Book Reviews

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Translated by Paul Reeve

Bessière C., Gollac S., 2020, *Le genre du capital: Comment la famille reproduit les inégalités* [The gender of capital: How the family reproduces inequalities], Paris, La Découverte, 336 pages.

The work of Thomas Piketty has shown that today, wealth inequalities accrue less through the incomes of individuals than through inheritance. But while this work analyses recent transformations in the landscape of class inequalities, it does not analyse gender relations. What of wealth inequalities between women and men? Starting from this question, Céline Bessière and Sibylle Gollac do not content themselves with simply adding a variable to existing analyses of capital. They draw and expand upon feminist research on the family, identifying the practices that favour men's capital accumulation in a context of increasing paid employment among women. By showing that it is the family that produces wealth inequalities between women and men, they revive the analysis of the political economy of patriarchy first set out in the 1970s by Christine Delphy, who notably established the key role of domestic work in the reproduction of the labour force. While the sociology of gender has produced a large body of research on women's paid employment, and the sociology of the family has focused on analysing affective ties and their political framing, this book returns to the political economy of patriarchy, integrating the changing structures of capitalism. The authors thus approach the family as an economic institution, within which goods circulate, their value and possession depending on the status and relationships of its members and their ties.

The available statistical data demonstrate the current relevance of this perspective. While the INSEE Patrimoine [patrimony] survey does not precisely capture gender inequalities, in particular due to the limitations of the statistical category of the household, it nevertheless evidences recent increases in wealth inequalities between women and men. Bessière and Gollac also draw on a database of the legal records of 4,000 union separation cases, assembled with other researchers. These data show how these separations amplify economic inequalities between spouses to the disadvantage of women. But while the statistical data highlight inequalities, they do not show us how they are produced. To do this, the authors analyse what they call 'family economic arrangements': that is, the ways in which money and goods circulate within the family. These arrangements take place through inheritance following a death, when a family business is passed on to one of the children, or when the couple's property or alimony are negotiated in the course of a divorce. Family monographs—established over the course of 20 years of research through repeated interviews with the various members of families, but also through the collection of samples of private writing—show how the differences between daughters and sons, wives and husbands, are established in practice. Family economic arrangements when families encounter the law, in the offices of notaries and lawyers, are also captured through ethnographies and interviews with these legal professionals.

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0424

The book often deals with moments of conflict, no doubt because they involve relational work through which individuals classify and explain the links between family members and their economic consequences. This process thus facilitates the sociological study of what would otherwise most often remain hidden within the silence of practices. The influence of Viviana Zelizer is notable here. These moments also show how legal professionals intervene in the definition of family ties, not only to help resolve conflicts or, for the wealthy, with tax optimization, but also to reproduce inequalities. In this way, the authors extend the materialist analysis of the family through a sociology of the legal and political framing of the private sphere.

They thus evidence the phenomenon of 'male domination through inheritance'. In addition to this central result, Bessière and Gollac also highlight what might be referred to as the patriarchal unconscious of supposedly egalitarian institutions. The privileges of sons in family reproductive strategies, those of fathers in marital separations, and 'reverse accounting' in the division of inheritances (where property is distributed according to the statuses of individuals rather than its economic value), are not the result of explicitly sexist strategies but the consequence of arrangements that assign differentiated positions and roles to women and men. Finally, the authors show how inequalities of inheritance contribute not only to widening gender inequalities but also to maintaining class inequalities. Not only are there differences in wealth between families, but there is also a different relationship to the law which disadvantages less affluent families, whose affairs are more quickly dispatched. For working-class women, the question is not receiving an inheritance but managing everyday budgetary constraints. Legal professionals often remind them of their role as mothers.

By analysing the multiple ways in which women's opportunities to accumulate wealth are limited, this book explains how economic gender inequalities are accumulated not only at the level of the labour market and of domestic work but also at the level of the family, and in particular in the differences in material and symbolic investments in daughters and sons. Bessière and Gollac show how, in addition to the gendered functioning of employment and domestic tasks, limiting women's opportunities for accumulation is an essential component of social relations between the sexes.

Mathieu Trachman

Maruani M. (ed.), 2018, *Je travaille, donc je suis: Perspectives féministes* [I work, therefore I am: Feminist perspectives], Paris, La Découverte, 304 pages.

This collection of texts is the latest in a series of collective volumes that have marked out the history of the research of the Marché du travail et genre (Labour market and gender, or MAGE) research group.(1) Its ambitions are to underline both the continuity of the group's research over the years since its creation under the CNRS in 1995 and offer new contributions to the critical perspective, so crucial in feminist research. As Michelle Perrot recalls here, following the example of female historians of work, MAGE's researchers have expanded the scope of the sociology of work onto 'women's work'. Their research has shown the importance of focusing attention on women not only to demonstrate the effects of the inequalities they experience but also to reveal their roles as producers, creators, and actors in the history of struggles for equality in the world of work. The various strands in the MAGE collective's research have helped to identify what Nicky Le Feuvre describes as a 'plethora of more or less subtle, more or less sustainable mechanisms which contribute to delegitimizing women's place on the labour market' (p. 269). In the 2000s, the centrality of work as a concept in gender studies seems to have been challenged, with thinking about work and employment considered, in Margaret Maruani's words, 'outdated, obsolete, irrelevant' (p. 10). Likewise, gender inequalities were minimized as 'residual', with equality 'well on its way'. But, Maruani continues, '[t]here is no natural gradient towards equality. Inequality remains the default. Yes, its boundaries are mobile, but for the most part, rather than disappearing, they shift.'

