Women Worldwide

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

Transnational Feminist Perspectives

COLLECTED WORKS

Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR

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CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the past few years, we've witnessed how interconnected our world is. In 2016 we saw worldwide Women's Marches; in 2020, Black Lives Matter protests took place around the world. We also experienced a global pandemic that has touched every nation on earth. The Internet allows us immediate access into the lives and situations of people everywhere, while disinformation has exacerbated political divides and strengthened the Far Right in many places. Global capitalism has increased the wealth inequality gap, leaving more people in abject poverty while billionaires indulge in space tourism. Climate change has escalated, and its disproportionate effects on poor people of color have created climate refugees.

All these instances of global interconnection—both positive and negative—are also gendered. That means they have differing impacts on people based on gender while also creating and reinforcing the ways people experience gender. We see that experiences of gender are always shaped by nationality, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, social class, ability, age, and religion. So, when we talk about *women*, we aren't talking as though all women share a single common identity or as though gender is more important or more salient than other social identities. Rather, we see women as a social category of people constructed within patriarchy (a system that divides humans into two gender categories and then values men, masculinity, and maleness over women, femininity, and femaleness) to maintain dominance of some people over others. This binary system of gender has real-world impacts on all people and has particularly devastating impacts on people who are designated as subordinate or second class within this system. This social construction of gender, its shaping of the world, and its effects on individuals and groups of people are at the core of this textbook.

Having a transnational understanding of the world, then, means learning to examine issues for commonalities and differences, taking seriously the impact of histories, cultures, languages, and geographies on gender.

Our goal is for *Women Worldwide: Transnational Feminist Perspectives* to help you think through the many issues that affect women—across their differences—from transnational feminist perspectives. We also hope that your feminist analysis of these issues will encourage you to imagine how you might work in the world for change to create greater inclusion, equity, and social justice.

As feminists, we are committed to collaboration in our work, and this textbook is the result of a diverse group of authors working together to create an accessible, scholarly, feminist overview of gender at work in the world. We hope this book introduces you to new information, concepts, and people, and we hope it encourages you to develop your own transnational feminist lens as a way to understand and evaluate

what's going on in our world. We challenge you to think critically and in new ways about the events that shape the lives of diverse women around the globe and to imagine how you might become involved in transformative work to create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world.

We also believe that feminist knowledge should be as accessible as possible, and so we are excited for this collaboration with Oregon State University's Open Educational Resources (OER) to create a textbook that is available online for free.

We want to thank all of the people who put so much effort into creating this textbook. Without the deep commitment and expertise of authors, this book could never come to be. So, we thank Khatera Afghan, Kiana Anderson, Carrie Baker, Tracy Butts, Patti Duncan, Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt, Folah Oludayo Fletcher, Shannon Garvin, Janell Hobson, Shar Kumarakshi Kalyanam, Kamalaveni, Rebecca Lambert, Jaya Mala, Amanda Milburn, Marcela Rodrigues-Sherley, Paula Sheridan, Mehra Shirazi, and Luhui Whitebear.

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Finally, we thank our colleagues and students who have helped shaped our thinking about transnational feminist issues and the ways we teach about women around the world.

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TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS

Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt and Kiana Anderson

Invocations of transnational feminisms can be found as early as the 1960s through the ideals of "global sisterhood." The term *transnational* in reference to feminism is distinct from "global" feminism. With the publication of Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Global* in 1984, it became evident that many mainstream US frameworks of feminism were still rooted within western notions of progress and oppression that foregrounded the points of views of white, middle-class, and liberal feminism. Transnational feminism critiqued the assumption of a global sisterhood, rooted within white, middle-class, western feminist subject positions that frequently have ignored non-western cultures, geopolitics, and paradigms, and the lived experiences of women in the Global South. Furthermore, transnational feminism and feminists attempt to dismantle the hegemonic power structures implicit in this divide between western feminists as "saviors" and feminists attempting to save the disadvantaged women from non-western spaces. Instead, transnational feminism pushes for radically reshaping feminist geopolitics by including perspectives of women and feminist movements that otherwise have been ignored or glossed over. *Transnational feminism* also suggests a politics rooted in solidarity, rather than an assumed shared experience.

Transnational feminists believe that the term *international* emphasizes nation-states as distinct entities, while the term *global* speaks to liberal feminist theories on "global sisterhood" that ignore so-called women in the Global South, especially perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). The fact that perspectives of feminists from the Global South have been ignored is most evident in discussions on gender inequality, labor politics, economic disparities, and various other imbalances produced by globalization and neoliberalism that privileges capital and profit-making while glossing over the working conditions of the poor and working classes, women, and racialized subjects.

Why Is CEDAW Important?

by Shannon Garvin

When European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Turkey on April 7, 2021, with EU Council President Charles Michel, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Michel received chairs in which to sit, but President von der Leyen did not. When the same meeting had

occurred in 2017, all three leaders were men, and all three were provided chairs. While this may seem a minor blunder to many, the truth is it reflects substantial cultural ideas that women do not have a place or voice—literally, "no seat"—in a society or its government. In cultures where women have no place, they are not treated as valuable and gifted people, but as property that one can use and abuse as one sees fit.

In 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It defines discrimination against women and sets forth a plan to eliminate it. In March 2021, Turkey withdrew from CEDAW just weeks before refusing to give President von der Leyen a chair at the international summit. CEDAW plays a vital role in addressing and elevating the position of women in local cultures by giving international groups common ground from which to grow and expand their resources and opportunities. The Istanbul Convention and the UN Beijing Platform for Action have built on the initial agreements of CEDAW.

Transnational feminist academic paradigms draw from various frameworks that investigate interlocking systems of oppression, including postcolonial feminist theories and critical race feminism (CRF). While these theories intersect with and draw from each other, transnational feminism is distinct from postcolonial feminism and critical race feminism. For instance, a postcolonial perspective is rooted in decentering the white, western, Eurocentric experience. Hence a postcolonial feminist lens seeks to both understand and undo the legacies of colonialism within feminist activism using a postcolonial perspective, emphasizing how colonialist legacies, racism, colorism, and casteism have shaped and continue to shape the social, economic, and political oppression of people across the globe.

Critical race feminism, in contrast, derives from the intertwining of three jurisprudential movements: (1) critical legal studies (CLS), (2) critical race theory (CRT), and (3) feminist jurisprudence/womanist theory. Feminist jurisprudence/womanist theory is rooted in the belief that while law is necessary, it is not sufficient to overcome discrimination and achieve success for communities of color. CRT favors a multidisciplinary approach that intersects with various social science, education, and humanities-oriented disciplines to developing the rights of people of color, particularly women. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the notion of intersectionality (which is a part of the CRT and CRF framework within the legal discourse) to fully understand the complex situation of women of color, rooted in Black feminism. According to Crenshaw, understanding the oppression of Black women requires us to not only look at their race and gender, but to also explore the intersection of these identities, as well as class, sexuality, ability, and geography, among other aspects of identity and experience.

Transnational Black feminism foregrounds the long history of Black feminist praxis and theorization, dating back to the nineteenth century with writings by Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells. According to the Transnational Black Feminisms Working Group, "transnational Black feminisms can move us beyond survivability and demands for recognition, and instead generate alternative frames and understandings around belonging, community, justice, and equity" (Naylor and Nadasen n.d.). Transnational Black feminisms also emphasize the importance of racial politics in the development of capitalism and global politics—what Cedric Robinson (1983) called "racial capitalism"—as well as the need to integrate a gendered analysis.

