

Networked Feminisms in the Time of COVID-19

**Reconnecting with the legacy of the
witches**

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Prepared on the unceded land of the Ngunnawal people. I acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional owners of the land upon I work and live, and pay my respect to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging.

This thesis has been prepared in my personal and academic capacity and should not be attributed to organisations to whom I belong or are otherwise affiliated.

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the COVID-19 pandemic, including highlighting the exacerbation of gender inequalities. I argue in this thesis that the pandemic was both *networked* and *gendered*, consolidating existing trends surrounding the deployment of online technologies for social movements. The experience of the pandemic, I observe, leant on patriarchal capitalist logics that centre individual family life at the centre of society, behind the closed doors of which a gendered division of labour exists, upon which corporate and government policies rely. Owing to the particular nature of the pandemic, and its simultaneous reliance on the home as a safe haven, and on technologies, I argue that there is a need to better understand feminist mobilisations as a reaction and response to a long-term global reproductive crisis. I situate COVID-19 as a symptom and acceleration of this crisis. I draw on Silvia Federici's work on the witch-trials, as the origin story of today's gendered hierarchies between non-work and work. It is from this basis that I argue that the insights of Federici and others on social reproduction and the global social reproductive crisis are of particular relevance to understandings of the pandemic and how feminist movements.

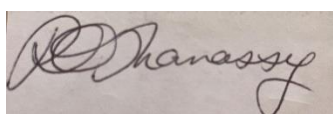
The networked nature of the pandemic has served to deepen feminist online life, enabling feminists to reach each other through affective care bonds and solidarity, to respond to this immediate crisis. Through a reading of Federici's own construction of a feminist commons as relational and revolutionary I articulate the online feminist commons as a framework to understand contemporary and future feminist movements. I outline three principles to construct the framework of the online feminist commons: autonomous and spontaneous gendered claims-making, affective bonds of care and solidarity; and transboundary responses to the social reproduction crisis. I utilise a series of examples, of local, regional and global feminist mobilisations during COVID-19, to point to the possibility of loosening movement building from geographical strictures and the potential of self-reflexive engagement of difference online between feminists, to deepen affective care bonds and solidarity across difference. I am influenced by the *Feminism for the 99%* and transnational feminists, in this theoretical framework, to capture the complexity of relationships within and between feminist movements and feminists. The framework captures a pattern of commoning behaviour that is transboundary and complex, in conflict with global capitalist logics. Its enduring value is understanding contemporary and future networked feminisms as interconnected and complex social movements, which are autonomous, spontaneous, and bound by complicated interfaces of solidarity and affect.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university
2. and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University; and
3. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'P. Tharassiy'.

Date: 3 December 2022

DEDICATION

For Dahlia Martin,

A fierce feminist, a devoted mum and one of my favourite people

Rest in Power and give them hell

For my Aunty Val

An inspiration to always be myself, to party until your feet hurt and live passionately with your friends

Thank you for teaching me about art, life and love

Always in my heart



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To the most excellent proof-readers and friends a girl could have – Lisa, Abby and Heather – thank you for improving my work and my life, checking for hanging sentences and keeping my overabundance of commas in check. Thank you for investing in this thesis and in me. I value our friendships deeply.

To my fabulous friends, thank you for supporting my passions and always standing beside me. To the group chat in particular, thank you for always loving me so very much in all your very different ways.

To my beloved honorary goddaughters, Katalina, Alanna and Adi, thank you for being little lights in my life. I commit to always being your confidante and teaching you to hold your power.

To my parents, thank you for always holding my hand in whatever I wanted to do.

To my husband, thank you for always supporting my dreams and helping them come true.

NETWORKED AND GENDERED – THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”) first detected in December 2019 quickly spread globally with a global pandemic declared by March 2020. Governments globally responded to evidence “shutdowns” or “lockdowns” could slow transmission of the virus, triggering restrictions on movement, public gatherings, a shift (where possible) to at-home working and schooling and closing “non-essential” businesses. Such responses highlighted and in some cases intensified pre-existing inequalities within and between countries and communities. Within the pandemic response logic safety was to be found in the home despite for many this being economically infeasible or dangerous. The experience of the pandemic I observe leans on patriarchal capitalist logics that centre individual family life at the centre of society, behind the closed doors of which a gendered division of labour exists.

It uses the intertwined lenses of feminist social reproduction theory and Italian theorist Silvia Federici’s work on the feminist commons to conceive feminist responses to the pandemic as simultaneously a political struggle against and response to the crisis of social reproduction. Social reproduction is the work by which society is reproduced, extending from repetitive domestic carework to ecological care to the creation and maintenance of collective knowledges (Federici 2019a, p.5). Feminists have used social reproduction theory to seek to describe the simultaneous reliance and devaluing of this unpaid labour of women. I argue the central thread of Federici’s work is an insistence upon placing this work as a site of struggle. She does this to both highlight the creation and maintenance of such logics under capitalism and argue feminist movements ought to respond to these logics in the home. Such a perspective I argue is of increasing salience as the pandemic shrunk the spatial and temporal boundaries between home and work, highlighting the boundary struggles between paid and unpaid work and underscored the global reproductive crisis under capitalism.

Having situated the lens of social reproduction as central to my understanding of the pandemic and as a site of resistance I consider the mobilisation of feminist social movements online.¹ I argue the pandemic was both *networked* and *gendered*, which consolidated existing trends surrounding the deployment of online technologies for social movements. Through my reading of Federici’s feminist

¹ For the purpose of the thesis, feminist and women’s movements are used broadly and interchangeably, noting the diversity in preferences of individual movements. Essential to the understanding of feminist here, is that it is a political and social identity, that seeks to challenge binary hierarchical logics of gender. In referring to women and feminists, this is explicitly inclusive, and refers to people in all of their diversities, but woman is used throughout to apply to people to whom feminine gendered expectations or performance is socially enforced and expected. I explicitly reject efforts to exclude trans and two-spirit people from feminist theory, movements and practice.

commons as relational and revolutionary, I outline a framework of online feminist commons as a new lens to understand contemporary and future feminist social movements which recognises the global reach of the undertaking, whilst providing flexibility in understanding the relationships, diversity and complexity in feminist movements. Inherent to this is my argument that it is possible to loosen commons from geographic boundaries, to connect communities through mechanisms of affective care, community and solidarity. It considers how women and feminists in all their diversities were at the heart of pandemic response, delivering material, psycho-social and cultural needs of their communities. I argue the deployment by these autonomous movements of digital technologies– by which I refer to internet powered tools, apps and communication devices and services – extend the boundaries of community beyond the local, to transboundary movements, joined by revolutionary bonds of affective care, community and solidarity.

Structure and Approach

The research takes a theoretical lens to the gendered impact and response to the pandemic seeking to question the underlying biases and principles that divide human lines upon gendered binaries. In applying Federici's critique, the thesis is influenced by the Marxist problematisation of capitalism. It argues that the crisis of care is linked to the ways in which capitalism seeks to simultaneously rely upon and devalue work coded "women's work." It engages in desktop research and offers a series of examples of women's and feminist advocacy throughout the pandemic to illustrate the features of the online feminist commons. These examples draw on both peer reviewed research, first-hand accounts, blogs, and media, to illustrate the characteristics of online feminist commons. Owing to the often-informal and spontaneous nature of these movements it is necessary to consider a range of sources to draw together these accounts.

This first introductory chapter provides an overview of the thesis and introduces its framing that the pandemic is gendered and networked. The second introduces feminist social reproduction theory situating it within Federici's work on the witch-trials, as an origin story for hierarchical gendered logics of human relations. It does so to draw out the ways in which care work, and social reproduction work more broadly, has become simultaneously devalued and essential under capitalism. It argues that social reproduction theory offers a valuable lens to understand the pandemic, and to underpin political struggle and gendered claims-making by feminists and feminist movements. The third chapter considers Federici's work on feminist commons, which she argues is a response to gendered hierarchies and crises of social reproduction under global capitalism. I offer a reading of *Feminism and the Politics of the Commons in an Era of Primitive Accumulation* in particular, to articulate Federici's feminist commons as relational and revolutionary (Federici 2019a). Through my reading of Federici's feminist commons I extend the theory of the feminist commons as a new framework to understand transboundary and networked social movements. It outlines three principles that define online feminist commons: autonomous and spontaneous gendered claims-making, affective bonds of care and solidarity; and transboundary

responses to the social reproduction crisis. It uses select examples of feminist mobilisations during COVID-19 to demonstrate the application of each principle. The concluding chapter explores the value and limitations of the online feminist commons as a framework for deepening the understanding of the role of online feminist life in allowing feminist movements to be simultaneously local and personal, and global and revolutionary.

COVID-19 - a networked global pandemic

COVID-19 was the first pandemic to occur in a “globalised and networked society” (Seufert et al 2022, p.3). Pre-pandemic society had become “profoundly computerised” and basic human activities involve the interaction with computers or computer-based technologies (Ensmenger 2012, p.2). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital technologies at a pace likely to continue or accelerate. In 2021, 4.9 billion people or 63 per cent of the world’s population accessed the internet, an increase of 17 per cent since 2019 (ITU 2022a). Global lockdowns brought about “the largest traffic surge” of the Internet at a global level (Böttger, Ibrahim, Vallis 2020, p.39), with global internet traffic increasing in the first week of lockdown by 15-20% (Feldman et al 2021). In the initial months of the pandemic the growth rate for internet usage followed the geographic spread of the virus (Böttger et al, p.35). Technology particularly video-based meeting and calling apps (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Houseparty, Google Rooms), internet-driven communications (WhatsApp, Signal) and social media, entertainment and fitness applications either emerged or grew in popularity exponentially. Such transitions were not evenly spread, refracting inequalities within and between communities.

Whilst I am not undertaking a deep review of the challenges of technology I note that the acceleration of online life during the pandemic could serve to consolidate existing risks, inequalities and complexities. Despite early hopes that the internet would be a disruptive force to decentralise communications and power (Lobato and Gonzalez 2020); issues of access, commercialisation and affordability have stymied the development of an online public sphere that would bring about opportunities for expression, information and enhanced political engagement (Papacharissi 2002). Issues regarding the commercialisation of the internet and the consolidation of power by large corporations and government are outside of the scope of a detailed analysis here. The “big five” – Facebook, Google, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon – have successfully co-opted the term “community” and created “addicted ‘users’ with our desires becoming the products and targets” (Varon, 2020). These corporations are increasingly interventionist in people’s lives with targeted advertising, data-collection and retention and smart learning algorithms that can influence behaviour. Furthermore governments particularly in the management of the coronavirus have increasingly been using smart technologies to surveil populations (for example Lyons 2020) with long term concerns for potential for mass surveillance globally (Barriga et al 2020).

Critiques have arisen regarding the universalising nature of the global health response as oriented toward the global north situated in nuclear families², urban locations and skilled formal work where online work and social distancing is plausible; blind to social norms and practices around communal living and practical issues around informal work, income generation and shelter (Jaga and Ollier-Malaterre 2022). Such critiques should be also placed within a consideration of the networked nature of the pandemic. Of course the capacity to shift online was not evenly distributed, exacerbating issues of inequality and poverty. Large discrepancies between rich and poor nations and between industries, deepening economic and intergenerational educational inequalities (Alcazar, Bhattacharya, Charvet et al 2021, p.21). The COVID-19 shift online refracted offline inequalities and reinforced online inequitable access.³ Income, age, gender, education, migration, ability, racial marginalisation, and location play important roles in access to and use of the internet.

The digital divide describes both the discrepancy of internet access and device ownership and the unequal opportunities in the production and ownership of information online, across different populations at the local, regional, national and global areas, which cross issues of income, education, infrastructure and location (Lee 2021). This division exists both between the Global North and South and disparities within the Global North (Lee 2021, 74). The capacity for activists to have global reach, is constrained, or enabled by their location – both geographically and in relation to the global marketplace. Despite ambitions for an information age to power development in the Global South, measures of content creation indicate that large swathes of the world, particularly Africa are excluded from the global movement towards a knowledge economy powered by the internet (Ojanpara, Graham and Zook, 2017).

For women the digital divide is more acute. The gender digital divide refers to the gendered difference in resources and capabilities, within and between countries, regions, sectors and socio-economic groups (OECD 2018, 22). In 2018, only 48% of the world's female population used the internet compared to 58% of men (UN Women 2020a, 3). It is particularly prominent in the Global South with women globally 23% less likely to use mobile internet (Broadband Commission 2019,

² These authors refer to nuclear families. There is a tendency toward an understanding of family that relies on heterosexual, nuclear families absencing diversities and different family types and structures. The social, economic and political biases expressed through structures of capitalism are likely to be internalised through single-parent, LGBTIQ and multiple-generational households as they are in heterosexual nuclear families, shaped and reinforced by cultural, societal and legal norms. For women-coded carers, COVID-19 and the global reproductive crisis, remains a structural problem with personal implications.

³ I use the term refracted to identify that the pandemic both exacerbated existing inequalities owing to positionalities (geographic and in relation to the market), identities, and structures, but the pandemic was a lens through which these existing inequalities would pass through and change, reshaping the inequalities. I would argue that the nature of the pandemic as gendered and networked created a particular lens through which inequalities were both changed and exacerbated. A particular example is the way in which the networked nature of the pandemic relied upon technologies to deliver education or pivot to online working, which meant that large swathes of people were either unable to access education, or were put at greater safety risk, through a systemic response that was blind to existing inequality of access to technology.

p.4). A study found across ten countries in Africa, Asia and South America, that women were 30-50% less likely to use the internet to participate in public life (Broadband Commission 2019, p.4). Multiple identities -including race, class- and location are critical factors in access to digital technologies (O'Donnell and Sweetman 2018, p.219). The need for interventions to address digital and financial inclusion to close the widening digital gender gap became particularly acute during COVID-19 (Madgavkar et al 2020).