For these reasons too, a critical perspective on the objects of study, as well as the concepts, categories, and tools used, becomes a necessity. But as forms of employment, relationships, situations, and roles in the workplace are in constant transformation, considerable challenges arise in framing and developing research problems, as well as in data collection and analysis. In recent years, critical feminist perspectives have more broadly drawn on the concepts of intersectionality and postcoloniality and offered a clearer reading of processes at work in a global labour market characterized by 'feminization, flexibilization, fragmentation, and financialization' (J. Rubery, cited by N. Le Feuvre, p. 272). Thus, the figure of the female, racialized, migrant domestic worker became the focus of numerous studies, coming to symbolize the casualization of paid work, plural forms of oppression, and the blurred boundary between paid and free care work.

In her introduction to the collection, Maruani points to the particular attention paid throughout to the articulation of the issue of gender and work with the theoretical framework of intersectionality. To emphasize this, the prologue presents the transcript of the opening lecture by the philosopher and feminist civil rights activist Angela Davis at a 2015 colloquium celebrating

(1) Notably: *Les nouvelles frontières de l'inégalité: Hommes et femmes sur le marché du travail (1998); Femmes, genre, sociétés: L'état des savoirs* (2005); collections edited by Margaret Maruani and published by Éditions de La Découverte.

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0426

MAGE's 20-year anniversary. Its title is taken from her 1981 book *Women, Race & Class*. In the prologue, Davis takes a historical perspective, recalling the fundamental role of militant action in the struggle for the recognition of women's rights at work and then in the interest within feminist studies in the interweaving of gender with class and 'racial' relations.

The book is structured in three parts, each with its own introduction. The book's format, as a series of short chapters on a diversity of case studies and theoretical issues, makes it an enjoyable and stimulating read. The first part, 'Inflexible Inequalities?', presented by Danièle Meulders and Rachel Silvera, offers seven chapters that recall the persistence of inequalities and that question the norm on the basis of which they are measured. The implications for the study of inequalities are political and relate to law and public statistics, issues that are explored in the various chapters. Thomas Amossé demonstrates the persistence in France of a large gap between men and women in access to highly qualified and highly paid jobs, even as the number of women facing the risk of precarity has grown. Sophie Pochic analyses the elitist framing of 'diversity management' (based, in theory, on networks of high-ranking female professionals) and the rhetoric of 'market feminism' in a context where gender equality has become an important focus for businesses in terms of their image and attractiveness. Marie-Thérèse Lanquetin demonstrates that, despite national and international texts guaranteeing legal equality in work and employment, de facto inequalities continue. Moreover, Lanquetin argues, the existence of this legislative framework tends to make these inequalities less visible and thus more difficult to reveal. The four following chapters explore these issues in various national contexts. Combining results from field studies in Brazil, France, and Japan, Helena Hirata shows the usefulness of the imbrication of social relationships for thinking the complexity of the organization of care activities and understanding the relationships of domination in the context in which they are performed. Laura Frader provides an example from the US context of the inadequacy of legislation favouring gender equality when the actors who are in a position to work to ensure its application do not do so. Bila Sorj analyses recent change in research topics in the field of gender and work in Brazil. Finally, Carlos Prieto shows how, in Spain and other European countries, a relatively 'traditional' family model is maintained, with little sharing of family tasks, even where mothers are in paid employment.

The second part of the book, entitled 'Nouveaux objets, nouvelles frontières' [New objects, new boundaries], introduced by Catherine Achin and Catherine Marry, presents seven studies with contrasting objects of study, disciplinary approaches, and geographical contexts. Cécile Guillaume and Gill Kirton show how gender constructs inequalities between women working in the same sector (prison administration in Great Britain) in the context of policies of restructuring and austerity which impact the lives of women both working in and using public services. According to Iman Karzabi and Séverine Lemière, public policies aimed at enhancing women's access to employment must be reinforced and must take

into account the effects of violence experienced beginning early in life on school investment and access to employment, as well as violence suffered at work. Taking a longitudinal approach across several generations of female workers in a Shanghai factory, Tang Xiaojing examines the supposed benefits of the Great Leap Forward for women's emancipation in work and the family. Next, Rebecca Rogers brings her historian's gaze to bear on needlework training for young women in colonial Algeria; she describes how this training 'undermined gender norms' (p. 163) by opening up access to paid work. Hyacinthe Ravet shows how the focus has shifted from the study of women within different artistic spheres towards gendered analysis both of artistic professions and of barriers to entry into them. Amélie Le Renard's chapter draws on studies she carried out in Dubai and Riyadh, which show how analysing the articulation of nationality with relations of gender, class, and 'race' can shed light on the processes that produce structural advantage in a globalized world. Audrey Lenoël and Ariane Pailhé describe the perspectives opened up by the analysis of the activity of 'women who stayed in the [home] country'—the wives of migrant workers—and explain the challenges of collecting appropriate data on these situations.

The third part of the collection, on 'Work, Gender, and Feminism', presents six texts that focus on theoretical issues in research on work and gender. In their introduction to this section, Isabelle Clair and Jacqueline Laufer write that the presence of the term *feminist* in the book's subtitle reflects a process of legitimization of critical feminist perspectives in the academic field. The same goes for the recognition of the 'seriousness' of gender studies on work, migration, family relationships, violence, etc., as well as the critical and reflective dimensions of many studies such as those presented in the book.

Drawing on her own research on women's work in working-class environments, notably home care workers, Christelle Avril presents an empirical critique of the 'successful concept' of care. Nathalie Lapeyre shows how the naturalization of 'qualities' transformed into 'skills' orients women towards various support functions, and she observes that the sexualization of the female body constitutes a greater obstacle for workers and technicians than for engineers or managers. Adopting an intersectional and postcolonial perspective, Kamala Marius addresses the question of women's empowerment through work in South India, and Michel Lallement analyses the gendered effects of the digital revolution on the status of women at work and on their professional identity. Danièle Kergoat emphasizes the centrality of work as a concept in gender studies and its paradigmatic quality. Laure Bereni explains the usefulness of the 'space of the cause of women' as a category for affirming a critical sociology of feminist movements and underlining their heterogeneity.

