## Framing

#### Only a feminist lens can solve structural disparities – other pedagogies push women’s oppression to the backburner, which means it never gets solved

**Matsuda 86** Matsuda, Mari. [Assistant Professor of Law, University of Hawaii] “Liberal Jurisprudence and the Abstracted Visions of Human Nature: A Feminist Critique of Rawls’s Theory of Justice.” *New Mexico Law Review*, Vol. 16, Fall 1986.

The body of emerging scholarship known as feminist theory, as rich and diverse as it is, is characterized by some basic tenets. First is the charge of androcentrism in mainstream scholarship--the charge that traditional scholarly discourse largely ignores the lives and voices of women. Second is the charge of dualism. Dualism is the oppositional understanding of intuition, experience, and emotion as the inferior antitheses of logic, reason, and science, coupled with a tendency to equate women with the former grouping and men with the latter.3 A related dualism places men in the public domain-politics, law, paid work-and women in the private-home, absence of law, unpaid work.32 From these critiques of mainstream scholarship, feminists have derived two insights. The first is that the personal is political.33 By this it is meant that what happens in the daily lives of real people has political content in the same way as does what we normally think of as politics – the structure of economic systems and governments. That is, who makes breakfast, who gets a paycheck, who gets whistled at in the street – all the experiences of daily life are a part of the distribution of wealth and power in society. The second insight is that consciousness raising – collective focus on the particularities of real-life experience – is essential to truth-seeking.

#### Focusing on “big picture” issues like security and economic development dismiss gendered advocacies and never address them —this retrenches injustices.

**Enloe 14** Cynthia Enloe**, 05-16-20**14(Research Professor in the Department of International Development, Community, and Environment, affiliations with Women’s and Gender Studies and Political Science, all at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, “Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics,” *University of California Press,*<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lib/umichigan/reader.action?docID=1687669&query=&ppg=2>)

Why do most of us not hear the names of these organizations regularly on the nightly news or on the main Internet news sites? Editors, mainstream experts, and some academic scholars employ several strategies to dismiss the analytical (that is, explanatory) value of these groups’ insights and impacts. One common rationale for ignoring *the work of these transnational*feminist networks is to dismiss them as representing only a “special interest*.”* By contrast**,** the international expert is**,** sohe(occasionally she) claims, interested in “the Big Picture.” That is, the common assumption is that one-half of the world’s population is equivalent to, say, logging companies or soccer clubs; thus, the thinking goes, their actions do not shed light on the world but simply are intended to advance their own limited self-interests**.** A second rationale for not taking seriously the ideas and actions of these contemporary globalized women’s advocacy groups — ideas and actions that should be thoughtfully weighed, not automatically accepted—is that the arenas of politics that these feminist activists do expose are presumably merely domestic or private, as opposed to, for instance, the allegedly “significant” public arenas of military security or government debt. In other words**,** the conventional failure to take seriously the thinking behind transnational women’s advocacy isitselfrooted in unrealistically narrow understandings of “security,” “stability,” “crisis,” and “development.” **All** four concepts are of utmost concern to those worried about the international Big Picture. Each of these four concerns—security, stability, crisis, and development—is routinely imagined to be divorced from (unaffected by) women’s unpaid and underpaid labor, women’s rights within marriage, the denial of girls’ education, women’s reproductive health, and sexualized and other forms of male violence against women, as well as the masculinization of militaries, police forces, and political parties. The conventional Big Picture**, it would appear,** is being painted on a shrunken canvas. Third, these feminist transnational groups’ **analyses and actions** can be ignored**—their** reports never cited**, their** staff members never invited to speak as experts**, their** leaders or activists never turned to for interviews**—** on the questionable grounds that their campaigns are lost causes**.** Behind this justification is the notion that challenging entrenched masculinized privileges and practices in today’s international affairs is hopeless, therefore naive, therefore not worthy of serious attention.Further underpinning thisfinalargument are thestunninglyahistorical assertions that **(a**) any advancements that women have gained have come not as a result of women’s political theorizing and organizing but because women have been given these advancements by enlightened men in power,and(b) we collectively have “always” understood such useful political concepts as “reproductive rights,” “sexual harassment,” “systematic wartime rape,” and “the glass ceiling.” This latter assertion overlooks the fact that each of these revelatory concepts was hammered out and offered to the rest of us by particular activists at particular moments in recent political history. All three of these spoken or unspoken rationales, and the assumptions they rely upon, are themselves integral to how international politics operates today. All three assertions that deny the significance and analytical value of transnational feminist organizing are the very stuff of international politics. The very rarity of professional international political commentators taking seriously either women’s experiences of international politics or women’s gender analyses of international politics is, therefore, itself a political phenomenon that needs to be taken seriously**.** What so many feminist-informed international commentators ignore has been explored by the burgeoning academic field of gender and international relations. That is, paying close attention to—and explaining the causes and consequences of—what is so frequently ignored can be fruitful indeed.9