However a global study of digital crisis interaction found that the increased affordability of smart mobile technologies, are closing the gap between low-, middle- and high-income countries access to digital platforms and online life, but concerns beyond connectivity are persistent continue beyond connectivity into influence over production, data protection and privacy in less regulated markets (Volkmer 2021, p.19). Access to such smart mobile technologies' powers access to social media, which the same study showed for those under 40 globally regular use of social media, with "normal" use of Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram of at least 63% of respondents (Volkmer, p.12). Given this exponential growth coupled with the youth bulge in developing countries⁴ I argue that whilst we should remain alert to the continuing disparities and risks associated with technologies, digital technologies will have a real and growing impact on connection and activism into the future. Interesting and complex questions need to be engaged to ensure such growth in access, comes with attendant influence in production and creation of technologies.

The thesis will focus on the deployment of digital technologies by feminist movements as a tool and space to deliver, connect, raise consciousness and advocate for feminist goals. I define my use of "online life" as the ways in which people engage with internet-powered technologies (computers, smart phones, tablets and other devices), internet-powered platforms and applications (including social media, communications applications like WhatsApp or Signal) and websites (including blogging). I use the term 'online life' to articulate not just the internet as a disseminator of information or coordination, but digital market square or forum through which relationships, debates and conversations are formed and transacted. I argue the pandemic's networked nature consolidated and accelerated the use of these technologies and has deepened individuals' online life.

COVID-19 has arguably intensified opportunities for autonomous organising of marginalised groups (Okech in Transnational Institute 2020), and deepening solidarities at local and transnational levels (Al-Ali 2020, p.344). The internet has the capacity to "strengthen identities and solidarities" among geographically distant constituencies access to which is growing in the global South (D'Enbeau 2011, 66). It is from this basis that I argue in chapters three and four there is an

⁴ I recognise the term "developing countries" has negative connotations relating to a hierarchical logic. However, it is being used in the technical manner that is used in international organisations, such as the United Nations, World Bank and OECD in describing and analysing the phenomena of the youth bulge.

increased capacity for the formation of solidarity and community loosened from geographic boundaries through online life. It is possible to argue that whilst the experiences of women and feminists are distinct from each other, the crisis of social reproduction is a global challenge transmuted through global capitalist logics. As such it is possible that this long- and short-term existential threat is a convening crisis that feminists must respond as an interconnected network of feminist movements.

The internet has been described as a “propeller of transnational feminism”, which creates a “broader connection where the local gets transposed to the global” (Banerjee and Kankaria 2022, p.2-3). Engaging in online life, including new medias, extending from internet enabled communications like emails, through to websites, streaming, forums, blogs, podcasts, and hashtags, serve to attract women to feminism, intensify feelings of solidarity and disseminate information (Banerjee and Kankaria, p.4). It is arguable contemporary online engagement also allows for “new modes of critique” which provides an environment able to engage “substantively and self-reflexively in issues of privilege and access” (Baer 2016, p.18). This provides unique opportunities for feminists to reach into, and across difference.

Feminist engagement online is not without difficulty. Whilst feminists use and engage with online spaces for coalition building, information and news sharing, community building and analysis, the internet also arguably serves masculinist institutions and can facilitate pushback against feminist activism (Rowe 2008). The online world is an artefact and reinforcer of norms and dominations (for example Wajcman 2009, Schiffrin, Koc-Michalska and Ferrier 2021, p.199, Hargittai and Shaw 2015 and Nilizadeh et al 2016, p.289). Online life poses particular risks of gender-based violence and harassment to women, with intersectional identities increasing risk of being targeted, both at interpersonal and public life.⁵ In a report from the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted while online life can aid progress on development and gender equality, the growing use of the internet, posed particular risks to women, estimating 23 percent of women have reported having experienced online abuse or harassment at least once in their lifetimes (UN SR VAW 2018, pp.5-6). “Public” women, journalists, activists, and politicians are particularly targeted by gendered online abuse, distinct from other forms of online harassment, due to its gendered and often sexually explicit nature (Krook 2017). Such considerations are important in considering activism of feminist social movements, compounded by growing resistance to gender norms and hostility to civil society globally.

Having noted the gendered digital divide, I recognise not all movements mobilise using digital technologies, nor do they access and utilise them to the same degree or expertise. Whilst the

⁵ This can include from harassment (unwanted contact) and networked harassment (groups of coordinated unwanted contact), image-based sexual abuse, stalking and voyeurism, synthetic media (sharing of false manipulated images), disclosure of personal information including contact or location information, defamation, misrepresentation, threats, impersonation or hate speech (Dunn 2020).

gendered digital divide and access is not an insubstantial challenge, many global south feminist activists mobilise online, in building online and offline communities, pursuing activism and advocacy and disseminate information for self-expression and representation (Henry, Vasil and Witt 2021, p.5). Henry et al, note that many women in the Global South “engage in subversive acts in digital spaces” to challenge structures, discourses and representation (Henry et al 2021, p.5). I argue that such research is important to combat the perception of Western dominance of online feminism, implied through reporting that absents women in other positionalities, such as the 2012 report #FemFuture and subsequent critique which was widely panned as variously elitist, emblematic of white feminist “symbolic multiculturalism” (Loza 2014, p.8), exclusionary of older feminists, and failed to recognise the deliberate creation of feminist spaces (Daniels 2015, pp.22-23). Whilst inequities persist access to online life is growing with internet use growing from 18 percent of the world population in 2006, 38 percent in 2014 and in 63 percent in 2021 (ITU 2022, p.21). Such trends, though imperfectly distributed, are likely to continue with young people globally using the internet more than any other group, in all regions, with 71 percent of young people aged between 15-24 accessing the internet (ITU, p.140). These trends suggest access to the internet is likely to shape how social movements operate into the future. Such trends may further refract existing inequalities, for example, the growing disparity between Africa and other regions (ITU, p.21), or may deepen inequalities for social movements and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the growing use of the internet, particularly social media, has opened new opportunities for far-right social movements and disinformation. Whilst a detailed examination of this is outside the scope of this thesis, the adoption of easily accessible technologies and voice has enduring impacts for the nature of public debate and conduct.

In an early analysis of the pandemic, Tabbush and Friedman concluded the movement’s decentralised nature and “decades of thoughtful feminist tech deployment” made it resilient to the pandemic (2020, p.637). Feminist movements have successfully “harnessed digital technologies and social media platforms as both sites and tools of activism” (Mendes and Dikwalbot 2020, p.3.). Brechenmacher and Hubbard note women’s rights activists have observed stronger feminist solidarity networks during the pandemic with women more vocal online with a growing audience and fostering of new connections (2020, p.5). Whilst feminist mobilisations in response to COVID-19 examples of which are considered in chapter four, are innumerable and diverse, I argue contemporary feminist online mobilisation is a story of continuity, drawing on feminist traditions of dispersed and autonomous action, drawing on histories and legacies of pamphlets, posters, petitions, magazines, art and zines. Online spaces have created a broader conception, audience and participation of feminist political participation and activism, using blogs and other mechanisms to create a form of discursive activism (Shaw 2013, p.126). It has particularly allowed for the feminist advancement of “digital mediated consciousness raising” which contributes to increased public awareness of feminist concepts, theories and critiques (Mendes and Dikwalbot, p.5).

Furthermore, I argue the flexibility of technologies allows for direct conversations loosened from geographical, or temporal limits, replicates in some way the role of consciousness raising groups in the 1970s in developing identities, dispersing information and inspiring action across diversity and distance.

Gender and COVID-19

The pandemic brought into sharp focus existing inequalities none more so than gender. UN Women reported a “shadow pandemic” early in 2020 identifying its disproportionate impact on women (UN Women 2020a). The pandemic has often been referred to as “a disaster for feminism” owing to the particular gendered nature of the pandemic (Berkhout and Richardson 2020). In this thesis, I argue that the pandemic was a symptom of a broader crisis in global capitalism; in particular around the devaluing and reliance upon women’s unpaid labour and continued efforts to restrict or suspend community or government supports for this social reproductive work, referred to by others as the global reproductive crisis (for example Vradi 2016).

In chapter two, I will introduce and discuss the emergence and maintenance of the gendered logics of “women’s work.” Despite regional and country differences, men and women do not share equally unpaid carework, despite women’s participation in the labour market (Stefanović 2022, p.24). Pre-pandemic unpaid care work was worth about \$10.8 trillion each year to the global economy (Coffey et al 2020) with women and girls performing approximately three times of unpaid care and domestic work in the majority of households (UN Women 2022b). The pandemic deepened these logics and exacerbated this inequality, with UN rapid assessments in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Latin America and Asia and the Pacific finding increased gendered responsibilities for unpaid carework, including responsibility for the aged and marginalised, and for increased hygiene requirements (Stefanović, p.34-7), forcing many out of paid work (for example, Madagavkar et al 2020). For many, reduced formal and informal family care supplies “posed a shock” to social norms around the distribution of unpaid care work and posed a threat to re-entrench gender roles (Dugarova 2020, p.7). Where women could access work from home, gendered logics of carework proved persistent. The underlying assumption by government and employers that working from home “could be unproblematically transferred to the office to the home” remaining blind to caring responsibilities and the “regendering” of the home and the expectation that women and their paid work were “interruptible” (Thornton 2021, p.53-4). In the UK women were found to be almost 50 percent more likely to be interrupted (Andrew et al, 2020). In the US a study found that mother’s employment is disproportionately impacted relative to fathers, linked variously to mothers being considered the default parent or differing employer expectations of availability (Collins et al 2021). Shifting work and school to home increased the care-load exponentially, with attendant issues of reduced wellbeing and self-care, increased mental health problems and limiting paid work opportunities. Women reported decreased satisfaction and mental

wellbeing, for example 38.6% of women in Ireland reported feeling downhearted and depressed, compared with men (Cullen and Murphy 2020, p.355). These frustrations were commonly reported in traditional and social media, and anecdotes.

Attitudinally, the gendered division of human life which simultaneously relies upon and devalues women's care work excludes women from decision making and leadership, exemplified through the management of the pandemic. Feminist scholars, feminist organisations and multilateral institutions offered analysis highlighting the gendered dynamics in households and the gendered impacts of the pandemic including across borders (for example Al-Ali 2020, Amahazion 2021, Craig 2020, Dattani 2020, Dugarova 2020, Foley and Piper 2020, Care 2020, Jaga and Ollier-Malaterre 2022, Kisner and Federici 2021, Madgavkar et al 2020, Mercado et al 2020 and Mazzadri, Newman and Stevano 2021 and Stevano, Mezzadri, Lombardozzi and Bargawi 2021b). As a marginalised voice the ability to cut through was limited. Feminist insights and analysis were sidelined, with a preference for populist "waging war" and "we are all in this together" policy choices (Deiana, Hagen and Roberts 2021, p.657). These universalising logics supported analysis and response that were denuded of difference along class, race, disability, geography, and sexual orientation. Government responses have in the main failed to include women in decision-making or deliver gender-sensitive responses to the pandemic (UNWomen 2021). In a global study of 87 countries and global taskforces, it was found that men were overrepresented in both global and national taskforces, despite significant evidence that women were "disproportionately burdened by compounded and economic impacts" and that failure to convene diverse and inclusive decision-making bodies, acted as a multiplier of existing gender-based inequities (Van Daalen et al 2020, pp.1, 12).

Furthermore "home" was characterised as a safe harbour from the virus. Restrictions and monitoring of movement, increased time with perpetrators and restricted access to vital support and health services. An overall increase in GBV was identified, including sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic and family violence, harassment and child, early and forced violence. Reports of increased incidences of child marriage (World Vision 2021) and female genital mutilation (Lancet 2021) linked to closures of schools and movement restrictions that prevent access to prevention, protection and care services. UNFPA reported serious implications that threaten provisions in the area of sexual and reproductive health (UNFPA, 2020) and in the context of transgender healthcare (Koehler et al 2021).

