

Introduction to Special Issue, *Gender, Work & Organization*

Editors:

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Social Reproduction: Households, Public Policies, and Alternative Organizing

Abstract

This special issue (SI) contributes to a growing body of work in the fields of management and organization studies focusing on the complex relationship between social reproduction and inequalities in paid work and organizations. In this introduction to the SI, we first identify three key areas of inquiry relevant to the study of social reproduction: challenging the boundaries of productive and reproductive labor; inequalities and exploitation; and alternative organizing. We then present the seven papers of the SI that draw on research from Australia, South America, Spain, Turkey, the UK, and the US to contribute to the aforementioned areas, foregrounding distinctive social reproduction dynamics manifesting in the household and alternative organizations (cooperatives), and facilitated by state policies. Based on these contributions, we propose an agenda for future research on social reproduction that aims to address the persistence and potential transformation of the existing gender, class, and race orders. We call for future studies exploring changing parenthood roles and how these affect the organization of re/production tasks; for research revealing and investigating underlying inequalities (re)produced by public policy; for analyses of existing and potential forms of

feminist alternative organizing, and how these are sometimes hindered by heteropatriarchal structures; and for the study of social reproduction dynamics across cultural, socioeconomic and political contexts.

Keywords: Social reproduction; productive and reproductive labor; inequality; alternative organizing; gender; public policy

Introduction

Capitalism builds from two separate but conjoined spaces: the space of production and the space of reproduction (Arruzza & Gawel, 2020). Feminist research first turned to social reproduction during the 1960s and 1970s, offering a critique of capitalist hierarchies of production and reproduction, which naturalize exploitative social relations and prioritize waged workers over unwaged (Federici, 2019). Autonomist feminists stressed the importance of making women's unpaid labor visible at home and beyond (James, 1975; Federici, 2014; Motta, 2013), going beyond Marx's analysis of capitalism (1990) by addressing the relationship between labor power and the conditions that sustain it (Vogel, 1983). Labor power underlying production is not self-regenerating or self-sustaining. Three intertwined processes (re)produce labor power: activities that replenish the worker outside work (e.g., food, affection, care, recovery); activities that sustain and care for non-workers outside paid work (e.g., childcare, elderly care), and finally, reproducing new future workers via childbirth (see Fraser, 2017).

Research on social reproduction broadens our understanding of capitalism beyond the production of material goods, to also account for daily and generational reproductive labor, undertaken primarily by women and within households, but also in schools, hospitals, and other institutions (Ferguson, 2020; Laslett & Brenner, 1989; Vogel, 1983). A social reproduction perspective recognizes women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care responsibilities and how these contribute to women's continued subordination and undergird men's participation in the formal labor force (Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013; Federici, 2012). In addition to childbirth and care work, social reproduction includes the socialization of the workforce, the (re)production of culture, and care for the environment (see for example, Bhattacharya, 2017; Ferguson, 2020).

While there has been renewed interest in social reproduction in the fields of feminist politics, education and economic geography (Mezzadri, 2022; Murtola & Vallely, 2023; Nassif, 2022; Bowlby et al., 2023), our call for papers for this special issue (SI), launched before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, responded to a scarcity of research in management and organization journals directly addressing the interrelationship between productive and reproductive labor. As the articles submitted to this SI were under peer review, organizational journals began publishing more papers on social reproduction (e.g., Nassif, 2022; Zulfiqar, 2022a, 2022b). For example, Leap et al. (2022) explored migrant workers in the US, who produced and distributed personal protective equipment during the early pandemic. By framing social reproduction as choreography, the research illuminates how these migrant workers, in adapting to new paid employment, both perpetuated and challenged gendered inequalities in their households and communities. Other work published since 2020 turned to the global South, highlighting the intersection of reproductive work and women's informal paid labor in urban settings (Parizeau, 2023). Recent research also explores the fragility of social reproduction strategies that migrant households employ across spaces and the precarity emerging from the challenges of social reproduction faced in rural communities (Green & Estes, 2022). Other papers investigate social reproduction in relation to land as a contemporary realm of feminist power and women's survival struggle (Ossome, 2021; Ossome & Naidu, 2021).

