

# Labor, Gender, and the Environment Nexus: A Feminist Political Economy Perspective

The complex and multifaceted relationship between labor, gender, and the environment has gained increasing attention within the field of international political economy. This article explores this nexus, focusing on the ways in which gender and environmental relations intersect with labor markets and economic globalization. Drawing on a feminist political economy perspective, it examines how gendered labor market segmentation, the undervaluation of care work, and ecological dependency contribute to environmental degradation and social inequality.

## Gendered Labor Market Segmentation and Environmental Degradation

Labor market segmentation is a key factor in understanding the gendered dimensions of environmental degradation. Gender-based discrimination and occupational segregation result in women being concentrated in low-paid, low-skill jobs that are often associated with environmental hazards. For example, women are disproportionately represented in the garment industry, agriculture, and domestic work, all of which have significant environmental impacts.



## Social Justice in the Globalization of Production: Labor, Gender, and the Environment Nexus (International Political Economy Series) by Berit Glanz

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In the garment industry, women workers often face hazardous working conditions, including exposure to toxic chemicals and poor ventilation. The agricultural sector, where women make up a significant portion of the workforce, is a major source of water pollution due to the use of pesticides and fertilizers. Domestic work, which is typically performed by women, involves the use of cleaning products and other chemicals that can contribute to indoor air pollution.

## **The Undervaluation of Care Work and Environmental Sustainability**

Care work, which includes tasks such as childcare, eldercare, and housework, is essential for sustaining human life and well-being. However, care work is often undervalued and underpaid, and it is predominantly performed by women. This undervaluation perpetuates gender inequality and limits women's opportunities to participate in the formal economy.

The undervaluation of care work also has environmental implications. When care work is not recognized as a valuable contribution to society, it is often neglected or outsourced to low-paid workers. This can lead to increased environmental degradation, as care work is often performed in ways that are harmful to the environment. For example, when childcare is outsourced to low-paid workers, it may result in children being left unsupervised in unsafe environments or exposed to environmental hazards.

## Ecological Dependency and Environmental Justice

Ecological dependency refers to the reliance of human societies on the natural environment for their survival and well-being. Women are often more dependent on the environment than men due to their traditional roles in food production, water collection, and other resource-intensive activities. This dependency makes women particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change.

Environmental justice is the fair and equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Women are often disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and degradation, and they have less access to environmental decision-making processes. This inequality is due to a number of factors, including gender discrimination, poverty, and lack of education.

The labor, gender, and environment nexus is a complex and multifaceted issue that has significant implications for social justice and environmental sustainability. Gendered labor market segmentation, the undervaluation of care work, and ecological dependency all contribute to environmental degradation and social inequality. Addressing these issues requires a feminist political economy perspective that places gender equality and environmental sustainability at the forefront of economic policy.



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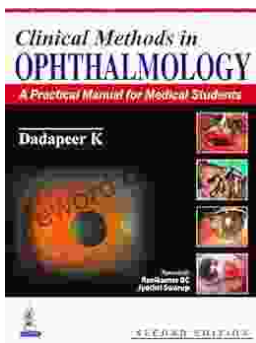
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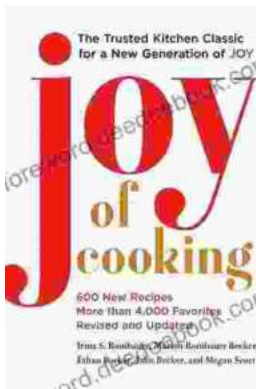
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