CRF literature has expanded beyond the borders of the United States. Global CRF offers transnational perspectives and contributes to postcolonial theory, given that women of color around the world are marginalized within various contexts. Global and transnational CRF promotes the perspectives of women in the development of international and comparative law, including public international law, human rights, and international business transactions. While transnational feminism rejects the idea that people from different regions have the same subject position and subjectivities and experiences with gender inequality, it recognizes that global capitalism has also created similar relations of exploitation and inequality. Nadine Naber, in "Arab and Black Feminisms: Joint Struggle and Transnational Anti-Imperialist Activism," charts the formation of the diasporic anti-imperialist Arab feminist group and the Women of Color Resource Center in the United States. By tracing its history from the 1960s and 1970s, Naber maps the alliances among Black feminist thought, radical women of color movements, and Palestinian history and contemporary methods of decolonization (Naber 2016, 116-25).

In order to address issues of inequality and intersectional oppressions, transnational feminist practice is involved with and rooted in activist movements across the globe that work together to understand the role of gender, race, class, sexuality, and the state in critiquing and resisting heteropatriarchal, capitalist power structures. Thus transnational feminism is both a liberatory formation and a practice that continuously resists forces of colonialism, racism, and imperialism rather than being complicit with these historic forms of oppression.

Women's UN Report Network: A Global Resource

by Janet Lockhart

Looking for information specific to the experiences of women and girls in every part of the world? Women's UN Report Network (WUNRN) is a comprehensive online resource for news and research

about issues facing women and girls worldwide. Created on the basis of a United Nations report on the status of women, "WUNRN addresses the human rights, oppression, and empowerment of women and girls all over the globe."

With themes from child marriage to women, girls, and technology, their searchable database includes a huge scope of news articles, reports, documents, and research from across the globe. Topics are timely, such as one article about women and Zoom fatigue, and research-worthy, such as one about existing matrilineal/matrifocal societies (yes, there are some!). Their archive goes back more than ten years. They also maintain a listserv that sends subscribers UN reports, resolutions, and other publications. The site can translate items and articles into Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

A nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, WUNRN provides these resources as "tools, to move forward advocacy and activism, local to global, on the human rights, oppression, and empowerment of women and girls all over the world."

WUNRN also organizes occasional high-level events on women's rights at the UN in Geneva, New York City, and Rome. They also cohost webinars on subjects like violence against women, cyberbullying, and women and addiction issues.

In the early 1970s, Angela Davis visited Egypt, later writing about her visit in the book *Women, Culture, and Politics* (1990). Davis's trip and her thoughts exposed how white western feminists have both represented and excluded many of the lived experiences and conditions of Egyptian women. Davis's collaboration marked an approach of transnational feminist solidarity through the eyes of multiple generations of Egyptian feminists and African American women contextualizing gender oppression within multiple structures, including globalized capitalism.

Conditions in Egypt in the 1950s through to the 1970s allowed for the formation of new international forms of solidarity focused on material conditions. This enabled Egyptian feminists to forge solidarity with women across the globe, including with Angela Davis, who located gender oppression within the same structures—namely, capitalism and imperialism. More recently and in a post-9/11 world, Arab feminists like Lila Abu-Lughod challenge western representations of oppressed Muslim women. In her book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* she writes, "gendered orientalism has taken on a new life and new forms in our feminist twenty first century" (Abu-Lughod 2013, 202). And in her important critical essay, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," Abu-Lughod explores the ethics of the war on terror and justifications made for American intervention in Afghanistan in terms of liberating, or saving, Afghan women.

Rather than "saving," Abu-Lughod (2002) writes:

> I argue that we need to develop, instead, a serious appreciation of differences among women in the world—as products of different histories, expressions of different circumstances, and manifestations of differently structured desires. Further, I argue that rather than seeking to "save" others (with the superiority it implies and the violences it would entail) we might better think in terms of (1) working with them in situations that we recognize as always subject to historical transformation and (2) considering our own larger responsibilities to address the forms of global injustice that are powerful shapers of the worlds in which they find themselves. (783)

Transnational feminist activism has also forged deep alliances with Palestinian women linking their struggles for gender equality to national liberation. Feminists in the Global North have failed to understand the importance of connections between gender and nation, and as a result, "Palestinian women have been at the receiving end of well-intentioned but misguided initiatives which have disregarded their agency, needs and resilience, and have focused on a narrow understanding of 'women's issues' and critiques of patriarchy and nationalism" (Sharoni et al. 2015, 654). There are, however, encouraging signs of emerging transnational feminist solidarity in response to the political and humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Foremost among these actions is the emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which has created new momentum for a coherent feminist response to the crisis in Palestine.

Palestine is a feminist issue

In November 2014, at the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, several members of the association crafted a petition that presented a rationale for feminist support of the BDS movement. The group was moved to action in the aftermath of the siege on Gaza a few months earlier and sought to stress the connections between systemic forms of oppression and the transformative potential of collective transnational resistance and solidarity (Sharoni et al. 2015, 654).

Transnational feminist theorists and practitioners vary their use of terminology. Some of the variations used include "transnational feminisms," "transnational feminist praxis," and "transnational practices." Richa Nagar and Amanda Lock Swarr, in their book *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, provide a list of terms that have been used at various historical moments to describe transnational feminist practices. They emphasize that the term *transnational* feminism is merely a product of its time in US and Canadian academic institutions. The terms previously used to describe transnational feminist solidar-

ity include "women of color" feminism (Combahee River Collective 1981), "Third World" feminism (Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991), "multicultural" feminism (Shohat 1998), "international" feminism (Enloe 1990), and "global" feminism (Morgan 1984).

In *Women's Studies on Its Own: A Next Wave Reader in Institutional Change*, Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, two prominent scholars of transnational feminism, claim that they do not think the term "transnational" is better suited than either "international" or "global," but that it is useful inasmuch as it is free from the implications that other terms may have:

> Transnational as a term is useful only when it signals attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits of culture and capital. Through such critical recognition, the links among patriarchies, colonialisms, racisms, and feminisms become more apparent and available for critique or appropriation. The history of the term "international," by contrast, is quite different. (2002, 73)

Along with Grewal and Kaplan, other feminist scholars like Chandra Talpade Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander claim that the term *transnational feminism* has political power and can intervene into essentialist binaries like First World/Third World, or heteronormative gender constructs. These scholars believe that the term "international" puts more emphasis on nation-states as distinct entities, while the emphasis on the "global" draws attention to liberal feminist theories and the concept of what Robin Morgan calls "global sisterhood" (Morgan 1996), without taking into consideration race, class, culture, or colonialist and imperialist histories. It is evident that under the term "feminism," transnational feminism intersects with these concepts while also remaining its own distinct entity.

Indigenous feminisms are also transnational

Transnational feminism, then, begins with the idea that power—economic, political, cultural, social, and other forms—has become global where borders are crossed. These border crossings have multiple impli-

cations, as the act of crossing borders entails subjects being confronted with one's alliances with multiple national identities and citizenships. The prefix *trans–* suggests on or to the other side of, across, or beyond. So, this idea of movement across borders is at the core of transnational feminism as people are constantly influx. For instance, workers move across borders to find jobs. Money and currencies move all over the place, at faster and faster rates. Movements are not only global but also transnational and transactional.