Building on both past and recent work, this SI offers an opportunity to comprehensively address the gendered aspects of social reproduction in the context of exploitative capitalist development and the defunding of social welfare. In selecting articles for this SI, we sought deep analyses of resistance to discrimination and exploitation, and exploration of the ways in which the separation of the productive and reproductive spheres contributes to the crisis of capitalism and

its gendered impacts. Additionally, this SI seeks to shine light on the role of alternative organizing structures in addressing this crisis (Cheney et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2014; Phillips & Jeanes, 2018).

Social Reproduction in Management and Organizations

We identify three main existing lines of inquiry in management and organization studies with relevance to social reproduction: a) Challenging the boundaries of productive and reproductive labor; b) Inequalities and exploitation; and c) Alternative organizing.

Challenging the boundaries of productive and reproductive labor

Abundant research focuses on how people navigate their personal and work lives, recognizing that work commitments exert pressure on families and personal pursuits outside employment (Allen et al., 2000; Bianchi & Milkie 2010; Kossek, Perrigino, & Rock, 2021; Ilies et al., 2007). Similarly, family responsibilities, along with the negotiation and decision-making processes taking place within households, influence the extent to which and how people engage with paid work (Bowles & McGinn, 2008; Nohe, Michel & Sonntag, 2014). One line of research has discussed gender inequalities within households and in the workplace, highlighting the potentially transformative role of engaged fatherhood (Grau-Grau, Las Heras, & Bowles, 2021; Brandth & Kvande, 2019; Kvande & Brandth, 2019; Petts & Knoester, 2018; Tanquerel & Grau-Grau, 2020). Recent research has claimed that reverberations from the COVID-19 pandemic may trigger increases in men's participation in childcare and improve women's position in the labor market (e.g., Sevilla & Smith, 2020). Across the world, however, the impacts of the pandemic have exposed "vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic" (United Nations, 2020, p.2). More mothers than fathers were forced to reduce paid work hours during the pandemic, because

of increased pressures from family responsibilities (Collins et al., 2021). While it is still early for clear conclusions, the restructuring of home, education and employment through the pandemic may ultimately exacerbate social and gendered inequalities (e.g., Andrew et al., 2020; Wenham et al., 2020; Wasdani & Prasad, 2020).

A different body of organizational research touching on social reproduction exposes organizations as “greedy” (Goldin, 2021), perpetuating the myth of the ideal worker through demands of extreme work hours and the provision of wrap-around services within the workplace, enabling even longer work hours (Lupu, Ruiz-Castro & Leca, 2022; Padavic, Ely & Reid, 2020; Reid, 2015; Ruiz-Castro, 2012). When the neo-traditional adaptive strategies persist, the well-being of the family (rather than that of women) remains a priority, leaving women responsible for trying to find the “desirable” work-life balance: “By maintaining reproduction as part of middle-class or so-called aspirational women’s normative trajectory and positing *balance* as its normative frame and ultimate ideal, neoliberal *feminism* helps to maintain a discourse of reproduction and care-work while at the same time ensuring that all responsibility for these forms of labor – but not necessarily all of the labor itself – falls squarely on the shoulders of so-called aspirational women” (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg: 2020, p.8; emphasis in original). The same socio-economic processes sustain the labor serving the production of goods and services and the labor fueling social reproduction (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006).

Social reproduction scholars consider the separation and the interweaving of the public (masculinized) and private (feminized) spheres, and the institutional structures that support them, when discussing inequalities in work, households, and policy settings. Within this line of inquiry, there is also focus on how economic, social, and political events influence labor

inside and outside workplaces. The shift from making physical products – “production” – to making money – “financialization” – is generating new struggles in the reproductive sphere, manifested in increasing inequality and housing challenges (Lin & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2013; Wöhl, 2017). Recognizing reproductive labor as part of capitalist labor relations constitutes “a revolutionary demand” (Federici, 2012) that requires addressing exploitative social structures and the organization of alternative forms of work and care.

Inequalities and exploitation

A second line of social reproduction-related enquiry within organizational scholarship focuses on inequalities in work and organizations. This research shows how specific groups of people are exploited and discriminated against to perpetuate the status quo in homes, organizations, and societies (Carlin & Federici, 2014; Pattenden & Wastuti, 2023; Mezzadri, 2023; Motta, 2013; Sultana, 2012). As feminist geographers have highlighted, various continuities and disconnections, promoted institutional structures, contribute to the production of gendered subjectivities and inequalities (Katz, 2001; Elson 2012; Roberts, 2008; Roberts & Zulfikar, 2019). An illustrative study of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon underscores how workers suffered grave human rights abuses as the visa sponsorship system changed in response to COVID-19, making migrants’ places within households even more precarious (Nassif, 2022). The study sheds light on the dual role of migrant workers as both as providers of care and as receivers of support offered by a network of engaged community leaders and activists. Another recent study in this area draws on social reproduction theory to criticize corporate wellness initiatives for their individualistic stance, arguing that the wellbeing of every individual worker is dependent on the efforts of many unacknowledged workers whose wellbeing is often sacrificed for the wellbeing of others (Murtola & Vallely, 2023).

