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Spatializing social reproduction theory: integrating state space and the urban fabric

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ABSTRACT

This article sets out to extend the core ideas of social reproduction theory (SRT), an increasingly influential strand of scholarship within and beyond critical geopolitical economy. It suggests that while SRT productively addresses longstanding debates within Marxist feminism, it has yet to adequately theorize the shifting spatialities of reproductive work and the relationship between social reproduction and the state. To address this relative weakness, this article stages a dialogue between SRT and the emergent neo-Lefebvrian literature on state space and the multiscalar geographies of capitalist urbanization. The primary claim at stake in this context is that reproductive work is periodically and systematically reorganized and re-spatialized in relation to the broader crisis dynamics of capital, and the reweaving of the urban fabric; and, moreover, that this process of reorganization and re-spatialization is profoundly mediated, managed, and canalized by state spatial practices. To concretize this theorization, this article closes with a brief historical reading of US imperial expansion and urbanization between roughly 1898 and 1925.

KEYWORDS

Social reproduction theory; extended urbanization; critical urban theory; Marxist feminism; state theory; geopolitical economy

Introduction

The specter of women's oppression, and the gendered character of social reproductive work under capitalism, has haunted much Marxist analysis since at least the 1840s. As the condition of possibility for labor power itself, such historically gendered reproductive work lurks as a kind of 'absent presence' in much of the Marxist canon. Marx himself, writing in *Wage Labour and Capital* in 1847, illustrates this point clearly enough. In that text, he noted that 'the cost of production of simple labour-power must include the cost of propagation, by means of which the race of workers is enabled to multiply itself, and to replace worn-out workers with new ones' (Marx, 1847, n. p.). Therein, he implied the work behind that process of 'propagation'—work that was then, as it is now, disproportionately done by

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women—but did not attend to it directly. And many Marxists have followed a similar path since, presupposing the existence of an abode of social reproduction *behind* the hidden abode of production (see Fraser, 2014), albeit without considering it in much specificity. For generations of Marxist feminists, however, this specter of social reproductive work has itself constituted a core problematic. These thinkers have attempted to shed light directly onto the hidden abode of social reproduction, and to attend to the role of gendered work in forming 'capitalism's human subjects, sustaining them as embodied natural beings, while also constituting them as social beings' (Fraser, 2014, p. 61).

There are many names and texts that we might identify with this long historical engagement with the gendered work of reproducing capitalism and its workers. While it is common to suggest that the origins of this literature are to be found in 1972—with the publication of *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* by Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa—one certainly need not start there. After all, how else would we situate texts like Mary Inman's *In Women's Defense* (published in 1940) or Margaret Benston's 'The Political Economy of Women's Liberation' (published in 1969) if not in relation to the broad problematic of valorization, the reproduction of labor power, and 'the woman question' (see, for context, Bhattacharya et al., 2022)? Of course, however else we might periodize the claims of Marxist feminism, one thing is certain: Today these concerns are once again on the table, and as urgent as ever. With the twilight of the US-centered systemic cycle of accumulation, the crisis of reproductive care instantiated by financialized-neoliberalization, and the failures of 'progressive neoliberalism' on matters of gender equality (see Arrighi & Moore, 2001; Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018), the problem of social reproduction has exploded onto the intellectual and political scene.

One of the most productive (and influential) engagements in this context has come from theorists working under the banner of—and attempting to formalize—Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) (see, for background, Bhattacharya et al., 2022; Jaffe, 2020). Spearheaded by the likes of Tithi Bhattacharya, Nancy Fraser, Susan Ferguson, Cinzia Arruzza, David McNally, and several others—and most forcefully developed in the 2017 edited volume *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (Bhattacharya, 2017a)—SRT has worked to expose 'the superficiality of what we commonly understand to be "economic" processes'; and it has attempted to bring into view the 'messy, sensuous, gendered, raced, and unruly' process of reproducing capitalism, particularly beyond the wage relation (cf. Bhattacharya, 2017b, p. 70). Put differently, SRT has emerged on the scene of Marxist feminism in recent years, and suggested, perhaps above all, that '[w]hile the creation of capitalist value and profit requires [that] labour power be abstracted from…concrete realities, critiques of capitalism can and should begin from the fact that labour power is an *embodied* capacity that is socially (and hierarchically) organized' *and reproduced* (Bhattacharya et al., 2022, p. 47, emphasis original). It has effectively turned its attention to the so-called 'non-capitalistic' reproduction of labor power, and to the manifold (and reciprocally co-produced) determinations that are both structured by and structuring of that process. And, as I will suggest below, SRT has also provided critical answers to two of the most foundational and enduring questions of Marxist feminism in the process—questions which have structured that movement's long and uneven history, particularly since the 1970s:

(1) whether or not women's oppression is reducible to the dynamics of capital accumulation and women's particular positionality within capitalist society, and (2) whether or not unwaged social reproductive work is directly 'productive' of value.

And yet, while acknowledging the critical force of recent work in SRT, this article will also suggest that SRT leaves several key theoretical questions unanswered. In what follows I will argue that while SRT has productively engaged several foundational controversies within Marxist feminism, it has yet to properly account for: (1) the shifting spatialities of social reproduction and the making and remaking of new geographies of reproductive work, and (2) the relationship between social reproductive work and the state. To directly address these two tightly linked lacunae—and to critically *extend* the project of SRT—this article will thus proceed in four parts. First, it will provide a broad (and brief) map of the landscape of Marxist feminism, tracing the key fault lines that have structured debate in that context over the past several decades. Second, it will sketch out how SRT positions itself in relation to those debates, teasing out how the problem of spatiality and the state appear—and fail to appear—in its engagements with those themes. Third, this article will pursue a theoretical synthesis, suggesting that we can effectively extend SRT through a dialogue with the emergent neo-Lefebvrian literature on state space and the spatially expansive geographies of capitalist urbanization, and the recent work of critical urban theorist Neil Brenner in particular (especially Brenner, 2019, Ch. 2). In that context, I will argue that social reproductive work is periodically and systematically *reorganized and re-spatialized* in relation to the broader crisis dynamics of capital and the rescaling of the extended urban fabric; and, moreover, that this process of social reproductive reorganization and re-spatialization is profoundly mediated and guided by state spatial dynamics. Finally, this article will concretize this theorization through an historical reading of US imperial expansion and urbanization between roughly 1898 and 1925.

In developing this argument, my concern is thus primarily with *extending* the spatial and state-theoretical insights of SRT, in and through an engagement with the neo-Lefebvrian literature on state space and extended urbanization. And yet, it bears underscoring at the outset that what follows could just as much be read as the obverse: As an attempt to extend the emergent neo-Lefebvrian literature itself, to address the relative occlusion of gendered work and the reproduction of labor power in that context. In other words, what follows should be read, perhaps above all, as an attempt to think this neo-Lefebvrian scholarship and SRT *together*; and, as such, as an attempt to complicate and move beyond the now quite well-rehearsed claim that the former is fundamentally incompatible with feminist analysis of all stripes (see, for context, Derickson, 2018; Katz, 2021).

