

Careful {Speculations}: {Toward} a {Caring} {Science} of {Forensic} {Genetics} in {Colombia}

Olarte-Sierra, María Fernanda; Pérez-Bustos, Tania (2020.0)

ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

158 Feminist Studies 46, no. 1. © 2020 by Feminist Studies, Inc. María Fernanda Olarte-Sierra and Tania Pérez-Bustos Careful Speculations: Toward a Caring Science of Forensic Genetics in Colombia Feminist Science and Technology Studies (STS) has recently opened up the question of care as a set of practices related to the sustainability of life.¹ The field of feminist studies more broadly has extensively 1. This literature mostly comes from Northern contexts and started to flourish with the seminal work of María Puig de la Bellacasa, "Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things," *Social Studies of Science* 41, no. 1 (2010): 85–106. This essay gathers scattered feminist STS reflections on these issues and looks at them through the lens of care, including authors such as Susan Leigh Star, Donna Haraway, Isabelle Stengers, Hilary Rose, and Annemarie Mol. The concept of care orienting this exercise of rereading these authors is proposed by Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, ed. Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 35–62. Before and after that essay came out, Puig de la Bellacasa published several other papers related to this issue, including "Touching Technologies, Touching Visions. The Reclaiming of Sensorial Experience and the Politics of Speculative Thinking," *Subjectivity* 28, no. 1 (2009): 297–315; "Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care," *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 2 (2012): 197–216; "Ethical Doings in Naturecultures," *Ethics, Place & Environment* 13, no. 2 (2010): 151–69; "Making Time for Soil: Technoscientific Futurity and the Pace of Care," *Social Studies of Science* 45, no. 5 (2015): 691–716; and *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). All these publications have been widely cited by other authors, particularly in a special issue of *Social Studies of Science* on the politics of care published in 2015 (volume 45, issue 5). Other examples María Fernanda Olarte-Sierra and Tania Pérez-Bustos 159 studied how care, and associated practices such as transnational care chains, are feminized and precarious—involving an ethos embodied by those who actively work to maintain or preserve another's life. Feminists have focused on the politics of care embedded in invisible jobs related to aesthetics, domestic work, child and elder care, and sexual activities and see all these tasks as related to the reproduction of life and culture.² Central to this conceptualization of care is the understanding that these jobs are typically women's work. There is a common association between this care and notions of "motherhood" as it relates to values such as compassion, love, and respect, which have been constructed as universally feminine. However, the main goal of feminist studies of care has been to deconstruct this association, particularly because it is imbued with the white, wealthy, heteronormative ideal of femininity that underlies a gendered division of labor. The reality is that class, race, nation, and gender determine who cares for whom, whether or not labor is paid, and to what extent care is exploitative. One strand of recent research problematizes both valorizing and criticizing care practices

on the grounds that they are based on a rather homogeneous understanding of the feminine. Instead, these scholars seek to resurrect valuable feminist work without relying on essentialism of authors contributing to this discussion on care as an ethos for science include Ruth Müller and Martha Kenney, "Agential Conversations: Interviewing Postdoctoral Life Scientists and the Politics of Mundane Research Practices," *Science as Culture* 24, no. 4 (2014): 537–59; Charis Thompson, *Good Science: The Ethical Choreography of Stem Cell Research* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); and Carrie Friese, "Realizing Potential in Translational Medicine: The Uncanny Emergence of Care as Science," *Current Anthropology* 54 (S7): S129-S138. 2. From Latin America, see, for example, Luz Gabriela Arango Gaviria, Adira Amaya Urquijo, Tania Pérez-Bustos, and Javier Pineda Duque, eds., *Género y cuidado: teorías, escenarios y políticas* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2018); Pascale Molinier and Luz Gabriela Arango Gaviria, eds., *El trabajo y...*