

Careful Cracks: Resistant Practices of Care and *Affect-ability*

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Abstract

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, several institutional policies and discourses, speaking in tandem with a “health” and “financial crisis”, have highlighted what seem to be the consequences of an aporetic disentanglement of capitalist relations of production and reproduction. Indeed, partial halts to economic production in the wake of COVID-19 have become equivalent – through symbolic and material actualisations of vulnerability and care – to a suspension of people’s capacity to sustain themselves. This dynamic has thus overshadowed alternatives to the capitalist tie of economic production with social reproduction. Resisting this landscape, local solidarity groups have emerged globally to counter the flattening of reproduction for the perpetuation of the socio-economic status quo by creating networks of mutual aid and support. Learning from these movements, I propose *affect-ability* as a philosophically productive term and tool to conceptualise resistant practices of care, toward underscoring the inherent relationality and vulnerability of bodies as well as its unequal and inequitable effects, while rethinking the notion of care itself from these ontological, political, and ethical premises.

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Introduction

Situated in Milan, Northern Italy, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I continuously witnessed institutional policies and discourses that arose from the seeming consequences of an aporetic disentanglement of capitalist relations of production and reproduction. Instead of critically considering the contentious and problematic nature of these institutional sites, the main governance techniques during the pandemic have reaffirmed a “There Is No Alternative” logic. Contrary to this backdrop of narratives and policy landscapes, practices of solidarity “from below”, such as food and medicine distribution, community childcare, mental health support, and others, have proliferated nationally and globally. In this way, vulnerability and its unequal distribution have come to orient and maintain relations of resistance.

Thinking through these events, I propose *affect-ability* as a philosophically productive term and tool to conceptualise resistant practices of care. In this article, I define and develop an account of affect-ability that is based on every body’s ability to affect and be affected. By underscoring the ontological relationality and exposure of bodies, this concept invokes ethical and political accountability for those who become affected and how they become affected. Through articulating bodies as always-already affected and affecting, care work can reproduce or resist current social processes of normalisation, while exposing the connections among ontological, ethical, and political dimensions of care practices.

The “Two Crisis” of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, questions of care, social reproduction, and health have come to the forefront of political debate and organisation. Exposing the lacks, inequalities, and discontinuities in the infrastructures which sustain life, the pandemic has reinforced activist demands against cuts and privatisation of healthcare services, exclusion of care workers from basic labour rights, and shortages in medicine and vaccine distribution across global divides, among other terrains of struggles. Moreover, protests in several countries highlighted that the pandemic has not only affected populations in terms of its immediate effects on health, but it has crucially severed pre-existing structures of inequality and marginalisation.

The conditions which “make life possible” have been under attack more intensely, not only by the risks immediately related to one’s health and care necessities, but also by what has been described as a *financial crisis* taking place at the same time as the *health crisis*. Indeed, companies ceasing production temporarily or going bankrupt, uncertainty in the financial market, and shrinkages in the demand of goods have catalysed extremely high rates of job loss, home eviction and debt, thus exacerbating the more “direct” effects of the pandemic. If the nexus between these two crises – one productive and the other reproductive – is hence taken as a given in most hegemonic policies and discourses, I seek to destabilise this causal necessity by asking: why is the possibility to reproduce life thwarted in the moment economic production shrinks, slows down, or stops?

In Europe and in the United States, the current pandemic-induced financial crisis has already resulted in significantly higher falls in Gross Domestic Products (GDP) than those recorded from the financial crisis of 2007–2008. Considering narratives around the latter in its connection to another crisis – the so-called “refugee crisis” in Greece – Anna Carastathis, Aila Spathopoulou, and Myrto Tsilimpounidi observe:

What needs further unpacking, then, is the interdependency between the dominant understanding of crisis and the implied return to normativity. In most debates about the current crisis, questions about the future are limited to asking when things will return to ‘normal’. In other words, the massive social and political shock of the crisis and the destruction of the material conditions it imposes create nostalgia for what existed ‘before’, an uncritical acceptance of the conditions before the crisis (Carastathis, Spathopoulou, and Tsilimpounidi 2018, 31).