#### We have an ethical responsibility to reject patriarchy—it leads to unjust domination. Thus the role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best performatively and methodologically breaks down structural instances of the patriarchy.

Jhyette **Nhanenge, 2007**  (developmental Africa worker), 2007, Retrieved May 30, 2015 from http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/570/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1

The two characteristics, which benefit in a racist and/or patriarchal society are white and male. Since both are received by birth, the benefits are not based on merit, ability, need, or effort. The benefits are institutionally created, maintained and sanctioned. Such systems perpetuate unjustified domination. Thus, the problem lays in institutional structures of power and privilege but also in the actual social context. Different groups have different degrees of power and privilege in different cultural contexts. Those should be recognized, but so should commonalities where they exist. However, although Ups cannot help but to receiving the institutional power and privileges it is important to add that they are accountable for perpetuating unjustified domination through their behaviours, language and thought worlds. That is why ecofeminism is about both theory and practice. It does not only try to understand and analyze, it also finds it important to take action against domination. (Warren 2000: 64-65).¶ Patriarchy is an unhealthy social system. Unhealthy social systems tend to be rigid and closed. Roles and rules are non-negotiable and determined by those at the top of the hierarchy. High value is placed on control and exaggerated concepts of rationality, even though, paradoxically, the system can only survive on irrational ideologies.

## Contention One

#### The idea of women as subservient homemakers is STILL a pervasive belief. Employed women’s work is devalued and unemployed women are increasingly doing MORE domestic labor

**Rao 19** Rao, Aliya Hamid. “Even Breadwinning Wives Don't Get Equality at Home.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 12 May 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/05/breadwinning-wives-gender-inequality/589237/. // FC

That women should take on the bulk of domestic responsibilities is still a widespread belief. Married American mothers spend almost [twice](https://academic.oup.com/sf/article/91/1/55/2235879) as much time on housework and child care than do married fathers. Although American mothers—including those with young children—are far more likely to be working now than in past decades, they spend [more time](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/chapter-4-how-mothers-and-fathers-spend-their-time/)on child care today than did moms in the 1960s. One way to understand how women’s success at work is treated at home is to look at heterosexual breadwinning wives—women who outearn their husbands. About [29 percent](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/upshot/rise-in-marriages-of-equals-and-in-division-by-class.html?module=inline)of married women in the United States fall into this category, and it’s a group that has been steadily growing. But when wives are professionally successful, couples are often reluctant to acknowledge the woman’s status as the breadwinner. In one [study](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X16676857) of families in which wives earned at least 80 percent of the total household income, researchers found that in just 38 percent of the couples did both the husband and the wife say that “breadwinner” was an appropriate label for the woman. It wasn’t just the husbands who were skeptical of the term—wives were actually less likely to think of themselves as breadwinners than were their husbands.