Saskia Sassen has studied the new economies and transnational movements in which she elaborates on how power as understood by transnational feminism has become global caused by movement and migration of workers. Along with this labor movement is the movement of transactions—labor and economic, familial, religious, education, and skills. In *Cities in a World Economy*, Sassen describes the situation of the global economy as existing on the backs of women and other marginalized people:

> The last decade has seen a growing presence of women in a variety of cross-border circuits. These circuits are enormously diverse but share one feature: They are profit- or revenue-making circuits developed on the backs of the truly disadvantaged . . . They include cross-border migrations, both documented and not, which have become an important source of hard currency for governments in home countries. The formation and strengthening of these circuits is in good part a consequence of broader structural conditions. . . . I conceptualize these circuits as countergeographies of globalization. (Sassen 2006, 185-86)

Transnational Feminism and Globalization

Within the past decade, Global South nations have entered the new global economy by sending women across borders to work in wealthier countries and send home their wages as remittances. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas in her book *Servants of Globalization* (2015) studies migrant Filipino domestic workers who leave their own families behind to do the caretaking work of the global economy. Parreñas's groundbreaking work discusses the invisibility of labor migration and transnational families. She explores the role of domestic workers and their labors, the separation from their children and children reunifying with their mothers, and the plight of the aging care workers.

Such feminization of labor is also linked to what Sassen refers to as "feminization of survival" (Sassen 2003, 59-77). The government of the Philippines, for example, sends women as care workers—in particular, nurses and domestic workers—as part of its national economic development program. While nurses are often considered part of the middle-class professional stream of migrants, two-thirds of the female migrants from Philippines are domestic workers. These women migrant workers go to Canada, China, Hong Kong, Italy, countries in the Middle East, and the United States. As a result, many of these migrant workers are often exploited as their cultures become displaced; this transaction becomes transnational given the multiple borders being crossed on both a geographical and bodily level. Not only are these migrant women exploited, but also their loss of relationship with their children constitutes a sacrifice. Valerie Francisco-Menchavez, in *The Labor of Care: Filipina Migrants and Transnational Families in the*

Digital Age (2018), discusses her interviews and collaborations with a group of working migrant mothers from the Philippines. Francisco-Menchavez provides an analysis of the emotional sacrifices resulting from the separations between migrant workers and their children, and explores circuits of care for these transnational migrant mothers. She pays particular attention to how technologies like Facebook, Skype, and recorded video have opened up transformative ways of bridging distances produced by globalization while still supporting traditional family dynamics. All of these practices demonstrate what Sassen (2006) has called the "feminization of survival." In "The Feminization of Survival: Alternative Global Circuits," she writes,

> These circuits can be thought of as indicating the—albeit partial—feminization of survival, because it is increasingly women who make a living, create a profit and secure government revenue. Thus in using the notion of feminization of survival I am not only referring to the fact that households and whole communities are increasingly dependent on women for their survival. I want to emphasize the fact that also governments are dependent on women's earnings in these various circuits, and so are types of enterprises whose ways of profit-making exist at the margins of the "licit" economy. Finally, in using the term circuits, I want to underline the fact that there is a degree of institutionalization in these dynamics—they are not simply aggregates of individual actions. (Sassen 2003, 61)

Diar Foundation: Microloans for Women in South Sudan

by Lauren Grant

South Sudan has spent most of its independence in conflict. Since 2013, "armed groups have targeted civilians along ethnic lines, committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed property and looted villages, and recruited children into their ranks." With most of the population under age 18, women take on immense family responsibilities—made much more difficult in the face of conflict, gender-based violence, and few opportunities to secure an income and basic needs.

"Even before the crisis, more than half of [South Sudan's] citizens lived in absolute poverty, were dependent on subsistence agriculture and suffered from malnourishment." Now the country faces radical political instability, weak state structures, and few formal financial institutions, limiting small business and enterprise work opportunities, and deeply affecting women who seek to support their families through agricultural and handicraft-making activities.

Microfinance and lending practices for small business owners in rural South Sudan have grown among civil society organizations such as Diar Foundation, an Indigenous women and youth rights and development organization. In central rural South Sudan, Diar Foundation hosts more than 550 women at Yirol Farm, where it brings them together in small savings groups. Each week, women contribute 1,000

SSP (about $7) and basic household items to a collective pot, including sugar, flour, and cooking oil, and two women are selected on a rotating basis to take home the pot. Diar's model for collective financial management, accompanied by trainings on savings and small business, empowers women's groups to provide for their families, purchase seeds and livestock, save and invest in starting up small businesses, and, most importantly, to become decision-makers in their lives and communities.

Savings equals women's empowerment in rural South Sudan, where 90 percent of borrowers are women. Microfinance and lending and trainings on business management, saving, and bookkeeping are tools for poverty alleviation and development. By providing initial funds for the collective pot, Diar Foundation empowers women to find financial freedom and climb out of poverty, a monumental win in a country where more than 7 million people experience hunger and need humanitarian aid.

Transnational in Transnational Feminist Research

Transnational feminist research is seen both as a radical and an essential framework that seeks to reveal connections and various forms of inequalities between the Global North and South. Given the histories of global colonialism and the forces of capitalism and globalization, such research allows transnational feminists to confront colonialism, imperialism, and neocolonialism and the multiple forms of political oppression based on gender and sexuality.

Building Bridges between Postsecondary Institutions and Prisons

by Shoshana Pollack

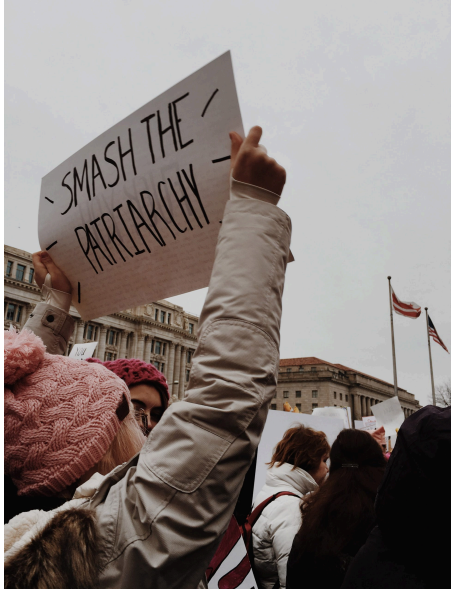
Walls to Bridges Canada (W2B) is a national university-based program housed in the Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Inspired by the US Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, W2B brings together incarcerated and non-incarcerated students to study for semester-long courses in prisons and jails. The W2B mission is to create educational opportunities in correctional settings where the experiences of teaching and (un)learning challenge assumptions, stigmatization, and inequality. The values underpinning the program include a commitment to solidarity with people who are incarcerated and to the creation of collaborative learning spaces where critical analysis, dialogue, and self-reflection dismantle preconceptions about prisoners and punishment.

The leaders of this program are women incarcerated at a federal women's prison in Canada who have taken many W2B classes and have co-developed the pedagogy with the director. They work as teaching assistants for W2B professors and co-facilitate a five-day instructor training, during which educators from Canada, Europe, and the United States come to the prison to learn the unique educational model of W2B. Once professors take the instructor training, they can establish W2B classes in their own communities. For educators and students alike, assumptions and stereotypes are challenged through relational learning and by unpacking how we come to hold certain assumptions about the "Other." Research on the impact of W2B classes found that both incarcerated and non-incarcerated students report an increased awareness of how structural factors such as racism and gender-based violence affect criminalization, a strengthened commitment to social action, and an increased sense of voice and belonging as a result of being part of an innovative collaborative learning community.

In "What Is the *Transnational* in Transnational Feminist Research?" (2019), Anneeth Kaur Hundle, Ioana Szeman, and Joanna Pares Hoare articulate the aims of the *transnational* in feminist research.

> The focus on the transnational in feminist research aims to decentre Western epistemologies, shaking the foundation of the sometimes taken-for-granted framework of Western—and specifically UK, US or European-focused—feminist research in the English language; it aims to disrupt the embedded hegemonies of nationalist ideologies, in all their heteropatriarchal connotations. (3)

It is also important to note how "transnational feminisms, as activism and scholarship, have largely been developed and influenced by the work of self-identified women-of-colour feminists located in the Global North and postcolonial scholars or 'Third World feminists' located both in the North and South" (Hundle, Szeman, and Hoare 2019, 3).