Such mobilisations of the notion of crisis thus go hand-in-hand with a naturalisation of the *status quo*. Translated to today’s landscape, I argue that speaking of “financial crisis” as a direct and necessary consequence of the “health crisis” caused by the pandemic may, in fact, hinder the unravelling of the capitalist ties between production and reproduction, which dangerously naturalises the ideology that decreases in economic growth are necessarily equivalent to interruptions in life sustainability.

Capitalist Reproduction and Counter-social Reproduction

The entanglement of capitalist relations of production and reproduction has been put under profound critical scrutiny by Marxist feminist thinkers attempting to elaborate a unitary analysis of the capitalist system which has converged into *social reproduction theory* (Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Vogel 2013; Bhattacharya 2017). Social reproduction theory aims to sever the ties between “labor dispensed to produce commodities and labor dispensed to produce people” as parts of the same “systemic totality” (Bhattacharya 2017, 2). Thus, this analytical apparatus may help explain how capitalist construction of such a monolithic system – seemingly without exogeneity: as the infamous Thatcherian slogan goes, “There Is No Alternative” – parallels the strategic exclusion and differential inclusion (Mezzadra and Nielsen 2013) of forms of labour traditionally outside wage mediation and/or undertaken in extremely precarious conditions on which the system is actually built, with care and reproductive work being among the most paradigmatic examples.

The marginalisation of reproduction as “unproductive” has often been accompanied, in capitalist societies as well as most of their economic analyses, by a process of feminisation and naturalisation of forms of labour relegated to the domestic sphere. The privatisation of social reproduction is discussed by Isabell Lorey (2015) in relation to contingent historical actualisations of precarity and autonomy. Through European modernity, the male white bourgeois subject is indeed affirmed as an autonomous being able to act “rationally” in the public sphere, as free as he is master of his own capacities to produce and possess (Lorey 2015, 29–30). As further analysed by Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007, 52–3), this process paradoxically proves the postulate, as in John Locke’s liberal notion of the body politic, that a white male subject is autonomous from

any external determination even in – and precisely by – its subjection to political rules. Against this backdrop, the kind of risk protection liberal governmentality offers for the white male citizen is fundamentally based

on the one hand, on the unpaid labour of women in the reproduction area of the private sphere; on the other hand, on the precarity of all those excluded from the nation-state compromise between capital and labour – whether as abnormal, foreign or poor – as well as those living under extreme conditions of exploitation in the colonies (Lorey 2015, 36).

Therefore, liberal articulations of autonomy are heavily premised on violently unequal regimes of precarity enabled by the naturalisation of free reproductive labour, as well as through systems of colonial exploitation and racialisation. How is it then possible to practice and account for autonomous forms of reproduction and care which – even temporarily – interrupt and/or resist the ties among capitalist, patriarchal and colonial regimes of production and exploitation?

The reproduction of relations that are resistant to the capitalist *status quo* has been defined by Helen Hester as “counter-social reproduction – that is, as *social reproduction against the reproduction of the social as it stands*” (2018, 64). Counter-social reproduction exceeds and resists the reproduction of labour-power; it is rather tied to shaping communities and infrastructures of care for marginalised lives and bodies. As argued by Silvia Federici on a similar distinction between the two dimensions of reproduction (2008), establishing what could, following Hester, be described as a form of “counter-care” is fundamental for the sustenance of social movements themselves. For instance, in thinking about the tradition of working-class mutual aid, Federici claims that, by radically re-composing care as a terrain of struggle, movements have been building, in parallel, collective forms of reproduction crucial to their own perpetuation (2008, 8). Reclaiming this “counter” dimension of reproduction, then, is itself an act of resistance – exploding capitalist monolithic logic by an autonomous socialisation of one of its pillars – and of care for resistance, essentially sustaining struggling communities.