Why are Americans so reluctant to acknowledge wives who are breadwinners? One reason is that couples in the U.S. continue to idealize and privilege a family structure with a male breadwinner and a female homemaker. Recognizing women as breadwinners threatens the idea that a family fits into that mold. When wives earn more than husbands, couples often [reframe](https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/earning-more-and-getting-less/9780813536798)the value of each spouse’s work to elevate the husband’s work as being more prestigious and downplaying the importance of the woman’s job.

Breadwinning wives also don’t get parity in how household chores are divvied up. As wives’ economic dependence on their husbands increases, women tend to take on [more housework](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2782401). But the more economically dependent men are on their wives, the less housework they do. Even women with unemployed husbands [spend considerably](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/chapter-6-time-in-work-and-leisure-patterns-by-gender-and-family-structure/) more time on household chores than their spouses. In other words, women’s success in the workplace is penalized at home.

#### Homemakers are workers – the state has made marriage a widespread economic survival tool – it’s a job

**Moraes 16** Moraes, Alana. [Writer for the International Journal on Human Rights] Brant, Maria A.C. [Writer for the International Journal on Human Rights] “SILVIA FEDERICI: OUR STRUGGLE WILL NOT SUCCEED UNLESS WE REBUILD SOCIETY” *International Journal on Human Rights*, December 2016 // FC

It was the feminist movement that began the analysis of sexuality that has given the power to prostitutes to say, “I am a sex worker” and to come out of the shadows and to struggle and say, “my struggle is also a feminist struggle.” It was the women’s movement that started analysing sexuality as part of housework, as part of the services that women are expected to give to men, as part of the marriage contract that women are obliged to give. Until the 1970s or 1980s, the crime of rape in the family did not exist in the United States, because it was understood that when you get married, the man acquires the right over your body and has the right to get sexual services from you at any time. It was understood – and the feminist movement has analysed it – that men always sell themselves, or try to sell themselves, in the wage labour market. We also sell ourselves in the marriage market. For many women, getting married is an economic solution, because the division of labour has been organised in such a way that it is much more difficult for women to get access to wage jobs. So, many women marry not because they want to, but as an economic solution for their lives. And you have sex because that is part of your job. We performed this deconstruction of sexuality, of the family, of the relationship between men and women, and we said that marriage is prostitution. In many cases, you can have a good relationship with your husband, but it doesn’t matter. The reality is that the way the state has constructed marriage has forced women to rely on marriage for survival and therefore, to offer sex in exchange for subsistence. The state has put us into the situation of prostitution.

#### Through domestic labor, women are continually placed into exploitative relations that allow for the perpetuation of a patriarchal hierarchy

**Kynaston 96** Kynaston, C. (1996). The everyday exploitation of women. Women’s Studies International Forum, 19(3), 221–237. doi:10.1016/0277-5395(96)00011-8 // FC