Mapping Marxist feminism

While it is certainly impossible to provide an adequate map of both the history and present of Marxist feminism in the present context, it seems fair to suggest that two dominant questions have structured debate in that broad domain since at least the 1970s. The first is the question of whether women's oppression and subordination is, strictly speaking, reducible to the dynamics of capital accumulation and women's (putatively shared) positionality within capitalist society (see, for context,

Eisenstein, 1999). The response to this question has, predictably, not been straightforward. For one, many scholars have attempted to engage it through an exegetical reading of Marx, and an effort to account for his own reductionism (or lack thereof) on these matters—always complicated by the relative paucity of Marx's comments on 'the woman question' in the first instance (see Cammack, 2020; Gimenez, 2005; Vogel, 2014). And on the other hand, it has simply produced a range of mutually contradictory answers. Over the past several decades, these have ranged from the early Althusserianism of Juliet Mitchell, who argued that women's 'condition throughout history' was the 'result of different combinations' of relatively autonomous 'structures' (Mitchell, 1966, p. 16); to the dual systems theory articulated by Heidi Hartmann, who suggested that 'it is not the logic of accumulation that permits capitalism to place women in an inferior rank in the internal dynamics of the labor force, but rather…another system, which…enjoys an autonomous life of its own: the patriarchal system' (Arruzza, 2022, p. 1360); to, finally, those approaches that veer much closer to the radical feminism of Shulamith Firestone and others, for whom women's oppression is historically and analytically *prior to* any other mode of domination within capitalist society (see, for context, Firestone, 1972).

The second structuring question of Marxist feminism is narrower and more technical. It is the question of whether social reproductive work performed outside of the cash nexus and direct market mediation (Endnotes, 2013)—and thus, much of what has historically been considered 'women's work' under capitalism—is *directly* productive of value. To be clear, there is relatively little debate as to what Marx himself thought on this matter: For him, it was not. 'Marx's categories of value and surplus value express', as Cinzia Arruzza (2022, p. 1357) puts it, 'a specific social relation that implies abstract labor, and therefore the socially necessary labor time mediated by the exchange of equivalents on the market'. And yet, while many Marxist feminists agree with this 'traditional' theorization of value (see Bhattacharya et al., 2022, p. 51), others have placed it under sustained scrutiny, with critical implications for the structure of debate within Marxist feminism over the past several decades. For example, scholars associated with the Wages for Housework movement in the 1970s used that revolutionary call to demonstrate that women performing unwaged domestic work were subject to exploitation and surplus value extraction (see, for context, Federici, 2012). Following the work of autonomous Marxists like Mario Tronti, and his theorization of the 'social factory', such scholars emphasized the role of unwaged domestic work not only in the production of use values, but in the direct production of surplus value as well (see Bieler & Morton, 2021, p. 1760); or, as Leopoldina Fortunati has put it, they situated such work in a '*chain of capitalist exploitation*' (Fortunati, 1995, p. 129, emphasis original). And, crucially, scholarship in this vein has only continued since the 1970s, demonstrating the distinctive 'channels' through which unwaged social reproductive work contributes to the process of value generation (Mezzadri, 2019).

SRT, to be clear, does not necessarily take these two structuring debates as its primary target nor point of departure. That strand within the tradition of Marxist feminism, which took shape throughout the 2010s across a range of key publications (see, especially, Arruzza, 2016; Bhattacharya, 2017a; Ferguson, 2016; Fraser, 2014; Jaffe, 2020; McNally, 2017), is perhaps more accurately described as taking as its point of entry a deceptively simple claim: Labor power, as a commodity, is

unique (Bhattacharya, 2017c). In other words, SRT departs—building on the likes of Barbara Laslett, Johanna Brenner, and Lise Vogel, among others—from the observation that the 'labor dispensed to produce commodities and [the] labor dispensed to produce people [are] part of the [same] systemic totality'; and, moreover, that 'labor power itself is the *sole* commodity…that is produced outside of the circuit of commodity production' (Bhattacharya, 2017c, p. 2, 7, emphasis original). While waged work has been the overwhelming focus of Marxist political economy, such work is necessarily dependent upon a set of reproductive activities that exist outside of the 'circuit of commodity production', and which are structured by and structuring of the productive sphere—while also being overdetermined by race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and innumerable other reciprocally co-determined phenomena within the concrete geohistorical totality. In other words, SRT begins with labor power's curiosity in view, arguing that labor power is unique precisely because it requires so-called 'non-capitalistic' logics to support its (re)production (Bhattacharya, 2017c).

Much follows from this originary provocation regarding the 'non-capitalistic' reproduction of labor power.[1] But one of its most important implications for SRT is that much (though certainly not all) social reproductive work thus occurs 'outside the direct control of capital' (Bieler & Morton, 2021, p. 1761), providing a relatively autonomous domain for anti-capitalist struggle. Put differently, SRT largely accepts the core tenets articulated in the 'orthodox' Marxist account of capitalism. It follows what Fraser (2014, pp. 57–58) identifies as that tradition's key definitional principles: That under capitalism the means of production are privately owned, which establishes a division between the owners of the means of production and the producers; that under capitalism there is a 'free labor market', meaning that labor is free of its material means of subsistence, and free to sell itself on the market for a wage; that capitalism is contingent upon its self-expansion, meaning capitalists are compelled by capital itself to accumulate evermore capital; and, that capitalism tends to use markets 'to allocate the major inputs to commodity production'. SRT simply *extends* these claims, suggesting that this institutionalized architecture presupposes a sphere of reproductive work that has been historically gendered, and that is responsible for reproducing labor power, 'building communities, [and] producing and reproducing the…horizons of value that underpin social cooperation' (Fraser, 2014, p. 61). And, going further, that much of the work of reproducing labor power is conducted outside of the direct control of capital and market mediation, giving the reproductive sphere its own normative grammar, which might even enable distinctive forms of 'resistance to market discipline' (see Bieler & Morton, 2021, p. 1766; Fraser, 2014).

If these core observations appear as relatively uncontroversial, it is in developing them, however, that SRT finds itself implicated in more contentious debate—and at the center of the two dominant structuring debates established above, more specifically. Indeed, in regard to the first problematic, SRT rejects the notion that society is structured by a single line of *economic* determination (see Hall, 1986); and posits the image of a complexly structured, and overdetermined, socio-spatial totality. In other words, rather than suggesting that gendered hierarchization is reducible to the imperatives of accumulation—or, alternatively, 'independent' of them—SRT suggests that gendered hierarchization and the laws of motion of capital accumulation are part and parcel of the same social whole; and thus, that gendered subordination

is the presupposition and result of a broader contradictory unity (McNally, 2017). In that sense, SRT argues against any attempt to sever these 'moments' within the social totality, suggesting a philosophy of internal relations in which gendered hierarchization and the imperatives of accumulation—insofar as they are articulated within the same social formation—'contain their interaction with each other as essential aspects of what they are' (Ollman, 2015, p. 11; see also, Harvey, 2009, p. 290). But of course, that position need not suggest that gendered hierarchization is (logically) necessary within all capitalist social formations, nor that it is reducible to the abstract logics of accumulation (see, for context, Conroy, 2023b). Rather, this insight is more typically taken within SRT to simply suggest that the distinction between social reproduction and production emerged historically with capitalist society, and is tightly articulated to gendered hierarchization, even if gendered hierarchization is not reducible to its historical role in the reproduction of labor power (see Fraser, 2017, pp. 23–24).