Related research has also examined how categories of oppression, including class, gender, race, and ableism “are co-produced in simultaneity with the production of surplus value” (Bhattacharya, 2017, p.14), creating and reproducing simultaneous forms of oppression over time. Focusing on the gendered implications of COVID-19 in the Global South, Al-Ali (2020) proposed that intersectional pre-existing inequalities gave rise to specific risks and vulnerabilities for specific groups such as ethnic minorities, domestic workers, migrants and sex workers. Scholars have argued that to effectively resist the persistent exploitation of members of low power groups, along with the devaluation of their reproductive labor, it is necessary to cultivate communal forms of living that allow practice of solidarity and the re-appropriation of the resources created through reproduction (Carlin & Federici, 2014). Such views offer a robust critique of power relations, stressing that, scholars studying structural inequalities ought to shift analyses of social reproduction from an individualistic perspective to a focus on reciprocal and communitarian practices (Gómez Becerra & Muneri-Wangari, 2021).

Alternative organizing

Continuing the focus on challenging and transforming inequality regimes, a third line of enquiry turns on alternative approaches to organizing production and reproduction (Atzeni, 2012). This body of work, which illuminates how normative forms of organizing maintain the status quo and perpetuate inequality in the realms of both production and reproduction (Acker, 2006; Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020; Ridgeway, 2013), offers glimpses into potentially radical reconfigurations prompted by new ways of managing homes, schools, care sectors and workplaces. Research on alternative approaches to organizing moved into mainstream organizational journals during the economic crisis of the early 2000s, and continues to grow with the inclusion of a diverse set of management and organizational topics such as social

entrepreneurship and hybrid organizations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Phillips et al., 2015), sustainable economies (Ergene, Banerjee & Hoffman, 2021), and cooperative organizing (Cheney et al., 2014; Rothschild, 2009).

Alternatives, such as mutual aid groups and community solidarity initiatives, have the potential to subvert and transgress the gendered division of labor that de-politicizes and individualizes social reproduction (Daskalaki, 2021), explicitly intertwining the personal with the political (De Peuter & Dyer-Witheford, 2010). This line of research not only presents the limitations of traditional structures but also offers new avenues for radical transformation in different fields. Scholars have focused on the significance of women's involvement in alternative organizational forms (Daskalaki & Fotaki, 2017; Manning, 2021; Rodriguez Castro, 2021). During the height of the pandemic, for example, alternative organizational forms emerged to offer support and care to those who were marginalized during the lockdowns, filling voids left by governments (e.g., Sitrin & Sembrar, 2020; Chevée, 2022). The role of mutual aid groups in responding to care needs during the COVID-19 pandemic provided evidence that social reproduction is ultimately a collective care practice rather than a private responsibility (Travlou, 2020; Kavada, 2022).

Viewing collectives as a crucial site of struggle against inequalities innate to dominant organizational forms, the entire activity of the people who perform alternative organizing takes a new meaning: Alternatives express the will to resolve the crisis of patriarchy and neoliberal models upon which current forms of capitalism are built by exploring other ways of structuring reproduction (Cheney et al., 2014). Women's participation in self-reproducing movements with emancipatory and transformative potential (Daskalaki, 2021) creates spaces where people

have the power to re-appropriate the commons and transcend the traditional boundaries of public–private and formal–informal economic spheres (Federici, 2012).

In summary, this SI aims to contribute to these three lines of inquiry, deepening our scholarly understanding of the interwoven systems of re/production under capitalism. It offers a critical analysis of efforts to address the boundaries of productive and reproductive work, discusses the impact of public policies in addressing inequalities related to social reproduction, and offers insights on alternative organizational forms in the context of social reproduction.