Walby (1986, pp. 53-54) argues, then, that the domestic labourer is essentially engaged in the production of labour power, on both a daily and a generational basis. In particular, she expends her labour power on replenishing the labour power of her exhausted husband. However, the labour power she produces is owned and controlled not by her, but by her husband. In this sense, then, the woman, as producer, has neither ownership nor control over part of the means of production. When the husband, or partner, subsequently sells the labour power that the woman has produced he does not fully remunerate her for the labour she has expended, because the part of the wage that he allocates for his own personal use is typically larger than that allocated for his wife's personal use. Walby also notes that the housewife usually works longer hours than her male partner. In working longer hours and yet receiving less, Walby maintains that the housewife is clearly exploited. In effect, the husband is appropriating the wife's surplus labour. Walby is not, of course, the first writer to suggest that women's domestic labour should be conceptualised in the context of a patriarchal or domestic mode of production. Delphy's (1984) analysis of patriarchy, in which she argues that the domestic mode of production is the economic base of women's subordination, is particularly well known. In her refreshingly frank and open style Delphy maintains that a Marxist analysis of capitalism represents only one possible application of the general historical materialist methodology of Marxism. She draws on Marxism to develop her own materialist feminist analysis of women's oppression. Delphy argues that all tasks performed in the maintenance of our material existence are quite clearly productive, but that only certain tasks will be acknowledged as being productive. Tasks will be labelled productive or unproductive, and will be paid or unpaid, depending upon whether they are performed in the capitalist workplace or in the home. Since the home is not generally regarded as being a workplace -- indeed is often regarded as being a haven from the workplace -- tasks performed there are not regarded as being "real" work. Work is commonly perceived to take place only in the capitalist workplace. Delphy (1984) is at pains to stress, however, that in contemporary industrial society there are, in fact, two modes of production: the capitalist mode and the domestic mode. Whilst in the capitalist mode of production workers receive monetary remuneration for their labour, in the domestic mode of production women are granted only their maintenance and receive no monetary payment. Since many of the tasks performed within the two modes of production are essentially the same, it is clearly not the tasks, themselves, that determine their paid status but, rather, the relations of production that characterise the performance of the tasks. Women, of course, are the workers within the domestic mode of production and Delphy maintains that it is their conscription to this mode of production that enables their labour to be systematically appropriated by men. Just as capitalists are the beneficiaries of the capitalist mode of production, so too are men the beneficiaries of the domestic or patriarchal mode of production. Together, the work of Delphy (1984) and Walby (1986, 1989, 1990) has considerably advanced our understanding of the nature of women's subordination. Delphy's insightful use of the methodology of historical materialism to explore the dynamics of women's subordination, and her conceptualisation of the domestic mode of production, paved the way for Walby's more rigorous specification of the interlocking elements of patriarchy and, in particular, of what she elected to call the patriarchal mode of production. Both of these theofists have correctly stressed that the relations between men and women are, at base, exploitative relations, in exactly the same way that the relations between capitalists and proletarians are exploitative. The basis of exploitation is identified, in both cases, as the appropriation of surplus labour. Whilst in the capitalist mode of production, surplus (unpaid) labour is appropriated from wage workers, in the patriarchal mode of production surplus (unpaid) labour is appropriated from women. In this latter mode, surplus labour is appropriated from women through the operation of a sexual division of labour that ensures that women continually perform the bulk of the household's domestic labour or housework. The lack of adequate recompense for labour expended (i.e., the appropriation of surplus labour) constitutes exploitation. It must be stressed, however, that this fundamental exploitation provides the basis for the development of a whole range of further inequities which, in the case of the patriarchal mode of production, systematically blight the lives of women whilst at the same time enhancing those of men. The nature of these inequities, in areas such as leisure, health, and access to financial resources, will be further pursued in the second part of this paper.

#### The current system doesn’t recognize homemakers as workers, which fuels the oppression of and silences women

**Federici 1** Federici, Sylvia. “Wages Against Housework.” *Warwick*, 1974, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/postgraduate/masters/modules/femlit/04-federici.pdf. //](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/postgraduate/masters/modules/femlit/04-federici.pdf.%20//) FC

It is important to recognize that when we speak of housework we are not speaking of a job as other jobs, but we are speaking of one of the most pervasive manipulations, most subtle and mystified forms of violence that capitalism has perpetrated against any section of the working class. True, under capitalism every worker is manipulated and exploited and his/her relation to capital is totally mystified. The wage gives the impression of a fair deal: you work and you get paid, hence you and your boss are equal; while in reality the wage, rather than paying for the work you do, hides all the unpaid work that goes into profit. But the wage at least recognizes that you are a worker, and you can bargain and struggle around and against the terms and the quantity of that wage, the terms and the quantity of that work. To have a wage means to be part of a social contract, and there is no doubt concerning its meaning: you work, not because you like it, or because it comes naturally to you, but because it is the only condition under which you are allowed to live. But exploited as you might be, you are not that work. Today you are a postman, tomorrow a cabdriver. All that matters is how much of that work you have to do and how much of that money you can get. But in the case of housework the situation is qualitatively different. The difference lies in the fact that not only has housework been imposed on women, but it has been transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need, an aspiration, supposedly coming from the depth of our female character. Housework had to be transformed into a[n] natural attribute rather than be recognized as a social contract because from the beginning of capital’s scheme for women this work was destined to be unwaged. Capital had to convince us that it is a natural, unavoidable and even fulfilling activity to make us accept our unwaged work. In its turn, the unwaged condition of housework has been the most powerful weapon in reinforcing the common assumption that housework is not work, thus preventing women from struggling against it, except in the privatized kitchen – bedroom quarrel that all society agrees to ridicule, thereby further reducing the protagonist of a struggle. We are seen as nagging bitches, not workers in struggle.