Unlike previous economic downturns which have mainly impacted male employment, COVID-19 has resulted in what has been termed a "shecession" (Ogando, Rogan and Moussie 2022, p.172). The downturn is related to both the impact of the virus on feminised industries - healthcare, cleaning, social and community work and service industry work – themselves a reflection of gendered logics around care and increased childcare needs caused by school and childcare

closures (Alon et al 2020). Women make up over 70 percent of the global health and social workforces (Care 2020, p.7), and gender discrimination and disadvantages persisted throughout the pandemic owing to the gendered segregation and hierarchies (Dugarova 2020, p.2). Compounding factors of race, poverty, minority status, socio-economic depressed locations compounded further these risks. Migrant workers were particularly vulnerable, owing to high representation in health services, low pay, likelihood of working in others' homes, risk of dismissal and abuse linked to the movement restrictions (Foley and Piper 2020). Feminised and consumer-facing industries such as retail, hospitality and airlines were particularly exposed and hit the hardest (Goldin and Muggah, 2020). Furlough and job losses disproportionately impacted feminised and racialised workers, particularly those working part-time, flexibly or in the informal economy. These trends hold true in the global south (Al-Ali 2020, 334-5), with women employed in sectors most impacted (entertainment, retail, tourism, travel, and smallholder farming), the informal economy and as migrant workers (Care International 2020, p.4, Ogando et al, p. 71-2). Informal workers, representing some 90% of work in the developing world (Ogando et al 2022, p.171-2), were particularly vulnerable to loss of livelihood due to lockdowns (Stevano, et al 2021b, p.281)

The thesis seeks to consider how these common yet diverse experiences are understood in feminist theory and the potential for these experiences to be the basis for the formation of affective communities and sites of resistance. I consider COVID-19 and its impacts are a symptom and accelerator of the global reproductive crisis and that it has increased the urgency to embed this crisis in theory and activism. The networked nature of the pandemic has served to deepen feminist online life enabling feminists to reach each other through affective care bonds and solidarity; to respond to this immediate crisis and aid them in the continued strengthening of feminist movements.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEIVING SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND SELF-REPRODUCING MOVEMENTS

As framed in the introductory chapter, I argue that the pandemic was gendered and networked and its gendered implications were a result of binary hierarchical gendered logics that underpin global capitalism and transmute the global reproductive crisis. The pandemic triggered similar, yet distinct experiences of gendered crises of care from which increased solidarity, community and feminist consciousness raising could grow. This chapter focuses on social reproduction, as described and problematised by feminists as central to an argument on the need in theory and practice to centre social reproduction as a site of political struggle. I argue that the pandemic increased expectations and performance of gendered social reproduction work and highlighted the pre-existing condition of a global reproductive crisis. In this chapter I introduce Federici's work on the witch-trials as a historical and theoretical frame for understanding the gendered impacts of COVID-19, in particular the establishment of hierarchical gender roles. Subsequent chapters will rely upon Federici's understandings of underlying hierarchical binary logics in social reproduction, social movements, and the commons to articulate a vision of feminist social movements that embed social reproduction as a site of feminist solidarity, consciousness and resistance. Shared experience of struggle and gendered claims-making whilst distinct and diverse owing to local contexts, deepen links between feminists. Having situated COVID-19 as an exercise in continuity with regards to the global reproductive crisis and articulated the social reproduction lens as a valuable one for understanding not only this crisis, but a larger crisis in capitalism, I begin to situate my understanding of the online feminist commons, as a framework to understand contemporary and future feminist movements. Federici articulates that social reproduction is the site of struggle under capitalist patriarchy, and it is from this basis, that I draw on social reproduction and transnational feminisms, as complementary lenses to understand feminist social movements.

Katz describes social reproduction as "the fleshy, messy and indeterminate stuff of everyday life", that is essential to and often in tension with capitalist production (2001, p.711). It refers to what is socially constructed as "women's work": the caring for the young, old, and infirm, the maintenance of social and familial bonds that is vital to our communities. It can refer to the care of our world and the construction of collective memory (Federici 2019a, 5). Social reproduction refers "to the activities, behaviours and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis and intergenerationally" including the provision of vital consumables, the socialisation and care of children, care of the infirm or elderly and the social organisation of sexuality (Laslett and Brenner 1989, pp.383-4). At its most simple, it supplies the "social glue" that underpins social cooperation, simultaneously material and affective (Fraser and Leonard 2016).

Federici: The Witch-trials

Central to Federici's work is the analysis of the European witch-trials in *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) which is linked to her *Wages to Work* activism of the 1970s, that sought to centre reproduction a crucial ground of struggle for women (2004, p. 14-5, Kisner and Federici 2021). She posits that the fifteenth and sixteenth century European witch-trials deliberately reordered social and sexual human affairs to subjugate women and their knowledge to serve the reproduction of capitalist workers (Federici 2004, pp. 14, 92, 115). The result is capitalist patriarchy under which the ideal human is male, white and heteronormative (Collard and Dempsey 2018, p. 1357). She uses the frame of Marx's primitive accumulation — the mechanism by which land, particularly land used in common was taken and put under private ownership and use — to describe the process by which a hierarchy of relations, and the enclosures of commonly held resources, was established, and extends this process to domestic and sexual labour (Federici 2019a, pp.154-5).

Her analysis in *Caliban and the Witch* establishes that women's work is 'mystified' into a natural resource or personal service with proletarian women, their bodies and carework were constructed as communal goods as a replacement of the commons for proletarian men (2004, pp. ii, 64, 97). Through this analysis she argues that capitalism brought forward a reordering of human relationships, one in which the feudal lord and serf hierarchical relationship was shifted to a binary hierarchical gender relationship (2004, pp.14-25). Reproductive and household work had been in feudal societies classified as work, performed in relative safety in community with other women, and did not imply hierarchical social relations between men and women on the basis of relative working roles (Federici 2004, p.25). She argues that the witch-trials served to castigate women who held knowledge that could challenge the power of the state or church, particularly as it related to autonomy, conception, and the production of workers (2004, p.97).

This analysis centres the subordination of women's power in the transition to capitalism. The witch-hunts are understood as a "state-sponsored terror campaign" (Chattopadhy 2017, pp.164-5), that aimed to eradicate "alternative forms of knowledge and morality to patriarchal rationalisations" (Bakker, 2007, p.545) held by women. By destroying "witches" it was possible to transition to a division of labour based on structural separation and subordination of human beings reducing any flexibility for women to operate economically or sexually in feudal and transitional societies (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, pp.74-79). The witch hunts forged ideals of womanhood and domesticity and disassociated women from healing and reproductive knowledge (Federici 2004, pp.186-7, 201). This strategy worked through the church and state operating together to curb women's autonomy over their bodies, which in turn ensured sufficient workers and soldiers for capital and the state (Mies 1998ed, p.106).

This violent re-division of labour served to reorder social relations and created distinct spheres which delineated productive waged work performed by men from concealed domestic and reproductive work performed by women. In this predatory system, Fortunati characterises women including waged women as having two faces of work relations as a direct or indirect waged worker and as a reproductive vessel between the male worker operating as a conduit for capital (Fortunati 1995, pp.14, 18). The witch hunts forged ideals of womanhood and domesticity, sanctified male supremacy, created horror in men of the power of women's sexuality and excluded women's knowledge on healing and reproduction from the frame (Federici 2004, pp.186-7, 201). By the end of the seventeenth century the state, church and unions supported the notion that women served to "assure that her mate will return to work physically and psychologically prepared for another day of labour" (Gonik 2019, p.172). Eventually this would be subsumed into a belief of women's naturalisation to this role and enfeebling of women to perform public duties, despite the persistence of working women globally.

The logics of the witch-trials persist today seen in efforts to control conception, social pressure to conform with conceptions of womanhood⁶, the construction of social reproduction work as "women's work" and violence-excusing attitudes. The modern patriarchal capitalist system "disguises and disavows" the role of social reproduction, and rather than valuing it in its own right is "treated as a mere means to the making of profit" (Arruzza et al 2019, p.22). Essential to the feminist problematisation of social reproduction is understanding it as deliberate efforts in feminising, and naturalising carework (Henry 2017, p.1369). Patriarchy relies on male entitlement to and devaluation of feminine coded care (Manne 2017). Feminists have long pointed to the unsustainability of this division of labour and critiqued governments relying upon and discounting reproductive labour as a "costly renewable resource, like a magic pudding" (Folbre 2014, p.3)). These logics of care serve to naturalise the disproportionate burden of women's unpaid carework in the home and in the paid economy the tendency to devalue and underpay industries that rely on feminised carework.

However, practices of care are complex and relational encompassing both professional and everyday care (Mol et al 2010, p.14) often simultaneously representations of both love and obligation (de la Bellacasa, p.2012). Some feminist analyses have sought to enable love, care and solidarity to leave the private space of the home, and for caring to be constructed as an expression of love and solidarity, essential to survival, community cohesion and interdependency of relational human beings (Lynch 2007, p.552). It is therefore possible to radically construe care work as an act of solidarity that applies to "everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair 'our world' ... includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all that we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web" (Fisher and Tronto 1990, p.40). It is upon this basis that notions of

⁶ As constructed in local contexts.

care can form affective bonds of community and solidarity, rather than reaffirm gendered relations. These bonds of care, in addition to feelings of solidarity, I argue are central to the development of online feminist commons.

Wages for Housework and Witches

Federici's analysis of the witch-trials emerged from her involvement as a founding member of the 1970s "Wages for Housework" campaign. Heavily influenced by material feminists' efforts to common social reproduction (Hayden 1981, p.1) the campaign sought to assert costs for the social reproductive work of women. Federici describes the campaign as a "strategy to change power relations", which rejected the notion that women should take a second, waged job to gain autonomy from men and reflect the unpaid labour of women and reflect the devaluing of this work as a central pillar of capitalism (Federici and Small 2015, p.1). The campaign situated the location (household), temporalities (drudgery, repetition and routine) and structural violence (through dependence) of social reproduction (Elias and Rai 2019, p.205). Key to understanding this is also the observation that even where women do work outside the home, there remains social reproductive work to be performed, which remains the role of women within a nuclear family under capitalism (Costa and James 2017, p.83).

Central to the critique offered by the campaign is the observation that all work under capitalism is exploitative, but unpaid domestic and care work, is of a different quality. She observes that not only is unwaged work exploitative it is manipulated into "a natural attribute of our female physique and personality" (Federici 1975, p.2). From this, women are unable to be classified as workers, and the work is classed as love, not work (1975, p.3). Once naturalised as part of female attributes, this also builds in binary logics that divide men and women in social, economic and political relationships. In these observations, the echoes of Federici's exposition on the intent and effect of the witch hunts are clear.

I would argue that central to understanding the implications of the *Wages for Housework* campaign is its revolutionary potential in seeking to assign costs to work that had been made invisible under capitalism as acts of love rather than productive work. Federici's observations of the transition to capitalism outlined above, describe in many ways the mechanisms by which capitalism was able to restructure human relations. I would also draw upon the observations of two other theorists – Angela Davis and Maria Mies — in understanding the campaign and its implications for this thesis. Angela Davis problematised the nature of housework through a critique of capitalism that engaged with race, class and gender. Davis points to the revolutionary potential of the *Wages for*

Housework campaign and importantly problematises its logics, in terms of legitimising domestic servitude of women, particularly racialised women (1983, p.136)⁷. It is her observations on the sexual division of labour and her problematisation of assertions of naturalisation that I would like to focus upon, rather than this critique. Davis' description of the "invisible, repetitive, exhausting, unproductive, uncreative—these are the adjectives which most perfectly capture the nature of housework" (1983, p.128) captures the nature of the sexual division of labour in the home for women under capitalism. Furthermore, she notes that the housewife as "man's eternal servant" as a relatively new concept, with pre-capitalist women serving a variety of "fully fledged" working roles, including spinner, weaver, seamstress, baker, butter-maker, candle-maker, soap-maker and doctor, nurse and midwife (1983, pp.129-30). She notes that whilst modernity brought some outsourcing of these labours, and structural separation between the public and private economies became more rigidly enforced, with propaganda representing the housewife and mother as the universal model of womanhood (1983, p.131). I draw here on Mies' insights to understand the mechanisms by which such logics have been transmuted by global capitalism. In a process she refers to *housewifisation*, Mies describes a process by which international capital integrates women worldwide into the capitalist accumulation process and apply its logics to define "women everywhere as dependent housewives" (1998, pp.3). She argues further that such logics have powered global capitalist exploitation of women, with the internationalisation of housewifisation to simultaneously devalue and construct women's labour overseas as "cheap" labour (1998, p.x). The implication for this thesis, is to centre a deep suspicion of capitalist logics that serve to naturalise social reproductive work to women, and to recognise the transmutation of these logics globally, as an effort to subordinate women as a basis for which feminist critique and movements can emanate.

Federici has returned and applied the lens of witch-hunting to contemporary societies, interested in global capitalist exploitation of women. Having established that the process of accumulation,

⁷Whilst recognising the potential for payment of "housewives who felt they were 'going crazy staying at home'", I would argue that Davis points to it being incomplete in two ways – it does not question the underlying profit-motive in the economy – for both women who may choose to be paid for this labour or enter the formal workforce nor does it answer the frustration of "housewives" (1983, pp. 137-9). Davis offers an important critique that the goal under socialism is ending the privatisation of women's housework or the "socialisation of housework", which presupposes the end of the "profit-motive" under capitalism (1983, pp.139).

I point to these additional perspectives to provide further context for Davis' critique of the concept underlying the *Wages for Work* campaign. Drawing on the example of black women's lives under South African apartheid, and the use of hostels to separate people from family life, Davis suggests that this endeavour points to housework as an essential to "wage-labour" under capitalism (1983, pp. 135). She goes on to depict the drudgery of housework and questions whether payment would legitimise domestic slavery. Using the example of racialised women in the US, who have historically been paid a wage for broadly analogous domestic work, Davis suggests that rather than wages enabling housewives to "enjoy a higher social status", it is unlikely that it would do so owing to racialised and sexist logics that have chronically undervalued this work performed by "domestic servants". (1983, p. 136). In critiquing the role of binary logics that assign women's work as not economically valued or socially valorised, I argue that Davis' critique of this movement draws out that it is important that it does not incidentally fail to recognise race as a compounding factor of marginalisation and oppression.

including the exploitation of women's labour, is a repeating process under capitalism (Federici 2019a, p.27), it is unsurprising that Federici would extend her analysis to contemporary capitalist processes. At the end of *Caliban* and subsequently, Federici has raised concerns that there is a rising trend of witch-hunting globally, pointing specifically to Africa, India, Latin America and Papua New Guinea (2008, p.21). In making observations from the 1980s onwards, Federici notes that the process of globalisation of these economies, have created "deep crisis in the process of social reproduction" (Federici, 2008, p.21). For Federici the connections between allegations of witchcraft and new violence against women was clearly rooted in restructuring capitalist development and state power (Andrews 2022).

I argue that Federici also seeks to situate continued violence against women within the frame of these repeating logics of accumulation. Violence against women she argues is both normalised and escalating, as a feature of globalisation as "a process of political recolonisation" that seeks control over natural resources and labour (2018a, pp.49-50). She notes that this is particularly acute where natural resources are bountiful (2018a, p.50). I argue that this is also a useful frame to understand other trends, such as the global pushback against women's rights by authoritarian governments and right-wing movements, including growing restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights and healthcare (for example, Sanders and Dudley-Jenkins 2022, Cupać, and Ebetürk 2020). Such observations are vital to understand the context within which feminist social movements operate.