In her conclusion to the book, Nicky Le Feuvre emphasizes the need to admit the ambivalence of 'the promotion of women's autonomy and gender equality as it emerges in individualist societies'. We must also accept, she argues, that in order to better understand how women are called upon today

to free themselves from the normative foundations of gender, we must take into account the new fault lines as well as intersectionality in the 'post-Fordist world order' (p. 275). The book surveys a vast range of findings and theoretical advances, but the contributions also show that much remains to be done and that the focus on women remains important, as Michelle Perrot points out in the epilogue: 'the fragility of women's work persists' in the face of rigidities in hierarchical domination and forms of harassment, of differences in wages and working hours, and of technical and communicational transformations—all areas where research must continue.

Stephanie Condon

Scott J. W., 2018, *Sex and secularism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, XVI–240 pages.

Far from encouraging equality between sexes and sexualities, 'secularism', on the contrary, establishes gender inequality. Moreover, it has acted as an effective rhetorical strategy for affirming the religious and racial superiority of Western countries, both in the past and in the present. In opposition to Samuel Huntington's (1993) theory of a 'clash of civilizations' between the Christian West and Islam, Joan Wallach Scott presents a rich and richly documented analysis, drawing on numerous historical studies on the unequal and hierarchical foundations of the very process of secularism.

It is difficult to do justice in French to the term 'secularism', which is rendered as *laïcité* in the French translation of the book (Flammarion, 2018). Taking what she presents as a Foucauldian 'genealogical' approach to the concept, in her analysis the terms 'secular' ('referring to things nonreligious'), 'secularization' ('the historical process by which transcendent religious authority is replaced by knowledge that can only originate with reasoning humans'), and 'secularity' ('a nonreligious state of being') are superimposed (p. 5). This is ultimately not a problem, since the aim of the book is not to give substantial content to secularism as a concept but to capture the discursive logics associated with it and how they have evolved over time. Scott writes that 'although it may not reflect the reality it claims to describe, the secularism story (secularization, secularity) does have an important influence on the way these realities are perceived' (p. 9). This is a highly original aspect of this book, which distinguishes it from many others that seek to explore the foundations of secularism, or the content and limits of the process of secularization. The concept of 'secularism' functions here as political discourse.

The genealogy of the concept of secularism has considerably evolved over the last centuries and is based on the play of multiple oppositions. In its earliest uses, it carried a negative connotation and referred to intraworldly relations. This logic was reversed in the 18th century. At the time of the French Revolution, secularism came to positively refer to the State and its representatives, with religion becoming its negative counterpart. The 19th century was characterized by new oppositions: between women and men, masculinity and femininity (with the public and political sphere reserved for men, while women were relegated to the religious sphere), but also between 'civilized' (Christian) nations and 'primitive' nations in Africa and the Ottoman territories. In the second half of the 20th century, during the Cold War, the idea of a free (Christian) religion, as against the cold and authoritarian domination of communist atheism, was integrated into the very concept of secularism. In the most recent period, there has been a direct association in Western countries between secularism, democracy, and gender equality, on the one hand, and religion, Islam, and gender inequality, on the other. 'Gender equality is portrayed in terms of the difference between uncovered and covered societies' (p. 14). The concept thus confirms the political

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0430

and moral superiority of the West over other countries, and in particular predominantly Muslim countries.

The first chapter, 'Women and religion', surveys a large historical literature in order to show that the association between women and religion is a product of secularism itself, not the relic of ancient practice. The French Revolution of 1789 established the idea of the reasonable and reasoning man and the emotional woman, under the influence of clergy and confessors. The gendered division of labour (women are the guarantors of men's morals, while being economically and politically dependent on them) became a marker of 'modernity' (p. 48). The same logic can be observed in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire, in particular around the transformation of sharia into a standardized, modern civil code. Here again, secularism and the colonial enterprise established or reinforced gender inequalities, which would sometimes be reinterpreted as 'tradition'.

The second chapter, 'Reproductive futurism', emphasizes the role of science in the subordination of women, by way of the imposition of heterosexual marriage and reproductive teleology as a requirement of nature itself. The Western model of heterosexual marriage, characterized by asymmetry between the sexes, took root in the colonized countries over the course of the 19th century. The combat against non-reproductive sexuality (masturbation, homosexuality) and the associated methods (contraception, abortion) is thus not the remnant of a religious doctrine. 'These policies consolidated a class and racialized vision of national homogeneity' (p. 81).

The democratic revolutions of the 18th century are often seen as the source or foundation of gender equality in Western countries. Chapter 3, 'Political emancipation', challenges this idea, as revolutions have tended to reinforce the division between the public and private spheres. According to Scott, the social contract thus became a sexually asymmetrical contract, whereby women were understood to consent to their own subordination. Furthermore, the right to vote did not prevent the marginalization of women in the political process, including in the most recent period. She writes: 'the extension of the vote to women did not entirely invalidate the equation. Instead, it simply moved the question of men's power to another plane' (p. 121).

Chapter 4, 'From the Cold War to the clash of civilizations', highlights the shift of the concept of secularism towards those of democracy and liberalism, in opposition to Soviet atheism. The USSR was then represented as the antithesis of religious freedom in Western, Christian countries. Scott suggests a parallel between discourses around religious freedom and around sexual freedom during the Cold War. 'Sexual freedom—no longer a private matter—was increasingly referred to as a founding premise of secular democracy' (p. 126). Beginning in the late 1980s and the 1990s, many international institutions defending women's rights began to focus on violence against women, which they were more likely to present as a consequence of women's dependence than as its cause.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 once again shifted the lines of discourse around secularism. Islam became a threat to a system conceived as both democratic and Christian, characterized by sexual emancipation (Chapter 5: 'Sexual emancipation'). In the new discourses of secularism, religious freedom and sexual freedom became synonymous. Emancipation (in particular women's emancipation) could only come about through sexual freedom, which in turn is guaranteed by secularism. By this token, Muslim countries are countries of oppression, and moral crusades to 'uncover' women are justified both inside and outside national borders. Here, the author suggests a number of fertile prospective directions for thinking the relationship between sexuality, religion, and emancipation. Drawing on anthropological research in Muslim countries (notably that of Saba Mahmood, 2009), she questions the notions of 'subjectivation' and 'agency', as well as a Western-centred reading of emancipation. She shows, moreover, that the assertion of equality between the sexes or sexualities in no way guarantees its reality.(1)