#### This affects all women – the oppressive attitude spills over

**Federici 2**  Federici, Sylvia. “Wages Against Housework.” *Warwick*, 1974, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/postgraduate/masters/modules/femlit/04-federici.pdf. //](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/postgraduate/masters/modules/femlit/04-federici.pdf.%20//) FC

This fraud that goes under the name of love and marriage affects all of us, even if we are not married, because once housework was totally naturalized and sexualized, once it became a feminine attribute, all of us as females are characterized by it. If it is natural to do certain things, then all women are expected to do them and even like doing them – even those women who, due to their social position, could escape some of that work or most of it (their husbands can afford maids and shrinks and other forms of relaxation and amusement). We might not serve one man, but we are all in a servant relation with respect to the whole male world. This is why to be called a female is such a putdown, such a degrading thing. (“Smile, honey, what’s the matter with you?” is something every man feels entitled to ask you, whether he is your husband, or the man who takes your ticket on a train, or your boss at work.)

#### The view of the woman as subservient and economically dependent upon men perpetuates gendered violence

**Giovetti 19** Giovetti, Olivia. “3 Causes of Gender Based Violence.” *Concern Worldwide*, 5 Mar. 2019, https://www.concernusa.org/story/causes-of-gender-based-violence/. // FC

At Concern, we believe unequivocally that protecting and empowering women and girls is key to making lasting change. Gender-based violence has many causes but we’ve identified three key factors — and outlined ways we’re working to address them.

1. HARMFUL GENDER NORMS

Gender stereotypes and are often used to justify violence against women. Cultural norms often dictate that men are aggressive, controlling, and dominant, while women are docile, subservient, and rely on men as providers. These norms can foster a culture of abuse outright, such as [early and forced marriage](https://www.concernusa.org/story/child-marriage-education-blackboard-over-bridal-altar/) or [female genital mutilation](https://www.concernusa.org/story/kenya-one-mothers-love-daughters-bravery/), the latter spurred by outdated and harmful notions of female sexuality and virginity.

## Solvency

#### Thus, the advocacy: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

I’ll clarify any more in CX – it checks – otherwise I’d spend 6 minutes speccing tiny parts of the plan and never get to substance – guts clash

#### Recognizing the right to strike magnifies women’s voices and is key to solve structural sexism

**Howard 21** Howard, Sally. “How Can Women Get Equality? Strike!” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 14 Mar. 2021, [https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/mar/14/how-can-women-get-equality-strike. //](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/mar/14/how-can-women-get-equality-strike.%20//) FC

Yet domestic labour has always been a tricky injustice to protest against. It takes place in the privacy of the home, making it difficult for women to see each other doing this work and to collectively acknowledge that men do not share equally in its burden (and they don’t: the average British woman still contributes 60% more washing, wiping and childcare a week than the average British man, even as the pandemic has increased this work to around nine hours per day). And there can also be dire consequences if we withdraw this labour: children uncared for and vulnerable relatives unfed.

“A women’s strike is impossible; that is why it is necessary,” claims Women’s Strike Assembly (WSA), an activist alliance that, to mark last week’s [International Women’s Day](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/08/international-womens-day-equality-pandemic), called for a series of banner memorials to be erected around the UK to declare why #westrike as women (or, just as importantly, why we can’t). In a manifesto published in November, WSA wrote: “We strike because we are tired of our labour being taken for granted. We strike because we now have to do a triple shift: our paid work, our unpaid domestic labour and educating our children during the pandemic.”