Social Reproduction as a lens to the Pandemic

Social reproduction derives its epistemological roots from Marxist feminist thought, which considered the shifts in gender relations between feudal and capitalist societies, which served "capitalist accumulation", drawing out that underlying all capitalist relations, was household social relations (Armstrong 2020, p.38). Federici describes social reproduction 'the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labour are daily reconstituted' (2012, p.5). She argues that it is not just the concern of material needs like housing, cleaning, childrearing, that social reproduction is also the ways in which our collective memory and meaning-making is formed (2019a, p.5). I would argue that this conception is the point upon which the latent power of social reproduction as a site of resistance emanates.

Feminists utilise social reproduction to problematise the power dynamics that this division of labour creates – namely that women's work is chronically undervalued, and perspectives ignored. Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fisher, link the role of social reproduction to the factors of sexist oppression, which assign women as subordinate and disguise the pivotally important role of social reproduction (2019, pp.21-22). The lens also offers a mechanism to "loosen" the distinction

between labour and work (Mezzadri et al 2021a, p.5). The concept has improved considerations of the relationships between gender, sexuality, race and class, helping to understand the sources of women's oppression and recognise capitalism's dependence on unpaid labour (Mohandesi and Teitelman 2017, p.37). These conceptions allow feminists to situate reproduction within the capitalist system and connect and make visible the private domain of women to the global political economy.

As noted earlier COVID-19 has been described as a crisis of care or social reproduction as people struggled to meet new or intensifying demands. The pandemic's central locus in the home, increased the demand for social reproductive work, with employers and policy makers relying on the "magic pudding". Demand for reproductive labour has exponentially increased as the pandemic has imposed the spatial constraint of the home (Dattani, 2020). School closures, disruption in care for the elderly and socially vulnerable increased the burden of care on women (Özkazanç-Pan and Pullen, 2020). "Stay-at-home" orders rapidly accelerated the long-term process of privatising social reproduction, with impacts on households depending on wealth, renegotiation of care-duties, family size and composition, housing and infrastructure (Stevano 2021b, p.278). Corporations and governments were largely blind to caring responsibilities and the "regendering" of the home, and the expectation that women and their paid work were "interruptible" (Thornton 2021, pp.53-4).

I argue that whilst COVID-19 was particularly acute for many, it was mainly an exercise in continuity and a symptom of an enduring global reproductive crisis, and an accelerator of inequalities, poverty, and violence. Situated here within a global reproductive crisis, the pandemic arose against a backdrop of global trends toward the consolidation of power of capital, and the erosion of living standards, solidarity and declining social supports of the welfare state (Vrasti 2016, p.249). The COVID-19 pandemic deepened the "crisis of care" and social reproduction in a broad sense (Dugavova 2020, p.1). A long-term view considers the crisis not a "freak epidemiological event, but rather a manifestation of the existing systemic fragilities of capitalism" (Stevano et al 2021a, p.180). Rao notes, drawing on Katz, that even outside the "extreme case" of the pandemic, capitalism does not have a mechanism to guaranteeing the maintenance of the labour power it needs (2021, p.40). It relies upon logics of care and social reproduction in the economy that treats social reproductive labour as a "free gift", that simultaneously devalues and undermines the precondition for its own reproduction (McGregor 2020, p.3). Women's unpaid labour has been treated as the "shock absorber" for market goods and public services made unavailable, a trend intensified by the rapid increase of demand resulting from schools and nurseries, and increased healthcare demands for vulnerable communities (Heintz, Staab and Turquet 2021, p.474). However, a long-term view recognises the role of austerity measures in the global north, and international "structural adjustment" interventions has had on the decline of public services and structures. Increased commodification,

privatisation of public services and shrinking access to natural resources, have reduced access to the means of reproduction, in both global north and south (for example, Federici 2019, Mezzadri et al 2021b, Rao 2021). It also highlighted the global and multiplying transboundary impacts, with an international division of reproductive labour, which extracts and strains care systems in the Global South, in response to demands of the economic incentives and imperatives of the Global North (Stevano et al 2021a, p.181). Stevano et al argue the COVID-19 crisis was distinct in two transformations it brought forth, due to the intensification the work of households and the shift in the balance of “essential labour” towards sectors of the economy deemed as low-skilled and low-value producing (2021, p.276). It is truer to say that the COVID-19 crisis of care was symptomatic of these long-term challenges, and intensified Fraser’s “boundary struggles” between production and reproduction (2016).

COVID-19 has reaffirmed the relevance of social reproduction as a lens and prism to understand global capitalist processes and examine the global political economy of work from a feminist standpoint (Mezzadri et al 2021, p.2). Deploying such a lens enables an analysis that points to a continued crisis centred on the capitalist organisation of work and the renewed centrality of the household (Stevano, Mezzadri, Lombardo and Bargawi, 2021b). Doing so, as Federici suggests in *Revolution at Point Zero* (2012) and throughout her work, situates the home, and gendered relations within it, as a locus of struggle under capitalism. From that perspective, it can be a way to conceive of the underlying biases that brought about gendered impacts, and as a site for resistance for feminist movements.

Feminisms and Social Reproduction

Having situated COVID-19 as a site of continuity in terms of the global social reproduction crisis, I argue that situating social reproduction at the centre of feminist movements, is of increasing relevance and urgency. I place the critical analysis of the binary gendered logics under capitalist patriarchy that social reproduction offers, at the centre of my articulation of the online feminist commons. Contemporary feminists have sought to engage with the “richness of the everyday” of social reproduction to avoid universalising Western women’s experiences and situate social reproduction as occurring at the intersection of race, gender, nation, age, and class (Elias and Rai 2019, p.204). In conceiving of social reproduction in the global South, it is vital to understand the boundary struggles between social reproductive and paid labour, the spatial limits of agrarian life and the role of “indirect care” inputs of food, drink, and a clean, safe living space (Rao, 2021, p.45) and exposure to global capitalism and extraction of both materials and people. Furthermore, understanding the role of transboundary care work or “global care chains”, in which global capitalism creates a market of cascading care arrangements for increasingly marginalised and poor women, to service the needs of working women (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, p.87)

By highlighting social reproduction as a site of struggle, I adopt a Federician lens to social movements. In speaking of Wages for Work campaign of the 1970s, Federici noted that women’s groups of the time were reluctant to make this part of the women’s movement, which was seen by these groups as “embracing our degradation” (Federici and Andrews 2022). The focus of the movement was on enhancing women’s political and economic participation and representation rather than more radical notions of reordering the hierarchies in the home or recognising women’s struggle in the family (Costa and James 2017, p.83). Federici poses a radical notion, that while modern feminism has focused on the improvement of conditions of capitalism for women, it had lost its historical underpinnings upon which a greater challenge of transforming society away from capitalism could be focussed (Federici and Richards 2018). As noted above notions of care can be made revolutionary, by reading carework as a transformative and revolutionary practice upon which affective bonds of community and solidarity can rely.

In an interview with Marina Vishmidt, Federici referred to “self-reproducing movements” as those that do not separate political activism from the “task of our daily reproduction”, instead “creating a certain social fabric and forms of co-operative reproduction that can give continuity and strength to our struggles and a more solid base to our solidarity” (2013). A feminist movement that centres a critique and understanding of hierarchical gender relations has the potential to both revolutionise movements by centring social reproductive work in their operations, deepen critiques of power relations and creates forms of support to collectively deliver reproduction (Federici 2006). I would argue that the growing extent of the social reproduction crisis is making a reorientation toward social reproduction increasingly urgent.

Before articulating the online feminist commons as a framework to understand contemporary movements, I also want to draw together the complementary lenses of social reproduction with transnational feminisms, to situate an understanding of the multiplicity of feminisms at the centre of the online feminist commons. I argue that Federici's observation on social reproduction as a necessary site of struggle, is a complementary lens to transnational feminisms. Transnational feminisms, emerged from critiques of Western feminisms that universalised the experiences of primarily white, western and wealthy women (see Mohanty). I argue that these two lenses are complementary, as they both focus on the local and situated experiences of gender, but also, are connected to broader critiques and experiences of global capitalism. By situating the struggle against capitalism within the "home", universalising logics become increasingly uncomfortable, and ensures the multiplicity of patriarchies are reflected in understanding both personal and local social reproduction experiences, but also the development of feminist movements.

Describing feminist movements is a slippery task, owing to universalising legacies and histories of oppressions within and between women's and feminist movements. Feminist and women's movements respond to the patriarchal dichotomies which simultaneously place women as fundamental to the human condition, whilst marginal in economic, social and political roles (Mitchell (1966, p. 11). When I refer to feminist movements, I mean at its broadest conception is the series of movements and campaigns seek to respond to and resist gender inequalities, which come from a range of political, theoretical, geographic and positional perspectives and ideologies. It is an expansive and confrontational political provocation, with complex contributions on politics, economic, culture, sexuality, ecology, language and knowledge (Vrasti, 2016, p.250). Central to my understanding of feminist movements, is the notion of "gendered claims-making" (Beckwith 2005, p.585). I understand such a term to refer to the political acts of women organised into a social movements to make claims upon the basis of their experiences of their gendered experience of their world. In my understanding of this, gendered claims-making seeks to capture both the critique of gendered binary logics under capitalist patriarchy, and the political acts of feminist and women's movements. I argue that such claims-making is central to a feminism that situates social reproduction at the centre of feminist struggle. I will rely on the notion of gendered claims-making as central to my understanding of feminist movements throughout this thesis. When I use this term, I seek to capture critique, resistance and activism in response to local and global patriarchies and inequalities, engaged in by feminist and women's movements. Throughout the thesis I will use the term "feminist movements" to capture movements engage in such work, whilst recognising some may find this terminology objectionable. I take Ahmed's observation that feminism is the "dynamism of making connections" between those who recognise "something", even though they may have different words for it (Ahmed, 2017, p. 3), to capture the complications of feminist interface.

Whilst I do not intend to engage with the dominance of the feminist wave metaphor in describing the history and nature of the feminist movement (Rome, O'Donohoe and Dunnett 2019, p.253), there has been a dominance in theory and practice of the voices of western, white women. Mohanty, in particular, critiques universalising logics in feminism describing transnational feminism in terms of its desire, to reorient feminist practice toward anticapitalist struggles, and situating solidarity and understanding of difference (Mohanty 2003, p.13). Transnational feminism sets aside the universalising view of the "global sisterhood" as sharing universal patriarchal oppression and orients both activism and theory toward an understanding of difference, rooted in the perspectives of global south feminists (Marshall 2020, pp.193-4). Marshall describes transnational feminism as "the organizing, campaigning, and lobbying efforts of feminists on women's issues beyond their national boundaries" (p.194). The online feminist commons I articulate, is complementary and influenced by transnational feminisms, however my argument is that online feminist life and connections it forges between feminists and their movements, loosens the importance of the nation-state and proximity, rather situating it as a site of solidarity, care and community in answering both local and personal struggle against social reproduction, but also a global struggle against global capitalist logics.

As a theoretical and political framing in understanding feminist movements, the thesis adopts the observations of the manifesto, *Feminism for the 99 percent* by Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser (2019), which similarly takes a critical lens to global capitalist logics. The authors situate the feminist struggle within the injustices and inequalities that result from the neoliberal economic system and argue for a feminism that acts in solidarity with other struggles. In situating their feminisms as opposed to an "epochal" capitalist crisis (Arruzza et al, pp. 12-13) (and to liberal lean in feminism) the authors provide a theoretical umbrella to engage not only with the capitalist logics of social reproduction, and how these logics apply to other issues such as race, class and ecological collapse. In so doing it articulates a feminist vision that seeks to challenge the systems of oppression across movement and geographic boundaries and rejects reform of systems for an emancipatory vision (Arruzza et al, pp.80-81). Its conception of a feminist movement that acts in solidarity across movements is a framing essential to understanding the politics of the COVID-19 crisis and the desire for alternatives to capitalism as the defining logic of social, economic and political affairs.

The extension that I seek to offer, is to capture the often-ephemeral connections between feminists online, that centres an anti-capitalist critique and embeds the mediation of difference within feminist movements. I argue that feminist online life, offers new opportunities for connection, but also introspection within and between movements, that shifts the internet from being a tool for advocacy or organisation, but a platform that can shape and form new identities loosened from geography, that embeds a self-reflexive understanding of diversities and patriarchies.

CHAPTER 3 – READING FEMINIST COMMONS

Having established social reproduction theory, in particular Federici's insights as an essential lens to understand the pandemic, the global reproductive crisis and a critical lens for feminist movements, I situate my understanding of Federici's conception of the feminist commons, in order to connect with online forms of commoning. Primarily drawing on "Feminism and the Politics of the Commons", Federici, I argue, posits a form of feminist commons, a reading upon which the remainder of the thesis will rely (2019a). Through an analysis of this essay, I argue that are two defining features of her feminist commons, the first relational, describing community bonds and the second revolutionary, situating it as a site of struggle. The theoretical roots of her analysis of the witch-trials are apparent, with a clear intention to reconnect women's power and knowledges through community and commoning, as a counterbalance and response to efforts to assert gender hierarchies. Federici connects the commons with feminism by drawing on her previous work on the witch-trials and social reproduction – namely the role of women in reproductive work and the damage wrought through the separation of women from commonly held natural resources and knowledges (2019a, p.106). Providing a series of historical and contemporary examples, she highlights what she calls "women's struggle for direct access to means of reproduction" (p.108). I understand such a struggle to refer to efforts by women to respond to global capitalist logics, which have made entering the market economy necessary, reduced access to commonly held natural resources or austerity measures that restrict public goods like education, health, and social welfare.

