

If capitalism can be understood not only as a mode of production but also as a social relation, then to maintain its own power and legitimacy, which it fiercely does, it must organise a society that is internally atomised and antagonistic. The imperative to fragment the social body can be understood through the political categories of labour and gender.

Labour power is intellectual and/or manual labour, which represents one's capacity to work, to produce, as a commodity for sale. It represents potential gain for some and vital necessity for others, those who need to take their labour to the market to ensure their means of subsistence, to reproduce themselves. The reproduction of labour power is structured by an internal division, producing a subject who provides often invisible, non-direct but socially necessary labour, generally understood as extra-economic or on the side of production. It also produces another subject whose direct labour or potential value is latent; sometimes these subject positions are combined, but in both cases make possible the 'reproducibility of a system based upon the accumulation of value and the exploitation of wage-labour' (Gonzalez). This division of labour is made possible by underpaid or indirectly paid work and by gender subordination ('women's work'), regardless of the sex (or gender) a subject of reproductive labour power possesses and regardless of their relation to the domestic sphere (cf. the global care chain): they are 'feminised', racialised and marketised subjects who care, clean, feed, bear children and provide sex, respectively.

By extension, the family, despite its multiple manifestations, can be seen as a foundational 'social form' of capital, wherein a subject's capacity for labour is truly institutionalised, disciplined and regulated. The duality of direct and indirect labour instrumentalises family and gender relations as capitalist relations, thereby imposing what Marx calls 'self-evident natural laws' instead of 'denaturalising', and thereby, politicizing the asymmetric structural logic of the class relation between capital and labour, and unity through separation.

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