In conclusion, *Sex and secularism* is an extremely rich book, both in its diversity of sources and its scope. Scott invites us to rethink the concept of secularism as power-generating discourse, within nations but also in relationships between them. Her rethinking of the relationship between religion, secularism, and nation situates them at the intersection of gender, class, and race. In its wide sweep, the book opens a number of avenues deserving of further study, in particular of new developments in anti-gender movements in Western countries,(2) how Muslim women appropriate or distance themselves from discourses linked to secularism, and the place of religious feminisms.(3)

Marion Maudet

(1) Mahmood S., 2009, Politique de la piété: le féminisme à l'épreuve du renouveau islamique, Paris, La Découverte.

(2) Kuhar R., Paternotte D. (eds.), 2018, *Campagnes anti-genre en Europe. Des mobilisations contre l'égalité*, Lyon, Presses universitaires de Lyon.

(3) De Gasquet B., 2019, Quels espaces pour les féminismes religieux? *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 38(1), 18–35.

Tissot S., 2018, *Gayfriendly: Acceptation et contrôle de l'homosexualité à Paris et à New York* [Acceptance and control of same-sex sexuality in Paris and New York], Paris, Raisons d'agir, 328 pages.

This book by Sylvie Tissot is the fruit of an original study of residents of two neighbourhoods that have been the site of a gentrification process marked by the presence of a large gay (the Marais, Paris)(1) or lesbian (Park Slope, Brooklyn) population. 'Gay-friendliness' refers, first, to a set of positive attitudes towards same-sex sexuality and gay and lesbian people. The book's interest lies in its demonstration that these attitudes remain ambivalent, linking acceptance with control. Far from erasing hierarchies of sexualities, they contribute to redefining socially acceptable and legitimate expressions of same-sex sexuality, notably valuing its partnership and family forms.

Second, Tissot analyses gay-friendliness as a norm promoted by a group situated at the top of the social scale: the progressive bourgeoisie. The book continues Tissot's research on this fraction of the upper classes, who live in today's gentrified neighbourhoods and defend progressive positions, notably on issues of gender and sexuality.(2) Taken together, her findings show that gay-friendliness works to establish and maintain social distinction. It plays a role in the habitus of 'good neighbours', allowing members of this group to stigmatize the supposed homophobia of the (racialized) working classes, but also of the conservative grande bourgeoisie, as a matter of 'poor taste' (p. 221).

The study is built on observations, archival materials, and interviews with 95 residents of the two neighbourhoods, most of whom are white, heterosexual, and highly educated property owners. Tissot shows, first, that behind the apparent gay-friendliness prevailing in these neighbourhoods, relationships to same-sex sexuality remain heterogeneous. The first chapter focuses on the role of generation. Residents born between 1930 and 1955 continue to express some reticence concerning the visibility of same-sex sexuality and continue to expect discretion. The next generation (born 1955–1975) is characterized by greater recognition of same-sex sexuality, as well as more and closer relationships with LGBT people. For the youngest (born 1975–1990), the dominant attitude is indifference, accompanied notably by a rejection of 'categorizing' people by sexual orientation. In addition to the generational factor, Tissot shows that at the scale of life trajectories, some individuals learn or even 'convert' to gay-friendliness (p. 47). This occurs mainly via personal contact with gay men and lesbian women, and thus increasing familiarity with same-sex sexuality, whether through work, neighbourhood life or, even more markedly, with the coming out of a loved one.

Chapter 3, on gender effects, shows greater acceptance among women, which is manifested by more friendships with gay men and reflected in one of the common representations of gay-friendliness: the 'fag hag' [*fille à pédé*] (p. 174).

(1) On the process of 'gaytrification', see Giraud C., 2014, *Quartiers gays*, Paris, PUF.

(2) Tissot S., 2011, *De bons voisins: Enquête dans un quartier de la bourgeoisie progressiste*, Paris, Raisons d'agir.

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0434

Beyond this observation, Tissot attempts to capture the social logics at work. Behind the discourse of gender equality in the milieu studied here, the division of labour within couples remains gendered. Care work and the maintenance of social relationships are mainly handled by women, who are socialized from a very young age into an altruistic ethos. This in turn feeds into empathetic attitudes towards gay people; gay-friendliness may thus be understood as a part of their prerogatives. For some, friendship with gay men also constitutes a means to take some distance from male domination, which they specifically associate with heterosexual relationships. In addition, there is the difficulty, for men, of 'constructing a non-homophobic masculinity' (p. 165).

Tissot uses qualitative analysis to examine the effects of generation and gender, previously identified in other studies,[3] in interaction with class membership. In the book, other factors involved in gay-friendliness, often grouped together as 'atypical', emerge: heterosexual women perceived as tomboys [*garçons manqués*] or who are in contact with LGBT+ people through work (pp. 39–45), 'atypical' partnership and sexual trajectories (p. 149) among divorced or polyamorous women, an ethos of low virility among some men (p. 161), etc. In other words, gay-friendliness is also explained by relative distance from dominant norms on gender and sexuality.