Having established in chapter two, Federici's view that social reproduction is a site of resistance against global capitalist logics, her observations on the commons follow⁸. What I refer to as her "feminist commons" are beyond the examples she provides of urban gardens and collective gardens as mechanisms to manage the day-to-day activities of social reproduction, instead I conceive feminist commons to be a practice of revolutionary community and resistance. Drawing on observations of Latin American, African and Indian women's' attempts to respond to shrinking access to means of reproduction (for instance, food, shelter, water, services), Federici argues convincingly that women engage in forms of feminist commons (2019a p.107-8). Central to Federici's analysis of the commons is a critique of forces of global capitalism, including the work of neo-liberal multilateral institutions that served in the twentieth century to disrupt human relations, and relationships with land in newly decolonised territories (for example 2019a pp.26-50). This

⁸ The thesis does not intend to review or draw from the literature on other ways in which the "commons" is mobilised in theory and praxis. For example, notions of the commons used to describe places, or spaces, real or ephemeral under communitarian forms of management. Common uses describe ecologically significant locations, knowledge, digital spaces, or locations, such as space, or Antarctica.

latter element, owing to the global nature of capitalism and struggle, I argue in chapter four opens up opportunities to understand feminist commons, not just as geographically bound communities, and revolutionary movements grounded in common yet differentiated experiences of struggle.

Borrowing from with Linebaugh's argument that "commons" is not a natural resource or the management thereof, but as "a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive" (2007, p.279), Federici articulates a modern definition of the commons, which centres women's actions, and relationships with each other in community (2019a, p.108). It is from this perspective that my extension of her conception of the commons to social movements follows. By situating the relational and revolutionary intent of Federici's feminist reading of the commons, it is therefore possible to argue that the commons are an appropriate lens to observe/situate/interrogate/mobilise social movements, similarly disposed to resistance and connected by community. Therefore, I argue that Federici's feminist commons is both able to describe revolutionary responses to crises of reproductive care and as a framework to understand social movements. Through centring COVID-19 impacts and responses as a continuation and symptom of global capitalist logics over means of social reproduction, it is possible to understand commoning as transboundary. I argue in these penultimate chapters, that the feminist commons, has the potential to provide a framework for understanding networked global feminisms.

A feminist reading of the commons

Federici's feminist commons should be situated within Federici's understanding of the utility of the commons. In a chapter with Caffentzis "Commons against and beyond capitalism", they articulate the commons as an alternative to capitalism, a tool for class struggle and a necessary means of survival (2019a, p.88). At its centre is the notion of "no community, no commons" (2019a, p.94). Whilst this notion of the commons is more aligned with articulating an alternative form of social and political organisation of commonly held resources, these two principles factor in an understanding of feminist commons. Federici's feminist commons borrows from her contributions on the witch-trials and social reproduction and extends the commons further to a revolutionary intent beyond merely management. In describing a feminist perspective on the commons, Federici refers to a standpoint "shaped by the struggle against sexual discrimination and over reproductive work" (2019a, p.104).

My reading of "Feminism and the Politics of the Commons" argues that the central features of feminist commons are its revolutionary and relational nature. The chapter centres an understanding of the commons as a response and alternative to global capitalism, and seeks to reorient human relations away from hierarchical gendered logics to reconnect women in solidarity and community. Implicit in her understanding of the commons throughout *Re-enchanting the*

World, is a sense that commons are bound with community values, and a scepticism of a “global collectivity” (p.94). Federici also describes the ways in which the commons offer opportunities for women to act collectively to shape collective identities, create a counterbalance of power and to collectivise reproductive labour to protect against poverty and violence (2019a, p.108). Such efforts are logical progressions, I argue, of Federici’s perspectives on the witch-trials, as the mechanism by production and reproduction were separated, and women were forcibly split from collectively held knowledge and land. In those pre-capitalist societies, women too could rely upon collective power. The modern commons that Federici describes in Latin America and Africa in *Reenchanting the World* and other pieces (for example 2011b, 2019b), reconnect women with this inheritance. It is not the act of commoning the land or collectivising food that is vital here, it is the connections between women, and the “revalorising” of women’s knowledge and role in maintaining connections with each other and the lands upon which communities rely.

A further feature is the undermining of “the hold that capitalism has on our lives” by which I take Federici to be referring to commoning offering an alternative way to access the means of reproduction, and the rebalancing of human relations that connects production and reproduction (2019a, pp.108-9). In “Women, Reproduction and the Commons”, Federici highlights the efforts of Indigenous communities in Latin America and Africa, who respond to political forces and exogenous economic shocks respectively, to engage in commoning of land and resources to provide for families and to engage in survival and forms of political resistance (2019b, p.715). It stands in direct opposition to the privatised family as a counterpart to the market, for the purposes of privatising social relations, appropriating and concealing women’s labour, and propagating patriarchal capitalist discipline (Federici 2004, p.97).

Revolutionary Commons – Commoning as a site of feminist struggle

In introducing the notion of the feminist commons, Federici draws on the observation of Mies that commoning seeks to recombine what the division of labour under capitalism separated (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, p.141). Federici situates the commons as a response to “the neo-liberal attempt to subordinate every form of life and knowledge to the logic of the market” (2011, p.1). Far from neutral, this separation should be understood within the “struggle-first” analysis of the witch-trials, which constructed women as a “denigrated, subordinate Other” under capitalist patriarchy (Jeffries 2018, p.1324) through violence. Katz argues that capitalism, through the deployment of physical and symbolic violence, disrupts and reworks social practices and relations that govern production (Katz 2001b, p.1213-4), the global logics of which exacerbate wealth inequality and change social reproduction (Katz 2001a, p.710). Women, especially low-income or women of colour, Federici argues are separated from the means to keep themselves and their families alive and can only do so through selling their labour on the world labour market (2019a, p.20). Federici’s

feminist commons, therefore, is posited as a struggle against capitalist patriarchal logics and seeks to situate social reproduction at the centre of struggle.

The commons she articulates, is a reaction against, response and alternative to the capitalist organisation of human life. Federici's conceptualisation of the commons is influenced by Marxism, and in particular the observation that labour produces both commodities and people. It draws from socialist feminist observations on how patriarchal values determine the lived, affective relations of reproduction, production, and consumption to stabilize capitalism (Armstrong 2020, p.47). Such conceptions are deeply intertwined with Federici's previous work on the witch-trials and activism on wages for housework, which centres the struggle to refuse the commodification of social reproductive tasks, as a revolutionary strategy to undermine the capitalist division of labour (Daskalaki 2021, p.1650). Federici argues that that access to communal resources has been vital for women, with women often leading efforts to "collectivize reproductive labor both as a means to economize the cost of reproduction and to protect each other from poverty, state violence, and the violence of individual men" (2011, p.5). Federici notes, that this violence "erected more formidable barriers around women's bodies than were ever erected by the fencing off of the commons" (2004, p.184). This violence served to force women submit to their new 'useful' social functions and degraded social identities (Jeffries 2018, p.1355). Federici notes, that despite new enclosures, at the behest of global corporations and multilateral organisations, commons have remained resilient, and arguably, new commons have emerged. She notes, that "new forms of social cooperation are being produced", pointing to the Internet (2011, p.1). It is this resilience and flourishing that the thesis focuses on, as both material and activist action.

Relational Commons – Commoning in community

Within the scope of the witch-trials, Federici places women's cooperative work as a "source of strength and collective action against feudal domination" (Jeffries 2018, p.1326). Beyond the provision of material needs that commoning provides, Federici understands the commons is understood as a site of resistance, in which mutual bonds and the collective interest are created and conceived (2011, p.6). Feminist commoning centres social reproduction as the primary mechanism by which "collective interest and mutual bonds are created" (2019a, p.108)). By recalling Federici's notion of social reproduction, which goes beyond the fulfilment of material needs, such as housing, food, childbearing and child raising to "the reproduction of our collective memory and the cultural symbols that give meaning to our life and nourish our struggles" (2019a, p.5) it is possible to imagine the expansive scope of reordering of human relations that this may entail. The "quality of relations", relying on cooperation and responsibility to each other and to the earth (2019a, p.110) is core to the conception of the feminist commons. Federici understands the nature of "reproductive commons" as formative to create community values, generate affective ties

and create collective memory (2019b, p.719). Furthermore, I draw from Federici's own observations made that "commons of knowledge" wherein knowledges and collective memories are recuperated and shared, to create ties, norms and an "apparatus of resistance" (2019b, p.719). Such an understanding of the commons highlights the intangible nature of the feminist commons, and the role it has in creating community and solidarities.

In describing a series of commoning activities - gardening, cooking, repairing, recycling and creating - in Paris by a collective Petrescu usefully deploys the contributions of Federici's commons as an opportunity to shape a collective identity and counterpower in the community (2019a, p.108). Petrescu, draws out female subjectivity in these commoning practices in order to conceive of a commons that is central to the reconstruction of social, political, affective and cognitive agency (2017, p.101). In so doing, Petrescu, centres female subjectivity in the notion of the commons, as being able to be affected by different agencies (social, political, sexual and emotional) and create and be transformed by relations (2017, p.106). In centring female subjectivity, such a conception of the commons, draws out the power of challenging logics that would have women centred as object, as contrasted to male subjectivity. Furthermore, I argue, in centring relationality or community, recentres the logics governing human life and relations towards living in solidarity, rather than in competition vis a vis the market.

Federici has rejected a conception of the commons as a "patchwork of small projects", arguing instead that whilst the collectivisation of social reproduction work that these commoning activities and practices denote, the core of commoning is the construction of "spaces for social encounters and places of knowledge production" (2018b, p.1394). Instead of centring the market as the locus and conduit of human life and behaviour the feminist commons she articulates centres the role of women and their relationship with each other, the community, and the land as life-giving and life-sustaining. She situates the formation of community as necessary against the isolation and laboriousness of social reproductive work, particularly when coupled with full time work (2019a, p.184). Rather than a location in need of management or protection, it is action in community, a practice of solidarity and an expression of collective care.

Connecting the Commons to Social Movements

Commoning behaviour is a strategy to both undermine the centrality of the market and to centre affective bonds within communities to deliver for the holistic needs of individuals and community as identified through my reading of Federici's texts above. I have noted in chapter two, Federici's reflections challenges in rooting social reproduction at the centre of feminist movements (Federici and Andrews 2022). Here, I argue that we can use the commons as a frame to centre the social reproductive work, as a form of activism, drawing on Federici's own argument for a self-

reproducing movement. Key to such a framing is the understanding of the affective bonds of community through commons. Examples of feminist commoning behaviour tend to centre on the material needs of women or their communities— urban gardens, soup kitchens, efforts to care for children collectively. These activities are often understood as an extension of women’s social reproductive work, under logics of care, which would naturalise them. A revolutionary reading conceives this collective work as a feminist act, of collaboration, solidarity, and power against capitalist patriarchy. Harking back to the witch-trials, and the erosion of feminine power, knowledge and connection, the commons offer an opportunity for an affective community of care to emerge. Centring care work as a form of solidarity reclaims and revalorises women’s’ care work, as an act of activism, political in its challenge to gendered divisions of labour. By centring care as a point of affective community and solidarity, this conception of commons-as-movements links and extends social reproduction feminists’ observations of social reproduction as a site of resistance to a site of solidarity and reclaimed power.

Furthermore, by grounding the understanding in individual women’s experiences resists universalising logics and connects and reflects the perspectives of women of colour, marginalised women, or women in the Global South. By connecting through differentiated experiences of gendered social relations under capitalism, using the lens of the commons centred on social reproduction and the global reproductive crisis offers the potential for a vital reorientation of understanding feminist movements. Such efforts connect with the perspectives of transnational feminists. For too long, academic, and popular understandings of women’s’ movements have centred on the role of Western middle class white women, and their political and economic project for reform of existing institutions. If the axis upon which feminist movements pivot is struggle against gendered social relations that characterises women and their work as unvalued under capitalism, the logic of the movement moves toward revolutionary intent. Arguably, the pressure of “permanent crisis” (Federici 2019a, p.88), upon which people are increasingly distanced from the mode of their own reproduction – through environmental degradation, increased capital power and reducing government support and regulation – a critical activist movement centred on social reproduction has powerful potential.

CHAPTER 4 – A TRANSBOUNDARY FEMINIST COMMONS – SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The COVID-19 pandemic, established here as gendered and networked, has served to accelerate trends surrounding digital technologies and the crisis of reproduction under capitalism. I argue the pandemic compounded and made more visible the social reproduction crisis, long hidden for many through capitalist outsourcing of carework. The networked nature of the pandemic combined with this in two ways – the first, was the simultaneous experience of the pandemic and attendant (yet differentiated) experiences of the explosion of “women’s work”, and the second, was the internet enabled women to connect with each other through bonds of affective care and solidarity. It is from these observations this chapter introduces an extension to Silvia Federici’s feminist commons as a lens to understand feminist social movements. It draws together the threads of the feminist reading of social reproduction, feminist commons and social movements, to articulate a new framework for understanding feminist mobilisations as a response to COVID-19, as consolidating and accelerating force for the nature of contemporary and future movements.

As having understood Federici’s feminist commons as a feminist response and alternative to capitalism, I argue applying the logics of the feminist commons can deepen our understandings of feminist movements. I articulate a theoretical framework for understanding social movement through the logics of Federici’s feminist commons, framing social movements through a social reproduction lens, emanating from the revolutionary and relational features I outlined in chapter three. In this chapter I outline three principles that I consider to make up the framework of online feminist commons autonomous and spontaneous gendered claims-making, affective bonds of care and solidarity and transboundary responses to the social reproduction crisis. Each of these principles radiate from my reading of Federici’s feminist commons. Central to this is my argument community is more than a place, it is a series of practices that forms bonds between individuals and groups, of affective care and solidarity. Such a reading enables me to argue the feminist commons can be loosened from geographic proximity implicit in commoning activities⁹ to transboundary forms of connection and community, which can be used as a theoretical framework to understand for contemporary and future feminist movements, which mobilise increasingly online. Such a framework embeds technology and social reproduction into understandings of contemporary and future feminist movements. I argue technology powers new opportunities for dialogue across identities, solidarities, and communities across boundaries of country, culture, identity and positionalities continuing the work of transnational feminists.