Transnational feminist scholarship is grounded in transnational feminist activism

Transnational feminists also locate and articulate various intersections of power and domination across the globe. They critique many central sites of domination/subordination to determine where power is concentrated and how gender is defined within these various sites of power. Grewal and Kaplan refer to these sites as scattered hegemonies. As the understanding of feminism and its intersections with movement continued, the theory termed "transnational feminism" was first used by Grewal and Kaplan in their book *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transna-*

tional Feminist Practices, which situated transnational feminism among other theories of feminism, modernity, and postmodernity. Grewal and Kaplan remind us that

> We need to articulate the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, "authentic" forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels . . . transnational feminist practices require this kind of comparative work rather than the relativistic linking of "differences" undertaken by proponents of "global feminism"; that is, to compare multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions rather than to construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified theory of gender. (1994, 18)

Here, "scattered hegemonies" suggests a way of thinking about dominations across the globe from various disciplines. Grewal and Kaplan urge critics to consider and locate these ways of thinking by taking in multiple and intersectional perspectives and reading them side by side, rather than developing an entirely new and singular definition.

Three years after the publication of *Scattered Hegemonies*, M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty published *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, an important book in formulating transnational feminist frameworks. This text, building on Grewal and Kaplan's, focused more on the ways in which a theory of transnational feminism foregrounds feminist activist practices in global contexts. We can see this today in many contexts. For instance, various activisms addressing global racial justice and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement have led to intersectional collaborations. BLM is a global networked organization and a decentralized movement that has highlighted police brutality and criminalization of Black people. Furthermore, the BLM network works to connect global struggles of Black subjects by organizing and highlighting how oppressive systems (including those resulting from white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism) continue to threaten Black girls, women, femmes, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people.

The Black Lives Matter movement foregrounds intersectional feminist activism

Given that our lives are saturated with images, transnational feminism is also deployed within the fields of film and media studies in order to understand and analyze transnational media representations. Topics ranging from decolonization and gender to the global circulation of gendered images and their effects within and outside of national polities, along with critiques of contemporary forms of Orientalism within transnational media forums (from gendered perspectives), are all evident in feminist studies of transnational media representations. The edited volume *Transnational Feminism in Film and Media*

(Marciniak, Imre, and O'Healy 2007) extends the dialogue beyond the academic debate in understanding how media representations vis-à-vis the analysis of film, television, theater, music, visual culture, various art installations, and video art have global and transnational implications. The book, according to Sandra Ponzanesi, provides

> a thought provoking and refreshing analysis of the transformed understanding of migration, borders and media that has shifted in focus from the postcolonial subjects to new racialized others: Muslims, refugees and asylum seekers who reshape notions of East/West, North/South, but also of Europeanness through a focus on Eastern Europe, linking questions of transnationalism to postcoloniality and postsocialism. (2011, 353)

For example, the multilingual Academy Award-winning film *Babel* (2006), by Alejandro González Iñárritu, creates a transnational framework by challenging old and new global borders post 9/11 along with the portrayal of women, namely, Moroccan women who are represented as voiceless and seductive, replicating Orientalist tropes. Similarly, another Oscar-winning documentary, *Born into Brothels* (2004), while representing women in the sex industry in Calcutta advances the trope of both a white savior complex and the narrative of the unfit mother. The documentary centers around a white western woman's attempt to rescue the children who are born into brothels from the abuse and neglect of their mothers. Patti Duncan in her article "Saving Other Children from Other Women: *Born into Brothels*" explores how such rescue narratives are both gendered and racialized and are shaped by various colonialist, imperialist, and Orientalist tropes (Duncan 2013).

Research Methods, Methodological Approaches, and Praxis: Interdisciplinary Approaches

Research methods, methodological approaches, and praxis in transnational feminism are interdisciplinary and continue to evolve. They include qualitative, quantitative, and empirical approaches, using an intersectional feminist lens of gender, economics, human rights, and the politics of race and ethnicity, often located within the context of colonialism, imperialism, nation, nationalism, and nation-states. Transnational feminist research focuses deliberately on the problem of epistemology, particularly western epistemology as a site of knowing and being. Epistemology can be understood as the study of knowledge where questions of how one knows, what one knows, and how that came to be are studied. This type of research relies heavily on one's experiences (as experiences are a valid form of knowledge) to draw conclusions about what transnational feminism is. Such knowledge that comes from spaces of colonial structures is important to consider when attempting to subvert and push back against knowledge that emerges from sites of colonial oppression.

The study of epistemology is vital to feminist methodologies and praxis since it is used to locate the positionality of women and gender geographically and geopolitically as a way to decenter and interrogate colonial structures. By interrogating what has been considered by western feminists as "liberatory frameworks," transnational feminists interrogate the very mode of organizing knowledge and its relationship to heteropatriarchal and hegemonic power structures.

Transnational feminist frameworks are also continuously subject to interrogation and contestation. These critiques, as Nagar and Lock Swarr (2010), Fernandes (2013), Roy (2017), and others suggest, when they operate within the same systems of power and privilege, and from the same imperialist networks they seek to critique, do not address any change or seek to empower the disenfranchised. In fact, critiques that try to amass power and pander to neoliberalism and other liberal political projects do not advance transnational feminist practices.

Activists of all ages are part of transnational feminist struggles for justice

Transnational feminist research and praxis is therefore a radical framework with an ability to connect various forms of inequalities between the Global North and South; to confront histories and contemporary practices of imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism and their effects on women, gender, and sexuality; and to displace Eurocentric and liberal feminist theories and ideologies. Much of the research relies on role of reflexivity within transnational feminist research while being cognizant of one's positionality and sites of what Donna Haraway calls "situated knowledges." Situated knowledge reflects the particular location of the knower and rejects any impulse to universalize and essentialize both knowledge and experiences (Haraway 1988, 575-99). In other words, all knowledge comes from particular positions we hold and reflects particular conditions within which each form of knowledge is produced. Thus, in conducting and reading about transnational feminist research, one must also be reflexive; considering one's own identity and biases is key to contributing to this research in ways that can incite change and enact movements for social justice.

The Youth Are the Future *and* the Present

by Laura Galindo

In the United States and across the world, young leaders are not just demanding change, they are leading it. Over the past several years, we have experienced an international movement of youth leaders like no other. From Greta Thunberg in Sweden advocating for global climate change awareness; to Emma Gonzales in Parkland, Florida, taking a stand for gun control after experiencing the worst high school shooting in American history; to Darnella Frazier in Minneapolis, Minnesota, whose quick and empathic video response helped shed the light of accountability on the murder of George Floyd, youth have sparked international conversations.

Young leaders are using social media to mobilize their communities toward equitable action and are creating a cultural shift in consciousness and awareness. They are leading important accountability conversations with elected officials and people in power to push for just representation in their schools and in their communities.

Girls Learn International (GLI), a program of the Feminist Majority Foundation, empowers and educates middle and high school students to advocate for human rights, equality, and universal access to education, and collaborates with girl-focused partner organizations in India, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda. Organizations like GLI are needed to support and empower girls, boys, and nonbinary young leaders into action. Their service-oriented after-school club model makes it easy for students to work with advisers to establish chapters in their schools.

A just, equitable future free of oppression can be lived today, and young leaders are a constant reminder of that.