In fact, this kind of dialectical thinking sits at the core of SRT's approach to ascriptive difference in general, allowing it to grapple with the manifold determinations implicated in the production of a highly diverse, global working class. In other words, SRT is interested not only in the specificity and curiosity of labor power and its reproduction—but with 'understanding how categories of oppression (such as gender, race, and ableism) are coproduced in simultaneity with the production of surplus value' (Bhattacharya, 2017c, p. 14), and implicated in the making and reproduction of waged workers. In this sense, SRT differentiates itself from adjacent approaches like intersectionality theory, which imagines a world of 'latticed' oppressions, each with its own distinct logics and 'specificities', which meet up at a single point (Bhattacharya, 2017c, p. 17; see also, Ferguson, 2008). And it argues that a range of distinctive forms of differentiation and oppression are implicated in the reproduction of labor power—and are thus structured by and structuring of the forms of reproductive work that are necessary to capital accumulation (Fraser, 2014, p. 61). Put otherwise, social reproduction theorists tend to suggest that the 'image of the social' presupposed in intersectionality theory and related discourses 'reproduces precisely' what such theorizations aim to avoid: '[A]n essentialised understanding' wherein specific oppressions 'may intersect' in space but remain 'ontologically distinct systems' (Ferguson, 2016, p. 42). And in the place of that conceptualization, SRT proposes an internally related totality produced and reproduced in and through 'spatially-located' and 'differently-constituted' subjects (Ferguson, 2016, pp. 54–55). The process of reproducing capitalism and reproducing workers is structured by many (context specific and internally related) determinations.

This, again, is how SRT engages the question of the reducibility (or irreducibility) of women's oppression vis-à-vis capitalism. But SRT also stakes a claim in relation to the second structuring debate outlined above, regarding whether unwaged reproductive work is directly productive of value. Here, SRT is quite clear (and faithful to Marx himself): Under the capitalist mode of production such work is not value producing. As Ferguson (2020, quoted in Bieler & Morton, 2021, pp. 1761–1762) reminds us: 'Because value is determined in producing goods for exchange, and insofar as the products of social reproductive labour have in fact been consumed in the creation and sustenance of life (not capital), that labour cannot be ascribed a capitalistic value. It is "unproductive" in capitalist terms'. And

yet, with that said, SRT does not simply re-capitulate an 'orthodox' position on this front. It underscores the dialectical relationship between non-value generating social reproductive work and the productive sphere, and emphasizes the fact that the former is both structured by and structuring of that domain over which capital has much more direct control. SRT notes that the concrete labor of unwaged social reproduction is 'saturated/overdetermined by alienated social relations within whose overall matrix such labor must exist' (Bhattacharya, 2017c, p. 10). It is shaped by the temporalities of value-producing work and the variegated and complex forms of ascription and oppression that structure both 'productive' and 'unproductive' work alike. And, going further, SRT notes that this non-value producing zone of reproductive work can also influence value-producing labor and its dynamics. This work is home to distinct yet relationally produced practices and normativities (see Ferguson, 1999; Fraser, 2014), which produce distinct forms of social struggle and shape the condition of productive work.

Indeed, it is precisely an understanding of the *ever-evolving* co-constitution of value-generating and non-value generating work under capitalism—and the potentiality for anti-capitalist struggle to be waged on either side of that divide—that grounds some of SRT's most perceptive insights. Perhaps above all, this general theorization is at the core of the claim, central to much work in SRT, that the organization and articulation of production and reproduction—and the corresponding forms of gendered hierarchization that mediate that dynamic—is a matter of historical specificity. For Nancy Fraser, each regime of accumulation produces a distinct, and momentarily stabilized, means of organizing that relation. And this is precisely because capitalism holds out the possibility for what Fraser identifies as 'boundary struggles', 'which erupt at the sites of capitalism's constitutive institutional divisions', including at the distinction between production and social reproduction, and which allow for the remaking of that relation in the process (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018, p. 69). In fact, for several key scholars within SRT, this relation is not only subject to re-articulation, but to periodic *re-spatialization* and *reorganization* as well, as certain activities and aspects of social reproduction move in and out of the household and across other scales of analysis; and in and out of the cash nexus and direct and indirect market mediation (see Bhattacharya, 2017c; Bhattacharya et al., 2022; Fraser, 2017; Jaffe, 2020).

As should be clear at this stage, SRT does not, therefore, entirely obscure questions of space and spatiality. As argued above, SRT's engagement (albeit at times indirect) with the question of the putative reducibility of women's oppression to the dynamics of capital accumulation is mediated by highly spatial language. When social reproduction theorists counterpose SRT with adjacent theorizations, they often do so by drawing attention to the limits of theorizations that describe 'multiple oppressions with spatialized terms such as *lines, locations, axes*, and *vectors*' (McNally, 2017, p. 96, emphasis original); they take issue with the assumption that independent processes putatively intersect and add up to form distinctive and differentially located subjectivities. SRT insists that we move beyond the latent 'social Newtonianism' that defines such work, suggesting that every part within the socio-spatial whole is 'in constant motion and interaction and thus internally affected…by its interrelations with other parts' (McNally, 2017, p. 97). Things (and identities) are in fact (geographically situated) relations undergoing perpetual 'temporal transformations that reconfigure them as elements of a living system' (McNally,

2017, p. 104). And, further still, in developing its position regarding the relationship between social reproduction and value generation, SRT again draws on a spatialized lexicon (see Bhattacharya, 2017c). It effectively posits that there is no necessary relation between any one scale—such as the household—and the reproduction of labor power, and suggests the periodic re-spatialization and re-articulation of value and non-value generating work (see, for context, Winders & Smith, 2019, p. 875). How those dynamics are organized and spatialized is a matter of conjunctural specificity, and the (partial) result of social struggle across the (often quite blurred) productive/reproductive divide.

And finally, we should underscore that the problem of the state also runs through several of SRT's core claims, and its engagement (both implicit and explicit) with the structuring questions of Marxist feminism. In addition to its role in the direct provision of social reproductive functions, the state appears within SRT as a necessary actor in the production, stabilization, and institutionalization of the relationship between the productive and reproductive spheres (see, especially, Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018). The ruling class, for many within SRT, 'relies on its state to ensure the privatization and regulation of social reproductive work through policies and policing that tend to reinforce existing gender and sexual hierarchies' (Bhattacharya et al., 2022, p. 53). The state is identified as the medium through which 'the institutional map of capitalist society' is drawn and the subsumption of social reproductive activities is ensured (Fraser, 2017, p. 36). Indeed, within SRT it is often the state itself that functions as a hinge and crucial target in the boundary struggles that (invariably) emerge over the articulation of production and social reproduction. Moments of capitalist crisis are understood to produce not only a crisis of hegemony and a struggle among different factions of capital and labor over 'rival solutions to crisis management' (Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017, p. 66). They are also typically productive of a state-centric struggle over the boundary between production and reproduction, and the relation of the latter to the wage nexus (Fraser, 2017). And it is for exactly this reason that some critics of SRT go so far as suggesting that that literature is more concerned with governance than labor relations (Mezzadri et al., 2022, p. 1784).

