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Rethinking Social Reproduction and the Urban

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Introduction

As we move through the 21st century, the changing geographies of urbanization, increasingly unfettered capital accumulation, unprecedented levels of migration, and crises of climate and viral pandemics, have added further urgency to the seemingly intractable question of which categories and methods are adequate to understanding and researching the urban. And yet, notwithstanding their increasing inability to explain 21st century urbanization and urbanism in their 'infinite variety', the 19th and 20th century economic compacts upon which mainstream and Marxist urban theory have been based – the nexus of urban land, circuits of capital, production, and agglomeration economies – remain in place. While it is still customary to approach the contemporary urban by recounting the shifts in the structures and agendas of capitalism and the impacts of these shifts on daily life, we contend it is not possible to think through the urban without considering the role and relations of social reproduction: which are neither

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subordinate to production, nor an embellishment; neither something to be 'added to urban theory', nor an after-effect to the analysis of processes of urbanization that was assumed adequate without it. Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the global crisis in social reproduction, large swathes of mainstream and critical urban scholarship continuously fail to recognize both the analytical interdependence between relations of social reproduction and production, and how this interdependence shapes social relations and urban futures. It has been left to feminist urban scholars, time and again, to call attention to the radical incompleteness of urban thought, decrying theory that writes life and lives out of time and place[1] (see, for example, Kollontai 1977 [1909]; Burnett 1973; Hayford 1974; Lofland 1975; Mackenzie 1980; Markusen 1980; Wekerle 1980; Hayden 1983; Ferguson *et al*. 2016; Fernandez 2018; Kanes Weissman 2000; Rendell, Penner, and Borden 2000; Spain 2002; Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2004; Meehan and Strauss 2015; Miraftab 2016; Peake 2017; Pratt 2018; Ruddick *et al*. 2018). We offer this book with the hope that is amplifies and resonates with this long-growing feminist chorus.[2]

Our central problematic, then, is to ask how social reproduction might generate different ways of knowing and investigating the urban in its constitutive and regulative relations. We have argued previously (Peake *et al*. 2018; Ruddick *et al*. 2018) that in terms of their social ontology, urban geographies are geographies of living, yet urban theories have distilled this living to capital and wage-labour in processes of production. This filtering process is part of the hierarchical knowledge production in which the knower's positionality is integral to theorizing and valuing subjectivity and experience. The dominant Enlightenment-bequeathed academic knowledge system of phallogocentrism – the privileging of determinateness and of the masculine (Derrida 1978; Cixous and Clément 1986 [1975]) – has sundered economic production and social reproduction, pitting them against each other as dichotomous opposites and privileging economic production over social reproduction. The dominant urban epistemology is thus one in which economic production and social reproduction have been historically presented as separate and different, both geographically and analytically, signifying domination and subordination, greater and lesser value, respectively. We start however from a problematic of the constitution of economic production and social reproduction as inseparable; they are two dimensions of one integrated system that are constructed, temporally and spatially, in processual relation to each other and marked by differentiation and struggle. We also start not with a notion of being 'different', but with social difference, which we understand conceptually as 'relational connectedness' (see Ware 1992, p. 119), whereby colonial, patriarchal, racist, and heteronormative disciplinary systems of domination and oppression play out through processes of production and social

reproduction, attempting to determine who has the right to belong and the right to life itself. Finally, we argue that the potential for urban transformation lies both in the small slippages and seemingly prosaic aspects of everyday life, as well as in more exceptional events and encounters, organized and spontaneous struggles, and in the supplemental space of undecidability and indeterminacy.

The process of the urban coming into being through the relational connectedness of social reproduction and production is thus never fully complete. Only partially determined, this urban process is exceeded both by the struggle of contending classes within capitalist history, including its present, and by the social and political relations that reverberate within histories that can neither be sedimented as, nor absorbed by, the history of capitalism and its attendant structures of subjectivity. We argue that the enduring necessity of social reproduction constitutes an embodied openness to these different histories, an openness that is violently truncated by hegemonic regimes of exploitation and oppression. Tapping into this openness through the urban everyday, we can unsettle the apparent certitude of capitalist value-producing logic and its historical teleology. The urban, therefore, not only spatially conditions and mediates the unfolding of the capital-labour contradiction but it is also reshaped and reorganized in this process. Perhaps most importantly for our time, the spatial organization of embodied urbanization is open both to resurgent histories that resist the economy's subsumption of life and to everyday struggles that make other lives and futures possible. These too often ignored aspects of the urban come into focus in this book – an urban that opens to radical histories and struggles of life-making through social reproduction, and a social reproduction that is not an end in itself, but a methodological entry point into understanding how people in their everyday lives shape and reshape the spatial forms of their lives.

How then do we understand social reproduction? First, we consider social reproduction as a real object of knowledge – that is as a conceptually generative construct and productive way of knowing the urban, and of understanding how urbanization is being reorganized and resisted. Writing amidst the vestiges of modernity – of people-making, public space, freedom, citizenship (already profoundly limited forms) – that are all but eroded, we ask how people's agency, struggles, desires, hopes, and dreams, might be rethought in light of the erasure of the social wage and social contracts and their replacement by demonization, dispossession, and the downloading of responsibility for social life to 'the individual'. This increasing precarity of urban life and how this life is reproduced, in conjunction with the analytical framings used to examine them, has put the feminist intellectual and political project of social reproduction back on the urban agenda with a new urgency, engendering praxis and producing ideas that can be socially and epistemologically transformative

(see, for example, Teeple Hopkins 2015; Buckley and Strauss 2016; Andrucki *et al*. 2018; Chattopadhyay 2018; Peake *et al*. 2018; Winders and Smith 2019).

Second, notwithstanding the decisive role of social reproduction, it has formed only the theoretical 'constitutive outside' of the urban since non-feminist urban theorizing began (as the 'illegible domain that haunts the former domain as the spectre of its own impossibility, the very limit to intelligibility' Butler 1993, p. xi) (Peake 2016; Roy 2016b; Jazeel 2018; Ruddick *et al*. 2018). We ask how we can transition from treating social reproduction as a mere constitutive outside to being constitutive of how, where, when, and through whose labour the urban emerges. Hence, we see social reproduction as a real object of the urban – an empirical reality to be mapped, documented; a tableau that writes the urban even as it is written by it. Moreover, we consider the who, where, when, and how of social reproduction and the alternative social and spatial relations it produces to be historically contingent and only partially discernable through their specific relationship to the mode of production in which they are unfolding.

Third, our problematic also speaks directly to the imperative to decolonize feminist urban knowledge production, which is not free of hierarchical and imperial thought, produced within a social ontology shot through with whiteness and specific Western ideologies, values, and experiences. It is with this concern of decolonizing the epistemologies and ontologies of existing social reproduction analytical frameworks that we propose *social reproduction qua method* (Tanyildiz 2021), as a tool to think through the relationship between ontology and epistemology, which orients us towards how social reproduction is undertaken. As method, social reproduction is an attempt to explicitly connect some of the main aspects of critical feminist epistemologies – such as emphasizing the locatedness and partial nature of knowledge production and a willingness to continually scrutinize categories of analysis, embedded as they are in specific spatialities and temporalities – to feminist considerations of social ontology (cf. Ruddick *et al*. 2018). Foregrounding what social reproduction can do as an organizing lens at least partially frees us from predetermined sets of implicitly white and explicitly economically reductive analytical categories, providing a much-needed epistemological reflexivity. Such an intentionally open framework enables us to attend to the range of ways in which people shape the circumstances of daily life in relation to conditions of hegemonic capitalist production. This framework not only reveals how capitalist value-producing labour is predicated upon social reproductive labour – thereby providing a more robust analysis of the capitalist mode of production in its totality – it also moves us closer to understanding how the teleological philosophy of history put forward by the proponents of

capitalism (and reproduced by capitalist social relations) is only rendered possible through the everyday constriction of a host of other histories and the social relations and subjectivities that can organize life differently. Social reproduction as method is useful then because it does not require us to invest in a specific epistemology and ontology, thereby recognizing the necessity for other epistemologies and ontologies in the conversation.

Expounding social reproduction as method requires elaboration of the relationship between social relations and the relations of social reproduction, as both separate and in relation to each other. Social ontology does not ask 'what is' as classical ontology does. What social ontology does is to investigate the conditions of the possibility of society, the social, and social relations. Put differently, it orients us towards examining the reality of society, the social, and social relations in a formative and integrative fashion. Social reproduction, on the other hand, provides us with the omitted underbelly of society, the social, and social relations. For instance, it shows us: how capitalism (despite its seeming omnipotence) cannot reproduce itself in a capitalist fashion; how capitalism (despite its constantly discarding people out of the wage-labour relation into the reserve army of labour) needs those very 'disposible' peoples for its futurity; how this reveals that (despite patriarchy, white supremacy, and other forms of oppression) women, people of colour, and other oppressed subjects are absolutely essential for the survival of society; and, therefore, how resistance and struggle for the liberation of these peoples are necessary for a better world. What social reproduction does is to give a fuller, more wholesome picture of the society we live in (Tanyildiz 2021). Such rethinking moves us away from considering social reproduction as a unitary theory of oppression towards comprehending it as a method that accounts for the historicities and spatialities of its variegated mobilizations, organizations, and praxes of the particular investigation under consideration. At the same time, forwarding social reproduction as method ensures that social reproduction does not assume another untethered epistemological salience and autonomy.