I have argued that COVID-19 was an event of continuity and acceleration for feminist social movements have increasingly relied on the internet to build community and support, share

⁹ Such as community kitchens, gardens or communalising care work.

information, undertake advocacy and coordinate action. However, in seeking to capture contemporary and future movements, I also seek to capture that internet movements are often spontaneous, and sometimes short lived whilst still being connected to a broader sense of a feminist social movement or cause. In articulating the online feminist commons, I seek to provide a framework that more readily captures bursts of activism within an understanding of feminist movements. In so doing I seek to create a framing to understand the global feminist social movement as pluriversal, encompassing of diversities, transboundary, and networked. The principles identified below engage with online and digital technologies and platforms as tools for social movements, as embedded into contemporary social movement practice, complementing and amplifying in-person forms of relating, activism, and protest. Whilst continued issues of the digital divide persist, the enduring impact of the rapid acceleration of technologies under COVID-19 globally, coupled with the increasing affordability of smart mobile technology, suggest that digital technologies will become a ubiquitous part of social movements.

In articulating the online feminist commons I am not seeking to argue that a new form of commoning emerged as a new whole. It offers a framework to better understand the online life of feminist movements that centres social reproduction as a site of resistance, rather than an argument that feminist online life formed a new form of global commons. Individual communities could be understood therefore as individual commons within this logic but the primary focus here is on providing new ways to understand social movements. It is distinct from Mariam Ticktin's work, which argued COVID-19 had enhanced experiences in what they call "burgeoning feminist commons" which "foreground new, horizontal forms of sociality" (2021, p.38). Ticktin focuses on three principal examples including pointing to masked political protests driven by racialised police violence, mutual aid, and the practice of pandemic "pods" or "bubbles" wherein multiple households formed safe groups. These examples fit within Federici's feminist commons and remain by and large geographically bound. Ticktin's argument is broadly complementary, the point of disjuncture, is that Ticktin is arguing that COVID-19 produced new forms of feminist commons whereas my focus is on providing a framework to understand feminist social movements online using COVID-19 mobilisations as illustrations of broader trends, rather than to broadly describe a process of commoning in response to the pandemic. My argument does not seek to extend Federici's logics of feminist commons, to argue that the internet or feminist online life constitutes a new or emerging form of commons. To do so would be to grossly oversimplify the complexities of relations within and between feminist movements to suggest that there is such a cohesive whole. By highlighting the potential for transboundary gendered claims-making, such a framework provides an analytical tool to engage with diversity, identity, and difference, and reflects that through technology distances between communities of feminists shrink. The online feminist commons, seeks to provide a framework to understand contemporary and future feminist movements, that embeds an understanding that the internet can shrink distances between feminists – both between locations and identities – and that this feature is one which other

frameworks do not adequately reflect. By drawing on Federici's focus on social reproduction as a site of struggle, and of transnational feminisms, it is possible to recognise the relationships between feminists and their movements, and the way online life, is not merely a tool for connection, instead it can be a constitutive part of movement formation that shifts the nature of connection and mediation of differing positionalities and locations. Arguably, online feminist commons can form relational and revolutionary movements themselves such as in the case of the #metoo or #NiUnaMenos examples outlined below.

Autonomous and Spontaneous Gendered Claims-Making

The first principle of the online feminist commons I articulate seeks to capture the growing role of the internet in the constitution and practice of social movements. I seek to shift away from speaking of the internet as a tool to be deployed, instead conceiving it as a part of activist practice has the capacity to shift how movements mobilise and how relationships form within it. In observing contemporary social movements, I argue the low barriers to entry the internet affords individuals and groups means that protests and movements can arise spontaneously and autonomously. Whilst I have noted access to technology is unequal globally, there are powerful suggestions that online mobilisations are possible through adversity not only owing to technological limits and also restrictions on civil society and movement. The most recent example of mobilising through adversity and the spontaneity of movements, is the protests responding to Masha Amini's death in Iran in which Iranian women have led a global movement online of outrage and solidarity online and offline, powered largely by clever deployment of young Iranians online (for example de Hoog and Morresi 2022, Verma 2022, Dagres 2022, Wamsley 2022).

Of the principles this first principle has the most intellectually demanding connection to Federici's feminist commons owing to its attempt to broaden the notions of community. Central to her understanding, and mine, is that there is "no commons without community" (2019a, p.94). Many of her examples of commoning are linked to particular community bonds – for example Chilean women's shared kitchen pots or indigenous commons of South America (2019a, pp. 79, 141). It is important to remain alive to these practices being embedded in traditional practices, or as a direct response to particular histories. In this principle, I argue that community does not need to be bound by geographic boundaries as would be implied though forms of commoning such as shared kitchens, gardens or communal caring practices. Instead, I draw from the idea that community emerges from bonds of solidarity and care.

Throughout *Re-enchanting the world*, Federici describes commons in a pluriversal way. She draws from the Zapatista ideology, of “one no, many yeses,” to point to the potential for the commons to be an answer to the global reproductive crisis (2019a, p.7-8). I take up this indigenous Mexican Zapatista revolutionary movement’s conception of the ‘pluriverse’ as an approach and a prism through which to look through to understand multiple, intersecting worlds of feminist and women’s organising. The Zapatista movement declared in 1996, “El mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos” or “The world we want is one where many worlds fit” (EZLN 1996). The “pluriverse” describes multiple potentialities, that reorders relationship of principles of hospitality and kinship (Arora and Stirling 2020). It is an inherently decolonial perspective, that questions the “West’s” universalising narrative of growth and development (Suppiah et al 2022 53, 56)

Furthermore, the pluriverse has been articulate to describe efforts to “delink from commodity chains where possible and to relink to practices of care for humans, nonhumans, and more-than-humans that suggest the centrality of relational values” (Kaul 2022 et al, 1151). It seeks to move beyond colonial and capitalist ways of thinking, of linear modernity, of domination, control, and extraction. A “feminist pluriverse” is not well articulated in the literature, but I argue that it is possible to conceive of a feminist pluriverse which explicitly rejects capitalist ideology that devalues women (Marcos 2014). In extending this notion to the global feminist movement, we can simultaneously recognise a digitally networked global movement, as well as the potentialities, fissures, and diversities within and between movements therein. It also allows for the researcher to embed critical perspectives of colonial and capitalist logics within the conception of the movement

I use this term to describe the autonomous and spontaneous nature of contemporary movements, each taking from their own local experiences of the global reproductive crisis, to contribute to local and global feminist activism. To do so in this framework embeds a critical consciousness of intersecting identities often absented in other more universalising conceptions of feminist movements. I read the pluriverse with Federici’s argument that commons cannot form “global connectivity” (2019a, p.94), to understand that the online feminist commons does not seek to capture a global movement of feminism, but movements of feminisms expressing critiques of local and global patriarchies under global capitalisms. These movements cross community boundaries, both in terms of geography but across differences. This is why when I articulate the framework of the online feminist commons, it is about providing a way of understanding and conceiving social movements, rather than seeking to suggest at these movements are *constitutive of commons* themselves. Recognising that commons emerge from specific contexts, histories, and cultures, deepens the capacity of the framework to engage with difference and diversity and rejects universalising logics over culturally specific practices or experiences.

By transmuting this pluriversal nature to online mobilisations, I seek to capture the ways in which contemporary feminist movements operate – that is, it is possible to start a movement through capturing a sentiment or action online, particularly on social media. Whilst my definition of ‘online

life' goes beyond social media, I argue that its ubiquity in contemporary digital life, means it is growing in influence and impact for feminist mobilisations. Hashtags symbolised by the “#” is the primary convening practice on social media. Whilst they do not constitute movements in themselves, they are a mechanism of resistance, partial alliances and are defined by their viral nature (Haraway 2016). Feminist movements deploy hashtags “as an umbrella” to raise awareness and mobilise discontent which have displaced other early feminist internet tools like chat rooms and mailing lists (Lobato and Gonzalez 2020). In drawing together, a picture of online feminist movements, I seek to capture this virality, through this principle of autonomous and spontaneous movements. A particular example of the spontaneity and virality of online movements is the global spread of the 2017 #MeToo hashtag. A tweet from Hollywood actress Alyssa Milano posting on Twitter, “If You’ve Been Sexually Harassed or Assaulted Write “Me Too” as a Reply to This Tweet” (2017) quickly triggered a hashtag and conversation on Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and other social media websites (Ghadery 2019, p.256). By early November 2017, #MeToo had been tweeted 2.3 million times from eighty-five countries (Powell 2017). Subsequent translations into new languages, and contexts pointed to the capacity for hashtags to convene a movement spontaneously, and then through local interpretation, operate autonomously to respond to local conditions.

Hashtags have the potential to disseminate shared problems, amplify feminist conversations, enhance the voices of minorities, and seek to drive social change (Carvalho, Barbosa and Santos 2022, p.273). During the pandemic, I argue that hashtags was one way that the internet enabled women to reach each other and their shared yet differing experiences of the pandemic. In Africa, regional feminist advocacy group *FEMNET*, sought to share lockdown concerns, particularly for women with disabilities through the hashtag #inclusivelockdown (Horn 2020). In a consideration of four hashtags that focussed on violence against women in the pandemic, #16Days, #IsolatedNotAlone, #womensupportingwomen and #NiUnaMenos, Carvalho, Barbosa and Santos found that for hashtags to be successful, the campaign need to be clear in purpose, invited collaboration and made an emotional appeal (2022, p.285-6). Such hashtags and other social media driven expressions of gendered claims-making, are autonomous, spontaneous and can be free from organisational structures, planning and identity, acting as unfiltered gendered claims-making. Social media also facilitates engagements, conversation, and reflection across diversities within the movement.

Such mobilisations can be short-lived but should be understood in the broader ecosystem of the social movement of feminisms. In an article focussing on commoning as a form of resource management, Varvarousis draws together social movements and commons, to argue that social movements can form a type of “liminal” commons, and that such commons are rhizomatic, arguing effectively that social movements can form commons, that act as processes of change that can expand “without the distinction between center [sic] and periphery” (2020, p.2). Such a framing can

be useful in considering the ways in which feminists mobilised as a result of the pandemic, and in considering into the future, that online feminist commons are pluriversal, autonomous, and spontaneous.

Reyes powerfully situates the pandemic in terms of women's labour "subsidising the global economy" and notes that governments' responses to the pandemic relied on this "great elasticity of women's time" (2020, p.264). In this article, they argue that the feminist critique of this sexual division of labour powered "effervescent activity of feminists in their countless analyses, proposals and actions throughout the COVID-19 era" (2020, p.267). In this same article they point to the *Feminist Response to COVID-19*, a website and campaign created by feminists and feminist organisations along six principles that focus on intersectionality, long term and climate-just transitions and cooperation. The volunteer-run cooperative describes itself as "broad collective of feminist activists, coming together in solidarity" and has a broad membership of individuals and organisations. Volunteers created feministcovidresponse.com, with contributions from almost 70 organisations across all geographic regions, to share resources, funding, and submit stories from the pandemic. Furthermore, loose networks of feminists organised a range of internet-enabled resources and campaigns. A group developed a "Google doc" of "COVID and Gender Resources" which contains hundreds of events, recordings, resources, and reporting. Other online mobilisations of allyship included crowdfunding activism, for example a global coalition through Red Umbrella Fund to support sex workers. Whilst scant information is available about the recipients of this crowdfunding support, this online mechanism, responded to the failure of the capitalist structures to adequately respond to the pandemic in such a way that was sensitive to the real-time needs of sex workers.

In the "effervescent" response, both formal feminist institutions and loose networks of feminists participated in feminist responses extending from practical advice; to emotional, material, and financial support; through to online house parties, meetings of feminist collectives and mobilisations of autonomous resources and giving circles. These were undoubtedly powered by the internet, drawing on years of thoughtful feminist organising online and longstanding transnational feminist networks, who could galvanise to coordinate online advocacy (Tabbush and Friedman 2020, pp.633, 637). These actions ranged from the hyper-local to transboundary efforts. In a special feature, *Gender and Development Journal* points to the role of social media in mediating and sustaining feminist movements in a range of global contexts (Nazneen and Ocech 2021, p.237). The reduced barriers to activism and action that digital technology, particularly social media and mobilisations of hashtag feminism, points to enduring feature of social movements, that they can be autonomous and spontaneous. In situating this feature as a constituent part of the framework to understand feminist social movements, it is possible for theorists to capture these often short-lived, or devolved and dispersed movements as not just a random event of feminist mobilisation to capture them as linked and a site of continuity within the movement.

Affective Care Bonds and Solidarity

Central to Federici's conception of the feminist commons is community bonded by responsibility and relationality between community members and the environment that they inhabit. I define community as being composed of affective bonds of care and solidarity, transmuted offline and online. Solidarity refers to joint, collective action or feelings that to respond to and struggle against oppression under global capitalism. This second principle connects to Federici's observations about the role of the commons as a method of struggle against patriarchal and capitalist logics, and to notions of community, solidarity and affective care bonds.