Learning Activities

1. Working alone, with a peer, or in a small group, explain the differences between "transnational feminism" and "global feminism" as discussed in this chapter. Why do contemporary feminists prefer the term "transnational" over "international" or "global"? Why do you think the title of the chapter describes plural transnational feminisms, rather than a singular transnational feminism? After reading this chapter, how would you define transnational feminism in your own words? How does this chapter's discussion of transnational feminism build on and/or complicate what you've learned about feminism from other sources (e.g., news articles, other classes, your personal experience)?
2. In this chapter, Dutt-Ballerstadt and Anderson discuss a variety of feminist issues, activism, and scholarship that could be considered "transnational," including:
    - intersectional collaborations between the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and global racial justice issues and organizations;
    - solidarity with Palestinian women and the emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement;
    - and the role of migrant Filipinas and caretaking in the global economy.

    Working alone, in pairs, or in a small group, select one of the topics listed above. What do you currently know about the issue you've selected? How much do you know about it? Where did you learn the information that you know? What questions do you have? Second, take a few minutes to search the Internet for more information about your topic (always taking care to select reliable sources as you gather information). What else is there to learn about these topics? How might transnational feminist analysis and activism provide new ways to address the issues you discovered in your research?
3. This chapter, and indeed all the chapters in this textbook, includes specialized vocabulary that may or may not be familiar to you. Over the course of the semester, you will want to build a familiarity with these terms and learn to use them in class discussions and in your writing. Working in a small group, create a class glossary that you can continue to add to over the course of the semester. The following terms from this chapter provide a great start for your glossary: transnational feminism, Global South / Global North, hegemony/hegemonic, liberal feminism, neoliberalism, colonialism/postcolonialism, feminist praxis, feminist methodology, critical race feminism (CRF), intersectionality, globalization, feminization of survival, Orientalist, epistemology.

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WORLD MEDIA

Janell Hobson

In the video segment of "Brown Skin Girl" from *Black Is King* (2020)—the third "visual album" by pop star Beyoncé Knowles-Carter—Black girls and women are validated for their physical and inner beauty as Beyoncé's voiceover proclaims, "We were beauty before they knew what beauty was." Within the pop star's pro-Black message we might imagine *they* to represent a system of power rather than a collective of individuals: a system based in white supremacy, western imperialism, and heteropatriarchal oppression. Such systems reflect the multiple forms of oppression that legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017) identifies as "intersectionality," which have complicated how women—Black women specifically—have experienced the interconnected inequalities of gender, race, class, and other factors. Such experiences extend toward the subject of beauty.

Online Activism / Real-World Change: World Pulse

by Janet Lockhart

World Pulse is an international online community of women who work together to teach digital skills and leadership, share resources and ideas, and mobilize each other to create social change in their countries.

World Pulse was founded in 2004 by Jensine Larson, a traveling journalist, who had the idea after being asked by women in several different countries to "tell their stories" to others. She wanted to use global media technology to empower women to tell their *own* stories.

As World Pulse has grown, women and allies from nearly two hundred countries now use the platform to share stories and support and work for change—pressuring leaders to respond to issues, starting businesses, running for office, and using their creativity to spark new movements—in the real world.

Their philosophy is, "We believe that when women are heard and connected, they transform the world for the better."

Women of Africa and the diaspora—especially from those African countries and Caribbean Island nations where skin-bleaching creams are prominently in use—needed Beyoncé's reminder of their beauty and desirability, as the video unfolds in glorious celebration of the dark skins and cultures of Black and brown women and girls. The video emphasizes Black girlhood in particular, since they are most vulnerable to internalizing negative messages about their beauty potential. So, we see the intergenerational handclap games of mothers and daughters, as well as young debutante queens being affirmed by their community. Even the inclusion of gender-bending girls in suit and tie, posing with featured Nigerian singer Wizkid standing next to a hijab-covered Muslim and an albino, suggests that there is no one way to be a beautiful "brown skin girl." Celebrated dark-skinned models like Naomi Campbell and Adut Akech, Kenyan actress Lupita Nyong'o, and Beyoncé's darker-skinned bandmate from Destiny's Child, Kelly Rowland, also make cameo appearances, while the video segment concludes with the song sung by Beyoncé's daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, in a gesture toward elevating the self-esteem of the next generation of Black girls.

Brown skin Black woman

This presentation, which covers the range of complexions among African-descended women, including dark-skinned South Asian women who are also encouraged to buy fair-skinned creams, signals Beyoncé's global message. The song's premiere in 2019 is apropos given how the major beauty pageants that year—Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Universe, and Miss World—all crowned Black women winners. It also shuts down the light-skin / dark-skin debates over "Brown Skin Girl" that erupted upon the song's release on Beyoncé's Afrobeat album *The Gift* (2019), which celebrated the African continent and was specifically conceived of as an accompanying project to her involvement in Disney's live-action remake of the blockbuster animation film *The Lion King* (1993). Beyoncé's audiovisual project is exemplary of world media and the various global responses that position it for different transnational and local meanings. First, as a Disney-sponsored project streamed exclusively on its online platform, it is aligned with the global corporation's dominant commercial worldview that has reshaped world cultures through a US-centric lens. Second, its Afrocentric message complicates the African American imagination Beyoncé brings to its depiction of "Africa," from *The Lion King's* animal story to her own spinoff on African royalty, which is reflected in a romanticized version of an African past from where the enslaved ancestors of African-descended people originated.

Even the challenges of global distribution speak to power differences, since many on the African continent did not have access to Disney's streaming platform, subsequently forcing Beyoncé to intervene with spe-

cial screenings. The structural inequalities between continental Africans and an African American pop star—one who benefits from fame, wealth, light-skin privilege, and US nationality—necessarily project multiple meanings of "Africa" in its narrative. Indeed, Beyoncé, who was once hailed in the title of a Nollywood film, *Beyoncé: The President's Daughter* (2006), which characterizes the color and nationality of the African American singer as an ideal for Nigerian womanhood, reflects a global and transnational power that inevitably shapes the beauty politics around dark-skinned beauty. The pop star attempts to bring that power to her audiovisual project, using her privileges—which have enabled her own ascendancy to world stardom—to celebrate Black and brown womanhood.

Finally, Beyoncé's project had a different impact on another region of the world with its reception among her South Asian fans. They had praised the pop star for being racially inclusive of Indian women and girls, who also struggle with self-esteem over their color. For this reason these same fans immediately condemned the song "Beyoncé Sharma Jayegi" ("Beyoncé Will Feel Shy") from the Hindi film *Khaali Peeli* (2020) for insinuating that the fair-skinned leading lady referenced in the song, who is praised for being *goriya* (fair-skinned), would "make Beyoncé feel shy" in comparison.

During a year of the global movement for Black Lives Matter and in which Beyoncé praised the dark-skinned beauty of both African-descended and South Asian women and girls in "Brown Skin Girl," it was inevitable that many would react negatively to the irony of a Bollywood song extolling the beauty of whiteness and using an African American pop star to serve as a beauty contrast to being fair-skinned. And yet the songwriters insist they intended no insult to Beyoncé, that the invocation of her name was specifically in response to her world status as a globally recognized beautiful woman. They had not thought any deeper about the problematic use of *goriya* to contrast a woman's beauty to Beyoncé, which merely reflects how colorism is deeply ingrained in the culture alongside elitism and casteism. As Dalit activist Thenmozhi Soundararajan reminds us, "Race and caste are not the same system, but they are parallel oppressions that have the same logic" (2020), the former in oppressing Black lives and the latter in subjugating Dalits as "untouchables" within Hindi culture in India and its diaspora.

Khabar Lahariya

by Shannon Garvin

The 2021 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award winner in the World Cinema Documentary category was the ground-breaking *Writing with Fire*. This documentary follows Dalit women in India who work as journalists and the extreme challenges they face—from working from the underside of power (Dalit

people are considered the lowest social caste) to struggling to read in English on the smartphones they need to record interviews.