Social Reproduction

Most conceptualizations of social reproduction and its relationship to capitalist production, especially those within the field of feminist political economy, are derived from Marx's use of the notion (1993 [1885]). Cindi Katz's (2001, p. 711) now iconic understanding of social reproduction as the 'fleshy, messy, indeterminate stuff of everyday life' is deliberately broad and imprecise, as is its conception as 'life's work' (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2004). Other definitions, still laid out in broad brush strokes, are more cut-and-dry, along the lines of social reproduction as 'the process by which a society reproduces itself across and within generations.'[3] Yet

others have had a preference for more detail. For instance, Brenner and Laslett's (1989, pp. 382–383) now 30-year old definition of social reproduction is still much repeated:

> the activities and attitudes, behaviors and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis, and intergenerationally. Among other things, social reproduction includes how food, clothing, and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization of children are provided, the care of the infirm and elderly, and the social organization of sexuality. Social reproduction can thus be seen to include various kinds of work – mental, manual, and emotional – aimed at providing the historically and socially, as well as biologically, defined care necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation.

It is feminist critiques of classical Marxism as well as feminist political economy analyses of social reproduction's defining relations and categories – labour, work, home, gender, race, class, sexuality, the family, life, and value – that have led to the de-naturalization and problematizion of social reproduction. In 1969, a century after the publication of Marx's *Capital*, Margaret Benston (1969) published an article entitled 'The political economy of women's liberation' in the *Monthly Review*. For Western feminism, Benston's pioneering piece placed 'the politics of women's liberation within an anti-capitalist framework' and identified 'domestic labor as the material basis of women's structural relation to capitalist production and their subordination in society' (Federici 2019). In doing so, Benston helped to inaugurate the field of the political economy of gender. The following decade saw a proliferation of work in this area of socialist feminism, which re-envisioned critical political economy as feminist political economy by opening its categories to epistemological scrutiny.[4]

Socialist feminist political economy's most important contribution was the concept of social reproduction.[5] A number of feminist scholars made important and wide-ranging contributions demonstrating that capitalism cannot reproduce itself capitalistically; rather, it downloads the burden of its own reproduction onto women in the form of unwaged work. This was an invaluable insight into how capitalism as a system of private property and exploitation worked in tandem with patriarchy, even though there was no agreement as to the actual nature of this relationship between these two systems of exploitation and oppression. The centrality of the concept of social reproduction, however, was so accepted and uncontested that it became synonymous with the field itself, coming to be known as social reproduction feminism (Ferguson 2020). Not only did this field

gender classical Marxist political economy's focus on production, but it also expanded conceptualizations of the modes of production, as well as historicizing and spatializing patriarchy, paving the road towards a more unitary theory of oppression.

In these earlier studies of the role of women's domestic labour in the renewal of labour-power and non-workers, such as children, youth, and adults out of the workforce, the household as the socio-spatial unit of social reproduction was privileged. Contemporary feminists have moved beyond household-based analyses, investigating other sites and modalities of social reproduction, such as those of day care centres, schools, institutions of higher education and training, recreation centres, health centres, and hospitals. These studies were combined with those that explored the ways in which the relations of production are recreated through the inter-generational transmission of material, emotional, and affective resources, including through the nurturing of individual characteristics such as self-confidence, and the establishing of group status and inequality, such as through access to education. Intermeshing with these studies were those that encompassed human biological reproduction centering particularly on childbirth and the obligation of maintaining kin networks and relationships, such as those ordained by marriage, and thus the study of the social organization of fertility and sexuality (Kofman 2017) as well as social constructions of motherhood (Bakker 2007). More recently, scholars in the field have recognized that bonds of care are a central ethic and need within social reproduction, including nurturing in ways that keep people psychically, emotionally, and mentally 'whole'. Social reproduction is, thus, heavily implicated in subjectivity formation in that it comprises the embodied material social practices of those engaging in both the material and emotional activities and relations that bring everyday life into being.

While the activities and relations of social reproduction in these studies have been prescribed and overdetermined as women's work, this has been an exercise fraught with omission, not least in circumscribing who counts as 'woman'. We concur that in many parts of the world women, whether in conjunction with the state, private sector, other family or community members, or on their own, are still central to processes of social reproduction that maintain human life – those that either must be done if people are to survive, or those that lead to improved living conditions or a greater sense of well-being. The epistemological turn of moving beyond the household has enabled a reorientation of social reproduction to the global capitalist system at large and to the multifarious ways in which the renewal of labour-power occurs, such as (ironically) through an increased engagement in the social reproduction of other households via intra- and trans-national migration by nurses, teachers, and live-in

caregivers and the flows of remittances these migrants send back to their families. This expanded gaze has led to an increasing recognition that not all women participate in social reproductive work, at the expense of embodied others who do, most commonly across classed and racialized lines, and that other marginalized groups – for example, children, refugees, immigrants, modern-day slaves – regardless of gender, are also heavily engaged in such work.[6]

It is also the case that while embodiment has been a presupposition for the labour engaged in processes of social reproduction (and production) it is increasingly no longer a prerequisite. The costs of the social wage constitute a drain on the production of surplus value (especially shareholder profits). Capital's retreat from the social wage has resulted in the increasing financialization and marketization of social reproduction, assigning it a market value (Bryan and Rafferty 2014). This embodied labour moreover can now be acquired flexibly for select slivers of time, on zero-hour contracts at minimum wages and below. Moreover, artificial intelligence (via various platforms that simulate social interaction) and automation are increasingly supplanting embodied labour. Being stripped of waged employment, the body can be 'employed' as an encasement of desirable parts and organs – such as hair, blood, kidneys – whereby 'biotechnologically isolated, manipulated, and disseminated life is absorbed by capitalist processes' (Floyd 2016, p. 61). For example, biotechnological developments in biological reproduction has led women from being a source of labour–power to becoming a source of living raw material through surrogacy. We understand this multifaceted process of eliminating labouring bodies broadly as a continuation of processes of enclosure.

As the conditions in which social reproduction takes place have become more precarious and attacks upon it have accelerated, its analysis (having fallen into a lull during the 1990s and 2000s) has once again risen to the top of many feminist agendas. With no room for race or other relations of oppression beyond those of class and gender in the early social reproduction analyses, there had been a theoretical divestment, until the most recent revival of social reproduction theory, which brings a rigor to hitherto unaddressed questions (Ferguson *et al*. 2016; Bhattacharya 2017). In the last decade, social reproduction theory has emerged as an attempt to offer a unitary theory of women's oppression. Social reproduction feminists have critiqued earlier feminist political economy analyses for not focusing on 'the multi-faceted complexity of real-world relations and political struggles, as well as the ways in which racial oppression intersects with gendered forms of domination and class exploitation' (Ferguson *et al*. 2016, p. 28). In order to avoid such theoretical fallacies, contemporary social reproduction feminists have reconceptualized their ontological presuppositions in regard to the nature of the social. They

argue that relations of oppression that are racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized, 'are *not* additional systems that just happen to coincide. Rather, they are concrete relations comprising a wider sociality, integral to the very existence and operation of capitalism and class' (Ferguson *et al*. 2016, p. 32). We further add that, to examine the constitutive role of racial difference as a historically sedimented formation, the conceptualization of social reproduction could usefully be brought into conversation with postcolonial urban theory. This is central not only to ensuring that our conceptualization of social reproduction is historicized but, as Ananya Roy (2016a) would argue, is also attentive to historical difference as constitutive of the urban.

Notwithstanding its intimate political and theoretical relations with earlier debates, and sometimes because of this, social reproduction theory is often mistaken as a mere synonym of either domestic labour debates or socialist feminism. And yet it is premised upon distinctive ontological and epistemological propositions in that it foregrounds the internal relationship between capitalist value-producing labour and its often omitted predicate, that is non-capitalistically produced social reproductive labour, by focusing on the latter's necessary but contradictory relation to the capitalist pursuit of surplus value. Through shifting the analytical focus onto this internal relationship, social reproduction theory is able to: historicize the notion of patriarchy vis-à-vis specific modes of production and their attendant social formations; demonstrate that women's oppression is not a pre-capitalist residue that capitalism merely picks up, but is integral to the very logic of capitalism as a system, and is necessarily reinvented as regimes of capital accumulation change; and argue that historically specific forms of patriarchy and capitalism are not external to one another, but, rather, are co-constitutive of each other.

Our understanding of social reproduction builds upon those of social reproduction theorists in that we do not consider it as a coherent stable construct over time and place, but as an historicized and spatialized construct, speaking to multiple layerings, subject to its own internal dynamics as it is buffeted between the use of labour and resources needed to live everyday life. It includes the embodied labour (paid and unpaid) in conjunction with the resources, such as those of land, 'nature', time, technology, and increasingly capital, that enable human and non-human life to occur, the emotional and material needs of everyday life to be met, as well as hopes and dreams for the future, and the material social practices that constitute the organization of daily life and life over generations to take place.[7] It is about the process of the production of value – both use and exchange value – moulded through the spatialities and temporalities of the everyday and determined through differentiation and struggle.