Contributions to this special issue

This SI features studies that investigate the complex ways in which current forms of social reproduction may be challenged and potentially transformed by reconfigurations in intra-household relations, organizational and public policies, and alternative approaches to organizing. We solicited research that explores openings for transformations in the distribution of childcare and housework, social mobility, and modes of engagement with paid work. Reflecting the quality of submissions from scholars from the Global North and South, this SI includes seven articles covering research conducted in Australia, South America, Europe and North America. The studies are set in three major arenas for social reproduction: the household and family, organizations/cooperatives, and the state. The articles illuminate the role of individuals, economic forces, governmental policies, and welfare systems in maintaining and transforming social relations, hierarchies, and ideologies of production and social reproduction.

Núria Sánchez-Mira's study, “(Un)doing gender in female breadwinner households: Gender relations and structural change” (2021) explores an ultimately transitory challenge to the gendered breadwinner and homemaker roles within the historical and economic context of the

2008 economic crisis in Spain. Her study shows how men's job losses and wage cuts altered both men's and women's daily lives. In the dual-career, working-class families she studied, women became primary breadwinners to make up for losses in their partners' incomes. Sánchez-Mira analyzed couples' everyday practices, identifying patterns of renegotiation of the division of housework and childcare as well as the meanings attributed to women's breadwinning role. Women presented themselves as involuntary breadwinners, and their altered status was transitory; households reverted to male-breadwinner or co-breadwinner arrangements as soon as men found full-time employment again. Regardless of family arrangement or the type of employment women engaged in during the period of men's un(der)employment, there was little evidence of a sustained increase in male involvement in housework or childcare. Men's identity as breadwinners persisted even when the recession deprived them of the "ability to factually adjust to such ideal" (Sánchez-Mira, 2021, p.12).

Banister and Kerrane's article, "Glimpses of change? UK fathers navigating work and care within the context of Shared Parental Leave" (2022) also explores changes in household relations. The external prompt in their study is an expanding national parental leave policy in the UK rather than changes in men's employment. Their findings offer a path toward sustained increases in fathers' involvement in childcare. By studying the lived experiences of professionally employed fathers who were first-wave beneficiaries of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) in the UK, Banister and Kerrane show how the intersection of family relations, organizational initiatives and public policy helped transform fathers' experiences and expectations around childcare. The longitudinal design of their study allowed them to capture fathers' lived experiences at two points: pre/during their period of parental leave and then following their return to work. The evidence they share in their article reveals the potential for public policies to help disrupt the intergenerational transmission of gendered parenting

ideology. Some, but not all, of the fathers they interviewed “sought to disrupt generational biographies” and were critical of the traditional gender role their own fathers played. The study highlights the transformational potential of shared parental leave policy, illustrating how a subset of fathers subsequently altered their work practices to make themselves available for ongoing, hands-on participation in the care and upbringing of their children.

Sánchez-Mira (2021) and Banister and Kerrane (2022) sought to identify signs of change in the classed and gendered social structure that sustains social reproduction, wherein men are socialized and prepared for paid labor and women for unpaid labor within households. Referring to the notion of “undoing gender” (Butler, 2004), these papers show how dominant discourses and expectations around gender roles occur within cultural contexts such as homes and labor markets, and are shaped by governmental policies. Shifts within these cultural contexts contribute to both sustaining (in the case of Spain) and potentially transforming (in the case of the UK) productive and reproductive roles and the gendered values ascribed to those roles.

Similarly, Arifeen and Syed’s contribution, “Social reproduction and gender beliefs of ethnic minority women”, (2022) explores how the interplay of cultures of origin and local cultures can gradually transform women’s life choices. Drawing on life story interviews of highly educated second-generation British Pakistani women, this study contributes to prior conversations in social reproduction and diversity research by exploring social reproduction across cultures. The authors unpack the mechanisms of social reproduction, the push and pull of two cultures in the creation of gender beliefs, and how women negotiate across these beliefs when making work-life choices. In the face of gendered expectations rooted in their ethnic origin that encouraged leaving paid work after having a child and pressures from their families

to conform to traditional Pakistani gender roles, women drew on British host country beliefs in their decisions to remain in paid work full-time.

While social reproduction theory has been criticized for being overly deterministic and focusing on stability rather than change (Bakker, 2007), the studies of Banister and Kerrane (2022) and Arifeen and Syed (2022) present compelling evidence that well-designed and effectively implemented family policies, along with interactions across cultures, have the potential to change beliefs and behaviors. Both of these papers focus on highly educated individuals. In Banister and Kerrane's paper, change comes gradually with an evolution of the social context and women's consolidation of their positions in white-collar jobs and inside the family through their money-earning status. The changes noted across the two studies are not radical. They would better be catalogued as glimpses of change, revealing that change is possible while simultaneously illuminating how even incremental and gradual transformations in social reproduction involve continuous battles over equality within institutions such as marriage and parenthood.