Meeri Devi leads a team of women who report on issues from the perspectives of those on the bottom of Indian society for Khabar Lahariya (Waves of News). While many articles are written in Hindi, some like "*For Mission Nari Shakti,* We First Need *Purush Sanshakti // New Year, Same Old Burden of Safety from Male-inflicted Violence on Women*" are written in English and work to educate people living in India and live around the world. In this article, reporters explore why men and boys must also be actively involved in policies to eliminate sexual violence against women. By necessity, journalism needs the voices of all parts of a society—all genders, religions, and ethnicities—or it cannot accurately report or speak to the life of average and ordinary people. Like Khabar Lahariya, it must also report in local dialects so that it can be accessible to all people. Supporting, reading, and learning from local women "on the ground" in rural and poor parts of the world is one way we can engage the world and support the work of women worldwide.

Given these different responses to issues of gender, race, color, nationality, local and global media, and transnational audiences, this chapter explores the evolution of world media and representations of womanhood through this lens. This includes tracing its origins through local shows, world fairs, cinema, music, and commercial media at large. Analyzing such concepts as the "male gaze," race and racialization, and cultural appropriation, this chapter seeks to illuminate how womanhood has diverse and complex meanings that shift based on the intersections of gender, race, class, nationality, sexuality, embodiment, and disablement.

World Views on Women

In 1992 the Cuban American feminist performance artist Coco Fusco sought to create with fellow Chicano artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña a satire during the quincentennial celebration of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of America with their mock exhibit "Two Undiscovered Amerindians." Fusco and Gómez-Peña used performance art to commemorate the time Columbus brought Indigenous Americans back with him from the Americas to exhibit at the royal court of Spain, which subsequently spawned centuries of similar human exhibitions that are arguably the first examples of "world media" in the western world. While the majority of the public missed the satire of their artistic aim—reading the "Two Undiscovered Amerindians" exhibit literally and thereby eliciting charges that the performance deliberately misinformed the public—Fusco suggests that such efforts at literal interpretations erase the colonial violence that was whitewashed through the Columbus Day celebrations and further re-creates "the concept of cul-

tural diversity fundamental to this understanding [that] strikes at the heart of the sense of control over Otherness that Columbus symbolized" (Fusco 1994, 145).

Such constructions of Otherness through the exhibition framework of non-Europeans also shaped representations of disability via the "freak show" display of white disabled and/or disfigured bodies, which inevitably formed a parallel between white disabled "Others" and their non-white able-bodied or disabled counterparts. A powerful example of this was in the display of Sara Baartman, a Khoisan woman from the Cape of South Africa who was infamously called the "Hottentot Venus." Baartman was publicly displayed to create a spectacle of the size and shape of her buttocks, which subsequently turned her into a sex object exhibited among the other "freak show" curiosities at London's Piccadilly Circus. Placed on display in both England and France from 1810 until her premature death at the end of the year in 1815, Baartman was constructed both as a "freak" and "perfect specimen of her race" (Hobson 2005, 36). She was both an abnormality for Europeans and a normality among the "Hottentot" she was understood to represent, although her racial/ethnic group was already labeled as the "missing link" between humanity and animality by Europe's race scientists, thus leading to the posthumous dissection and inhuman medicalization of her cadaver by the anatomist George Cuvier.

Present-day echoes of the Hottentot Venus can be traced through the spectacle of women's behinds, especially among hip-hop stars like Nicki Minaj, Cardi B, and Megan Thee Stallion (whose nickname literally derived from men comparing her booty to a horse, thus perpetuating the typical animalization of Black women). And while certain white women, such as the Kardashians—who monetize their looks through racial appropriation via darkened makeup and surgically enhanced lips and behinds—have attained the look of the "exotic other," we must distinguish between the dehumanization of an African woman's body in the past and the present-day spectacle of highly visible celebrity women who willingly display their assets for fame and fortune. Having said that, we may notice how both historical and contemporary depictions of womanhood are premised on similar sexual objectification.

Baartman would certainly not be the last "racial curiosity" in the western world to elicit interest both as a pop culture entertainment show and as a scientific specimen. As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues, her freak-show display—much like P. T. Barnum's later exhibit (and the first among his various "freaks") of the African American elderly woman Joice Heth, falsely billed in 1835 as George Washington's 161-year-old nursemaid—illustrates the intersectionality of race, gender, nationality, and disability. Garland-Thomson thus suggests, "the language and assumptions of the ability/disability system were implemented to pathologize and exoticize [these women, whose bodies] . . . invoked disability by presenting as deformities or abnormalities the characteristics that marked [them] as raced and gendered" (Garland-Thomson 2002, 7).

Another of Barnum's "freaks," Afong Moy, was the first Chinese woman to enter the United States in 1834. Her bound feet and Chinese dress were placed on display alongside other trade goods from China,

including tea and porcelain, which ultimately objectified and fetishized the "Oriental" woman, who was imagined to be exotic, submissive, and sensual (Davis 2019). This trope of "Orientalism" (Said 1978), which collapses the cultures of East and South Asia as well as west Asia (or the Middle East) into simplified narratives and stereotypes, eventually led to the criminalization of Asian women, who were presumed to be prostitutes. They were subsequently the first group to be banned from the United States in the Page Act of 1875, a precursor to the 1882 Chinese Immigration Ban.

Human exhibitions proved an effective tool in promoting western imperialism and power, as they were eventually included in world fairs that advertised not just the "advancements" of the industrialized world in the West, reflected in technological innovations, but also the "regression" or "unchanging" cultures of the non-western world that such human exhibits conveyed by contrast. One of the first world fairs in this vein included the 1851 Crystal Palace World Fair in London, organized by Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert, which introduced to the public the technology of photography alongside small exhibits from some of the British colonies. Over forty years later, in 1893, Chicago's World Columbian Exposition, which marked the quadricentennial celebration of Columbus's "discovery," introduced the world to electricity while enhancing displays of non-western cultures through the ethnographic exhibit. During this decade the light of electricity would combine with photography to birth cinema, a new tool to perpetuate world media via western imperialism and the ethnographic display of other cultures.

While leaving a lasting legacy that is still felt in the twenty-first century with our ever-evolving electronic revolution via digital culture, there are other legacies stemming from the World Columbian Exposition. Women—white women specifically—were relegated to a "Women's Building" that showcased women's various contributions to arts, education, and home economics, thus promoting ideas and beliefs about appropriate behaviors and standards for a respectable womanhood that often excluded women of color. Indeed, Ida B. Wells joined her soon-to-be-husband, Ferdinand L. Barnett, and Frederick Douglass to disseminate the pamphlet *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not at the World's Columbian Exposition*, while only one African American woman, Fannie Barrier Williams, was permitted inclusion at the Women's Building exposition.

Women of Courage in Journalism

by Shannon Garvin

Around the world, female journalists offer a necessary voice to the experiences and perspectives of women in extraordinary events and everyday circumstances. Women often do not experience life as the

men in their cultures, and reporting a more accurate picture requires the voices of all—women and men, as well as various religions and ethnicities. The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) supports the work of women in journalism around the world. Each year. they offer Courage in Journalism Awards. Courage is often needed by women—whether their efforts are sidelined or mocked by coworkers and local male-driven media or whether they literally put their lives on the line every day, reporting from countries devastated by war or where women have no voice in society.

In Afghanistan, three young female journalists (ages 18-20) were gunned down and another injured after leaving work on March 2, 2021. The Afghan Journalists Security Committee reports that fourteen women journalists were threatened or killed in 2020. African Women in Media (AWIM) offers a place for women to write and educate the world on women's issues in Africa. Women have also been at the forefront of educating Africans across the continent on health and COVID-19.