Social Reproduction and the Urban

The feminist political economy analyses of social reproduction discussed above, and their recognition of the need to situate processes of social reproduction – in bodies, households, institutions, and processes of globalization – has yet to extend to the urban. Reorienting social reproduction from the household to the global capitalist system at large, not least because 'the renewal of labour-power occurs in, and through, the policing of borders, flows of migrants and the remittances many send to their countries of origin, army camps, refugee camps, and other processes and institutions of a global imperialist order' (Ferguson *et al*. 2016, p. 31), social reproduction theory has tended to treat the urban merely as a spatial and empirical accoutrement. In this way, the question of space, spatiality, and spatial forms in contemporary social reproduction theory become naturalized to the phenomena under consideration. In other words, it is not that an urban spatial-blindness marks these theories; rather, urban space does not figure as an analytic category in the making of these theories.

Feminist political economy has yet to rethink social reproduction as a feminist urban problematic, namely that the urban is increasingly the site and urbanization is increasingly the process through which social reproduction takes place. Why do we argue this? Certainly we cannot ignore that the world's population is now predominantly living in places called urban (such as towns, suburbs, cities, megalopolises, and so on). And we cannot overlook that, within the next few decades, it will be approximately two-thirds of the world's population living in urban places, owing not only to rising rates of urbanization in Southern cities (through natural increase and the movement of the world's rural population into urban places), but also to the reclassification of rural areas into urban ones.[8] Our argument is driven primarily, however, by the realization that it is now urbanization, the engine of this growth and movement, that increasingly drives capitalism. Harvey's voluminous work on the urban process under capitalism and the 'secondary circuit' of capital, has shown how surplus capital is turned into fixed assets of land and real estate (i.e. the built environment). Others have pointed to the increased embedding of the state into urbanization processes. Especially in Southern cities, urban land development – through infrastructure projects, real estate for local elites, and mega projects – are often now prioritized over the provision of jobs and industrial development (Schindler 2017; Goodfellow and Owen 2018). But it is arguably Lefebvre's (2003 [1970]) thesis on urban modernity in crisis in *The Urban Revolution*, in which he theorized a trajectory of the replacement of the industrial city through a process of 'complete urbanization', that has best understood the role of the urban beyond capital accumulation and class-based struggle.

As we wrote previously (Ruddick *et al*. 2018), from the late 1940s to the early 1980s, Lefebvre followed the transformation of everyday life, to formulate a concept of the urban revolution, which he invested with two meanings. In the first, the urban revolution inverts relationships between the pre-capitalist rural and the 'urban' and subsequently the relation between capitalist industrialization and capitalist urbanization: 'The "rural" no longer produces the "urban", but the reverse. Moreover, the urban is no longer merely an effect of capitalist industrialization. Once produced, the urban does not depend on industrialization for its own continuity; it becomes capitalism's opening to different labour processes through a reorganization of socio-spatial relations' (Ruddick *et al*. 2018, p. 394). Lefebvre referred to urban society's transcendence of industrial society as the engine of capitalism, as processes of 'implosion and explosion' and of concentaration and dispersion, in which cities could be understood as zones of agglomeration that themselves implode, fragment, and destruct while also extending their infrastructural reach deep into previously remote areas (Brenner 2014).

It is in the second sense in which Lefebvre uses the urban revolution – as a shift in the site of struggle from the factory to the everyday – that he opens a space for social reproduction and the urban as a ground for the formation of difference, 'alluding to the potential for a new politics of urban revolution, which can transform everyday life in all its aspects' (Ruddick *et al*. 2018, p. 394). Beyond Lefebvre, however, rarely have (non-feminist) critical analyses of the urban turned to the relationship between urbanization and social reproduction.[9] And yet social reproduction is inexorably implicated in driving crises of capitalism (Briggs 2017). As Norton and Katz (2017, pp. 7–8) state: 'A crisis of social reproduction occurs when existing social, political economic, or environmental conditions and relations can no longer be reproduced…. Likewise, a crisis of social reproduction occurs if the labor force cannot be reproduced in a given time and place or find the means to labor productively in a given setting.' Crises of social reproduction, alongside climate and environmental crises, war, conflict, and the resultant poverty and lack of livelihoods, have resulted in the displacement of millions to and within urban places, either within their country of origin or beyond.[10] Urban life, marked by unprecedented levels of migration and inequality,[11] has led David Harvey (2014, p. 60) to note that: 'The massive forced and unforced migrations of people now taking place in the world, …will have as much if not greater significance in shaping urbanization in the 21st century as the powerful dynamic of unrestrained capital mobility and accumulation.' Not least, people on the move and the deepening of inequality from increasingly unregulated rounds of capital accumulation has loosened the relation between the state, capital, work, and labour, increasing the myriad ways

in which lives are reproduced outside the wage. In the 21st century, migration, forced and unforced, is primarily a stake in a future, a stake in life itself.[12]

Following Lefebvre, we understand the urban as the conceptual knot mediating between the everyday ontological struggles of oppressed peoples, and the global spatial restructuring of hegemonic modes of production. However, rethinking the conceptual status of the urban as mediating does not confer it with an untethered epistemological salience and autonomy, thereby overriding the processes, lives, struggles, and subjectivities it is supposed to explicate. It is through social reproduction as method (as opposed to this epistemological autonomy), that the processes of urbanization, including its undoing, become 'knowable', albeit never entirely known, due to the urban's undecidability. In this way, we argue that a contemporary consideration of the spatial organization of our social lives needs to investigate the ways in which the processes of urbanization themselves are in need of explanation through social reproduction.

Whether in situations arrived at through displacement or through decades of *in-situ* neglect, the capacity for the social reproduction of everyday urban life is being eroded, characterized by uncertainty, insecurity, and disposability. The rise of precarious labour is driven in part by the desire of corporations to keep down costs – that is monetized subsidies to social reproduction: zero-hour contracts, payment below the minimum wage, short-term contracts, in short the 'gig economy', increasingly characterize the world of work, underpinned by capital's reduced commitment to the social wage and social contract. Simone's (2009) research across multiple cities reminds us that 'people as infrastructure' is not a new phenomenon; informal employment has always been an inherent part of capitalist systems of production. Precarity and insecurity, however, are now the primary material and emotional conditions through which social reproduction is instantiated, whereby the devolution of responsibilities onto the individual is not imposed but rather has become an accepted norm as it articulates with other commonsense understandings and becomes entrenched in socio-spatial practices.

The practice of migration, and its growth globally, is also partially a manifestation of the financialization of society as migration has become a way for individuals to navigate risk in the absence of the state providing conditions for their social reproduction.[13] In particular, the increasing financialization of social reproduction has influenced the ways in which urbanization takes place and is experienced. It is only slightly over a decade since the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States spread globally, generated by the restructuring of lending through the predatory pursuit of subprime mortgages, which centred on urban neighbourhoods, adding to the deepening of inequality, displacement, and austerity politics.

There were a number of pressures directly related to the financialization of social reproduction, that increased vulnerability, not the least of which was to increasingly entreat low-income Latinx and African-Americans, who had previously been redlined out of the housing market, to monetize their home-space, as a retirement plan and investment. Wade (2009, p. 40) reports that in the United States in 2008 alone 'more than 3 million houses were foreclosed in 2008, meaning that about 10 million people shifted into rented accommodation, vans or shelters' (quoted in Feldman, Menon, and Geisler 2011, p. 12).

In the face of such devastation, we turn to the chapters in this volume to explore the social reproduction of everyday urban life. Building on feminist urban theories and social reproduction feminisms, the chapters shed light on different aspects of the relationship between the urban and social reproduction, within different contexts but always through socio-political action. In what follows, we outline how the book's contributors address not only this relationship but also their irrevocable relation to questions of urban feminist knowledge production. We recognize themes that speak directly both to the production of the urban in relation to infrastructures, labours, and subjectivities, and the politics of this production, which engage the challenges of decolonizing feminist urban knowledge production and methodologies.

Making the Urban Through Feminist Knowledge Production

Infrastructures

The ethos of liberal citizenship in Western democracies finds one of its most crisp articulations in the presuppositions frequently relied upon regarding everyday urban life. As a benchmark of modernization, urban forms present people with 'proper' infrastructures through which an individual's life-chances in the capitalist market prosper, thereby ensuring a 'successful' integration into the public life of civil society. However, as is now abundantly clear, the relationship between capitalism, modernity, urban forms, and the reproduction of people's everyday lives is not as straightforward as this modernist narrative suggests. Even for those historical instances in the global North in which there is a resemblance to this narrative, feminist and postcolonial scholars demonstrate that it is invariably subtended by gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized operations of power. Increasing neoliberalization, austerity, and precaritization, both in the global South and North, has been creating other everyday lives for the majority of urban residents, for which no blueprint

is available; neither infrastructure nor people's access to it can be taken for granted. A number of the chapters in this volume collectively argue that it is the intrinsically agentic nature of the social reproductive work of those pushed into precarity that mediates between infrastructures and the urban, highlighting the centrality of social reproductive work in the making of the urban.