In Liverpool, Bristol and Edinburgh women gathered, last Monday, in socially distanced clusters toting their banner memorials. “#westrike because we are tired. Very, very tired,” a banner in Liverpool read and a memorial painted by Bristol Sisterhood stated, simply: “Fuck macho bullshit, women on fire.” Many of the social media protests, however, indicated why last Monday saw no wholesale abandonment of women’s posts. “I am a freelancer and I would not get paid (or lose my client!). But I’m striking with my compañeras in mind and spirit,” one IWD banner read, and another: “I cannot strike but I lit a candle in solidarity.”

Recent years have seen a flowering of strikes against gendered labour in Spain and South America. In 2018, six million women joined Spain’s 2018 “Dia Sin Mujeres’ (day without women), including Madrid’s Manuela Carmena and actress Penelope Cruz, as “feminist men in solidarity” staffed a network of collective nurseries. Old-fashioned mother’s aprons, the symbol of the strikes, were stitched in solidarity workshops and strung from balconies. But, in Britain, women’s general labour strikes have been conspicuously absent.

Selma James, the cofounder of 70s marxist activist project Wages for Housework, has a theory to account for this lack. She points out that as the power of unions dwindles, the climate in Anglo-Saxon countries is less hospitable to gestures of withdrawn labour, even as feminist identity marches gain broader support. Without union protection, British and north American women who strike from paid work risk losing their jobs; to the single mum on the breadline in a pandemic, strikes, in this context, seem the preserve of privileged white feminists.

For all this, calling political attention to the pandemic’s third shift is an urgent project. Only 36% of British women have been able to continue working full time alongside their caring responsibilities during the pandemic, compared to 66% of men, and mothers are more likely to have quit or lost their job. As the pandemic recedes over a nation of shattered women, there will be opportunities for direct action. Women’s March, Pregnant Then Screwed and Women’s Strike Assembly, among others, are calling for protests and marches to highlight the structural sexism that’s left women bearing the brunt of reproductive labour during this year of crisis.

James, in the meantime, advocates a daily constellation of “small resistances”: banging pots and pans at your window; stringing up a banner and apron; radically lowering domestic standards.

Forty-five years after the Women’s Day Off, Iceland has ranked top in the World Economic Forum’s [Global Gender Gap Report](https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality)– an index that examines educational opportunities, life expectancy, pay equity and the average time spent on housework – in 13 of the past 16 years. Yes, it’s impossible for many women to strike; but can we afford not to?

#### Sex strikes are an empirically successful way for women homemakers to mobilize and create systemic change

**Shaw 17** Shaw, Maureen. “History Shows That Sex Strikes Are a Surprisingly Effective Strategy for Political Change.” *Quartz*, Quartz, 14 Apr. 2017, https://qz.com/958346/history-shows-that-sex-strikes-are-a-surprisingly-effective-strategy-for-political-change/. // FC

Most people associate the idea of sex strikes with the ancient Greek play Lysistrata, in which women team up to bring about the end of the Peloponnesian War. But sex strikes have spanned hundreds of years and multiple countries. In 1600, for example, [Iroquois women](http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/iroquois-women-gain-power-veto-wars-1600s) refused to engage in sex as a way to stop unregulated warfare. The tactic worked: They gained veto power concerning all future wars and paved the way for future feminist rebellions.

In more recent years, sex strikes have surged in popularity as a means to achieve political ends. In 2003, Leymah Gbowee organized a well-publicized sex strike to end Liberia’s brutal civil war. Not only did warlords agree to end the violence, Gbowee was later awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts.