Chapters 2 and 4 seek to shed light on the common basis of this gay-friendliness. Same-sex sexuality is accepted above all when it takes the form of the monogamous couple or the family and parenthood. In the United States, in particular, many neighbourhood institutions (schools, synagogues, food cooperatives, etc.) value 'diversity' and support same-sex marriage, which became a 'cause' for some heterosexual 'gentrifiers' (pp. 81–110). Whereas in Park Slope the predominant legal register has been linked to demands for equal rights and non-discrimination, in the Marais it has been that of 'sexual freedom'. It is somewhat unfortunate that Tissot's analysis of these mobilizations—and, more broadly, of the respondents' relationship to politics—is only briefly sketched out the book.

While the norm of gay-friendliness has contributed to the normalization of same-sex sexuality, it has also generated forms of control and exclusion at different levels. In public space, the visibility of same-sex sexuality is policed: when it is too strong, it is associated with 'communitarianism' (p. 244); when its sexual dimension is too obvious, it is qualified as 'sleazy' [*crado*] (p. 250). In the sphere of friendship, sociability can be mixed in terms of sexual orientation, as long as it is not mixed in class terms: 'good friends', in the end, are gay men and women who have a similar lifestyle and who share the same class ethos. Gay-friendliness is also expected not to blur gender identities: 'good' gay men and women conform to gender norms and thus do not present as effeminate gay men or masculine lesbians. In the domestic sphere, finally, children are educated about gay-friendliness

(3) Rault W., 2016, Les attitudes 'gayfriendly' en France: entre appartenances sociales, trajectoires familiales et biographies sexuelles, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 213(3), 38–65.

through the transmission of a taste for 'diversity' by families who dread the possibility that their own child might come out. Being gay-friendly, in many respects, helps individuals to articulate and construct themselves as heterosexual.

Overall, the goal of shedding light on the considerable ambiguity that attends gay-friendliness runs through the entire structure of the book, with some redundancies. That takes nothing away, however, from the pleasure of reading it or the accuracy of its conclusions. Besides enriching the analysis of relationships to homosexuality, the book makes a strong contribution to the study of contemporary social classes.

Maialen Pagiusco

Bergström M. and Pasquier D. (eds.), 2019, *Genre et internet: Sous les imaginaires, les usages ordinaires* [Doing gender online: Ordinary practice beyond utopian ideals], RESET, 8, https://doi.org/10.4000/reset.1804

In the 1990s, North American feminist scientists were enthusiastic about the Internet: they thought 'communication at a distance would allow the physical body (male/female) to be dissociated from gender identity (man/woman), thereby promoting a fluidity of identities, challenging sexual binarity' (Introduction, p. 2). Twenty-five years later, 'how do digital practices change or reproduce gender relations; that is, the practices and principles of differentiation between women and men?' The answers to this question, which opens and runs throughout this dossier coordinated by M. Bergström and D. Pasquier, highlight some signs of change, but above all the heteronormative inertia of ordinary digital practices.

American students' day-to-day digital flirtation imposes heteronormative codes of sexuality—enterprising men, reserved women—regardless of the sexual orientation of the individuals involved. The internalization of norms is powerful, and the interviews collected by D. Pinsky highlight the tensions between the control involved in following the codes of digital communication and the relaxation favoured by physical distance. The 'double punishment' of young women—who suffer both harassment and stigma if they take the initiative—is recognized, but without any real change in practices. The threat of public dissemination of photos or text messages within the community limits aggressive manifestations of masculinity, but it mainly affects girls and restricts the expression of their sexuality.

E-sports tournaments via local networks (LAN parties) are organized to stage the performance of a virile, attractive, effective masculinity. J. Chaulet and J. Soler-Benonie observe that this masculinity rejects the figures of the homosexual and the single geek, and assigns limited space, functions, and models of identity to women. They supply the teams and provide care work for the players, and their presence is also the public assurance of the players' heterosexual identity. In this arena where all activities are subject to a heteronormative, androcentric logic, the small minority of female gamers negotiate their presence by adopting the few accessible codes of the world of video games: 'Lolita' or 'tomboy'.

In the South Korean video game company studied here by C. Paberz, the gender regime that governs the activities of and relationships between employees contradicts the company's professed policies of democracy and egalitarianism. The company's organization reflects a gendered order of social control, where female professionals are assigned to less qualified positions, precarious status, and the 'natural' function of speaking for female tastes in video games. Real games are for men, and those who play them are no longer women. The maleness of the video game sector confines women to the role of sympathetic, transient 'anomalies', reduced to discreet protest in the face of avatars in bikinis and stilettos.

Thanks to the rise of information and communication technologies, the most widespread form of video viewing is now the consumption of pornography. But as F. Vörös points out here, its ubiquity does not require its consumers

(whether gay, straight, trans, bisexual, or lesbian) to criticize the gender relations that are performed within it. Satisfaction, control, distinction, and passion: the typology of pleasures that guide practices around pornography reflects a complex and heterogeneous range of relationships. While passionate interest involves very advanced knowledge of gender, of the actors and actresses, which is shared and debated between initiates, the resulting space of exchange and discussion quickly excludes women.

Finally, L. Delias deconstructs the established link between advanced age and a lack of mastery of digital technologies. Delias emphasizes the diversity of situations and degrees of digital autonomy of respondents from the middle and upper classes in the light of varied professional and family trajectories and the gender relationships that structured them. Women's extremely widespread involvement in administrative and secretarial work, as well as the experience of marital separations, have enabled many to acquire digital skills and technological tastes which are favourable to their autonomy. The ordinary conditions of employment and (ex-)conjugal experience can therefore sometimes produce secondary benefits in the long term, which are renegotiated in the domestic context, where men's economic power can be decisive in the selection and purchase of equipment.