Before turning to these contributions, we briefly consider Mbembe's conceptualization of 'superfluity' and Simone's conceptualization of 'people as infrastructure' in order both to interrupt hegemonic ontologies of the urban and to situate the contribution of these chapters in an ontologically reflexive context of knowledge production. The work of Mbembe and Simone show us the limits of metropole capitalism's teleological social ontology, reminding us how the social ontology of the urban of former colonies is formed differently and how, within this latter social ontology of the urban, people become infrastructure (see also Roy 2009).

In considering the spatialization of an African metropolitan modernity as an historically specific urban form, Achille Mbembe offers the concept of 'superfluity', referring to both 'the dialectics of indispensability and expendability of both labour and life, people and things' and 'the obfuscation of any exchange or use value that labor might have, and to the emptying of any meaning that might be attached to the act of measurement or quantification itself insofar as numerical representation is as much a fact as it is a form of fantasy' (Mbembe 2004, pp. 374–375). In this way, superfluity can facilitate a socio-spatial investigation within the interstices of political, economic, biopolitical, and psychic approaches to the urban. Drawing on Simmel, Mbembe argues that 'the ultimate form of superfluity is the one that derives from the transitoriness of things' (Mbembe 2004, p. 399).

This transitory character of urban life constitutes the omitted predicate of a colonial urbanity that represents itself through the fixity of its infrastructure, as the immutable monument to its historical teleology, to its 'developed' and 'civilized' telos. AbdouMaliq Simone's landmark conceptualization of 'people as infrastructure' in African cities provides a deeper understanding of this transitoriness by turning to the 'incessantly flexible, mobile, and provisional intersections of residents that operate without clearly delineated notions of how the city is to be inhabited and used' (Simone 2004, p. 407). People as infrastructure illuminates the provisional and precarious workings of the 'the dialectics of indispensability and expendability of both labor and life, people and things' (Mbembe 2004, p. 374) in relation to the reproduction of the urban by indicating 'residents' needs to generate concrete acts and contexts of social collaboration inscribed with multiple identities rather than in overseeing and enforcing modulated transactions among discrete population groups' (Simone 2004, p. 419).

Focusing on expressive urban cultural practices in the wake of 'natural' disasters in Haiti and Puerto Rico, Nathalia Santos Ocasio and Beverley Mullings (Chapter 2) examine the conditions of possibility of people as infrastructure through a generative theoretical conversation between social reproduction, Simmel, and Simone. They ask their readers to consider how a society is possible in disaster- and debt-stricken contexts of austerity capitalism when the urban infrastructures of everyday life are devastated. In the course of their analytical deliberation, they first turn to Simmel's conceptualization of forms of sociation as the unceasing emergences and interactions that produce the unity of society within which its members live. One such form of sociability, according to Santos Ocasio and Mullings, might be found in expressive cultural practices, in particular music. Performed as a part of social reproductive labour that ensures, amongst other things, the reproduction of intergenerational linkages between the Caribbean and its African inheritances, expressive cultural practices provide the conditions of possibility of people as infrastructure by making sure sociability itself is imaginable and enacted in the aftermath of disasters. Santos Ocasio and Mullings evoke the importance of deeply ancestral forms of music, dance, and gathering, in the form of intergenerational memory and knowledge sharing practices. Therefore, as opposed to taking social reproduction as the work that makes all other work possible, they point to a series of practices of social reproduction which are not tethered to the economic but express their own logics, drives, and histories, therefore turning their attention to sociation as a zero point of sociability.

In Chapter 8, Natasha Aruri also investigates the destruction of the social and its spatial preconditions and effects. In her chapter she traces 'socio-cide' in Ramallah, resulting from ongoing colonial violence and espoused through neoliberalism, via the urban development of its built environment and infrastructure. For Aruri, social reproduction, broadly construed, becomes an analytic not only to which city- and place-making are re-oriented but also through which decolonization might be imagined in a context where Palestinian lives are rendered superfluous. Demonstrating how individual parcelization and zoning upon which urban development in Ramallah is premised are reproductive of a colonial logic of governance and unusable antispaces, Aruri argues for a common land ownership model that would enable reconfiguring urban land as a continuum that is open to connections and relationalities. In this way, antispaces could be re-socialized as spaces of social reproduction through which decolonial resilience and resistance could be collectively organized against the colonial dispossession and occupation of Palestinian land. Such centering of social reproduction in the production of space better prepares the city to deal with uncertain and transitory vital infrastructures, such as the water

infrastructures in Ramallah, which are the customary targets of colonial military violence. Understanding the urban as a commons oriented towards social reproduction, according to Aruri, helps dissipate colonial assumptions about the stability of life and vital infrastructures.

Thinking of people as infrastructure in conjunction with social reproduction is the theoretical focus of James Angel (Chapter 5). He draws on Ruddick *et al*'s. (2018) imperative of orienting analytical attention to the social ontology of the urban, lest we run the danger of forgetting people, struggle, difference, and history in our accounts of the production of the urban, ending with an autonomous epistemological category of the urban. Contributing to a social ontology of the urban that is centred around praxis, Angel focuses on the Catalan activist network la Alianza Contra la Pobreza Energética (the Alliance Against Energy Poverty, APE). He demonstrates that APE's feminist urban praxis is 'premised upon the creation of more caring and collectivized modalities of social reproduction' for those who do not have access to vital infrastructures, such as gas, electricity, and water, for their survival. Angel's analysis illuminates how social reproductive labour and people as infrastructure become intimately entangled during the processes of reproducing the urban and life within it, thereby providing us with the ethnographic details of a social ontology of the urban in Catalonia.

Tom Gillespie and Kate Hardy contribution (Chapter 11) also draws upon Ruddick *et al*.'s conceptualization of the social ontology of the urban. Operating within a framework of feminist comparative urbanism, Gillespie and Hardy discuss two urban social movements: The Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices de Argentina (AMMAR), a sex workers' union in Córdoba, Argentina, and Focus E15, a housing campaign in London, UK. Focusing on how these all-women or women-led grassroots activist organizations both reproduce the urban and their own subjectivities within the process, Gillespie and Hardy's comparative methodology is hinged upon what Ruddick *et al*. call 'infrastructures of social reproduction' (Ruddick *et al*. 2018, p. 396). Gillespie and Hardy employ ethnographic detail to analyse these movements' struggles over the infrastructures of social reproduction – of health, education, and housing – and show how they employ various tactics, such as 'demand[ing] access to existing infrastructures, creating autonomous infrastructures, and co-producing new infrastructures with the state' (Gillespie and Hardy, Chapter 11). Their chapter not only highlights urbanization as 'an open process determined through praxis, by actual people making the world they inhabit' (Ruddick *et al*. 2018, p. 399) but also signals the importance of historical difference in the constitution of the urban and to the fact that despite the seeming universality of social reproduction and its infrastructures they are always marked by this difference.

Meera Karunananthan (Chapter 7) also focuses on struggles over the infrastructures of social reproduction, through an account of the feminist network Solidaritas Perempuan's campaign for the right to water in Jakarta, Indonesia. Through an intersectional feminist approach, Karunananthan examines the ways in which human rights discourse might be employed to make visible urban poor women's social reproductive struggle with privatized drinking water systems. Moreover, Karunananthan elaborates on how the right to water activism might help to recast the Trotskyite transitional programme in a feminist manner to recuperate subaltern women's revolutionary subjectivity and expertise, which, she argues, is often unnoticed by the male leadership in established leftist groups. Karunananthan demonstrates that through the demands of collectivizing social reproduction in relation to urban water infrastructures, feminist activists of Solidaritas Perempuan Jakarta (SPJ) give priority to use-value production at the expense of exchange-value production, thereby reversing transnational capitalist logic and exposing its gendered violence at the urban, household, and bodily scales. For her, the sites of social reproduction and social reproductive labour are crucial in defeating capitalism in cities of the global South, and a social imaginary of a 'just city' becomes tenable with the reclamation of 'the labour power of women whose unpaid work has served to subsidize' postcolonial capitalism.

Subjectivities

In Ruddick *et al.* (2018), we approached theories of the urban through a primary focus on social ontology, aiming not simply to situate the subject as an intellectual problem – 'who acts' – but to centralize processes of subjectivation. In this volume the authors track the empirical folding and unfolding of subject formation in ways that show the subject is not a mere artefact which can later be 'situated' within more or less determined processes of urbanization. As 'the sedimented outcome of material social practice' (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2004, p. 10), subjects are not only constituted relationally, but also by their physical environments which play a role in constituting intersubjective encounters. Beyond urban form, Hoffman's (2014) research on how the politics of urban governance in Chinese cities leads to the normalization of the self as cosmopolitan – however incomplete – further evidences how subjectivities are shaped through urbanization, producing subjectivities that are not only *in* but also *of* the urban. She shows how urban politics is located in the constitution of new categories of subjects in Chinese cities giving rise to new modes of self-governance such as self-enterprise, volunteerism, and charitable giving. In the Chinese context,

'This has produced particular kinds of cities (entrepreneurial, financially "efficient") emerging in tandem with particular kinds of subjects (professionals and volunteers)' (Hoffman 2014, p. 1583).