Three years later, female partners of gang members in the Colombian city of Pereira withheld sex to demand civilian disarmament and a reduction in violence. [According](http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/colombian-women-use-sex-strike-demand-gangster-disarmament-huelga-de-piernas-cruzadas-2006) to the Global Nonviolent Action Database, the strike’s results were clear: Pereira’s murder rate fell by 26.5% by 2010, a huge accomplishment for a city that had a homicide rate twice the national average when the sex strike began.

Kenyan women [followed suit](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8025457.stm) in 2009, enforcing a sex ban until political infighting ceased. [Within one week](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/feb/09/sex-strike-belgium), there was a stable government. And in the Philippines, a sex strike [led to peace](http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/09/19/philippines.sex.strike/) in a violence-plagued Mindanao Island village.

#### Domestic strikes spill over to deconstruct broader gender and wage inequality

**Jaffe 18** Jaffe, Sarah. “The Women of Wages for Housework.” *The Nation*, 14 Mar. 2018, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/wages-for-houseworks-radical-vision/. // FC

To the women of the Wages for Housework movement, the Icelandic strike was a salutary example of their politics in action. Internationalist, anti-capitalist, and feminist, the movement argued that by focusing on women’s unpaid labor inside the home—child care, cleaning, emotional support, even sex—activists could highlight more fundamental inequalities based on gender. And the best way to do so was to refuse to do that kind of work. As the International Feminist Collective (IFC), which launched the Wages for Housework campaign, wrote in a press release: “We don’t want just to demonstrate our strength but to use it and increase it to get what we want…. We are tired of our work and of not having any time of our own.” That press release is just one of the trove of documents collected in the new book Wages for Housework: The New York Committee 1972–1977: History, Theory, Documents. Published by Autonomedia and edited by Silvia Federici, one of the core members of that committee, and artist and scholar Arlen Austin, Wages for Housework is one of those rare books that takes the reader inside the theory and practice of a radical movement, reproducing posters and flyers, photographs, internal strategy papers, and media clips along with previously published articles. Wages for Housework helps to recover a movement that had modest origins but spread around the world within several years. From the gathering in Padua, Italy, that launched the international campaign in 1972 to the spin-off groups like the New York Committee, the women of Wages for Housework made arguments and demands that were well ahead of their time, helping to fill in the gaps overlooked by the mostly male left and the mostly liberal mainstream feminist movement, both of which have long excluded the home and the processes of social reproduction from their activism and thinking. As the IFC’s launch statement (which served as a founding document for the New York Committee) put it: We identify ourselves as Marxist feminists, and take this to mean a new definition of class, the old definition of which has limited the scope and effectiveness of the activity of both the traditional left and the new left. This new definition is based on the subordination of the wageless worker to the waged worker behind which is hidden the productivity, i.e., the exploitation, of the labor of women in the home and the cause of their more intense exploitation out of it. Such an analysis of class presupposes a new area of struggle, the subversion not only of the factory and office but of the community. To demand wages was to acknowledge that housework—i.e., the unwaged labor done by women in the home—was work. But it was also a demand, as Federici and others repeatedly stressed, to end the essentialized notions of gender that underlay why women did housework in the first place, and thus amounted to nothing less than a way to subvert capitalism itself. By refusing this work, the Wages for Housework activists argued, women could help see to “the destruction of every class relation, with the end of bosses, with the end of the workers, of the home and of the factory and thus the end of male workers too.” In a moment when women’s protests and talk of class struggle are both resurgent, the intersectional analysis that Wages for Housework put forth (years before Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term) is more relevant than ever. It noted that to ignore women’s wageless work is also to ignore that of so many others, from the slaves who built the United States to those who still labor basically unwaged in prisons: “In capitalism,” as the Wages for Housework committee members wrote in 1974, “white supremacy and patriarchy are the supremacy and patriarchy of the wage.” But Wages for Housework also sought to improve women’s lives in more immediate ways, through struggles around health care and reproductive rights, Social Security, and the criminalization of sex workers, and it showed the possibilities of radical action even in the most conservative of eras.