

20200522 households and bureaucracies in covid 19 reportage

1. Online media have in the past months represented privatized care and education (social reproduction) institutions such as prisons, care homes, and familial homes as households set apart, separated in and by social distancing, saturated by different lockdown measures. In some reports, familial homes are positively marked for security, while care homes, worker dorms, and prisons have been reported on as negative hotspots. These have become households of different scale in pandemic related reports, linked in spikes of high risk and bursts of violence, in bureaucratic managerial procedures throwing up negative intimacies arising from inherited hierarchies obstructed from view.
2. Nations reported on in nearly gender-washing manner rank how female leadership in certain countries are doing better than others, stressing negative comparison with states under corrosive male leadership doing badly. The focus and manner of comparison highlights divisive valuation while hiding possible shared problems, and pointedly not addressing historical and structural differences and affinities. This results in hiding the generalization of assumed share values based on single focus – in this case, gendered leadership – within the mediation that is the comparative frame itself.
3. At the same time, in some of these best covid 19 practices countries, household lockdown has led to (fear of) increase in domestic violence, with women, children, but also some men as victims.
4. In East Asia, media prurience, with possible social violence facilitated through state tracking and transparency measures, as in the case of media outing a young housewife moonlighting as a popular wine-house entertainer (resulting in the closing of entertainment industry). Media reports have highlighted the seeming rise of enjo kosai in Japan, as young women try to escape household lockdown, while a recent cluster in gay bars in Seoul have shown up homophobic media reporting and trolling online. These might be runaways of sorts from familial households with media stalking pushing toward institutionalized castaway status.
5. In wealthy post-colonial countries, higher risks and deaths from “underlying ills” are clearly accelerated by historical and economic racism in racialized and indigenous households, communities, dorms and prisons. As well as the sidelined peoples become populations in senior care homes as households, suddenly, are like prisons.
6. Perhaps bureaucratically scaled household forms are more messily bundled and connected (and when possible moving) relations among people – living against the winds of positive and negative idealization in comparative frames that set forms as goals, forgetting peoples and relations irreversibly affected.