The formation of the self leads to a range of political possibilities – some collectively revolutionary, others highly individualistic. The contributors in this volume are not searching for a new or singular revolutionary subject, one which will indicate the exit, complete or otherwise, from any capitalist mode of production. Neither do they tend to an overpresence of the urban subject as a replacement for the industrial worker as the collective agent of revolution. As Mantha Katsikana describes in Chapter 4, the barriers to the construction of an anarchist and anti-authoritarian commons in Athens, many revolutionary movements continue to emphasize 'the accumulation and display of male power' as opposed to the 'affective and connective labour practices' needed for the 'social and emotional change necessary to build and reproduce durable relationships'. Katsikana's work speaks to the need to demasculinize radical and revolutionary subjectivities in order to better understand and appreciate how the 'emotional needs and manual tasks necessary for the everyday context of collective actions' are undertaken primarily by women in these movements (as well as the broader context in which many contemporary transformative movements are led by queer women and women of colour). Her work points to the collective renegotiations necessary to enable the malleability of subjectivity as a relational form of collective self-understanding. Katsikana's study is a welcome antidote to the now well-travelled theories of revolutionary urbanization and revolutionary subjectivity within urban studies that have overlooked the role of social reproduction and the fabric and texture of everyday life in promulgating transformations. Seeing greater potential for an engagement with gendered subjectivities in the shift from the factory as the heart of revolutionary struggle, feminist scholars have argued that struggles are not just about belonging in the city but also about how the city belongs to those whose invisibilized and unpaid labour maintains the urban (Buckley and Strauss 2016). We also see this engagement in Karunananthan's work with SPJ, which 'calls for Marxist debates regarding revolutionary praxis to be re-examined in light of both the constraints faced by women living in the margins of cities of the global South as well as their aspirations.'

What is evident from the research reported in these chapters is that for increasing numbers of people their own social reproduction is increasingly precarious and provisional, falling outside of and challenging the norms of a neo-liberal political subjectivity. Precarity, generally, speaks to the disintegration of stable societal bonds, social protections, and senses of entitlement and belonging, creating lives structured by

insecurity, eroding the possibility of life itself (Puar 2012). Precarity is not born of the economic project of neoliberalism, but is a signifying characteristic of it. With increasing inequality, the reorganization of economic and social relations in the context of the hollowing out of social and political institutions, and in the absence of infrastructures (Butler 2012), we can think of the governance of precarity as designating not only working and living conditions but also subjectivities and embodiment, and therefore agency. And as such, as Lauren Berlant (2011) notes, precarity is also a structure of affect internally inculcated into subjectivity via anxiety as the dominant lived experience of insecurity. From the point of view of organizing the everyday, the increasing inability to replenish the self, materially and mentally, has had enormously deleterious effects. Decades of neoliberal scouring out of the social and the permeation of the values and organizing principles of finance capital into society more broadly are leading to new forms of subjectivation, with a depleted, indebted, and anxious subject now prevailing across a wide variety of places.

It is within this context that Simone's notion of 'people as infrastructure' and Caroline Moser's notion of women's triple role – of reproductive, productive, and community-managing activities – come together to highlight how a strongly gendered division of labour not only in the household but also within communities, underlies, 'economic collaboration among residents seemingly marginalized from and immiserated by urban life' (Simone 2004, p. 407). Belinda Dodson and Liam Riley (Chapter 10) illustrate this convergence with reference to food systems in three African cities: Kitwe in Zambia, Kisumu in Kenya, and Epworth in Zimbabwe. Within households in these cities women are largely responsible for food procurement, allocation, and preparation, and in the broader urban food economy they are 'important actors … as traders, processors and producers, especially in the urban informal sector.' It is their paid and unpaid time engaged in food-related labour that helps reproduce patriarchal family structures and limits women's participation in other activities, placing strictures on their subjectivity formation. This particular 'mode of provisioning and articulation' speaks not necessarily to an 'efficient deployment' of the 'energies of individuals' (Simone 2004, p. 407) but to 'the gendered social forms and practices that reproduce life, family and labour in conditions of urban precarity' (Dodson and Riley).

With the urban as the primary mode through which capitalism endeavours to organize the social, political, and economic realms, a number of other chapters also highlight how processes of subject formation in the realm of social reproduction reveal fractures in capital's attempts to address those relations which capitalism has not yet been able to fully undo,

incorporate, or defeat. For example, Angel argues that it is 'through engagements with irregular infrastructural connections, that new ways of navigating and producing the city (and urban subjectivities) are being performed.' In other words, APE activists saw themselves as engaging in a feminist praxis, given their efforts to 'sustain life' in 'collective and egalitarian ways'. Although they show glimpses of a more emancipatory urban future, these struggles were also replete with the violence and precarity that leads to the formation of fragmented fugitive and indebted subjects, who had to resort to illegal occupation and illegal connections to the city's formal water and electricity networks. And while APE's collective actions saw success in legalizing water connections, they were less successful in securing legality for electricity connections, leaving poor inhabitants in a state of insecurity.

Also with a focus on the urban politics of infrastructure, Gillespie and Hardy's account, in Chapter 11, of their comparative study of AMMAR and Focus 15 shows how 'women's subjectivities' that emerged from these engagements changed over time 'from victimised, stigmatised and invisibilized subjects to agential actors with collective strategies for changing the conditions in which they live.' Faced with considerable ignominy, as sex workers and single mothers, both groups 'initially mobilised around notions of motherhood.' Despite the positive narratives of political motherhood that arose in the 1970s and 1980s in Argentina with the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, the sex workers' engagement with union activities eventually led to them identifying primarily as members of the working class. In both Córdoba and London, women's changing subjectivities led to new demands. In the UK, the single mothers also moved on from an identification solely as mothers to being housing rights campaigners, as they increasingly came to recognize that they were part of 'a much wider housing crisis that had not only gendered, but also classed and raced dimensions.' In Cordoba, the focus shifted from police repression to demand for access to infrastructures of social reproduction in education and healthcare.

Santos Ocasio and Mullings (Chapter 2) address the development of a collective subjectivity in a context of the absence of any reference points for an imagined future. In their exploration of the role of musical expressive practice in urban social reproduction, they address the 'impulse to sociability' – what brings people together and how that coming together sustains and enables the intergenerational and ancestral (re)connection to a sense of collective subjectivity, belonging, and liberation. Integral to sustaining a collective subjectivity is not only the unpaid work involved in social reproduction, including the passing on of knowledge, social values, and cultural practices, but also the forms of sociability and collective critique found in the expressive labour of making music.

Decolonizing Feminist Urban Knowledge

Our broad project of advancing a feminist urban theory for our time is predicated on recognizing the need to decolonize feminist knowledge production about the urban, including within this book. Coloniality, or the patterns of power resulting from colonialism that have shaped subjectivities, political and economic power, and knowledge (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Noxolo 2017), brings into view the way in which historical structures of gendered oppression, such as patriarchy and heteronormativity, work in concert with structures of class and racial ordering to shape contemporary urbanization. While postcolonial theory has long analysed how colonial power has shaped knowledge and global systems of economic, political, and cultural ordering emanating from Eurocentric epistemologies, decolonial theory from Latin American and Caribbean perspectives has theorized the relationship between coloniality and modernity, and liberation from coloniality as a political project. Latin American feminist traditions have further sought to critically interrogate decolonial scholarship through a '*descolonial* approach' (Esguerra Muelle, Ojeda, and Fleischer, Chapter 9), emphasizing the role of gender oppression in colonial power and the need to connect with ongoing anti-colonial movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, Indigenous scholars have sought to move beyond postcolonial concerns with representation to emphasize the lived voices and experiences of colonized subjects, particularly in spaces occupied by settler-colonists where Indigenous peoples and Indigenous geographies continue to be subjected to processes of dispossession (de Leeuw and Hunt 2018).

Urban theorists have used postcolonial analysis to argue for the heterogenization of urban theory, particularly through greater attention to cities in the global South (McFarlane 2010; Robinson 2011), and through calls to take historical difference seriously as a constitutive element of the urban (Roy 2016a; Jazeel 2019) – issues which assume particular salience in the context of the ascendance of comparison as a mode of analysis in urban studies in the 21st century (Nijman 2007; Ward 2010). Amongst the varied urban geographies presented in this volume are several chapters that provide insight into the formation of the urban through the predatory relations put in place by 'economies of dispossession… those multiple and intertwined genealogies of racialized property subjection, and expropriation through which capitalism and colonialism take shape historically and change over time' (Byrd *et al*. 2018, p. 2). In particular, they shed light on urban formations in the contemporary phase of capitalism, its logics of speculation, expropriation and dispossessive financialization, and the related biopolitical and necropolitical regimes of racialized value that they inaugurate (Tadiar 2013; Hong 2018).