Instead, women of color framed three distinct exhibits at the world fair. One display included an African American woman, Nancy Green, who performed in the debut of "Aunt Jemima," selling pancakes and advancing an early version of mass marketing around a commercial brand, one that relied on the myth of the Old South and its plantation romance, where big, dark-skinned Black women "knew their place" in positions of slavery and servitude. The stereotype of Aunt Jemima promoted the belief that such women were more than happy to provide comfort and comfort food for the white American consumer, a belief that was so deeply ingrained in the culture that pancakes and syrup under the brand name Aunt Jemima continued to sell until its removal in 2021. A different exhibit featured "Dahomey Amazons," fierce African female soldiers defeated by the French, who had colonized Dahomey (present-day Benin) and placed these women on display as a commemoration of the "savage" and "unfeminine" Africans they were able to subjugate in the interest of colonialism. In providing both domestic and foreign examples of Black female subjugation, the male dominance of western imperialism is affirmed, as represented in the contemporary "Scramble for Africa" among European nations in the late nineteenth century, also coinciding with the violence of the US post-Reconstruction era and the "manifest destiny" playing out in the American imperial wars in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

An intersectional analysis lays bare how gender politics collides with these racial politics. For example, these exhibits based in Black "primitivism" found a parallel in the "Orientalism" of the racial/ethnic others from Asia and the Middle East, as displayed with the "Snake dancers" of Egypt, which was colonized during this period by Great Britain. This third display of otherness at the World Columbian Exposition introduced an early version of the belly dance to the fair's audience. This dance eventually formed the "exotic dance" of the strip tease.

"Egyptian Dancer" from the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois, 1892

Indeed, various women performed as "Little Egypt," constructing a striptease performance based on the snake dancers seen at the world fair (Bentley 2005, 36). Moreover, the "Dance of the Seven Veils," imagined in the operatic *Salome* and based on the titular biblical seductress—who infamously requested the beheading of John the Baptist after dancing sensuously for King Herod—situates dangerous female sexuality through the lens of Orientalism. The dance was re-created in Fritz Lang's silent film *Metropolis* (1927) to convey the femme fatale quality of Maria, the false cyborg invented to lead the working-class masses astray but who is eventually burned at the stake like a witch, a spectacle steeped in a general misogyny affecting all women. The striptease of the veiled Oriental woman, via the "exotic dance," is in effect a colonial project in which "The inaccessibility of the veiled woman, mirroring the mystery of the Orient itself, requires a process of Western unveiling" (Shohat 1991, 57).

Such sexual and racial differences became a fixture in the culture, so much so that early cinema routinely constructed exotic Others in positions of servitude or villainy. D. W. Griffith's early silent films are exemplary, from his depiction of cinema's first trans character in *Judith of Bethulia* (1914)—included to exaggerate the "strangeness" of the "Oriental" biblical setting and the transgressive behavior of its female hero—to his infamous celebration of the Ku Klux Klan in his cinematically innovative *Birth of a Nation* (1915), with its construction of Black male rapists and white female innocence, to his orgiastic biblical drama *Intolerance* (1916), which trades in Orientalist fantasies. These representations framed and maintained the normalcy and dominance of whiteness and heteropatriarchy, which was eventually broadcast to the world through colonialism. Fortunately, African American filmmakers like Oscar Micheaux invented their own innovative styles to create cinematic counternarratives, as he offered with his film *Within Our Gates* (1918), an ambitious feature-length narrative that undercuts the heroism of white supremacists in *Birth of a Nation*. Micheaux opted instead to intercut the horrific scene of the lynching of a Black family with one in which a Black woman is sexually assaulted by a white man, who is later revealed to be her father

in an incestuous storyline that undermines the era's racist sentiments of racial difference that a legacy of enslavement exposes through interracial and interfamily relations.

Between the "exotic dance" of Little Egypt during the late nineteenth century and later performances in 1920s Paris by African American entertainer Josephine Baker, who similarly performed "black primitivism" through her own nude performances, the racial Other is routinely sexualized in contrast to the idealization of a pure and chaste white womanhood. Baker's performances both on stage and in film reiterate these racial divides, in which her wild, libidinously driven "primitive" persona serves as a foil to white male subjects, who are often enticed but inevitably resist the charms and dangers of racialized women when they leave the colonized space of Africa or the "Orient" and return to their proper place and home of the white heterosexual family.

Despite such messages, the popularity of entertainers like Baker among the French was such that white French women bought "bronzer" creams and powders to emulate her dark complexion, a reversal of sorts of the racial order.[1] Similar to present-day entertainers and social media influencers, such as the Kardashians and the white Instagram "blackfishers" bronzing their skin tones, these acts of racial otherness, through "blackface," suggest the fantasy and desire to "eat the other," as bell hooks describes, in which Blackness represents a heightened form of excitement, pleasure, and danger that whites can consume in temporary escape of their own conventional whiteness (hooks 1992, 21). Indeed, the racial bifurcation that constructed chaste, virginal white womanhood in opposition to Black and/or brown female sexuality inspired white women to appropriate the Orient/Primitive in order to assert the existence of their own sexuality, hence the "bronzer," hence the "Little Egypt" exotic dance.

Such racial politics complicate the analysis of feminist film theory, with Laura Mulvey identifying the "male gaze" as the dominant gendered structure framing the lens of the movie camera, with women's bodies consumed for their "to-be-looked-at-ness" status as objects and sexual spectacle, while men assume their positions as "bearer of the look" (Mulvey 1975, 11). It is not just the camera's gaze that is masculine-oriented, but so too is the movie lighting and focus, as Richard Dyer argues, oriented toward whiteness. Observing the ways that camera lighting creates a translucent quality around white skin, Dyer suggests, "the aesthetic technology of the photographic media, the apparatus and practice *par excellence* of a light culture, not only assumes and privileges whiteness but also constructs it. . . . [Idealized] white women are bathed in and permeated by light. It streams through them and falls on them from above. In short, they glow" (Dyer 1997, 122).

Through this culture of "light"/whiteness, Dyer further argues that racial and ethnic hierarchies are inevitably constructed among white subjects, from the Aryan ideal of blonde hair and blue eyes to its denigrated opposite in the "darker" white races of Jews and Roma, who were targeted for deportation and extermination during the World War II era of Nazi Germany. While this regime made explicit their white supremacist and eugenicist aims, the same ideology shaped the western world's media. Within Hollywood

cinema, the young, blonde white woman, ingenue or leading lady, would be cast as heroic, virtuous, or angelic, in contrast to her darker-haired villain. A glaring example is the horror movie *Dracula's Daughter* (1936). While Vito Russo argues that such films subliminally depict queer representations owing to the Hays Code during the mid-1930s until the 1960s that forbade scenes of "sexual perversion" along with other taboos such as interracial romance, we may also recognize how the monstrous villain is not only queer but also foreign, dark-haired, perhaps even stemming from an Orientalist background as a racial and exotic "Other." The dark and queer femme fatale is doubly coded for unacceptable womanhood. As Jane Caputi and Lauri Sagle have observed, "No matter how insistently white and heterosexual the classic femme fatale may appear, it is the dark woman/lesbian whose mythos and potencies—deepened due to her distance from and disloyalty to white heterosexist patriarchy—energizes her" (2004, 93).