Moving from changes within households to how social reproduction manifests in organizations and organizing, two papers in this SI examine the role of women's cooperatives in shaping social reproduction practices. Price-Glynn's article, "An ideology of collective-intensive mothering: The gendered organization of care in a babysitting cooperative", (2022) offers a qualitative study of a babysitting cooperative (co-op) in Oakland, California. Her interviews with parents involved in the co-op revealed contradictory outcomes that both relieved and burdened the parents. Interviews provided evidence that the co-op, which offered reciprocity-based, short-term childcare for members, most of whom were mothers, created and reinforced an ideology of collective-intensive mothering. In essence, the co-op acted as a group form of

intensified caregiving. Thus, instead of alleviating mothers' responsibilities, the co-op often expanded parenting expectations women had for themselves and others by emphasizing a need for continual improvement in care and constant dedication to children's needs.

In a second paper on organizations conceived to build cooperation among women, "The political economy of women's cooperatives in Turkey: A social reproduction perspective", Ugur-Cinar, Cinar, Onculer-Yayalar and Akyuz (2022) examined the viability of women's engagement in employment cooperatives in Turkey. The authors question the permeable connections between women's sustained membership in cooperatives and expectations for women's duties at home. Through in-depth interviews with current and past members from across Turkey, the analysis revealed three intertwined factors significant in determining women's continued participation in the cooperatives: the conservative, patriarchal regime within families and society; the governmental policies and practices that convey and propagate gendered ideals and norms; and the material and social resources women had at hand due to their membership in different social classes. The authors show how assignment to the primary role as homemakers and care providers requires that women negotiate their participation in cooperatives with their husbands and extended family. Younger women, those with more children, and those with less education and fewer cultural and financial resources experienced greater challenges in participating in cooperatives. Neoconservative Turkish state policies offer little support for women's education or skill development, making family negotiations more difficult and exacerbating the tenuous nature of women's cooperatives, which often fail due to members' lack of business knowledge and skills. With sparse institutional support, women's participation relies on individuals' access to class-based material resources, expertise and assistance.

The last two papers in the SI highlight the impact of public policies in maintaining and transforming social reproduction. In their article, “Childcare by migrant nannies and migrant grannies: A critical discourse analysis of new policy solutions for securing reproductive labor in Australian households”, Hamilton, Kintominas and Adamson (2021) turn our attention toward domestic workers, whose paid employment and structurally enforced low status within households allow parents to make different choices than they could without this support. Analyzing discourse within governmental and media documents related to policy changes concerning migrant care providers – nannies and grannies – in Australia between 2013 and 2019, the authors uncover how debates concerning migrant nannies and migrant grannies were framed, denying the value of migrant grannies’ contributions to Australian households. Both policy and media documents cast migrant grandmothers’ reproductive labor as nonwork, foreclosing alternative means of pursuing a more just and equitable care system, as well as more just and fair compensation for migrant workers. Unlike the mainly positive results attributed to changes in the shared parental leave policy studied by Banister and Kerrane, the policy and media documents analyzed by Hamilton and colleagues activate the gendered framing of childcare as “women’s work” and divert attention away from the need to redress underlying gender inequities in the division of reproductive labor.

Finally, Marcondes, Farah and Alves’s (2022) article, “Gender mainstreaming and frame analysis: A qualitative study of childcare policies in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay during Latin America’s left turn”, provides a rich interrogation of original source documents concerning national changes in childcare policies in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay during Latin America’s political turn in the 1990s. Similar to the work of Hamilton and colleagues in this SI, this comparative study focuses on initiating and implementing public policies that help reconfigure social reproduction. By examining how and to what extent the design and

implementation of new childcare policies incorporated gender equality perspectives, the study finds quite different results across the three countries. The documents Marcondes et al. (2022) analyze reveal a constant focus on gender equality in the design and implementation of policies only in Uruguay, where feminists actors remained central throughout the process. In Argentina, other leftist actors such as unions and educational groups countered gender equality frames with protectionist frames focusing on children and mothers, presenting mothers as the parent with “primary responsibility” for their children, leaving fathers essentially out of the new laws. Similarly in Brazil, civil coalitions countered feminist approaches and policymakers paid little attention to gender equality in enacting changes to childcare policies. Reflecting on the relatively successful case of Uruguay, the authors attribute the successful adoption of transformational policies to feminist actors’ ability to engage a broad coalition, including civil actors, government representatives and legislative members of different parties, in framing the discourse around gender equality.