In Chapter 3, Emily Fedoruk's analysis of a public mural quoting the words of Qayqayt First Nations Chief, Rhonda Larrabee, in the Vancouver suburb of New Westminster, British Columbia, highlights Indigenous social reproduction amidst ongoing processes of colonial dispossession in settler colonial Canada. Fedoruk situates the social reproduction of the Qayqayt First Nations into the broader context of settler-colonialism, thereby avoiding collapsing the ongoing violence of capitalist settler-colonialism into the violence of contemporary urban capitalism, making it possible to reflect on these different forms of violence relationally and historically. More importantly, by using social reproduction in this methodological way, this chapter directs us beyond social reproduction, towards Indigenous ontologies of life and history. In their exploration of the legacies of plantation economies and neoliberal urban transformation in the Caribbean, Santos Ocasio and Mullings (Chapter 2) discuss the ways in which processes of 'disaster capitalism' (Klein 2007) and 'debt imperialism' (Kim 2018) shape urban dispossession in the wake of environmental disaster in Haiti and Puerto Rico. They commit to what Frantz Fanon (1961, p. 210) terms 'passionate research', in order to seemingly recover 'beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, to some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence' provides communities battered by disaster capitalism with the tools to rehabilitate themselves and others. In her chapter on spatial politics in Ramallah, Natasha Aruri (Chapter 8) discusses the confluence of neocolonialism and neoliberal modes of urban development in a context of ongoing militarized settler colonial occupation in Palestine. As a primary vehicle through which finance capital feeds into contemporary urbanization, Aruri tracks the proliferation of speculative capital in the real estate market and its deleterious impact on possibilities for everyday social reproduction in Ramallah.

Providing insights into the ways in which the urban is produced through the distribution of social reproductive labour across transnational circuits of care and labour migration, Chapter 6 by Faranak Miraftab and Chapter 9 by Esguerra Muelle, Ojeda and Fleischer demonstrate that at a transnational scale processes of social reproduction are organized through the legacies of historical colonial relationships, as well as racial divisions of labour in contemporary imperial formations. Miraftab analyses the transnational circuits of social reproduction that come to serve crises of capitalism in this latest era of global capitalism, enabling, amongst others, the revitalization of the United States 'rustbelt' town of Beardstown, Illinois. She explores the global restructuring of social reproduction, through the place-making practices of migrant workers from Central America and West Africa, and how social reproduction work is made invisible not only through its gendered normalization but also through its spatial

fragmentation, both across the globe and within existing postcolonial racialized urban hierarchies. In doing so she challenges the racialization and criminalization of these migrant populations in nationalist discourse to render visible the transnational contributions of their labour. Esguerre Muelle, Ojeda, and Fleischer explore the multiple forms of violence that connect internal displacement in post-conflict Colombia, resulting from war and rural dispossession, with the re-enactment of colonial gendered and racialized labour relations in transnational care migration networks between cities in Colombia and Spain. Through a collaborative multi-sited ethnography conducted in four Colombian cities – Cali, Cartagena, Bogotá, and Medellín – and two Spanish cities – Madrid and Barcelona – they explore how Columbian women in Spain become trapped in a cycle of migration-return, effectively disposed to sustain uneven processes of urban production and, how in Colombian cities, *madres comunitarias* (communitarian mothers) conduct a form of underpaid care work sustained mostly by women of rural origin who have been forcedly displaced. Their work shows how the intertwined dynamics of war and globalized capital have forged a problematic geography of urban-based care work through which colonial power is constantly re-enacted.

The task of imagining a feminist urban theory that is capable of both analysing these recursive colonial logics and of envisioning possibilities for decolonization returns us to the political conjuncture of the epistemological, the methodological, and the ontological at the core of feminist philosophy. Given the deep imbrication of knowledge systems in the proliferation of colonial power, decolonization necessitates an interrogation of knowledge creation processes in terms of who generates theory, how, and the ends that theory serves (Jazeel 2019). The creation of possibilities for decolonization within the academy through privileging the 'singularity of indigenous, southern and subaltern narratives' (Jazeel 2019, p. 11) is contingent on meaningful attempts to pluralize and heterogenize the bodies and voices that constitute the epistemic communities of the academy. As Tuck and Yang (2012) have reminded us, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor.' Rather, it is a radical and transformative political practice that belongs outside the confines of the academy. In this context, the decolonization of knowledge frameworks within and beyond the academy serves as an aid to political efforts to end colonial domination, from the dismantling of racist epistemological frameworks that underpin Eurocentric power, to Indigenous campaigns for the radical restructuring of relationships to land, resources, and the environment (Esson *et al*. 2017). As Indigenous scholars have long argued, the impulse to render legible and explicable, which is inherent in intellectual cultures of subsumption, may militate against the ontological possibilities proliferating from attempts to reach for a decolonial horizon (Hunt 2014; see also Santos Ocasio and

Mullings, Chapter 2 and Fedoruk, Chapter 3). May we go so far as to ask whether an analysis of the creative and insurrectionary energies of decolonial praxis requires that we question and disinvest from the framework of social reproduction?

In the ongoing quest for locating 'new geographies of theory' in urban studies (Roy 2009), for example, Jazeel's recent call for a focus on 'singularity' as a way to open up to difference in knowledge production provides a useful epistemological intervention that begins by rendering visible disciplinary cultures of subsumption, which serve to reduce 'examples and cases to exchangeable instances, or conceptual givens, for the benefit of a disciplinary theory culture located in the EuroAmerican heartland' (2019, p. 11). If we were to privilege singularity, we may have to contemplate that decolonization as praxis may fall outside of any one overarching explanatory framework, including that of social reproduction, and may indeed exceed our known epistemological grids of representation (Jazeel 2019). For example, Santos Ocasio and Mullings' chapter on the role of expressive musical practices in enabling the reconstruction of relational community infrastructures in the event of natural disaster, and in asserting critiques of ongoing imperial and colonial dispossession, offers a compelling example of urban praxes that manifest 'affective and grounded alternatives to economies of dispossession' (Byrd *et al*. 2018, pp. 11–12). Santos Ocasio and Mullings conclude their analysis by casting doubt on the transformative potential of the expressive arts to effect material change in the world. It might be worth asking could we gain more in dwelling in the space of the *unspeakable* evoked by the Haitian song leader they cite in their article, who says: 'If you don't have this reaction instilled in you, you cannot understand it; it's inexplicable!'

Following 'fragments', translation and untranslatability, and poetics, are amongst the tactics put forward by Jazeel (2019) for working towards singularity. In Chapter 3, Emily Fedoruk traces the poetics of urban space through fragments of text and in so doing reflects on the role of illegibility in rejecting settler colonial regimes of recognition of Indigenous people in Canada. Juxtaposing it with another poem that also appears on the same building (by architect Graham McGarva), which adopts a colonial voice, she articulates some of the complexities of authorship. Ruminating on the space between translation and untranslatability, the written and unwritten, Fedoruk examines the potential of a fragmented poem in a public space to reclaim the survival of Indigenous people against the genocidal processes of colonial place-making. Fragments are also present in Chapter 8, with Natasha Aruri's call to reclaim the 'antispaces' resulting from colonial logics of spatial dissection in Ramallah, and to re-imagine the possibilities of these forgotten spaces for grounding a politics of communal regeneration and, ultimately, decolonization in a context of ongoing

military occupation. Such readings of fragments and untranslatable utterances map 'decolonial geographies as constellations in formation' (Daigle and Ramirez 2019, pp. 79–80), which evince tactics of refusing and resisting racialized economies of containment, displacement, and interconnected violences against lands, spaces, and bodies.

Methodologies

Positionality and reflexivity have been key methodological strategies in feminist scholarship since the mid-1980s, foregrounding the unequal power geometries of knowledge production (Harding 1986; Haraway 1988; Mohanty 1988; England 1994; Kobayashi 1994; Nagar and Ali 2003; Peake 2016). In keeping with this long-standing feminist practice of recognizing that all knowledge is situated in particular places, we asked contributors to this volume to reflexively locate themselves in relation to their work by explicitly addressing their positionality. There was considerable variability to the ways in which authors responded to this invitation, reflecting the multiple geographies they were situated in, and multiple vectors of power that are mapped by the transnational research networks evoked in this volume. The contributors have highlighted that positionality is not a straightforward matter; scholars may occupy complex and multi-layered positions drawn from personal biographies of mobility, migration, or displacement, which cast them simultaneously as settler colonial subjects, as diasporic and transnational subjects, and as both 'insiders' and 'outsiders', with experiential or empathetic connections with their research sites and subjects (Santos Ocasio and Mullings, Chapter 2; Miraftab, Chapter 6; and Aruri, Chapter 8). However, as Indigenous and feminist scholars have argued, reflexivity is about political accountability to the people and places one is working with (Nagar 2002). Esson *et al.* (2017), for example, claim genuine decolonization requires the cultivation of critical consciousness to work in concert with activism. Several authors in this collection have situated their work in the context of participation in, and ongoing relationships with, activist communities and have illustrated how research processes are also constitutive of researchers' subjectivities (Katsikana, Chapter 4; Angel, Chapter 5; Karunananthan, Chapter 7; Gillespie and Hardy, Chapter 11).