Returning to the notion of crisis, counter-social reproduction may well constitute a crisis by means of its inherent interruption of capitalist gears, creating a crack which then opens space for another meaning of the word “crisis”: an open-ended moment of affirmative redefinition and social action. As framed by Carastathis, Spathopoulou, and Tsilimpounidi:

The question becomes how we can move from the state of emergency (crisis, precarity, displacement) to a state of transition (critique, resistance, occupation), and then to one of emergence (solidarity networks, different social formations, alternative economies) (Carastathis, Spathopoulou, and Tsilimpounidi 2018, 33).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, several moments of “emergence” have indeed occurred: solidarity networks unfolding from below, such as those in Northern Italy which proliferated concretely in food and medicine distribution, mental health hotline, legal support, and itinerant theatre performances, among others. These solidarity groups took action in support of the psycho-physical health of communities, as well

as in response to the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, thereby caring for the consequences of what, under capitalism, is an entangled health and financial crisis. These moments of emergence broke the causal necessity between the two precisely by reclaiming reproduction as a terrain of struggle and by creating caring and careful relations that exceed economic growth. Through these networks, I witnessed processes of political organisation that attempt to build communities that move *from and away from* unequal regimes of precarity and marginalisation. Learning from them, I now turn to unpack the ontological, political, and ethical premises on which forms of care as counter-reproduction can be built.

From the Power to Be Affected to Affect-ability

Affect-ability is a philosophically productive term and tool to rethink the concept of care in its resistant dimensions. By affect-ability I mean every body's ability to affect and be affected, which gestures towards a theory of bodies as inherently vulnerable, exposed and in-relation, both affected and affecting in non-neutral fields of power across unequal and inequitable regimes.

Let me first discuss the ontological aspects of this concept. A starting point for my conceptualisation of affect-ability is Gilles Deleuze's expression "*power to be affected*" [my italics], presented in the philosopher's reworking of Michel Foucault's theory of power (1988, 71). Moving from a Spinozian conception of affects, Deleuze argues that any exercise of power manifests itself as an affect (1988, 71). Against this backdrop, a power relation is a relation between forces, where forces are defined precisely by their power to affect and be affected: for instance, if to incite and to produce constitute active affects, then to be incited, or to be induced to produce, constitutes reactive affects (1988, 71). Reactive affects are, for Deleuze, not simply passive – the flipside of active affects – but rather *relational*, as there is an irreducible element which resides in the encounter between forces consisting in the "force affected [...] capacity for resistance" (1988, 71). In this Deleuzian account, the possibility of resistance then constitutes a third power of force – next to its power to affect and be affected – which stems from the encounter between active and reactive affects in relation to "a transformative outside" from which new sets of force relations can emerge (1988, 86).

Therefore, if the capacity to be affected, accordingly to Baruch Spinoza, made every body a possible vessel for increases and decreases of power, this capacity, in the Deleuzian reading, fundamentally turns into a form of power itself. Moreover, if forces are defined by their power to affect and be affected, force itself is inherently subject to exposure, and this exposure – or ontological susceptibility – establishes the relational potential of resistance: encounters of active and reactive affects can either result in the molecular constitution of a resistant outside, or be fixed within a particular set of reactive forces. For this reason, I consider this conceptualisation significant for theorising how care and reproduction can resist or reproduce specific processes of normalisation.

Looking more closely at the relationship between resistance and the capacity to affect or be affected, we can see that it performs two main and significant gestures: this relationship *problematizes the active/passive binarism*, while affirming *resistance as "primary"*. Considering the first point in Deleuze's description of the "power to be affected",