Social reproduction: Future research agenda

This SI proposes social reproduction as a lens within management and organizational studies to examine the persistence and potential transformation of the existing gender, class, and race orders. The contributions summarized above collectively set the stage for a robust future research agenda in the field of social reproduction. Building from the contributions in this issue, we offer suggestions for future research at three levels of analysis.

Explore changing parental dynamics within households and the implications for social reproduction. At the household level, the papers in this SI highlight the relevance and importance of exploring the nature of and changes in parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood in the context of broader social, cultural and policy changes. We call on future research to

further illuminate potential paths for radical reorganization of intra-household reproductive tasks, because eliminating persistent gender inequality requires such reorganization. As Claudia Goldin laid out in her acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Economics, “the final act in the gender gap saga cannot be written until couples share more” (Goldin, 2023). As future scholars study radical reorganizations in homes, their work will need to consider how changes to the allocation of reproductive activities within families, in turn, challenge capitalist orders. Future research should continue to explore shifting perceptions and practices of fatherhood and examine how these shifts contribute to changes within households and within societies. Finally, scholars could examine how new life patterns, especially among younger people, may reshape the spatial and temporal relationships between reproduction and production.

Analyze how alternative forms of organizing could shift the social order of reproduction and production. At the organizational level, the papers in this SI highlight the variability in alternative organizing, not only in organizational form and function but also in interaction with cultural constructs shaping involvement in the organizations. Cultural constraints assigning women the primary caretaker role or defining acceptable approaches to parenting may hinder both women’s and men’s ability to participate in cooperatives (Price-Glynn, 2022; Ugur-Cinar et al., 2022). The novelty of conclusions reached across unique contexts in this SI suggest that further similar work is needed to make visible the powerful forces and discourses that valorize the status quo and restrict changes to the productive, reproductive and community roles of marginalized populations. We encourage scholars to apply an intersectional lens to examine how different forms of identity intersect within alternative organizing and its implications for changes to the social order of reproduction and production. Future research could also explore how various educational initiatives, governmental as well as organizational, can provide

legitimacy to enhance the appeal of alternative forms of organizing, and toolkits that may enhance their efficacy.

Unmask social reproduction dynamics across diverse cultural settings and unveil underlying inequalities (re)produced by public policy. Buoyed by the example of the papers in this SI, we encourage and underscore the need to decolonize the study of social reproduction (Crawford, 2018; Hall, 2016), and to explore social reproduction in different institutions across cultural, socioeconomic and political contexts. At the policy level, several of the studies in this SI noted the need to identify underlying gender, class and race inequalities that public policies (re)produce or address, including the impact of policies on individuals, households and communities. To reveal the dynamics between policies and inequalities, scholars could undertake longitudinal studies to monitor the evolution of policy impact over time and measure time-linked changes in gender inequalities. Marcondes et al.'s findings (2022) point to the importance of examining language and framing of new policies and how political actors use self-serving narratives to shape policy details, implementation and public perceptions. Focusing on how public perception affects the use of policies could enrich our understanding of the complex interplay between public policies and social dynamics, and pave the way for changes in practice.

Closing this introduction to the SI, we reiterate that social reproduction is a crucial site for power struggles over economic exploitation and social subjugation, as the space that sustains but also has the potential to resist structural and gendered inequalities. A focus on social reproduction reveals that struggles for equality cannot be bound to production alone, “without considering the myriad social relations extending between workplaces, homes, schools, hospitals—a wider social whole, sustained and coproduced by human labor in contradictory

yet constitutive ways” (Bhattacharya, 2017: 3). Feminist approaches have provided a critique of the separation of public (masculinized) and private (feminized) spheres and stressed the importance of making visible women’s unpaid labor at home, to critique capitalist political economy (Daskalaki et al., 2021; Motta, 2013). This special issue aims to broaden the debate by challenging the binaries of production/reproduction and public/private. It seeks to uncover the dynamics that interact to render some people more vulnerable than others, thereby addressing complex and intersecting inequalities, oppressions, and exclusions.

Special Issue Editors

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