Integrating state space and the urban fabric

Thus far this article has developed several closely linked arguments. It began by recalling that Marxist feminism has long concerned itself with two fundamental questions: (1) whether women's oppression is reducible to the dynamics of capital accumulation and women's (putatively shared) positionality within capitalist society; and (2) with how we should conceive of the relationship between unwaged, social reproductive work and the production of value. It then turned to SRT to establish that literature's position in relation to these two longstanding debates. What emerged from our review is that SRT not only provides illuminating answers to those questions, but engages them—both directly and indirectly—with a particular spatial lexicon, and a particular conceptualization of the relationship between social reproduction and the state. SRT has positioned social reproductive work and women's subordination within capitalist society as dynamically and dialectically linked to waged exploitation, and overdetermined by other (internally related) forms of

social ascription and hierarchization; it has revised the relatively static spatial imaginary presumed in much Marxist feminist theory, which fails to account for the ongoing re-articulation and re-spatialization of the relationship between productive and reproductive work; and it has developed a fairly clear set of claims regarding the relationship between social reproduction and the state, which center on the ways in which the state mediates and expresses struggles waged on either side of the production/reproduction divide. Nevertheless, despite these highly laudable contributions, in this final theoretical section I will suggest that SRT must go further still, precisely in relation to its conception of spatiality and the state. This claim is based on two observations.

- First, despite its progression beyond the spatialities presupposed in intersectionality theory and much Marxist feminism, SRT remains susceptible to a line of criticism that has been leveled against both of those literatures, broadly conceived. While SRT moves beyond both the accretive language of latticed, intersectional oppressions, and the conflation of reproductive work with the home, it fails to theorize the reciprocally evolving geographies of production and reproduction—and the ongoing re-articulation of that relationship—within a *broader* topography of uneven and combined geographical development under capitalism (see Katz, 2001). It fails to precisely address how the shifting and highly complex geographies of gendered social reproductive work—and the re-articulation of the relationship between social reproduction and the wage nexus—are made and remade in relation to the broader geographical transformations wrought by capital accumulation and capitalist crises, and the broader layering and re-layering of capitalist space (see Harvey, 1982; Massey, 1994; Smith, 2008). What falls from view is the problem of the spatialities of capitalist society in the broadest sense and the transformation rules that guide their perpetual remaking.
- Second, while SRT has usefully situated the relationship between production and social reproduction in relation to the state—in reference to practices of state mediation and institutionalization especially—'the state' remains largely disconnected from 'the grit (and problems)' of geography in this literature (Katz, 2001, p. 723). In other words, while SRT has productively (re)introduced the state into debates within Marxist feminism (see, for context, Brown, 1992; MacKinnon, 1983; Piven, 1990), the state itself has not been adequately *grounded and spatialized* in such analyses. How, for example, is the state implicated in the spatial reorganization of production and reproduction in times of crisis? And, presuming that the transition from one regime of accumulation to another does not constitute a clean rupture or break, how are the geographies of social reproduction shaped by inherited regulatory landscapes, state spatial practices, and inter-scalar configurations? Put plainly, if the state appears as critical for certain scholars within SRT, what falls from view is the fact that state power is always geographical (Lefebvre, 2009).

As suggested in this article's introduction, my contention is that one way of responding to these questions is with a turn to the recent neo-Lefebvrian literature on state space and the extended urban fabric, particularly Neil Brenner's 2019 text,

New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question. With that said, I am aware that this may appear as a controversial theoretical move to some. Brenner's work—and the broader neo-Lefebvrian tradition of critical urban theory of which it is a part (see Brenner, 2013)—has recently been subjected to quite forceful critique from within geography and urban studies, precisely for its lack of attentiveness to matters of gender and social reproduction. And of course, there are also a number of *other* scholars that we might turn to in an attempt to engage the lacunae identified above—scholars that *have* raised the problems of gender, social reproduction, spatiality, and the state. While there is no space to catalogue all of that scholarship here, it is worth recalling that several scholars have underscored, *inter alia*, the 'mutual constitution of gender' and the urban process itself (Bondi & Rose, 2003, p. 229; see also, McDowell, 1983); the relatively autonomous function of patriarchy in establishing the patterns and trajectories of urban growth (Markusen, 1980); the reliance of local redevelopment upon the 'global restructuring of social reproduction' (Miraftab, 2011); and the relationship between political economic restructuring and the remaking, enclosure, and privatization of social reproduction as well (Bakker, 2007; LeBaron, 2010). Indeed, it is little exaggeration to suggest that the relationship between social reproduction, spatiality, and the state has been central to feminist traditions in geography, urban studies, and international political economy since at least the 1980s.

And yet, I will insist that even against this highly productive literature, Brenner's recent work provides a useful point of departure for engaging the questions sketched above. While Brenner is not immediately concerned with gender nor unwaged, social reproductive work in *New Urban Spaces*, he quite forcefully insists that we think together both Henri Lefebvre's theorization of state space (*l'espace étatique*) and David Harvey's crisis-centric account of the making and remaking of capitalist geographies—setting into relief the near constant multiscalar churn of capitalist space, and the role of the state in mediating that dynamic at every instance (see, especially, Brenner, 2019, Ch. 2). And in the process, Brenner provides a theorization that articulates quite productively to our concerns, and in a way that the literature referenced above simply does not. Put otherwise, while the literature identified above informs and inspires the pages to come, Brenner's work is taken up in particular precisely because it speaks to our interest in (1) situating the work of social reproduction—and its ongoing remaking—in the context of capitalist space in the broadest sense, and in relation to the transformation rules that structure capitalist society; and (2) in considering how the state functions in the spatialization and re-spatialization of those dynamics. Of course, to say as much is not to suggest that other work has simply ignored these themes altogether. As a reviewer of this article pointed out, Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Golden Gulag* deserves special mention in that regard. In that text, Gilmore suggests that California's prison boom in the final decades of the twentieth century functioned as a so-called 'prison fix', which linked together (and partially resolved) a set of interrelated crises that spanned 'urban' and 'rural' space. And, further still, in Gilmore's account this prison fix emerged alongside new forms of reproductive work, including new forms of 'social parenting' and activist caregiving (Gilmore, 2007, p. 74).

But even this work—which comes perhaps closest to our agenda—is situated awkwardly in relation to our efforts to extend SRT. After all, Gilmore's scholarship on the prison fix remains primarily concerned with the *conjunctural nature* of these crises, as they were expressed and resolved in California over the course of several decades;

whereas our concerns (and those of SRT itself) are nested at a decidedly different—and higher—level of conceptual abstraction. And thus, while this work also informs and inspires the pages to come, my contention is that Brenner's theorization is again among the best suited for theorizing social reproduction, spatiality, and the state in the terms that concern us here. It is, in other words, best situated to allow us to extend SRT by attending to the making and remaking of social reproductive work in relation to the broader geographical transformations wrought by capital accumulation and capitalist crises, and in relation to the problematic of state space.