the possibility of resistance is catalysed precisely by the relationality immanent to any affective encounter, in which active and passive poles are not predetermined or distinguished, but only temporarily produced within specific phenomena. As further explained by Vinciane Despret (2013, 38), relating forces with affects invites renewed articulation of agency. In this context, there is no unidirectional movement or linear causality, but – as in Deleuze’s understanding of affects as relational – agents are activated precisely by being acted upon, affecting by letting themselves be affected and conferring to others the power to affect us. The second crucial aspect of Deleuze’s account of power that affirms affect-ability is that resistance “comes first” and can be regarded as “primary” in regard to power relations (Deleuze 1988, 89). Here, resistance functions as the inexhaustible and creative potentiality that continuously composes new diagrams of power by being in relation with the outside from which mutation and change emerge (1988, 90). These considerations articulate a reading of resistance as a state of becoming: always-already in-relation but never completely exhausted or reducible to a particular set of power relations. Thus, resistance cannot be accounted for solely in terms of subversion or contraposition to a norm, but becomes the possibility for new configurations which exceed existing power stratifications and destabilise previous categorisations. This understanding of resistance starts precisely from what is “exogenous” to capitalist relations, thereby avoiding the production of merely reactive discourse and practices which remain confined to pervasive and monolithic capitalist logic.

The *power* to be affected, then, allows for resistance to be theorised as a phenomenon where spheres of activity and passivity collapse, where affecting and being affected cannot be disjointed or distinguished as separate temporal moments, and where an ontological relationality and indeterminacy undergird and enable encounter. However, I would also like to confirm being affected and affecting as an *ability* – indeed, as *affect-ability* – instead of exclusively a power, in order to emphasise the ambivalent, normative, and opaque embodied dimensions of this capacity. After all, the power to affect and be affected is always-already situated in contexts which are not neutral, empty, or transparent. Presenting a similar critique in *Biopolitics of Feeling*, Kyla Schuller contends that any theory of affect which does not “interrogate how representations of affective capacity function as a key vector of racialization” remains within the same “biopolitical imaginary” that has first produced those hierarchies (2018, 15). To account for the production of these hierarchies, Schuller extensively explicates how the notion of “impressibility” – the capacity of internal responsiveness to external stimuli – has spawned, in nineteenth-century racial thought, an “animacy hierarchy,” assigning to racialised bodies “the impaired state of throwing off affects but being incapable of being affected by impressions themselves” (2018, 13). In contrast to this “unimpressibility”, the European subject was represented as having the capacity to absorb external stimuli that functioned for his own development and process of self-reflection.

The hierarchical dimension produced through this kind of relational ontology is also highlighted in Ferreira da Silva’s theory on the constitution of self-determination for the white male subject, in which the transparency of the European subject is strictly tied to the “writing of the others of Europe in affectability” (2007, 134). This condition is defined by Ferreira da Silva as that “of being subjected to both natural (in the scientific

and lay sense) conditions and to others' power" (2007, XV). As Schuller's reflections on Ferreira da Silva's theory highlight, these two seemingly contradictory accounts of racialisation could actually describe two temporally adjacent aspects of the same process: what Ferreira da Silva calls "affectability" becomes, in fact, the precondition for Schuller's description of "unimpressibility" as the "lack" of "the self-constituting capacity of autopoiesis" which in nineteenth-century racial thought marked the racialised person as "easily moved and yet unable to retain the effects of those movements" (2018, 218, n.9). In line with this argument, Schuller also writes that "[a]ffective capacity depends on its definitional opposite, debility, for theoretical solidity" (2018, 13); hence, affect-ability relies on a normative outside to sustain and produce its internal effects.

For all these reasons, I argue that affect-ability has an inherently indeterminate ontological character which is nevertheless tied to its actualisation in specific bio/geopolitical fields; this necessitates an account of its constitutive exclusions, such as the figure of debility mentioned by Schuller. The notion of "debility" has been greatly discussed by theorist Jasbir K. Puar in *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (2017), where the term was attentively analysed "as a needed disruption (but also expose it as a collaborator) of the category of disability and as a triangulation of the ability/disability binary" (2017, XV) by foregrounding a biopolitical consideration on mass and long-term debilitation of racialised bodies. In "Prognosis time: Towards a geopolitics of affect, debility and capacity" (2009), Puar also defines debility as the opposite of affective capacity, where the latter is always in "steady tension," since bodies' encounters with "social, cultural, and capitalist infrastructures" often render affective capacity simultaneously "exploitative and exploited" (2009, 162). As affect-able bodies move – or don't move – within infrastructures which can capacitate as well as debilitate them, the same reliance on affective capacity as a mode of resistance must be problematised, also in view of what counts as a "political act" and/or "political space" in the first place, as well as how to establish an ethical account of affective hierarchies. Accordingly, I now turn to the political and ethical implications of the notion of affect-ability in the thinking and rethinking of care practices.

