

# WORDS BEYOND THE PANDEMIC: A HUNDRED-SIDED CRISIS

Coord.: José Reis  
A collective work by CES



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Centro de Estudos Sociais  
Universidade de Coimbra



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# PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND PANDEMIC

Tatiana Moura

Attitudes, practices and political decisions validated by patriarchal views on masculinities (and gender relations) have affected the world in these times of pandemic, with visible manifestations in everyday life. Some impacts are already known, highlighting society's expectations regarding the roles of men and women. Male discourse has dominated international and government responses to COVID-19, and the global approaches and proposals adopted are strongly shaped by masculinised policies, such as declarations of "war" on the virus. This is a problematic analogy, since the key to tackling this crisis in the short term is the antithesis of "war" – care, social solidarity or community support. Some world leaders have shown disdain for the pandemic, acting as if their countries were too strong to be affected by it.

These patriarchal discourses may have significant consequences both for national and global policies, encouraging militarised and authoritarian approaches and prioritising economic and social sectors dominated by men, while neglecting the vital sectors where women are most present. Furthermore, women's jobs are more precarious and are not included in the protective measures that have been developed. Finally, the increase in caring

responsibilities has fallen on women, exacerbated by men's lower propensity to care for themselves and others.

It is necessary to rethink the moments of transition in times of crisis, using as an analytical and epistemological focus the transformations and choices that have generational and gender implications. It is essential, in the short and medium term, to understand how this crisis has been intensified by patriarchal policy approaches and responses – how it has shaped masculinities, gender relations and domestic/family dynamics. Above all, it is urgent to understand how moments of crisis defy patriarchal constructions of masculinities, creating spaces of non-violence and equality. We are, therefore, at the right moment to understand the factors associated with non-violent and equitable pathways of masculinity and gender relations, bringing to the debate the concept and practices of (formal and informal) care, which is essential to prevent violence and achieve more equitable societies in the long term. This means understanding the emancipatory potential of promoting caring masculinities and thus challenge the dominant patriarchal structures and the hierarchy of policies.