Accounting for positionality also requires an acknowledgement of the ways in which scholars are themselves imbricated in structures of coloniality and, thus, often ambiguously placed in relation to projects of decolonization (Dodson and Riley, Chapter 10). A decolonial agenda requires a confrontation with structures of white supremacy, privilege,

and racism (Esson *et al*. 2017) and its connections with ongoing economies of extraction in unequal geographies of social reproduction. To this end, in Chapter 3, Emily Fedoruk's hermeneutic approach causes her to reflect on her position as a 'settler-reader' of the quote from Indigenous Chief, Rhonda Larrabee, of the Qayqayt First Nation, part of a public art work 'on unceded territories of Musqueam, Qayqayt, Tsleil-Waututh, Skxwú7mesh, Katzie, and Kwantlen Nations' in New Westminster. Her reading is, as she puts it, 'conditioned by my experiences as a white settler living for 25 years on Coast Salish territory'. She returns to this positionality at various points in her text to forestall a possessive reading of Larrabee's text, to recognize that her reading of the text is itself tied to her own social reproduction as a knowledge producer in the academy, and to remind herself of the limitations of her own readings of Larrabee's text or even of the Indigenous feminist scholars she cites in her chapter. Fedoruk's analysis of her positionality reflects the ongoing ways in which academic research relationships, whether in urban studies or other fields, are immersed in the extractive logics that have historically structured the processes of racial capitalism and colonialism that continue to undergird economies of dispossession (Nagar 2008; Byrd *et al*. 2018). Furthermore, as Esson *et al*. (2017) have cogently argued, the deployment of discourses of decolonization within the academy is mired in a racial politics of gatekeeping and instrumentalization, wherein the use of decolonial language by non-Indigenous and white academics serves to reproduce coloniality by galvanizing the very structures of white supremacy that reinstate white privilege (see also Duarte and Belarede-Lewis 2015; Noxolo 2017; de Leeuw and Hunt 2018).

Feminist urban theory must be capable of critically engaging with these persistent historical and political realities if it is to avoid colluding with a politics of co-option, disempowerment, and reinstatement of racial (and particularly white) privilege and serve as a transformative tool for enacting decolonization. Reflexive analyses of positionality have gone some way in addressing these realities; as methodological strategies they underscore the need to remain continually vigilant to enduring erasures and new occlusions that might be constituted, even as the ethics and politics of research, representation, reflexivity, reciprocity, responsibility, and solidarity are being attended to in ever more nuanced ways through the work of scholars who elaborate feminist, postcolonial, decolonial, and intersectional approaches to knowledge production and praxis (Faria and Mollett 2014, 2018; Daigle 2019; Nagar 2019).

The diverse research designs that contributors to this volume have deployed also highlight how they grapple with these methodological dilemmas of doing research as they seek to produce non-totalizing narratives of the urban. They fall into three (not mutually exclusive)

clusters of: non-extractive praxis-oriented research; relational multi-sited research; and research based on a use of mixed methods.

The contributions by Katsikana (Chapter 4), Angel (Chapter 5), Karunanthan (Chapter 7), and Gillespie and Hardy (Chapter 11) favour 'non-extractive' collective feminist praxis to generate knowledge that can 'resource' struggles and be useful to movement actors. In pursuit of this goal, Angel navigates through the responsibility of his dual identity as a scholar and activist, and ultimately 'resources' the struggles he engages in by drawing upon his bilingual skills to translate movement literature and by seeking to build solidarity between activists located in the UK and Spain, such that these activist groups can reinforce and lend support to each other. For their part, Gillespie and Hardy elaborate a 'dialogic collaboration' method, which grants epistemic privilege to movement actors and deploys comparison to design research that, through ongoing dialogue, asks research questions that are relevant to movement actors, thereby 'co/produc[ing] knowledges that "speak" the theoretical and political languages of communities' (Ali and Nagar 2003, p. 365). Karunanathan, too, embodies a scholar activist praxis as she seeks to resource Solidaritas Perempuan Jakarta, by amplifying their local struggle to the international media, standing with them as an ally to highlight their role as knowledge producers. Finally, Mantha Katsikana (Chapter 4) addresses persistent contradictions and conflicts arising in Greek anti-authoritarian movements, spaces, and struggles in which she actively participated, directing the reader's attention to the everyday praxis of the 'personal is political', especially as it shapes an urban commons that is all too often figured as implicitly, if not exclusively, masculine.

A further set of approaches, broadly encompassing comparative, relational and multi-sited, are at work in the chapters by Miraftab (Chapter 6), Muelle, Ojeda, and Fleischer (Chapter 9), and Gillespie and Hardy (Chapter 11). Such relational methods are important to knowledge production in urban studies; beginning from multiple places and tracing the relational trajectories of the evolution of places is to displace the epistemic primacy that has been given to the global North, while 'rejecting any notion of pre-given "cases" or variants of a presumed universal/general process' (Hart 2018, p. 373). In Chapter 11, Gillespie and Hardy embrace 'dialogic collaboration' to link and think through their participation in a sex worker union campaign in Córdoba and a single-mother housing campaign in London. They weave elements of feminist standpoint theory, social ontology, and activist/participatory methodologies together, both to reflect on their movement-centric and historically differentiated collaborations and to create explicit linkages and dialogues between and amongst contexts that might otherwise diverge under the weight of facile distinctions between global North and South. In Chapter 6, Miraftab's relational

approach introduces multiple temporal and spatial standpoints – as opposed to the single axis of a here-and-now approach that is common in social reproduction theories – to analyse the post-colonial racialized capitalist global hierarchies between the global South and North. Anchoring her research in the specific location of the US rustbelt city, Beardstown, Miraftab seeks to theorize the global restructuring of social reproduction through flows of migrants between Mexico and Togo. Similarly, Esguerre Muelle, Ojeda and Fleischer (Chapter 9) undertake a decade-long, relational multi-sited collaborative research project between South American and Spanish cities to delineate uneven geographies of care access and provision.

Unsurprisingly, and most commonly, a mix of traditional social science qualitative methods are employed by the contributors. In Chapter 8, Aruri deploys mixed methods in novel ways. In order to critically analyse the real estate development in the city of Ramallah she deploys such standard methods as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, discourse analysis of legal documents, and commentary on social media. But crucially, building upon her training as an architect, she combines these with a visual method that pays particular attention to the architectural and morphological elements of Ramallah. The value of this combination of methods not only enables her to demonstrate the importance of public space to social reproduction but also allows her to offer suggestions that have the potential to expand the imagination of Ramallite designers, planners, and spatial entrepreneurs to build 'antispaces' that reconfigure public space in such a way that new orders and modes of decolonial social reproduction can be achieved. In Chapter 4, Katsikana, draws upon interviews, participant observation, and content analysis as well as her own personal experience, in order to understand how the affective and collective labour of resistance within anti-authoritarian/anarchist movements contributes to social reproduction in Athens. While the contributors to this volume, like many other critical urban researchers, largely favour such qualitative methods, there are also those that employ quantitative methods; to produce partial, situated knowledges does not imply that qualitative methods are always privileged over quantitative methods, as methods themselves are not *ipso facto* feminist (Lawson 1995; Peake 2015). Dodson and Riley (Chapter 20), for example, deploy the data generated from quantitative surveys interpolated with those gathered from qualitative interviews to highlight the gendered nature of both the urban food system and urban food poverty in the three African cities where they work. By mixing quantitative and qualitative methods, Dodson and Riley point to the generative capacity of mixed methods feminist urban research.

The Limits of Social Reproduction

While social reproduction helps us generate deepened analyses of urbanization processes, the formation of the urban, and the lived struggles of urban residents, we recognize, that like all concepts, it has limits, including those we already discussed in relation to the imperatives of decolonizing feminist urban knowledge. As with all attempts to make theoretical sense of worlds in transformation it is wise to be circumspect about the uses of the conceptual frameworks we nurture and to both acknowledge and set our sights beyond their limits. We argue that feminist theory needs to reflect on the limitations of its main concepts and its processes and politics of knowledge production.

One such limitation concerns the collapse of social reproduction into social ontology. Social reproduction eschews the question of social ontology by presenting itself as life-making, the problem being that life is a metaphysical concept, even though it is the most material everyday experience that we all go through. In our view, it is a mistake to think of social reproduction as the production of life itself because such an approach to social reproduction can envelop every possible subject and their everyday struggles into a unitary vision. In this level of universality, it can easily be argued that all people have the same problems ('we are all in this together') and require the same solutions. However, this is to push the problem of life not only out of social ontology, but also out of history. In such a scenario, social reproduction is epistemologically operationalized as a false universal appealing to a transhistorical and transgeographical 'human nature'. Social reproduction then ceases to be a method of investigating and sustaining social ontologies, instead replacing social ontology with itself as life, foreclosing how social reproduction is taken up under different life forms within history.

Amongst the potential pitfalls of such an approach, of making social reproduction a stand-in for life itself, is that of foreclosing appreciation for and engagement with approaches that have deeply rooted political, cosmological, and ontological understandings of and orientations towards the relations that must be sustained in order that life – and not only human life – can thrive. Collapsing these relations into the relations of social reproduction in an anticipation of a unitary framework of analysis stymies the possibilities of reflecting relationally and historically on different forms of violence that render life unliveable for those who are on the receiving end of these violences, as well as for those who directly or indirectly benefit from them.

Moreover, such an approach to social reproduction runs the danger of rendering the social of social reproduction into an index of empirical

varieties of oppression, as opposed to having a formational view of it whereby it is not taken for granted but understood in the historicity of its contingent precarity. For instance, slavery, ongoing settler-colonization, and the violence of contemporary capitalism and heteropatriarchy make social reproductive work extremely difficult, for in the aftermath of and during these violent regimes, the social itself needs to be reconstituted. Therefore, as opposed to taking social reproduction as the work that makes all other work possible, an approach that examines what undergirds social reproduction by focusing on the collective re-constitution of the social becomes necessary.