In speaking of the commons throughout *Reenchanting the World* Federici draws on women's traditional use and reliance on commons not only as a site of survival and power, and through the management of these commons which allows women to preserve and transmit traditional knowledge and memory, from which resistance, collective identity and cohesion grows (2019a, p.25). She situates the practice of commoning against the backdrop of a critique of the capitalist patriarchy, particularly as it applies to social reproduction. Federici centres commons and commoning as the production of new realities beyond capitalism through struggle, as the "primary mechanism by which a collective interest and mutual bonds are created" and that women's communalism provides a "counterpower in the home and the community and opens a process of self-valorisation and self-determination" (2019a, p.108). In speaking of Chilean women's efforts of communal kitchens, she notes that Chilean women's efforts "boosted the community's senses of solidarity and identity and demonstrated women's capacity to reproduce their lives without having to be completely dependent on the market" (2019a, p.141). In pointing to these examples, I seek to draw out the features of community that are essential to the formation of commons – solidarity, affective care bonds and resistance - from which communities can form, loosened from geographical ties.

In bringing such a conception together, the thesis relies on the idea of affective community that Federici calls "mutual bonds". I argue that community is no longer necessarily defined by proximity or a geographically bound project such as a community garden, instead I highlight affective emotional bonds which are formed through care, solidarity, and common experience. I argue here that the global logic of contemporary capitalism wherein the local and global are intertwined, means collective care becomes vital between dispersed populations in new communities of affect. It is on this basis that I argue that technologies utilised by global capitalism to minimise distance between markets, can also minimise distances between feminists. Social movements mobilising online, form "affective publics" that accumulate layers of expression and feelings of connectedness, based on common stories (Papacharissi 2016, p.311). Social movements are defined by 'affect', the "energy that drives, neutralizes, or entraps networked publics" (Papacharissi, 2014, pp. 3, 7.) Feminist movements, such as the digitally mobilised 2017 Global

Women's March Movement, powerfully leverage affect to create social change (McDuffie and Ames 2021). For digital activists, this is a deliberate engagement through accountability, inspiration and communication to construct identity, motivate action and create solidarity (Gong 2015, pp.88, 100). In terms of affective bonds, this refers to the dual experiences of responding to the social reproductive crises and engaging in care.

Here I draw on the work of Jimeno, who articulates a notion of "emotional communities" that are connected through affect of the shared experience of violence (2008). McIllwaine, Krenzinger, Ansari, Coelho-Resende, Leal and Viera extend Jimeno's affective communities in response to COVID-19 in Brazilian communities (2022). They situate the notion within feminist organising around economic and social justice issues, noting that the delivery of practical needs often shifts for these communities to transformative emotional-political community building that aims for structural change (2022, p.4). This concept, centres the role of women as organisers and beneficiaries of community COVID-19 responses, as linked social reproductive needs of their communities, in particular food security networks, domestic violence assistance and health and hygiene measures (2022, pp.5-7). Drawing on these observations I argue that COVID-19, and more long-term crises of social reproduction, is a form of shared form of structural violence, from which communities of affect can be formed geographically distinct, but experientially similar communities. An example of this, was the development of COVID-19 support groups, such as the "Body Politic Covid-19 Support Group" which became global and notable for working with the medical community (Bender et al, 2021, p.291), but is also significant in terms of its global reach through affective bonds centred on shared experiences of COVID-19 infection.

Implicit here is my argument that the shared global experience of the gendered and networked pandemic consolidated and accelerated trends towards digital feminist life. When we draw on Federici's notions of commons as cultivating bonds, maintaining memories and knowledge, feminist online life has similar potential. Feminist online life allows feminists to connect with each other, preserve memories and engage in critique and activism, outlets that allow the cultivation and reaffirmation of multiple feminist identities. In a consideration of South-Asian digital transnational feminism, Banerjee and Kankaria observe that the shared predicament of women's issues, long separated by geography and culture, when transported online, "they have a broader connection where the local gets transposed to the global" (2022, p.3). Digital feminism offers opportunities for "dynamic new engagement" within feminism to engage substantively and self-reflexively with issues of privilege, difference, and access (2016, p.18). Such analyses, draw in part from transnational feminists' insistence on engagement and conversation across difference. The pandemic situated the need for effective allyship, an understanding of relative positionalities toward the market and the crisis and transnational solidarities in response (Okech in Al-Ali 2022, p.344).

Feminist online life is characterised by the self-mediation and engagement with diversity and difference, suggesting that a unified feminist identity is neither essential to solidarity nor affective bonds. However, I argue that the identification *with* others' struggle is a powerful motivator for allyship, solidarity and the formation of affective bonds. Hashtags or belonging to online communities, can serve to deepen bonds and solidarities. I draw here, from Conway's description of the construction of a collective identity that emerged from the Global Women's March, that simultaneously respected the autonomy of local groups, the negotiation of difference and finding consensus to underpin a capacity to organising on a global scale (2017, p.214), to suggest that feminist movements under pandemic conditions, constructed a flexible collective feminist community that simultaneously drew from the commonalities whilst engaging with and respecting difference¹⁰. Social media in particular has enabled people to engage with and participate in feminist thinking and activism, through microblogging applications like Instagram and TikTok, engage in discourse through Twitter and develop public and private communities through Facebook. Furthermore, digital feminism utilises "feminist memes" as significant for "for creating a renewed and widespread consciousness of feminist issues in the public sphere" (Baer 2016, 18). Memes, shared primarily through social media in the form of images, capture an idea or comment that is recognisable and understandable. In the pandemic, memes were used to express frustration, create memories, or engage in critique. In *Quarantine Memes-ories: Feminist Memes Exhibition* al Khatib focuses on memes as a movement building tool. In a call-out for contributors they note "...that women use memes to contribute to public conversations about political events taking place in the world around them" (al Khatib 2021). Similarly, hashtag activism, has been found to create "structures of feeling" between women, driving feelings of affect, community, and solidarity (McDuffie and Ames 2021).

Podcasts and social media communities offer unique opportunities for feminists to explore issues of relevance to them, creating spaces reminiscent of consciousness raising groups (Pruchniewska 2019). These groups vary in size, scope and politics, from private "group chats" to public fora, making them difficult to holistically quantify and understand, pointing again to the autonomy that online life affords feminist groups. We can imagine that these groups offer individuals opportunities for online connection, reduced barriers to feminist activism and consciousness raising, untethered by location or other limits. They extend from relatively localised groups, such as Perempuan Berkisah or "Girl Tells" ("PB"), an Indonesia-based Instagram community, intensified its efforts to facilitate access and learn "feminist perspective knowledge" for individuals (Pasaribu 2021, p.173) to international groups, such as the 227000-member group convened by the Guilty Feminist

¹⁰ In drawing from this analysis from Conway, I am seeking to understand the ways in which collective identities could emerge, whilst being sensitive to local conditions, arguing that hashtags and other forms of connection are important ways for women to reach each other. The Global Women's March, in certain contexts, particularly in the US, was critiqued for its failure to foster inclusion and diversity of perspectives, particularly around the marginalisation of non-white voices.

Podcast. Online life and the cultivation of structures of feeling are likely to deepen in the development and practice of contemporary and future social movements.

Solidarity is a core part of Federici's construction of women's commons, expanding on the example of Chilean women, Federici notes that movements survival strategies, created a sense of community solidarity and identity (2019b, 715). I consider that similar to the efforts of Chilean women were in response to political repression and economic shocks, that COVID-19 posed new, and old threats emanating from gender inequalities from which solidarities could grow. The internet has the capacity to "strengthen identities and solidarities" among geographically distant constituencies (D'Enbeau 2011, p.66). The networked and gendered nature of the pandemic created a particular form of solidarity amongst women and feminine-coded carers. Keller, Mendes and Ringrose argue, that contemporary digital feminist activism can be understood as a networked whole through acts of connection such as posting and sharing, which forms "affective solidarities" rooted in shared experiences of discomfort (2018, p.29). In the COVID-19 context, Ahlawat notes that women used technologies to "fight back" and "forge ahead", connecting online and "building virtual strands of solidarity" (Ahlawat 2022, p.279). Such affective solidarities created new opportunities affective care communities, in which women and feminists could point to diverse yet similar experiences of the pandemic as a site of solidarity against similar but differentiated struggle against manifestations of a social reproductive crisis. Such strands of solidarity and allyship, I argue will continue to be vital to women's capacity to connect in solidarity to a range of exogenous shocks and existential threats into the future, for example climate change. These solidarities, built on common frustrations with the logics of capitalist patriarchies, transmuted online, may serve to be powerful multipliers of voice, critique and action.

As outlined by Okech in a 2020 webinar, titled "Webinar: Feminist Realities – Transforming democracy in times of crisis", COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for autonomous organising of marginalised groups and deepening of solidarities at local and transnational levels (Al-Ali 2020, p.344). A global example of online solidarity through the pandemic is the work of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) which established a solidarity platform, powered by WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (2020a) and launched their campaign "2 billion Strong: Recovery Starts with Us" highlighting both the enduring importance of informal work, and the importance of solidarity between informal workers. The campaign, visible on YouTube as a playlist series, makes visible the experiences and demands of the informal worker vital to countering universal experiences (2020b).

Online life enables solidarities and feminisms to be expressed at a range of levels. For example, solidarity and affective bonds can be formed through similar experiences, such as mutual aid and crowdfunding for trans people. During the COVID-19 crisis, financial pressures and restrictions on healthcare impacted the trans community, and access to vital healthcare prompted actions to

crowdfund this care, constituting a form a politics of affective care labour (Barcelos 2022, p.36). Cross-group solidarity has also been a feature of the pandemic response. In an example that engages with the spirit of the *Feminism for the 99%* Manifesto. For example, Pink Dot, a prominent Singaporean LGBTI network extended in solidarity care packages to migrant domestic workers detained in dormitories due to COVID-19 restrictions (Youngs 2020, 9) and transfigured its own “pink dot” campaign for LGBTI support, to light homes and workplaces pink in an act of solidarity between Singaporeans and migrant workers on June 27, 2020. Recalling Mohanty’s vision of feminist solidarity, which rejects Western feminism universalising women’s experiences (2003), it is possible to conceive of a diverse expression of feminist solidarity. Daskalaki argues that feminist solidarity and “embodied forms of resistance” are linked processes (2021, p.1655). By rejecting capitalist and patriarchal hierarchies of relationships between groups, it is possible to engage with difference and engage in “ongoing entanglements” based on affective flows (Daskalaki, 1655).

Transboundary response to the reproductive crisis

The final principle draws together three aspects of Federici’s feminist commons: providing a benefit to the community, taking collective action against violence and poverty, within the struggle to reconnect with the means of reproduction. Situated against the backdrop of the global reproductive crisis, community mobilisations, can be understood as political struggle against the crisis and taking action against structural violence and poverty. Global government and corporate responses to the pandemic as noted, were largely gender-blind, and continued to treat Folbre’s “magic pudding” of social reproduction as a free and inexhaustible resource. Therefore, for women, particularly women with other forms of intersecting marginalisations, connecting with each other became a vital lifeline. As both a reaction against the double whammy of increased social reproduction labour and public policy failures to respond to the gendered impact of the pandemic, women connected online, to deliver real time assistance and support to other women and their communities, through solidarity and affective care bonds.

As highlighted throughout, women and feminists are at the centre of response and critique of both the COVID-19 and long-term global reproductive crisis. Feminists have been at the forefront of demands to reimagine ways out of the pandemic, including using institutional spaces like recovery plans, and online networks to undertake digital advocacy and online protest (Tabbush & Friedman, 2020, Deiana et al 2022). Grassroots activism with mutual aid at the centre has been reenergised in the pandemic, an expression of both community action, resistance and response. Situated within the anarchist tradition, mutual aid is a self-help and liberatory practice of marginalised communities to respond to oppression and gaps in social protections, extending from basic provision to emotional support (for example Tolentino 2020, Travlou 2020). Of the examples considered in this chapter this is most akin to Federici’s work in communities in Latin America. A visible example of

mutual aid during the pandemic were community kitchens, which utilised technology to reach communities in safety. Women were at the centre of community-led responses including community kitchens in spaces as diverse as Freetown, Valparaíso, informal settlements in Cape Town, New Delhi and Exeter. Community provision of food packages was also common globally, services and community groups utilising online technologies, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook to coordinate volunteers and supplies, connect with recipients and coordinate delivery. The centrality of community kitchens to the virus points to the enduring challenge of food security under capitalism, particularly as both formal and informal work was impacted. Mutual aid organisers deployed technology to power their actions, including building a Google Doc to form childcare cooperatives or trade skills and labour (Kisner and Federici 2021). In Poland, “visible hand” mutual aid groups, convened on social media and practiced in both physical and virtual spaces to deliver assistance. These groups were dominated by women, which Łapniewska describes as forming a new form of commons based on care and relationality (2022).

The transboundary aspect seeks to draw out that these responses to the reproductive crisis are not bound by the strictures of temporal or geographical proximity. The internet loosens the importance of geography to movement building, through the bonds and solidarities outlined above. Arguably, the nature of engagements online, “de-territorializes location and permits alliances and intervention that cuts across identity and geopolitical demarcations” (Banerjee and Kankaria 2022, 10). Given that social movements can be established without physical proximity, the framework of the online feminist commons ensures that contemporary understandings of feminist movements appropriately embed the ubiquity of technology in describing the formation and practice of social movements. By loosening from geography, it is possible to create new forms of emotional bonds and strengthen solidarities outside of proximate community boundaries. National feminist movements in Mexico and Nigeria have deepened feminist community beyond immediate boundaries. For example, the pandemic has spurred multiplication of feminist collectives and solidarity networks in Mexico, creating emotional bonds, through a range of projects (Alfaro 2020, p.4). This includes the hacktivist group Luchadoras created and preserved digital memories of the pandemic (2020), Brujas Feministas engage in feminist-trading via social media of services and products (Matz 2020) and the CruzesxRosas) and an Instagram account created a video and social media campaign to highlight gender-based violence as a result of lockdown (2020). In Nigeria, women organised and held virtual meetings and webinars, including to produce a proposed policy direction for government responses to gender based violence endorsed by 283 women’s organisations (Akiyode-Afolabi and Olawale 2021, p.322).