To begin to develop this claim, we would therefore do well to recall that in *New Urban Spaces* Brenner begins from the assumption—following directly from David Harvey himself—that capitalism maintains an enduring and endemic *fixity/motion contradiction*, which structures capitalist space in general. He suggests that capital requires a relatively fixed geography—a relatively permanent structuration of physical and social space—to ensure the profitable exploitation of labor power and the accumulation of capital (Harvey, 1989). And he also notes that, due to the competitive pressures of the capitalist market and the temporal determination of value (Postone, 1993), capital maintains a 'chronic tendency…to accumulate over and above what can be reinvested profitably' within the parameters of its entrenched or embedded rational landscapes. In other words, capital is compelled to *transcend* its 'fixed' geographies to renew the possibility for profitable accumulation, and to speed up the turnover time of capital (Arrighi, 2004, p. 528). Famously, Harvey identified this process of re-territorialization as capital's 'spatial fix'. Such re-territorializations are a means of staving off crises by 'opening up' new spaces of accumulation and 'endowing [capital] with [its] necessary infrastructure, both physical and social' (see Arrighi, 2004, pp. 528–529). Brenner's work on the extended urban fabric effectively starts from this proposition, restating that capital perpetually produces and renders obsolete geographies of accumulation due to its own internal logics (see also, Harvey, 1982, 1985).

This alone is clarifying in relation to much work in SRT. While that literature notes the periodic re-spatialization and re-articulation of the relationship between production and reproduction, here we glean a more complete and complex landscape of capitalist socio-spatial transformation, one propelled by capital's tendency toward overaccumulation and its tendency to supersede its existing frameworks and infrastructures for circulation. And yet, Brenner's account goes further still, moving beyond Harvey's theorization of creative destruction, with critical implications for the questions at hand. Indeed, Brenner suggests that the spatial fix, for one, is not 'anchored' nor bound at any single scale (Brenner, 2019, p. 59). The making of a new structured coherence for capital is better conceived as 'a multiscalar process in which…"various hierarchically organized structures…mesh awkwardly with each other to define a variety of scales"' (Harvey, 1982, quoted in Brenner, 2019, p. 59). The spatial fix emerges in and through the remaking of the capitalist 'interscalar architecture', a point made in the concluding moments of Harvey's *Limits to Capital* and elsewhere, but left relatively undertheorized (Brenner, 2019, pp. 59–60). As Brenner puts it:

> 'The fixity/motion contradiction and the unstable territorial landscapes whose production it mediates are articulated in determinate scalar patterns: they are *scaled* in historically specific ways, and they are periodically *rescaled* during periods of crisis-induced sociospatial restructuring' (Brenner, 2019, p. 51, emphasis original).

And it is this conceptualization of the multiscalar relations of capitalist crisis that grounds Brenner's approach to both the urban fabric and state space. To begin, it is through this process of crisis-induced restructuring and (highly contested and often haphazard) rescaling that, according to Brenner, the extended urban fabric is woven and rewoven. In that sense, Brenner argues that urbanization does not refer to a process that occurs at a single scale and rejects the premise that the 'urban question' can be understood in relation to the functional specificity of a geographically bounded spatial unit (cf. Castells, 1977). Capital 'has to urbanize in order to reproduce itself', as Harvey famously argued, with urban space providing a key market for surplus and idle capital, commodities, and services (Harvey, 1985, p. 54). However, the urban process now refers to the *multifaceted and multiscalar* sociospatial relations developed 'to support the industrial accumulation of capital' itself (Brenner, 2019, p. 70). In other words, we encounter the urban as the 'medium, expression, and outcome of a new politics of scale in which the scalar organization of sociospatial relations is being actively destabilized, contested, rewoven, and transformed' (Brenner, 2019, pp. 117–118). It is a necessary moment in the 'differential but interactive (uneven but combined) processes of capitalist expansion', extending across both city and non-city space (cf. Makki, 2015, p. 485).

From this urban-theoretical architecture, Brenner then integrates key insights from Lefebvrian state theory, suggesting that this process of urbanization and scale relativization is effectively inconceivable without reference to state spatial practices. Urban space and state space are, in this conceptualization, 'intricately entangled, mutually co-constituting and conflictually coevolving formations of scale-differentiated sociospatial relations under modern capitalism' (Brenner, 2019, p. 10; see also, Lefebvre, 1991; Lefebvre, 2003). While the relationship between urban space and state space is highly variable, the latter has consistently functioned over the past 150 years of capitalist history to manage, mold, and canalize the former. And it is precisely this observation that allows us to avoid the kind of functionalism that at times attends to accounts of capitalist space, the urban process, and capitalist rescaling—including Harvey's. The urban is understood to 'result from the path-dependent accretion of superimposed layerings and relayerings of spatial practice' (Brenner, 2019, p. 68; see also, Massey, 1994), which are themselves intercalated with state power, just as the multiscalar state itself is given shape and expression through urbanization. The shifting dynamics of state territoriality within an inter-state system; the 'changing geographies of territorial organization and administrative differentiation within national jurisdictional boundaries'; and the 'territory-, place- and scale-specific ways in which state institutions are mobilized to regulate social relations and to influence their locational geographies' all inform the multiscalar spatialities of urbanization, just as much as they are informed by them (cf. Brenner, 2004, p. 78). And as such, urbanization is never merely the mirror image of the "imperatives of capital" (see Brenner, 2019, p. 78).

Again, it is quite clear that this framework is not focused on gender, nor social reproductive work. And yet, as Brenner makes plain, not only do crisis-induced rescaling processes implicate the urban fabric and state space, but they also 'recalibrate the geographies and choreographies of power relations', more broadly (Brenner, 2019, p. 108). In his words,

> 'Scaling processes are likely to figure strategically within what Doreen Massey has famously termed the "power-geometries" of social life—that is, the contested materialization of unequal relations of class, gender, sexuality, race, empire, and citizenship within historically specific sociospatial arrangements' (Brenner, 2019, p. 108).

And thus, while Brenner does not focus on gender, nor on social reproductive work, his theorization raises the specter of the relationship between the crisis-induced rescaling of the urban fabric and state space, and the historically specific materialization and articulation of class, gender, and a host of other 'power geometries' that define really-existing capitalist life. It provides space (if only that) for considering how the work of social reproduction is strategically implicated in these moments of overaccumulation and scale relativization, and at a high level of conceptual abstraction. Observations like the one above suggest that there is room in this theoretical architecture to engage the problem of social reproduction, and to *extend* the spatial and state-theoretical insights already present in SRT. In what follows below, I will attempt to develop a synthetic theorization of SRT and Brenner's theorization that does precisely that.