It follows that we need to interrogate the limits of what is signified by the 'social' in social reproduction, for example, by probing the anthropocentric conceptualization of social reproduction. The divisions within and between the human and nonhuman that underpin capitalist urbanization (Ruddick 2015) also function to ground an anthropocentrism within frameworks of social reproduction (Andrucki *et al*. 2018). The following chapters are haunted by organic and inorganic materialities beyond the human, such as water, crops, landscapes, buildings, which, however, largely come into articulation within this volume at the point where they become relevant to human reproduction. In the age of climate crises and viral pandemics, anthropocentric frameworks are increasingly inadequate on their own to either diagnose or respond to the more than non- and more than-human forces and processes that shape futures in and beyond the urban (Meehan and Strauss 2015; McKiethen and Naslund 2017). The current context of changes in the planet's systems and the role of the urban in those processes has necessitated rethinking of the relationship between social and ecological processes (Derickson 2018b, p. 427; see also Ruddick 2017), including through consideration of multispecies encounters and entanglements across various scales from the microbial to the planetary (Tsing 2015; Leiper 2017).

Reconsidering the limits of what is understood as the social also brings us to the question of the constitutive outside of social reproduction, of questions of undecidability, and of alternative conceptual schemas for understanding the social and the urban that could usefully be brought into conversation (see Peake *et al*. 2018). Thinking through the historical constitution of social reproduction, its constitutive outsides, and opening up the social may be instrumental in providing insights into how we can think through the possibilities for transformative political action in the midst of crises in social reproduction. While the following chapters, for example, address the potential of social reproduction to create material conditions of life that escape capture by capital, more needs to be done to excavate the revolutionary potential of social reproduction work through

commoning practices (cf. Linebaugh 2008) to create what Caffentzis and Federici (2014) refer to as 'anti-capitalist commons' and De Angelis and Harvie (2014) as 'commoning-beyond-capital'.

Coda: Social Reproduction and the Urban During a Pandemic

As we submit this volume for publication, we have been living in what has been routinely referred to as the unprecedented time of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Each in our own distinct and interlinked ways, the authors of this chapter and editors of this book have confronted the individualizing paradoxes and isolating demands of the present moment from the vantage point of our own homes and eerily empty city streets here in Toronto. While it is important to be reflexive about how we ourselves have coped, as editors and authors of a book focused on feminist urban theory and social reproduction, we are also compelled to question the oft-mentioned phrase that we are living in unprecedented times. We ask: What exactly is unprecedented about this time? Is it unprecedented that inequality will increase? That millions will fall into poverty? That migration to cities will increase in the face of poverty? That once open cities will move to closure? That people are not able to safely access the healthcare they need because of enduring spatializations of racism? That those who suffer from ill health rooted in socio-environmental injustice will suffer in greater numbers from a novel virus? That people who are told to stay at home are not able to do so because they have no home or because their partner or parent is violent? That people will be made sick doing an underpaid and insecure job because their employer refuses to provide for basic health and safety considerations? Or that national governments and institutions alike are exploiting a crisis to institute militarized regimes of population control, to cut off access to information, to consolidate power? We could easily ask many more questions, those which address the issues that the pandemic does not so much create these calamitous conditions, but rather exposes them.

The deep systemic injustices, inequalities, and violences that have been accelerated by responses to this crisis are not new phenomenon, especially for the huge swathes of the world's population living in states governed by conservative and neo-fascist leaders, but they are surfacing with a new intensity, shining light on capitalism as the history of the separation between capital and life. The spatial organization of our lives is marked by the pain and anxiety of this separation of life and capital. By the time you read these words, 'the situation' will have again shifted enormously; the constancy of change is now more apparent than ever, as is Dr. King's call

to attend to *the fierce urgency of now*. Thus, at the same time as the deeply stretched relations of social reproduction that form the warp and weft of urban everyday life are in the spotlight, we need to confront the violent re-instantiation of the 'health' of 'the economy' at the expense of everything and everyone else.

And yet the time of COVID-19 has also shown the city to be a site of ethical and political possibilities. The politics of care and connectivity that have surfaced in accounts of everyday life in cities across the globe reveal a bottom-up collective vision for helping those who lives are marginalized – refugees, immigrants, the homeless, the underpaid, targets of violence – in ways that are sustainable and speak to equality. Time will tell if there will also be a renewed politics of solidarity that arises out of these experiences. Rather than economizing, financializing, and dehumanizing society, we call for socializing and humanizing the economy, as the path by which we can reconsider, reclaim, and reconstruct our ways of being together to envision meaningful lives. This necessary re-orientation to life beyond capitalism will require reconsideration of social reproduction for years to come.

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Notes

1 In the long history of urban scholarship, genealogies of feminist interventions into the urban and social reproduction can be traced back 150 years to the 1870s. Social reproduction has been the (waxing and waning) central thread of feminist urban work since the early 1970s when it was ignited by the path-breaking debates between feminist political economists. The early work of Boserup (1970) in this period, which related to Southern cities, based on a classification of different types of cities according to the presences and absences of men and women, fell between the cracks. While development feminists took up Boserup's work in relation to women's various modes of integration into development, urban feminists remained largely unaware of it, their focus being on Northern cities and the above-mentioned debates. Northern-based scholars began to amalgamate empirical studies of the gendered division of labour within households with feminist Marxist political economy accounts of urbanization to address the role of social reproduction in capitalism. Building on this work, urban feminists initiated a field of study of the sites and processes of social reproduction in urban place-making and

urbanization, and of the ways in which changes in spatialities and processes of social reproduction and production affect and transform the urban. The first review of this work by urban feminists came as early as 1974 (Hapgood and Getzels 1974), followed shortly by others (Hayden and Wright 1976; Wekerle 1980) (see Peake 2020 for further elaboration).

2 Although they have not stopped in their efforts to problematize and transform this intellectual erasure, feminist scholars' patience with the tenacity of this lack of engaging with questions of social reproduction has been wearing thin over several decades and is resulting, amongst other responses, with a refusal to engage with masculinist urban theory (see Katz 2006; Derickson 2018).

3 Katz's most recent definition of social reproduction falls squarely in the political economy tradition, as 'the daily and long-term reproduction of the means of production, the labor power to make them work, and the social relations that hold them in place' (Norton and Katz, 2017, p. 1).

4 The following are some of those whose contributions defined this field for a whole generation of scholars: Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, Veronica Beechey, Patricia Connelly, Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, Diane Elson, Silvia Federici, Bonnie Fox, Selma James, Martha Gimenez, Meg Luxton, Martha MacDonald, Maureen Mackintosh, Angela Miles, Maxine Molyneux, Ruth Pearson, Wally Seccombe, Lise Vogel, and Annie Whitehead.

5 Although feminist scholars did not introduce the term 'social reproduction' (it was first introduced in the 18th century), socialist feminists were responsible for developing a fully-fledged account of it (for a genealogy of the term, see Caffentzis 2002).

6 Numerous studies have shown that although some men are engaging more in domestic work, this is uneven and far from reaching equality of participation (Altintas and Sullivan 2016; Office for National Statistics 2016; Bourantani 2017; Moyser and Burlock 2018; Woodman and Cook 2019).

7 We include fields essential for social reproduction that cross the waged/unwaged work divide, such as those of childcare, domestic work, education, and healthcare (see also Pearson and Elson 2015).

8 We agree with other critical urban scholars who argue that the lack of any global agreement on a definition of the urban, the uneven pace and form of urbanization, and the incompatability of national data sets raises serious questions about the nature of the 'global' urban (see Brenner and Schmid 2014).

9 Space prevents us from even a brief overview of this literature, but see, for example, Castells (1983) on the city as a spatial unit of collective consumption, and feminist critiques of why the provision of goods and services by the state fall short of a comprehensive understanding of social reproduction.

10 The global geoeconomic transformations triggered by the financial crash have also facilitated the global rise of the right – with its associated ideologies of fascism, nationalism, populism, xenophobia, and militarism. The associated reassertion of patriarchy and misogyny, in fixing the unstable subject of woman, is also accelerating the trend to increase the burdens on women to carry the costs of social reproduction.

11 See, for example, Piketty 2015; UN-Habitat 2016; Vidal, Tjaden, and Laczko 2018.
12 Scholars have documented the feminization of migration through the transnational migration of women for care and domestic labour and the resultant creation of global care chains (Huang *et al*. 2012; Parrenas 2012; Yeates 2012). Global care chains are central to contemporary processes of social reproduction both in responding to crises in social reproduction in contexts of increasing education levels and professional employment amongst women and the withdrawal of state support for activities of social reproduction, as well as in enabling migrant women from low income countries to support the social reproduction of their families (Yeoh and Huang 2010).
13 Contemporary migration also demonstrates the increasing entanglement of paid and unpaid reproductive labour (Pearson and Elson 2015, p. 10) as a key feature of social reproduction under the conditions of neoliberal capitalism and the financialization of labour (Federici 2018; Martin 2002).

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