These studies show that practices in the digital world are not cut off from the social spaces in which they are embedded, which they define, and where relations of domination are established and maintained. In light of these findings, it seems that the subversion of sexual binarity via the internet is very limited. An important challenge is to analyse 'subspaces' involving less fixed relationships, to contextualize practices temporally and socially, allowing this range of analyses to be refined and complexified. In many respects, the reflections featured here echo research on the feminization of male-dominated professions, where the experience of the minority involves tensions, adjustments, resistances, transformations, and displacements of gendered symbols and practices. They also encourage the exploration of 'gender inversion' (Guichard-Claudic et al., 2008) and the place of the masculine in feminized digital spaces and practices, as well as spaces that may profoundly challenge binarity and heteronormativity, making room for plasticity in identities and practices.[1]

Hélène Bretin

(1) Guichard-Claudic Y., Kergoat D., Vilbrod A. (eds.), 2008, *L'inversion du genre. Quand les métiers masculins se conjuguent au féminin…et réciproquement*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes.

Meidani A., Alessandrin A. (eds.), 2018, *Parcours de santé, parcours de genre* [Health trajectories, gender trajectories], Toulouse, Presses universitaires du Midi, 222 pages.

This edited volume explores interactions between health and gender across nine chapters representing a variety of disciplines. What impact do health status, illness, or biomedical categories have on gender roles and relationships? How does gender condition preventive attitudes, perceptions of risk, the experience of pathologies, and relationships to care and treatment? In responding to these questions, the book pursues two ambitions, which are set out in the introduction by Anastasia Meidani and Arnaud Alessandrin. The first is to replace binary essentialist thinking, which is widespread in the biomedical approach, with dynamic intersectional analysis of the imbrications of gender trajectories and health pathways. The second is to offer a non-naturalizing vision of gender and health, drawing on insights from a diversity of thematic, theoretical, geographic, and disciplinary perspectives. The introduction takes a very instructive look at the contributions and pitfalls of the different conceptual frameworks that have predominated in the study of the relationships between health and gender across time and theoretical currents: categorical thinking, post-structuralist feminist theory, relational approaches, intersectional analysis.

The book is then organized into three thematic parts, each consisting of three chapters. The first deals with the experience of cancer. In the first text in this section, Pierre Aïach examines the phenomenon commonly known as the 'gender paradox' with regard to mortality, in particular from cancer: namely, that mortality is lower in women than men despite higher prevalence and less favourable socio-economic positioning. Aïach seeks to shed light on this apparent paradox by analysing social conditions, notably employment trajectories and sociocultural dispositions that precede the observed differences in cancer outcomes. Next, Brigitte Esteve-Bellebeau offers a philosophical reflection on gender identity in the face of treatment protocols and cancer-induced damage to the body, based on observations in a clinical context. She describes successive breaks in representations of self as a sexed body at different stages in the process: when the diagnosis is communicated, during medical treatment, and, finally, during remission. The first part ends with a sociological text by Anastasia Meidani which, based on observations and interviews in an oncology clinic, highlights the force of sexed perceptions both in patients' experience and in the medical treatment of the disease. Meidani describes, for example, how stereotyped figures of women as 'exhausted' (by life) but 'strong' in the face of illness, and of men who are 'robust' (in life) but 'weakened' by illness, contribute to differentiated clinical responses to pain reported by women and men.

The second part of the book deals with reproductive health and sexuality, with three chapters each taking an original approach. The first is devoted to the management of reproductive toxicant risks in the workplace. Based on

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0439

company monographs and sociological interviews, Emilie Legrand and Anastasia Meidani explain that outside the period of pregnancy, these risks are almost entirely concealed at all levels of prevention policy. Female employees themselves strongly underestimate these risks, which runs against the widespread idea of an almost 'natural' female prudence in the face of health risks. The study of the combined effects of gender, age, and cohort, but also socio-occupational status, career implications, and parental status, helps to explain women's concealment, and even denial, of these risks. In the next chapter, Virginie Rozée presents an analysis of the conditions of surrogacy in India based on an in-depth ethnographic survey. Rozée shows that the practice of surrogacy is now an integral part of a globalized system for the management of the reproductive capacity of women, who seek to improve their living conditions through an exceptional financial opportunity. An intersectional approach sheds light on interacting axes of domination (linked to gender, socio-economic status, and the primacy given to the wishes of the intended parents and to biomedical power) to which pregnant women are subjected throughout a process in which they are assigned the place of 'silent bodies'. The second part concludes with a text by Meidani and Alessandrin on sexuality after age 60. While men's and women's relationships to sexuality have been converging, there remain significant gender differences in behaviour with advancing age.

The final part of the book focuses on bodies and the work of bringing them into conformity that begins as soon as they deviate from social, aesthetic, medical, or gender expectations. In a study of bariatric trajectories and representations of obesity, the semiologist Marielle Toulze reveals the obstacles obese women encounter in their pathway towards surgery, but also the forms of circumvention of the multiple normative injunctions and medical dietetic prescriptions to which they are supposed to adhere. At the end of this trajectory, many women nevertheless end up considering the use of bariatric surgery as a failure, which reveals a lack of 'will' to take charge of their own situation. In the following chapter, Alain Giami analyses the epistemological stakes of sociodemographic and epidemiological studies on trans identities in various Western countries. Giami shows that it is possible to develop methodological tools that reflect the evolution and diversification of gender identifications, taking into account the forms of individuals' own chosen forms of identification. The book closes with a contribution from Erik Schneider, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, on intersex children. Schneider highlights the impact of gender norms on the health of, and medical care for, these children. In contrast to 'normalizing' approaches and the psychiatrization of trans identities, he proposes a 'non-suspicious' approach to supporting these children (and their parents) in their trajectory of self-determination.

In conclusion, this book reflects the dynamism of what is now a thriving field of research. However, its disciplinary diversity and the heterogeneity of

the themes explored give the impression that it lacks overall unity. It is also regrettable that issues of ethno-racial belonging and migration are not further addressed. But the contributions, which are largely original and based on first-hand data, convincingly show how questions of gender pervade all areas and stages of individuals' health trajectories.