In my view, a first cut at such a reconstructed, synthetic theorization would affirm Harvey's core proposition, taken up by Brenner, that capital's tendency toward overaccumulation manifests in the recurrent search for a spatial fix across capitalist historical geographies. It would also underscore Brenner's addendum that it is through this crisis dynamic that the interscalar relations of capitalist society are constituted, and the *multiscalar* urban fabric woven and rewoven; as well as Brenner's sense that the scalar fix is never simply the expression of a 'pure contradiction', but is rather always 'complexly-structured-unevenly-determined' (see Althusser, 2006), and mediated by state spatial practices. And yet, beyond those insights, which are found in Brenner's theorization alone, we would now want to add that such crises of overaccumulation are profoundly linked to capital's reliance upon unwaged, and often highly gendered, social reproductive work as well. While there are many ways of thinking about that relationship, the recent scholarship of Jason Moore provides an elegant bridge between these two theorizations. After all, for Moore, capital relies upon (a host of) unwaged or 'cheap' socio-ecological practices and forms of work, and it is also periodically driven to *undermine those background conditions* leading to crises of overaccumulation. The problem for capital is thus not simply that it is driven to crises of overaccumulation due to its tendency toward overproduction. It is, more fully, capital's tendency toward *both* overproduction and the production of an 'insufficient flow' of free or cheap socio-ecological inputs 'relative to the demands of value production', including cheap reproductive work (Moore, 2015, p. 99). This insight suggests that either of those interlinked tendencies might be dominant within a particular conjuncture, and that the work of social reproduction is centrally implicated in that dynamic.

With this in view, the ongoing re-spatialization of social reproductive work—and the ongoing re-articulation of the relationship between social reproduction and the wage nexus—productively identified by SRT takes on a new valence. Unwaged social reproductive work continues to represent a condition of possibility for waged labor, naming practices that are both functional to and (often) spatially intermeshed with spaces of commodification (see, for context, Makki, 2015, p. 476; Smith, 2008, p. 115). However, rather than appearing as ambiguously re-articulated or

re-spatialized across distinctive regimes of accumulation (and in response to social struggle), the remaking—that is, the re-spatialization and reorganization—of historically gendered social reproductive work is now visible as intimately linked to the re-territorialization of capital and the rescaling of the urban fabric in the face of capitalism's internal crisis tendencies. Indeed, we would now do well to insist that capitalism requires both waged and unwaged work for its expanded reproduction; that it periodically and systematically undercuts its socio-ecological conditions of possibility (including its requisite domain of unwaged social reproductive work), leading to crises of overaccumulation; and that new rounds of urbanization generally seek to reestablish the basis for profitable accumulation in and through the construction of new multiscalar relations, bringing with them the radical re-articulation of social reproduction and the wage nexus and the re-spatialization of inherited patterns and geographies of social reproductive work as well. In this context, urbanization—understood as the 'medium, site and expression of diverse, multiscalar political-economic processes' (Brenner, 2019, p. 253)—involves not only the reweaving of the urban fabric across scales, but quite often the concurrent re-articulation and re-spatialization of overdetermined social reproductive work (see also, Conroy, 2023a).

Finally, we can also now suggest—synthesizing Brenner and SRT—that the state is integral to this multi-faceted (and often highly contested) process. With Brenner's neo-Lefebvrian approach in view, the state appears not merely as an abstraction, floating above social space; but rather as bound to space itself, coordinating, controlling, and canalizing the 'flows and stocks' of capitalist development *and* the geographies of social reproductive work (see Lefebvre, 2003, pp. 84–85). We can now suggest, in other words, that the state is critical in *mediating and channeling the patterns of social reproductive re-spatialization and reorganization outlined above*, which support and emerge alongside the reweaving and rescaling of the urban fabric in the face of crises of overaccumulation. It is central to the contested spatialization and re-spatialization of both productive and reproductive work, and to capital's multiscalar attempts to resolve its crises and regain the conditions for profitable accumulation. To gain a sense of what this means, we would do well to consider the distinction between the geographies of gendered, social reproductive work that prevailed under Fordist-Keynesianism versus those that prevail under contemporary financialized neoliberal capitalism in the global North. In both cases the state was/is a key player in determining and institutionalizing not only the relationship between production and reproduction, but in how that relationship was/is materialized in space (see, on those themes, Hochschild, 2014; Huber, 2013). And, further still, the synthetic theorization advocated for here also helps us to underscore that while social reproductive work is re-spatialized and redefined in the context of the politically mediated crises of capitalism, how these spaces are produced is fairly path-determined and often highly circumscribed, not least due to inherited regulatory landscapes and geographies (see Brenner, 2019, p. 68).

At this stage, the significance of thinking SRT and Brenner's neo-Lefebvrian approach together should be relatively clear. To summarize, capitalist crises of overaccumulation often involve the underproduction of socio-ecological inputs, including the unwaged work of social reproduction; capital typically 'resolves' such crises by establishing a new geography for accumulation, a new 'interscalar architecture', and a new kind of extended urban fabric; and, finally, this profoundly multiscalar

and contested process is not only facilitated by the 'guiding hand' of the state—to prevent both 'chaotic pulverization and the formation of a new space produced through a new mode of production' (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 228, 249)—but is integrally linked to the re-spatialization and reorganization of (overdetermined) reproductive work as well. And yet, there is one critical point to underscore before proceeding: Namely, that these insights do not necessarily preclude or discount the spatial and state-theoretical observations offered within feminist geography, urban studies, and international political economy, *beyond SRT*. After all, and as noted at the outset of this section, there is surely a literature within those disciplines which has taken up the problematic of gender, spatiality, social reproduction, and the state. Still, my specific contention remains that a synthetic reading of neo-Lefebvrian work on state space and extended urbanization and SRT is particularly fruitful *in the face of the questions that concern us here*.

My aim is to take account of (1) how social reproductive work is made and remade in relation to the broader geographical transformations wrought by capital accumulation and capitalist crises; and (2) to uncover how the state is implicated in the spatial reorganization of production and reproduction in that context. And my claim is that Brenner's neo-Lefebvrian theorization is a crucial resource for this project.

Historicizing social reproduction, state space, and the urban fabric

Thus far, this article has proceeded, quite self-consciously, at a high level of conceptual abstraction. But of course, these 'theoretical abstractions [are] not somehow floating above the particular'; they can—and in fact must—be 'read through (and across) conjunctural specificities' (Peck et al., 2018, p. 13). The following pages will, therefore, very briefly attempt to sketch out what this synthetic theorization illuminates in the context of a distinctive historical-geographical conjuncture: Specifically, in the context of capitalist restructuring and US imperial expansion between roughly 1898 and 1925. To that end, we would do well to recall that this historical moment was witness to broad transformations in the capitalist world-system; and to a shift from industrial accumulation to advanced corporate accumulation that brought with it 'the internal differentiation of global space' and a new scalar architecture of accumulation—or the production of new hierarchically organized 'islands of absolute space in a sea of relative space' (Smith, 2008, pp. 119–120; see also, for context, Gordon, 1984, p. 39). And, following Edward Soja, that it was a historical moment of profound restructuring in core-periphery relations as well. In this moment of rescaling,

> 'The primary source of superprofits began to shift. As part of another scale-expanding and crisis induced restructuring…the international juxtaposition of development (in the imperialist states) and underdevelopment (in colonial and semicolonial territories) became [ever]more important to the survival of [global] capitalism' (Soja, 2003, p. 165).

The United States was, of course, far from excluded from this process of capitalist reorganization and core/periphery realignment. Its longstanding expansionary ideology was intensified at the end of the nineteenth century and propelled as the 'centralization of production, concentration of capital, [and] ascendency of finance' birthed 'the new imperialism' (Holleman, 2018, pp. 59–60).