From Affect-ability to Resistant Practices of Care

By highlighting how "compulsory able-bodiedness" may generate exceptionalism-driven accounts of political subversion and resistance (Puar 2009, 165), Puar seems to question, in a similar spirit as Johanna Hedva, Hannah Arendt's understanding of the political as "any action that is performed in public" (Hedva 2016, 2). As Hedva contends, "if being present in public is what is required to be political, then whole swathes of the population can be deemed a-political – simply because they are not physically able to get their bodies into the street" (2016, 2). According to Hedva, it is precisely this normative logic which erases the differential in/accessibility of public spaces, especially for those bodies made sick by "regimes of oppression – particularly our current regime of neoliberal, white-supremacist, imperial-capitalist, cis-hetero-patriarchy" and thus carry "the historical trauma of this" (Hedva 2016, 7). Therefore, the indeterminacy inherent to "affect-ability" aims at reflecting the ambivalence of embodiment in relation to power, where affective capacity and debility are always already co-present and

unequally modulated, and where the problematisation of agency, as identified by Hedva for instance, can and should be accompanied by an account of the normative aspects and effects of affect as ability. Furthermore, the recentring of affective experience allows for a theorisation of politics as constituted by and through ordinary bodily enactments, resisting and reproducing specific relations of power by virtue of their affect-ability. This line of thought is indeed parallel to, and positioned within, a feminist tradition which aims to destabilise the political by bringing forth daily experienced forms of vulnerability – allegedly “private” “corpo-affective” (Górska 2016) events – as “not only already political but as transforming our understandings of what counts as political” (Cvetkovich 2012, 110). Drawing from feminist theory and activism, I would argue that this troubling of what counts as a “political act” and “political space” enables a critique of power which ties together its ontological, ethical, and political dimensions via an analysis of how quotidian bodies come to affect and be affected by different sets of forces. What kinds of relations are resisted and/or reproduced when we move from an understanding of bodies as affect-able: that is, as inherently vulnerable but unequally exposed to the workings of power?

Looking again at practices of care and mutual solidarity, they can be considered forms of politics which do not reproduce but resist the *status quo* while, at the same time, enabling for life in the present. Indeed, if liberal and neoliberal articulations of autonomy and dependency have catalysed the othering of reproduction through unequal regimes of precarity and exploitation, counter-social reproduction radically refuses the association of politics with the capacity to act independently in the public sphere. In fact, the exclusion and debilitation of marginalised and oppressed bodies are resisted through the creation of new political communities through solidarity. Thus, resistance in this sense involves the simultaneous material and discursive interruption of capitalist modes of reproduction and the reproduction of resistance itself. For this precise reason, recentring an ontological dimension of vulnerability and relationality – enabled by the conceptualisation of bodies as affect-able – troubles hegemonic understandings of embodiment and performance of the political.