Christine Hamelin

Knibiehler Y., 2019, *Réformer les congés parentaux: Un choix décisif pour une société plus égalitaire* [Reforming parental leave: A decisive choice for a more egalitarian society] (preface by Geneviève Fraisse), Presses de l'EHESP, 168 pages.

'Motherhood is a thread that runs through all of her thinking', Geneviève Fraisse writes in the preface to this work by feminist historian Yvonne Knibiehler, presented as the fruit of a lifetime of research. Now 98 years old, Knibiehler is a pioneer in the analysis of motherhood as a social fact. The defence of the social dimension of both motherhood and fatherhood lies at the heart of her thinking. In *La révolution maternelle* [The maternal revolution] (1998), she called for motherhood—and fatherhood—to be lived as a component of citizenship because parents are responsible for having given life and thus for the child's future.(1) Her ambition here is more political than academic. Through reflections that draw on several decades of historical and empirical work, she creates a veritable manifesto for the reform of parental leave in France. She presents it as an 'opportunity to rethink the relationship between mother and father, between parents and children, between private life and society' (p. 10). She is, of course, not the first to call for a reform of parental leave. A report published in February 2019 by the Haut Conseil de la famille criticizes the current system, deeming it 'flawed, and proposes measures to remedy this'.(2) But the overview presented in Knibiehler's book makes it of particular interest.

The work is divided into three parts. The first concerns previous policy gains on parental leave, presenting a summary of the history of maternity, paternity, and parental leave in France. The creation of maternity leave in 1909 was a 'fait social global' [general social fact], affecting all areas of private and public life. Knibiehler argues that this leave ratified the idea of female employment in the context of developing productivism, while a century later, paternity leave would emphasize the importance of private life and family values. An objective of parental leave, which emerged in the 1970s and which has been shared between mother and father since the reform of the Shared Child Rearing Benefit in 2014, is to show concern for equality. In reality, however, this leave is far from fairly shared between parents, a fact Knibiehler fails to mention. Moreover, it is small and not proportional to the parents' wages, which she also omits. Furthermore, the book scarcely mentions the many studies that have demonstrated the negative effects of such leave—whether taken full-time or part-time—on distancing women from the job market or hindering their career progression. Finally, while those taking this leave are overwhelmingly women (almost 96% of all beneficiaries), those who take it full-time are mainly women in the lowest income groups, whereas those who take it part-time tend to be in

(1) *Histoire des mères du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, 1980 (with Catherine Fouquet), Montalba illustrated edition; *Les pères ont aussi une histoire* [Fathers also have a history], 1982, Hachette Pluriel; *Histoire des mères et de la maternité en Occident* [History of mothers and motherhood in the West], 1987, Hachette (2017, PUF, Que sais-je? no. 3539).

(2) It recommended an extension of paternity leave to 1 month, a revaluation of the Shared Child Rearing Benefit (PreParE), and the sharing of part-time leave between parents.

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0442

the middle classes (more in the public sector). In sum, Knibiehler's presentation of the reform would have been clearer if the ambiguities surrounding this mechanism had been better explained.

In the second part, Knibiehler focuses on four 'feminist demands': the condemnation of violence against women, sparked notably by the Weinstein affair; the general reduction of working time; the demand for equality between women and men; and improving systems of childcare for young children. In this part, she returns to the core theme of her thought, namely the need for feminism to integrate the issue of motherhood and take into account 'domestic health work'. She addresses the recently recognized problem of obstetric violence and the right of women to give birth at home or to breastfeed beyond the end of maternity leave. Finally, according to Knibiehler, women must be able to choose to be mothers, but also to live their motherhood as they see fit. They are still the ones tasked with raising children, as while fathers may demand certain rights (shared custody in the event of separation, for example) they most often neglect their duties. This is why, in her view, the demand to extend paternity leave (currently 10 days in France) fails to address the main issues at stake: while it would enrich father–child relationships, it would not necessarily lead to an equitable sharing of tasks, notably in the home. In Knibiehler's view, the core issue is the rehabilitation of tasks within the family that could be favoured by parental leave,[3] which at 3 years is much longer than paternity leave and encourages a better reconciliation of productive and reproductive activities. Parental leave could thus be used to learn the *métier* [profession] of parenting because raising a child requires specific skills, as demonstrated by the very existence of professionals specializing in early childhood.

Knibiehler thus wishes for the parental function to be better recognized and valued. But how can it be ensured that this increased recognition will not lead to additional pressure on parents?[4] While the 'profession' of parenting may indeed ensure the recognition of parental tasks, does it not risk leading to the development of basically Western standards, drawn from the middle and upper classes? Finally, it strikes this reader as utopian to imagine, as Knibiehler suggests, that the organization of networks of parents within the framework of parental leave could allow parents from different backgrounds and cultures to meet.

The third part of the book presents prospects of parental leave reform, focusing on the issue of parenthood. The main prospect remains the positive and benevolent parenting that many parents aspire to. However, is this form of parenting not based on a concept that remains too focused on the middle and

(3) Parental child-rearing leave can be taken by one of the employed parents (with at least 1 year of seniority) during the year following a birth or an adoption. It can be renewed until the child is 3 years old if taken in at least one of the years by each of the parents. The employment contract is suspended, and the employee is not paid and instead receives benefits paid out by the Caisse d'allocations familiales.

(4) On this issue, see for example Martin, C. (ed.), 2014, *'Être un bon parent': une injonction contemporaine*, Rennes, Presses de l'EHESP.

upper classes? Knibiehler is, however, sensitive to the need to take the working classes into account, as shown by her frequent references to the anthropological literature and to aspects of child-rearing in other cultures. The conclusion invites us to consider utopian vistas, proposing rites of welcome for young people, new forms of socialization to help them grow, through ceremonies and symbolic tests, marking a progression of stages in childhood.