Indeed, as Moore notes, writing about the relationship between capitalist reproduction and imperial rescaling, this specific conjuncture was defined not only by a search for superprofits, but by a 'textbook case of Marx's "general law…of underproduction"', which linked together 'technical change, the centralization of capital', and 'a new imperialism' profoundly concerned with reestablishing the parameters for profitable accumulation (Moore, 2022, p. 10). What Neil Smith once described as the first moment of US global ambition—and a 'transition of US ambitions from a national and hemispheric to a global scale' (Smith, 2003, p. 115)—is thus best conceived as profoundly indicative of capital's tendency to both overaccumulate *and* underproduce its socio-ecological conditions of possibility.[2] And, as we might expect, this crisis-ridden moment of overaccumulation and underproduction—and its putative 'resolution'—implicated and involved the rescaling of the extended urban fabric, and was also quite plainly mediated by state spatial logistics (Brenner, 2019). Within the imperial United States specifically, urban space and state space were rewoven and rescaled in tandem—from Cuba to Puerto Rico, Haiti to the Dominican Republic—to secure new forms of overseas imperial power, and to establish new geographies of investment and new sources of cheap work and resources (see Jackson, 2020). The contours of this dynamic are particularly clear in the case of the colonial Philippines. After the US military 'surrendered…authority' in 1900, the civilian led Philippine Commission made sure that its 'first legislative act granted $1 million to the army's Corps of Engineers for highway work throughout the islands' (Jackson, 2020, p. 124). And, as Justin Jackson (2020, p. 125) points out, 'American colonial officials identified' and targeted 'the archipelago's poor roads' precisely because they were understood to constitute 'a barrier to economic development' and accumulation in the colony.

This emphasis on state-mediated infrastructuralization and urban rescaling is present even in the work of famed Progressive Era architect Daniel Burnham, who entered the fray of the Philippine colonial project in 1904 (Immerwahr, 2019). A close reading of Burham's work in that context demonstrates a consistent emphasis on the state-mediated reweaving of the urban fabric within *and* beyond city space, with one of his authored reports for the colonial government suggesting that the '[s]ection north of the Pasig [River]…could be converted into a splendid machine for handling freight and doing business' (quoted in Brody, 2010, p. 151); and his plans for Manila city itself famously imagining '[b]road avenues [that] would radiate outward from [Manila's command center], cutting diagonally through the street grid' (Immerwahr, 2019, p. 126). And yet, in his emphasis on state-mediated urban rescaling, Burnham was hardly unique. We find much the same in the context of the US occupation of Haiti, which began in 1915 and persisted until 1934. Therein, a range of infrastructural projects were undertaken precisely in order to 'ensure the stability necessary for the resumption of economic productivity across the republic' (Renda, 2001, p. 32), with the imperial state operating as an 'essential politico-infrastructural circuitry' for the materialization of that process (Brenner, 2019, p. 76). Among other techniques, the US military conscripted Haitian peasants, forcing them to work 'cutting vegetation, shoveling dirt, blasting rock, and crushing stones', to establish new channels for the flow of cheap goods (and the valorization of value). Marines on the island 'tied or chained Haitians together en route to roadsides teeming with workforces sometimes exceeding 5,000 men in size'—practices that were part of a (highly fraught) effort to 'nurture a plantation economy' (Jackson, 2020, pp. 126–127).

Thus, what should be quite clear in the admittedly abbreviated history sketched above is that this moment of US imperial expansion not only entailed a scale-expanding search for profit to resolve a crisis-ridden conjuncture; but, more precisely, the rescaling of the extended urban fabric in and through novel forms of state spatial power. In this context 'state space and the fabric of urbanization' were 'woven together and intermeshed', mediating the 'forward motion' of capitalist development (Brenner, 2019, p. 75). Jackson (2020, p. 118) once again captures this state spatial dimension lucidly, writing:

> 'In Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines beginning in 1898, and then Haiti and the Dominican Republic, beginning in 1915, U.S. military infrastructure strengthened the coercive capacities of colonial, neo-colonial, and post-colonial states to project power through social and spatial orders'.

And, while there is simply no space to elucidate this claim here, we should underscore that these practices of state-mediated urban rescaling did not only transform putatively peripheralized zones. They were also profoundly and dialectically linked to processes of urban 'implosion', agglomeration, and scale relativization within the contiguous United States. As Brenner himself put it (speaking broadly about this historical-geographical conjuncture), late nineteenth century political economic crisis

> 'Reinforced [an] imperialistic, scale-expanding search for superprofits and culminated in the consolidation of a new form of state-managed "organized capitalism" (Lash & Urry, 1987). However, despite the continued exploitation of peripheralized zones…this configuration of state-capital relations also entailed an increasing encagement of social relations within the territorial state (Mann, 1993) and a growing structural convergence between the scales of capitalist industrial organization and those of state institutions (Cerny, 1995). (Brenner, 1998, p. 473).

By way of summary, we might thus simply suggest that the new geographies of extended urbanization that appeared in the colonies were not only mediated, managed, and constituted by state spatial techniques, but that they were also profoundly related to a process of 'implosion-explosion' that unfolded 'unevenly across places, territories, and scales' *including within and across metropolitan and regional centers of the contiguous United States* (Brenner, 2019, p. 69). But to say as much is still, of course, to remain within the domain of neo-Lefebvrian urban theory. What the dialogue established with SRT helps, finally, to bring into view is that this process of crisis-induced and state-mediated reorganization and restructuring brought with it the profound reorganization and re-spatialization of (overdetermined) social reproductive work across the 'greater' United States as well (see Immerwahr, 2019).

To explore that dynamic, we can turn once again to both occupied Haiti and the colonial Philippines. In the case of the former, the recent work of historian Matthew Casey on 'domestic workers and foreign occupation' is particularly clarifying (Casey, 2019). As Casey demonstrates (albeit not in these terms), state-mediated urban rescaling was an integral aspect of the US occupation of Haiti. New geographies of extended urbanization emerged in that context through the resuscitation of 'a century-old *corvée* law requiring peasants to build roads with little food and no pay', as well as more subtle transformations such as the 'elimination of customary rights [and] the commodification of land' in the countryside (Casey, 2019, p. 149). And, as he notes, urban rescaling also brought with it new geographies,

patterns, and forms of social reproductive work as well. Those dislocated from rural life fled to cities like Port-au-Prince, with many taking up work as domestic laborers, cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children of colonial elites, and much of the time under conditions of unpaid and unfree labor (Casey, 2019, p. 151). And, going further still, these emergent patterns of reproductive work also 'extended beyond the private space of the household', functioning as a kind of 'human infrastructure' in cities that were themselves expanding and being reshaped by the occupation's emphasis on urban planning, street widening, and public works (Casey, 2019, pp. 151–152). In other words, Casey effectively describes a process of urban rescaling that implicated both city and non-city space, as well as the transformations in state-mediated social reproductive work that it produced. And, as he goes on to note, these emergent geographies of reproduction were only further complicated given that newfound city-dwelling workers often relied themselves on familial networks 'in the country' for reproductive support (Casey, 2019, p. 150).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines we can identify a comparable process of social reproductive re-spatialization and reorganization in response to the state-mediated reweaving of the urban fabric. Rebecca Tinio McKenna's work in *American Imperial Pastoral* helps to demonstrate this point clearly enough. Indeed, while McKenna's account is primarily concerned with the transformation of upland pastureland for various forms of colonial recreation in the early years of colonization, she also provides a compelling account of the construction of Benguet Road—a massive infrastructural project undertaken by the US colonial regime. In that context, McKenna recalls that American colonists 'secured native labor' for road construction 'largely through various "extra-economic means"' (McKenna, 2017, p. 51), setting 'workers within an instrumental hierarchy of ethnic and racial difference' (McKenna, 2017, p. 73). And further still, she demonstrates that this process came to rely on practices that dramatically remade the geography of social reproduction and its relation to the wage nexus, predictably mediated by spatialized forms of state power. McKenna draws attention to land use policy, and its role in establishing a reserve army of infrastructural laborers. In her words, such policy did more than merely criminalize a specific kind of production. Rather,