In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler describes vulnerability as a condition which socially constitutes our bodies as sites of exposure, publicity, and interdependency (Butler 2004, 20). However, this condition is reflected and actualised in unequal regimes of security and protection (Butler 2004, 32). Therefore, thinking of bodies as inherently vulnerable or, as I am suggesting, “affect-able”, cannot shy away from ethical considerations of the unequal effects of vulnerability and exposure. Isabell Lorey similarly discusses how the articulation of autonomy in European societies has brought about the warding-off and othering of existential vulnerability, thus prioritising the security of some bodies over and against others (2015). The radical implication generated here and premised on every body’s interconnectedness calls for a formulation of ethics that starts at the juncture between ontological vulnerability and its differential affects in capitalist regimes of precarity. As Lorey stated in a talk with Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Bojana Cvejić, Isabell Lorey, Jasbir K. Puar, and Ana Vujanović, “the ambivalence between the relational difference and the possibilities of what is in common in difference can be a starting point for political arguments” (2012, 172). In fact, the unequal

socio-economic regimes of capitalist societies create the very conditions in which reproduction and production are hard to disentangle: exploited and oppressed bodies are also less secure against the risks imposed by a possible “health crisis”. LevFem Collective & Transnational Social Strike Platform, in their recent publication about the struggles around social reproduction taking place during COVID-19 pandemic, remarked that “women, migrants, workers, LGBTQI+” are the “people whose labor is deemed essential, but whose lives are considered disposable” (2021, 10).

Counter-practices of care therefore require a fundamental *response-ability*, a term coined by Donna Haraway (2008; 2016) to introduce a relational practice of accountability for how and whose lives come to matter in an ecology that centres creativity and the making of new relations in an affective encounter; in other words, response-ability is the ability to respond to being affected. Haraway’s concept distances “ability” from its unreflexive usage as a normative signifier of successful capacity and recast “the ability to respond is always-already embedded in incapacity – in indifference and in-ability to engage”, as argued by Magdalena Górska (2016, 265). This problematisation of the term “ability”, as I proposed from the start of this article, is indeed inherent to the concept of affect-ability itself, since its aim is to account for unequal geographies of affective capacity while fostering an ethical response to them. Understood this way, the ability to respond accompanies affect-ability as an ethical practice of learning to be affected, attending to our ontological relationality and otherness, as well as accounting for hierarchical displacements and differential affections, ultimately creating careful cracks where resistant encounters can thrive.

Conclusion

Autonomous rearticulations of care, such as those enacted by social movements during the pandemic, propose an actualisation of “autonomy” resistant to racial and patriarchal imaginaries of freedom through external prescription and individual self-formation. Reflecting and respecting the ability of every body to affect and be affected, these forms of care aim to make connections which enable different and response-able forms of living. In the words of Isabelle Stengers, counter-social reproduction should be premised on “turning interdependency [...] into an active constraint, a constraint that activates feeling, thinking, and imagining” (2017, 398).

For these reasons, the many experiences of mutual aid and solidarity from below practiced during the pandemic continue to foster relations, relationships, and relationalities beyond those mandated and expected effects of crises that have been taken for granted. Against this reactionary and conservative logic, these movements rose from the margins in order to denaturalise the *status quo* which created and enforced the very infrastructures that continue to privilege some bodies over others, thus reproducing hierarchies of vulnerability. Counter-social reproduction therefore holds tremendous radical potential in reshaping community through organisation and socialisation outside capitalist circuits: solidarity groups, such as those born in Italy and globally during the current pandemic, as well as those created long before this pandemic to practice mutual care and sustainment within marginalised communities, expose how an ordinary, accessible, and existential politics of care is inextricably

related to resisting hierarchical ontological and ethical categories. By proposing the lens of affect-ability, I aim to explore how one way to think, imagine, and dream of a responsive and response-able ontology, politics, and ethics of care can.

The political relevance of care has been of wide and profound discussion in different scholarly fields and social movements, all of which have variously highlighted the ambivalent natures, logics, motifs, and radical potentials of care (e.g., Fisher and Tronto 1990; Precarias a la deriva 2006; Mol 2008; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). My hope throughout this article is to offer another tool to add to the kit which can be used through collective thought and praxis around care. Affect-ability, as I have proposed it here, hints at an ontological dimension of resistance which is inextricably linked to an ethical response to the unequal political effects of vulnerability in community. This precondition for, and process of understanding, care can be resistant to capitalist paradigms of social reproduction aimed at reproducing inequalities and systems of dominance. Because the non-dualistic nature of reality prevents a rigid distinction between these two paradigms of social reproduction and power relations, we can but accept and embrace the thick complexity of embodied experiences and practices. The indeterminacy inherent to the notion of affect-ability itself is thus well-suited to keep these various dimensions and tensions together and alive, which in turn foreground what an ethics and politics of care could look like under these ontological premises.