The merit of this work is the invitation it issues us to reflect on the parental condition, on the 'choice to become parents', and the responsibilities it brings. Finally, based on a reform of parental leave, Knibiehler draws the portrait of a way of co-constructing child-rearing, combined with shared responsibility between parents and institutions.

Sandrine Dauphin

Vergès F., 2019, *Pour un féminisme décolonial* [For a decolonial feminism], Paris, La Fabrique, 208 pages.

In this work, Françoise Vergès begins by linking together two events in January 2018: first, the victory of the female employees of the Onet cleaning company following a historic strike; and second, the publication of an editorial by a group of prominent women in defence of men's 'freedom to bother [*importuner*]'. The former was the conclusion of a long struggle of working-class and racialized women who do the cleaning work in SNCF stations. The strike had gone on for 45 days. The women's editorial in defence of 'the freedom to bother' criticized a 'hatred of men' that, the authors explained, could be found in feminism and the #MeToo movement. And yet, Vergès writes, 'the comfortable life of bourgeois women around the world is made possible by the work of millions of racialized and exploited women, making their clothes, cleaning their homes and the offices where they work, taking care of their children, and fulfilling the sexual needs of their husbands, brothers, and companions' (p. 10).

This division of labour between women, which is intimately tied to the North–South divide, is at the centre of the book's analysis. Vergès does not question that men are also affected by these divides, but defends her choice to focus on the role of women in the South in terms of the need to construct a critique of 'racial capitalism and the heteropatriarchy'. The decolonial feminism advocated in the book invites us to jointly think patriarchy, the state, and capital. Vergès takes a 'multidimensional' approach (a concept proposed by Darren Lenard Hutchinson), which she distinguishes from the 'intersectional' approach in terms of the refusal to split race, sexuality, and class into mutually exclusive categories. She proposes 'a critical decolonial pedagogy' (p. 33), as exemplified by the approach taken in her previous work, *Le ventre des femmes*, which analysed abortions and sterilizations performed without consent in La Réunion in the 1970s. In it, she highlights the fact that these behaviours were not simply the isolated actions of a few doctors, but were part of an anti-natalist policy developed by the French state in the 'overseas' *départements*, targeting poor and racialized women.

Vergès opens the first part of this new book, 'Choosing a side: A decolonial feminism', with a brief look at her own political trajectory and her initial rejection of the term *feminism*. She affirms the need to reclaim this concept at a time when it is monopolized by a 'civilizational'—white bourgeois—feminism, in connection with either reactionary, far-right or liberal movements, in the service of capitalism. She highlights the emancipatory impact of women's struggles, especially in the Global South, and the need to integrate those struggles into women's history as well as the history of decolonial struggles and the struggles of slaves. She defines decolonial feminism as a set of 'theories and practices rooted in the consciousness of a deep, concrete, daily experience of the oppression produced by the matrix of State, patriarchy, and capital, which manufactures the category "women" to legitimize policies of reproduction and discrimination based on social categorization [*assignation*], both racialized' (p. 39).

 DOI: 10.3917/popu.2002.0445

The pages that follow are devoted to analysing 'white privilege' among Western women. Large swathes of Western feminism, Vergès writes, accommodated themselves to colonization in the 19th century, on the condition that its civilizing mission extend to women, notably through schooling. In the 20th century, these relationships were reframed in terms of the notion of 'empowerment' and the rhetoric of 'women's rights'. Vergès emphasizes the key role of international organizations and Western governments in constructing an institutionalized and depoliticized 'developmentalist' or humanitarian feminism, which, beginning in the 1970s, sought to take the place of revolutionary women's liberation movements.

In the second part of the book, she addresses the specific forms taken by 'civilizational' feminism in the 21st century. She discusses the debates in 1989 around Islamic headscarves and highlights the role of many women and organizations who emerged from the women's liberation movements of the 1970s. According to Vergès, the widespread equation of feminism with secularism follows in the line of the discourses of colonization, displaced here onto French territory: it had now become a question of emancipating young Muslim women from the patriarchal culture of their fathers, brothers, and husbands, and thus of measuring their integration by their ability to cut themselves off from their family and their community. She situates this development in a context where the increasing employment of women in managerial and executive positions was accompanied by a massive expansion of service jobs (childcare, cleaning), which were largely based on the arrival of a socially devalued female workforce. She examines the resurgence of a self-proclaimed feminist, Islamophobic discourse: the 2004 law on the headscarf, the events in Cologne of 2015, the controversy around the burkini in 2016. She examines the multiple faces of civilizational feminism: notably the liberal current, which psychologizes domination while seeking to 'change mentalities', and state feminism, which erases collective struggles by individualizing them and by casting certain chosen figures as heroes. But she also highlights the erasure of women from a portion of the history of decolonial struggles, which creates the need for a dual commitment, both feminist and decolonial. In the wake, in particular, of Black feminism in the United States, she also explores the question of how to respond critically to sexism among Black and racialized men without falling into racism or moralism.

In the book's final pages, Vergès returns to her starting point: the cleaning industry and the predominant place of migrant and racialized women in this socially devalued sector. She discusses the concepts, forged within materialist feminist research, of 'care work' and the 'caring class', and proposes to analyse the cleaning industry as a care practice at the heart of the 'division of the clean and the dirty founded on a racial division of urban space and habitat'. In conclusion, drawing on the history of the struggles—and victories—of women in this sector in both the North and the South, she proposes to return to a feminism that carries within it the seeds of a radical transformation of society.

Reading this short essay in the immediate aftermath of the lockdown due to the COVID-19 epidemic highlights the importance of the issues that it explores. The place of the 'invisible' members of our societies and the essential nature of the work they do every day—cleaning, caring for the sick, children, the elderly, etc.—has been made singularly salient by the epidemic. That most of this work is done by women, a large proportion of whom are racialized women, along with the resulting political consequences, is the book's starting point. This rich book blends historical analysis, research and concepts from the social sciences, and the 'feminist project of decolonial politics'.

Alice Debauche