> 'It contained native peoples' movements and limited the spaces across which they could carry out subsistence – and even profit-generating practices…Besides creating new responsibilities and limiting an agriculturalist's options when land became exhausted or infertile, it shaped a social geography better suited to control…[And f]inally, in altering long-practiced means of subsistence if not profit making, forestry laws helped to make wage labor—*like work on the roads*—not a choice but a necessity' (McKenna, 2017, p. 71, emphasis added).

At this stage it should be quite clear that the *fin de siècle* reweaving of the imperial urban fabric had profound implications for the organization and spatialization of social reproduction within US colonies. All that remains to be seen is how this moment of crisis-induced rescaling impacted social reproductive relations *within* the contiguous United States. While space precludes a full engagement with those dynamics here, we might simply note, by way of conclusion, the recent work of Álvaro Sevilla-Buitrago (2022), and the foundational scholarship of Sallie Marston (Marston, 2000). Sevilla-Buitrago's work is particularly relevant insofar as it helps to demonstrate that in this broad historical-geographical moment we also find the state-mediated reorganization and re-spatialization of social reproduction within

cities like New York and Chicago. Drawing attention to those cases, Sevilla-Buitrago describes efforts to reorganize proletarian social reproduction by way of '[p]arks, settlement houses, playgrounds, sports facilities and community centers'; schemes that were understood as 'a form of "attractive social control" that would "increase… industrial efficiency"' in those urban agglomerations, 'and safeguard working-class and societal reproduction' (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2022, p. 27, 93; see also, Conroy, 2022). And, with the work of Marston in view, we come to see that this process of re-spatialization within the imperial core also implicated the *intra-household* spatialities of reproductive work, as homework was remade to achieve Frederick Taylor's 'principles of scientific management' (Marston, 2000, p. 236).

Indeed, when taken together, Sevilla-Buitrago and Marston help to demonstrate the state-mediated reorganization and re-spatialization of social reproductive work that occurred *across imperial space and scales of analysis* during this historical conjuncture; and, moreover, the relationship between those processes of reorganization and re-spatialization, the reweaving of the multiscalar urban fabric, and world-systemic efforts to reestablish the basis for profitable accumulation. They allow us to concretize our (sympathetic) critique of SRT, and our attempt to demonstrate how reproductive work is remade in relation to the crisis tendencies immanent to capital and the broader rescaling of capitalist space.

Conclusion

As noted at various points above, this article is not the first to suggest that we would do well to consider the relation between social reproduction, space, and the state. And yet, as significant as the extant literature is on those themes, this article has suggested that a key means of extending social reproduction theory (SRT), in particular, is in and through an engagement with Neil Brenner's recent work on urban rescaling and state space. This work allows us to maintain the core impulses of SRT—its commitment to a non-reductive dialectical-relational theorization of women's oppression, and an understanding of much social reproductive work as outside of the direct control of capital and yet constitutive of it—while also pushing its spatial and state-theoretical insights further still. The synthetic theorization elaborated here allows us to suggest, *inter alia*, that capitalist crises often involve the underproduction of socio-ecological inputs, including the unwaged work of social reproduction; that capital typically 'resolves' such crises by establishing a new geography for accumulation and a new multiscalar urban fabric; and, finally, that this process is not only facilitated by the state, but integrally linked to, and in fact dependent upon, the re-spatialization and reorganization of (often highly gendered) social reproductive work as well. Such reproductive work is remade in relation to the rescaling processes implicated in the transformation of capitalist space; and the precise contours of that dynamic have everything to do with inherited regulatory landscapes, and state spatial priorities in the present.

The intellectual significance of these arguments is, by now, hopefully clear. Perhaps most significantly for readers of this journal, I have taken up the problematic of social reproduction—a central theme in some of the most important recent scholarship within international political economy (see, for context, Mezzadri et al., 2022); and I have articulated a novel theorization of its relation to spatiality and the state, which pushes beyond

existing accounts within that disciplinary milieu. And yet, with that said, the *political implications* of the arguments elaborated above are critical as well, and must not fall from view. To recall, the most important political insight of SRT is that anti-capitalist struggle can be waged from within and/or beyond the wage relation, with the reproductive sphere housing a distinctive set of normativities particularly amenable to resisting capitalist discipline (Fraser, 2014). While this surely remains the case in the theorization sketched above, we can now elaborate on, and move beyond, that claim. Our synthetic theorization of SRT and neo-Lefebvrian urban theory clarifies that patterns of social reproductive work are always embedded in and productive of a much broader socio-spatial landscape, which transcends individual nations, even if it is mediated by various forms and scales of state power. These patterns of reproductive work are produced in relation to the reweaving of the urban fabric, which typically brings with it an *implosion* of infrastructural investment, and an *explosion* of unwaged social reproductive work across space (Conroy, 2023a). And this insight is *politically significant* precisely because it suggests that the multiscalar urban fabric itself provides the 'contour lines' that we might trace to identify new forms of political solidarity across both vast spatial distances and across distinctive forms of waged and unwaged work as well (see Katz, 2001).

Of course, with that said, we should not underemphasize the difficulties of solidarity, nor the profound unevenness of planetary capitalist space in this context (Conroy, 2023c, 2023d). But, at the very least, the theorization above provides a means through which we can both imagine and construct a 'translocal politics' that connects putatively 'discrete places' and distinctive forms of work, and situates them in relation to a shared process. We now have a new method for imagining what Katz refers to as 'countertopographies' (see Katz, 2001, p. 710).

Notes

1. Given that the 'social whole' is 'dominated by capitalist dynamic[s]', describing such work as 'non-capitalistic' (as some within SRT do) is arguably misleading (see Ferguson, 2016, p. 56). With that said, social reproduction theorists have quite consistently emphasized that such putatively 'non-capitalistic' work is always formed in relation to a complexly structured capitalist socio-spatial totality (see also, Conroy, 2023a).
2. Here I should underscore that in my emphasis on the moment of underproduction in this context, I depart from much of the literature in geopolitical economy on late nineteenth and early twentieth century US imperial expansion. This literature tends to emphasize the relationship between the 'market-centered' US 'clamor for global expansion' and 'the specter of overproduction' (see, for context, Smith, 2003, pp. 114–116; Smith, 2008; Soja, 2003).

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