As affect-able bodies organise, cracks within the present status quo emerge, exposing the resistant and careful politics of daily life.

Notes

1 Focusing on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy, these have encompassed dramatic increases in the levels of “absolute poverty” (at record high considering the last fifteen years), unemployment (only in the month of December 2020 occupation has fallen by more than 100,000 units, the 98% of which were job positions held by women), and homelessness (the ending of the moratorium of evictions imposed during the first sixteen months of the pandemic will result in around 10,000 evictions only in the metropolitan area of Milan). See ISTAT, 2021, “Le Statistiche dell’ISTAT Sulla Povertà. Anno 2020,” June 16, https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/06/REPORT_POVERTA_2020.pdf (last accessed: 28/08/2021); ISTAT, 2021, “Dicembre 2020. Occupati e disoccupati. Dati provvisori,” February 1, https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/02/Occupati-e-disoccupati_dicembre_2020.pdf (last accessed: 28/08/2021); Ministero dell’Interno, 2020, “Procedure di rilascio di immobili ad uso abitativo (INT 00004).” September 14, last modified: 23/08/2021, http://ucs.interno.gov.it/ucs/contenuti/Procedure_di_rilascio_di_immobili_ad_uso_abitativo_int_00004-7734141.htm (last accessed: 31/08/2021), with reference to the data of 2020.

2 See, for instance, CONSOB, “La crisi da COVID-19: dalla crisi sanitaria alla crisi economica” [author’s translation: “COVID-19 crisis: from health crisis to financial crisis”], at <https://www.consob.it/web/investor-education/crisi-sanitaria-economica> (last accessed: 26/08/2021). Notably, if the above-mentioned consequences of the financial crisis are considered as necessary consequences of the pandemic, nonetheless, parallel discourses highlight how this financial crisis is different, for example, from the one of 2007–2008 as it is of “exogenous” origin to the financial market (see, for instance, Giuseppe Capuano [head of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development], 2020, “Coronavirus, crisi economiche a confronto” [author’s translation: “Coronavirus: financial crises in comparison”], March 8, <https://www.startmag.it/economia/crisi-economiche-a-confronto/> [last accessed: 26/08/2021]). Hence, it could be argued the relation of capitalist economic system with its “outside” is differentially produced and posited when it comes to determining the origins and effects of the “crises”.

3 This theory is partly premised on the work of feminists from the International Wages Against Housework Committees in the ‘70s, highlighting reproduction as a gender-specific site of both oppression and exploitation with the function to reproduce capitalist social and labour regimes (Dalla Costa and James 1975; Federici 2012).

4 Contemporary actualisations of social reproduction in the Global North have foreseen partial reshufflings of Fordist models of heteronormative domesticity. However, shifts in socio-economic paradigms are also to be understood in continuity with the perpetuation of structures of dominance and oppression (Lorey 2015, 68-69). Indeed, fragmentary and class-specific changes in the “bread-winner” model are nonetheless accompanied by a reinforcing of colonial lines of power in the definition of regimes of precarity in the labour of care (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2014). In fact, migration regulations foster the production of internal/external borders in a labour market greatly “supplied by cheap migrant labour” from care and domestic workers who are mostly excluded from “any social benefits, unemployment and health insurance” (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2014, 195). Thus, social reproduction is still greatly articulated alongside those lines of power which are structural to the constitution of the capitalist system.

5 For more comprehensive accounts of experiences of solidarity across different countries during the pandemic see also Sitrin and Colective Sembrar (2020), and the abovementioned LevFem (2021).

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Biography

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