life aspects. From a methodological point of view, however, the two research fields postulate different behaviours different subjects can put in place, and determine different possible economic systems structures.

In relation to Gender Inequality, economic systems can be seen as constituted of individuals. This implies that individuals are the relevant economic agents when looking at economic actions and actions are valued to understand firms and economic system features and dynamics. In this context, individuals have to be considered as reciprocally independent, even when inserted in a relational context.

On the contrary, in relation to Gender Diversity, relevant economic subjects are not individuals, since they can be classified on the basis of gender. Each gender owns distinctive features that classify individuals and, in this sense, individuals do not behave as individuals but as members of a specific gender. Gender identity, in this case, permeates personality and forge it, and economic systems are constituted of different genders, each one with its features. Every group can show different particularities, as it happens when distinct individuals are considered the base of an economic system, but, in this case, the determining economic subject remains the gender.

Different perspectives found different theoretical framework at the basis of the different possible behaviours. We refer to different economic models of the mind that have to be intended as laying behind the two perspectives.

5 Two Models of the Minds

As it should be clear from the preceding paragraphs, researches about gender can implicitly refer to different ways economic agent can be intended. An individual economic agent is necessarily different from a group economic agent. It is yet worth underlining that when referring to group economic agents, it cannot be assumed that individuals are non-existing; as when referring to an individual economic agent, it cannot be assumed that there are not social influences on individuals. Rather, the difference between these perspectives lays on the decision-maker nature, as it can be seen by the researcher. Behind every research there is the researcher theoretical approach, whose reference system can differently classify observed behaviours. This means that eyes that observe are different, instead of behaviours, and that different behaviours depend on different models of the mind: one model considers human minds as independent; the other considers human minds as reciprocally connected forming different groups, that is genders.

Economic theory (Serafini & De Felice, 2019) states that individuals are mutually independent. This is because economic agent interaction is only limited to buying and selling and commodities price changing over time, in a way that every single agent cannot determine (Pareto, 2006, p. 141; Schumpeter, 2006, p. 918). It is worth thinking that, in this case, independence could be named psychological distinction, because, according to current economic theory, every economic agent perceives and decides in a separate way from every other economic agent. On the contrary, psychologists (Bion, 1973; Jervis, 2001) consider that human mind comes to life from inborn interactions with other minds (Mitchell, 2014) and mind interconnection is due to the particular way mind takes shape, starts to live and lives. In this way, regarding one-self as mentally independent would be incorrect as everyone is strictly connected with other agents since its own birth and most of human mind faculties are regarded as originating via child-caregiver relations matrix (Auchincloss, 2015). These differences highlight the fact that different models of the mind, to which different theoretical approaches refer, already exist in the literature. We cannot here deepen mind models' concepts and features but we can state that Gender Inequality mind concept is typically individual, whereas Gender Diversity conceives the mind concept as interactive and gender-specific. This methodological work can then be considered as a starting point for future researches since it tried to clear up the importance of preanalytical vision of researchers (Schumpeter, 2006), being convinced that clear assumptions cannot ensure quality researches, even though can contribute to found clearer consequences.

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