In understanding transboundary movements we must appreciate these are not necessarily global logics. For example, Latin America’s feminist movement is increasingly characterised by increased coordination and solidarity, powered through social media (Lopez-Ricoy 2021, p.494). #NiUnaMenos (“not one less” often referred to through its hashtag “#NUM”) is a core example of

transboundary movements. Ni Una Menos is an Argentinean movement against femicide and male violence originating in 2015 which quickly spread from a slogan to a viral hashtag and a regional movement (Diaz 2021). Its first demonstration was attended by 250,000 people in Buenos Aires, and transformed into a transnational feminist movement, especially in Latin America (Bedrosian 2021, p.101) with demonstrations Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and El Salvador. Relatively high levels of access to the internet in the region, coupled with social media enabled its viral spread in “propagating collective indignation” (Belotti, Cumunello and Corradi 2021, pp.1036-7). It represented a step forward in both mobilising popular mass movements (Souza 2019, p.90) and opening the possibility of “conflictual inclusion of different identities”, including through “online and off-line contagion of emotions” (Belotti et al p.1058). The hashtag facilitated unity, enabled information sharing and organisation and entangled social media with streets as sites for mobilisation and intervention (Fuentes 2019, p.185). A NUM founder described it as “feminism from below that is intersectional, transversal, and horizontal and engages with marginalized communities and activism passed down from the mothers, Grandmothers and other Argentine human rights groups” (Danielli, 2019). On the onset of the pandemic in the region, the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence, which is particularly acute in the region, made the work of Ni Una Menos particularly urgent, however public health orders restricted at least initially massive street protests (Piatti-Crocker 2021, p,15). Activists responded by organising virtual protests to pressure governments to act urgently to respond to the surge in gender-based violence, for instance Salvadorian women organised a virtual #NUM protest in June 2020 (Prusa et al 2020). Feminists established digital collectives and published online pleas for the government to respond to the spike in gender-based violence, and the careful enforcement of public health and femicide laws (Felman-Panagotacos 2021). Piatti-Crocker in her analysis of the movement, considers that social media platforms have a significant role in the speed and diffusion of political protests in response (2021, p19). Whilst this transboundary movement has significant skill in deploying online Ni Una Menos has remained a largely Latin American phenomenon, closely aligned with home-grown, class, indigenous or ethnic based movements, (O’Connor and Torres 2019). This suggests that whilst the transnational feminist movement may be increasingly connected online, the strength of those connections is still bound by shared experiences and worlds. As such capturing the pluriversal nature of contemporary online feminist commons framework is important.

This chapter has sought to articulate a framework to capture the nature of contemporary and future feminist movements. It draws on examples throughout the pandemic, to illustrate different aspects of its constituent principles. It suggests that the pandemic provides both fertile examples and has served to consolidate the role of the internet and draw attention to the crisis of social reproduction under this current capitalist epoch. This latter framing means that future efforts may be made to understand social movements as commoning behaviour into the future, which can place the question of how we reproduce ourselves under capitalism, and its alternatives, at the centre of social movements. It seeks to deepen our understanding of the role of technologies beyond merely

a tool, to capture the ways in which it can alter the formation and maintenance of movements. By situating social reproduction at the heart of feminist struggle, it is possible to see new potential for interface and solidarities between feminists online. By embedding online feminist life into contemporary understandings of social movements as a site of solidarity and struggle, it is possible to understand complex relationships and exchanges between feminist social movements.

CHAPTER 5: THE COMMONS – REENCHANTED AND NETWORKED?

In this final chapter, I articulate the theoretical value of the online feminist commons as a framework for understanding contemporary and future feminist movements. I argue its nature sits in the grey cracks between dichotomies between global and local, devolved and coordinated, together and separate, singular and plural. In doing so, I will also engage with Federici's own statements on technology to draw out possible critiques in articulating an extension of her concept of feminist commons to the digital world. I suggest that, whilst the mechanism of connecting in community is loosened from a shared location, community and solidarity can form online to form a body politic. In highlighting the relational and revolutionary intent of Federici's feminist commons, I have argued that communities grow in a transboundary manner through the mechanisms of solidarity and affect. Such an imagining of social movements, deepens both the understanding of the role of the internet in feminist social movements, centres a reflexive transnational and pluriversal form of feminism, and situates social reproduction at the centre of struggle.

In the concluding chapter of *Reenchanting the World*, from which I draw the articulation of Federici's feminist commons, Federici argues powerfully against the logics of technology,

“communication technology ... has primarily served to replace, rather than to enhance, interpersonal communication”

(2019a, p.184)

“I argue that technology exerts on us is the effect of the impoverishment – economic, ecological, cultural ...

computerisation has added to the general state of misery. ...Behind the illusion of interconnectivity, it has produced a new type of isolation and new forms of distancing and separation”

(2019a, p.189, 192)

In a 2021 interview, she raised concerns about the mobilisation of technology to engage in surveillance and further exploitation by a digital economy (Calantuno, Austin and Federici 2021). In a presentation to Lancaster University in April 2021, Federici noted that she had been focusing on the rebuilding of reproductive commons as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In that address

she noted that such commons, were collaborative and cooperative, and “produce profound ties, affective ties, social ties, and therefore also forms of security and solidarity. ... overcome the sense of fear, paralysis, self-devaluation and we gain confidence in our capacity to transform the world” (2021b). In that lecture Federici recognises the latent quality of digital technologies as an “an important tool” to facilitate connection with people across borders (2021). Whilst the digital world poses challenges of extraction and exploitation: accelerating consumption, hiding worker exploitation and deepen global capitalist logics. I consider that there is hope in a horizontal and spontaneous technology for social movements. Whilst healthy scepticism of corporate and government of technology is necessary, social movements persist in utilising technologies in creative ways to reach each other despite barriers, technological and autocratic.

Drawing together the notion of the commons and social movements, as a framework for understanding contemporary feminist movements, draws from Linebaugh’s articulation of commons as a process and Federici’s argument that the commons provide an alternative to capitalist ordering of human relations, namely the subordination of women’s’ work, as non-labour. The framework I have articulated seeks to connect the revolutionary potential of a critical reading of social reproduction with the feminist movement, to both situate women’s lived experiences of gendered hierarchy and provide theoretical flexibility to capture the role of feminist online life. By situating the online feminist commons as both a site of resistance against global capitalism and as a source of solidarity and community, I argue that the internet can allow women to engage in the act of commoning, such as through mutual aid or shared online resources, which can transcend into connections, community and power through solidarity. Participating in feminist online life, I argue allows feminists to develop collective memory and positing alternative narratives of the global reproductive crisis. In seeking to capture these spontaneous, autonomous and devolved feminist mobilisations through the logics of the commons, I can deepen the capacity for analysis of feminist social movements by recognising their dynamism and devolved nature, having being freed from geographic boundaries. The logics of transnational feminisms are influential here, however online feminist commons framework that I have articulated seeks to capture the ephemeral nature of online feminist life as a social movement, and the way in which the internet enables feminists and movements to connect with each other, form new solidarities and self-reflexively engage with difference. The framework captures a pattern of commoning behaviour that is transboundary and complex, in conflict with global capitalist logics. Its enduring value is understanding contemporary and future networked feminisms as interconnected and complex social movements, which are autonomous, spontaneous, and bound by complicated interfaces of solidarity and affect.

In articulating a framework for understanding social movements through the logics of Federici’s feminist commons, I am able to centre social reproduction and the global social reproduction crisis at the centre of resistance for social movements. In taking this approach, it resists framing that centres solely on women’s economic and political participation, to recentre entire lives as sites of

struggle. Furthermore, by grasping the global social reproductive crisis at the centre of resistance, it is possible to both deepen understandings of the fragmentation and refractions of oppressions and patriarchies under global capitalism, to both understand the global and local impacts on women, feminists and feminist movements. It draws on the principles of the manifesto *Feminism for the 99%* and the work of transnational feminist Mohanty, to situate solidarity in difference at the centre of feminist movements in theory and practice. Such a framework encourages feminist theorists and activists to reflexively engage with issues of location, class, race, identity, ability and other intersectionalities. In connecting Federici's feminist commons with online life, I have sought to provide a frame to understanding both COVID-19 mobilisations and the ongoing ways in which feminisms as social movements will participate in online life, arguing that it will continue to offer opportunities to reflexively engage with intersectionality and diversities of experiences and perspectives. Building on the observations of transnational feminists who recognise that it is being increasingly shaped by online discourse and the formation of solidarities (Banerjee and Kankaria 2022, p.2), I have embedded digital technologies within each principle. In drawing, imperfectly, from diverse experiences of women and movements, I have sought to demonstrate that whilst the gendered digital divide is significant, it does not preclude the thoughtful deployment of digital technologies to power social movements globally. In so doing, it moves digital technologies beyond a tool, to a facilitator and feature of modern feminisms, which engage in conversations in a transboundary manner between both locational and identity communities. Through the framework I argue it is possible to understand how digital technologies can allow for feminisms to "talk back" to each other. I have argued that technology enables multiple intersecting identities to form communities, loosened from geography or identity, realising one of the provocations of the *Feminism for the 99%* manifesto, which encourage greater exchange and solidarity between movements.

A future extension of this framework is within the analysis of gender-based violence online. Gender based violence online, is an extension of control and power dynamics under patriarchal capitalism. Technologies become part of construction of gender relations and reproduces gender orders, misogyny and heteropatriarchy online (Mainardi 2020, p.104). The digital environment creates both opportunities for feminist action but has also created attendant opportunities for the construction of "manospheres" wherein misogynistic ideas spread (Simões et al 2021, p.166). Feminist movements are subject to harassment in digital platforms, engendering a "hostile and misogynistic environment which renders the online sphere available only to men" (Lobato and Gonzalez 2020). Such efforts I consider, as a desire to silence movements, their critiques of gender inequalities, and obstruct access to collective power. An extension would emanate from Federici's analysis of the witch-trials and the attendant enclosure of feudal commons, and the transmutation of women to commons, a process upon which modern capitalism relies. By framing feminist movements as pluriversal online feminist commons, it is possible to reclaim the legacy of pre-capitalist commons, and the social protections that they offered to women. In this vein, the enclosures, framed by Federici as

continued violent and political acts, that divorce people from the means of their own reproduction, can raise a new frame to understand gender-based violence online. Federici situates the enclosures as a continued, repeating process, which engages in violence against women, including through reproductive control (2004, 2019a). By framing the online feminist commons as a source of power and resistance, and an alternative mode of human relations beyond capitalism, it is possible to argue that the high rates of interpersonal and public gender-based violence online, form new enclosures. Furthermore, as I observe global trends of counter-movement harassment and government restrictions on social media may make this further extension of the enclosures a useful frame in which to analyse increasing interference by state and non-state actors.

Governments restrict freedoms online, including rights to assembly and expression, through methods such as surveillance and restricting access. In 2021, *Freedom House* recorded the 11th year of declining internet freedoms, pointing variously to restricting freedom of expression, breaches of privacy of personal data and restrictions on dissent online (Shahbaz and Funk, 2021). Counter-movements, engage in behaviours such as utilising automated bots to target activists and journalists with threats and abuse or doxing (Tufekci, 2017). Such an extension to broader restrictions and threats of violence on social groups would invite the social reproduction lens to other forms of social movement, deepening engagement with diversity, and unpicking logics behind capitalist life.

The renewed interest in Federici's work around social reproduction and the commons during COVID-19 highlighted the desire for alternatives to global capitalism as an organising feature of human relations. Her commentary highlights the relational and revolutionary intent behind the commons. For social movements, adopting such a framing connects with a vision for alternative futures, and deepens the possibilities of connection through solidarity and affective community. As an alternative to capitalism, I argue Federici's feminist commons provides sufficient theoretical generosity, to extend its relational and revolutionary nature, to the online world which could underline the importance of community, identity, and solidarity to a complex movement. Loosening the commons from geographic boundaries stemmed from Federici's articulation of a feminist commons that focussed on community, solidarity and resistance as defining features. In so doing I highlighted the role that solidarity and affective care formed in connecting women to each other, through distance and diversity. In seeking to capture digitisation of feminist movements, I seek to capture the dynamism and multiplicity inherent in social movements, which can be triggered by a thoughtful tweet or post.

To a certain degree, this thesis seeks to answer my question I returned to during each lockdown. In speaking with friends and colleagues with children and reading news articles highlighting a crisis of carework for our community's young, old and vulnerable I kept asking myself, "*why aren't women angrier!?*" In engaging with Federici's observations from her *Wages for Housework* activism and witch-trials, that admission and expression of anger was improbable, so omnipresent

is the gendered logics of care and devaluing of women under capitalism. Popular understandings of feminism, focused on the economic and political participation of women, insufficiently engage with the home as a site of resistance, and notions of romantic and maternal love serve to hide the tedium of unpaid labour. COVID-19 made the boundary struggles between unpaid and paid labour more evident with the flexibility of women's unpaid labour covering failures by the market and government to adequately respond. Within such a frame Federici's argument to construe social reproduction as a site of struggle had increased relevance and salience, including for social movements. Furthermore, I situate this pandemic crisis of care within the broader global reproductive crisis and therefore have placed social reproduction as a site of struggle in the framework of the online feminist commons. By situating and reemphasising the home as a site of resistance, feminist movements can understand the diversity of women reflexively, as it applies a local lens to global problems. In centring this, feminists can undertake gendered claims-making through a deepened understanding of each other. Within the frame of continued and acute crises in our future, online connection between and among communities of feminists will become an ever more important feature of the movement, which opens new opportunities for dialogue between difference and a counterbalance to global logics of capitalism that would separate women from collective power, knowledge, and memory. To do so is to reclaim the power and inheritance of the witches they burned.

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