While these racialized depictions of womanhood are based in ideologies of biological difference requiring the eugenics ("well born") approach to a racial hierarchy, several movie stars and entertainers altered their bodies, names, and cultural backgrounds to construct idealized white femininity. As Judith Butler would say, gender is *performative,* meaning that our gender roles and behaviors are not biologically ingrained nor tied to a specific sex (Butler 1990). "Man," "woman," "transgender," "cisgender." These all mean different things, historically or from different cultures. Gender is also a social construction, as is race and nationality, for we learn these cues about roles and behaviors through a given society and can achieve different appearances based on these cues. Several of the famous "blonde bombshells," from Jean Harlow to Marilyn Monroe, were actual brunettes, and women of color were often expected to "pass" as white, while Jewish stars might "gentilize" their names.

Hedy Lamarr is an interesting figure as a Jewish star, changing her name from Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler to sound less anglicized and more exotic. She was often typecast as a raven-haired femme fatale, most notably as the biblical temptress in Victor Young's *Samson and Delilah* (1949). Prior to her Hollywood films, the Austrian-born actress was infamously depicted in the Czech film *Ecstasy* (1933), in which her onscreen orgasm was a first in cinematic history, with a close-up shot of her face. Lamarr's legacy is more of the scientific kind, however, as she used her offscreen genius to invent a frequency-hopping technology in her aid of the United States and their fight against Nazi Germany. This technology would later be used in such digital technologies as Bluetooth, wireless, and GPS.

Hedy Lamarr: Star of Silver Screen, Mother of Wi-Fi

by Rebecca Lambert

As we talk about media and critique it for the ways in which it maintains power structures, it can also be an incredibly useful tool for sharing forgotten stories and writing people back into the history from which they were erased.

The documentary *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story* is an example of finally giving a woman the credit she deserves. Alexandra Dean, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, director, and producer, tells the story of Hedy Lamarr, an iconic 1930s film star who is now being credited as "the mother of Wi-Fi." She collaborated with composer George Antheil to create a "frequency-hopping technology . . . that used rolls of perforated paper—like the ones in player pianos—to quickly switch between frequencies." This communications system was the foundation for current technology such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), Wi-Fi, and Bluetooth.

Dean found interview tapes from 1990 that Lamarr did with *Forbes* magazine, which she used to tell Lamarr's story. These interviews helped shape a project that allowed the inventor and actress to tell her own life story, giving visibility to a history that had been erased.

Learning Activity

How have you already seen media used to resist oppression and what new information did you learn?

What other ways can media be used to disrupt systems of oppression?

How can you hold media accountable while also using it to fight for social justice?

Alexandra Dean's documentary *Bombshell* (2017), which explores Lamarr's life and her scientific invention, notes how such genius did not "fit" the image created by the film studio system of its glamourous movie stars, women who were to be seen and constricted by the male gaze while downplaying any other complex character that lay beneath the pretty face. This documentary, premiering a year after Theodore Melfi's feature film *Hidden Figures* (2016), based on the history of African American women who worked alongside white women at NASA as human "computers" (the precursor to the computer machine that replaced women's labor in a system of automation), is a reminder of the ways women's labor and intellect are made invisible in the interest of promoting their physical attributes concerning beauty and desirability, which are highlighted for a white heteropatriarchal system.

Human Computers

by Shannon Garvin

The 2016 movie *Hidden Figures* revealed stories of gifted and incredible women who had been ignored in the history books. It showcases some of the African American women who worked at NASA as "human computers" and eventually engineers, and the breadth of social challenges they faced.

Before computers, people with excellent math skills were sometimes employed as "human computers," working out calculations in their heads and on paper in ways that seemed impossible. The stories of Christine Darden, Annie Easley, Mary Jackson, Miriam Mann, and Dorothy Vaughn now spark the imagination of young girls and boys of all ethnicities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

A handful of AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) women also worked at NASA. Helen Ling supervised the women-only human computer group and created her own form of maternity leave—by rehiring pregnant women after they gave birth, at a time when marriage and pregnancy were a death knell to careers. The work of the women in this group opened doors for women to transfer into engineering jobs and for female engineers to apply for and be hired at NASA in the decade running up to America's first orbital flights and landing on the moon.

In 2015, President Obama awarded Katherine Johnson the Presidential Medal of Freedom in honor of her work and that of her peers who had been overlooked. On February 26, 2021, NASA livestreamed the naming ceremony of its building after Mary W. Jackson. Hired in 1958 and now in her eighties, Sue Finley continues to work at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as the longest-serving female human computer and engineer.

Of course, not all women fit the standard, and in Hollywood, Black women were often erased in film narratives or marginalized as servants or slaves. Unlike the white woman's "to-be-looked-at-ness" status, Black women by contrast represented what Jane Gaines describes as the "paradox of being," in which the Black female body "did not signify 'woman'" (Gaines 1988, 12). And for those light-skinned Black women who were in closer proximity to whiteness, they were encouraged to deny their race altogether.

The multi-talented Lena Horne was once encouraged to "pass" as an "exotic" Latin American woman. When she refused to identify as anything other than African American—*and* refused maid roles—her film career was cut short. Horne spent most of her career in music and on the stage, but her cinematic legacy is preserved in "soundies" (musical numbers that could be cut from the film when it was shown in Southern states that forbade positive representations of African Americans) and in all-Black 1940s film musicals such as *Cabin in the Sky*, *Stormy Weather*, and *The Bronze Venus*.

Lena Horne, *The Bronze Venus*, 1943

Likewise, the lesser-known actress Fredi Washington received several offers by Hollywood studio heads in the 1930s to turn her into a movie star on par with Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford—provided that she pass for white. Like Horne, Washington refused, and as a result she was relegated to the margins. Studios felt she wasn't "black enough" for the usual maid roles offered to Black women. When performing in a rare non-maid role in the film *Emperor Jones* (1933), she would be forced to wear dark makeup to prevent audiences from viewing her as a white woman, because a romantic entanglement with the Black leading man (Paul Robeson) would have violated the Hays anti-miscegenation code. Washington is best known for the "tragic mulatta" role of Peola in the film *Imitation of Life* (1934), based on Fannie Hurst's sentimental novel and starring Claudette Colbert and Louise Beavers. Peola passes for white and rejects her mother (Beavers), who depicts the Aunt Jemima stereotype on which Colbert's white boss-mistress can exploit for her own success. Washington's famous portrayal would be erased from cultural memory with Douglas Sirk's remake from 1959, in which Susan Kohner, a white actress of Mexican descent, plays Washington's character.

Limited in her roles, Washington instead took up the mantle of theatrical activism and racial uplift. In 1937, she helped to establish the Negro Actors Guild, an advocacy group for Black actors onstage and onscreen that fought for better scripts and working opportunities (Woodard 2020). Had the Negro Actors Guild not existed, one of the American Film Institute's top ten movies of all time, *Gone with the Wind* (1939), would be a much more blatantly racist film (and may not have become such a classic) than the one we know today. With the help of the Guild, Hattie McDaniel, who plays Mammy in the film, for which she became the first African American to win an Academy Award, successfully lobbied for studio heads to erase the N-word from the script (Sturtevant 1999). She also refused to do a scene that expected her to shine the shoes of her master while on her knees. Likewise, Butterfly McQueen, who played Prissy, wouldn't do a scene in which her character ate watermelon. McQueen also refused to be slapped onscreen by actress Vivien Leigh, who portrayed the film's heroine Scarlett O'Hara.

Hattie McDaniel and Vivien Leigh, *Gone With the Wind*, 1939

Even as Black women like McDaniel and McQueen worked with the Guild to agitate behind the scenes, their willingness to take stereotypical roles subjected them to scathing critiques by leading Black voices such as the NAACP.

Academy Award-winning actress Hattie McDaniel

Washington, who would later serve as a major critic and columnist for the radical Harlem newspaper *The People's Voice*, was not quite as condemnatory toward McDaniel but did challenge the actress to stop defending her right to play the "mammy" roles.

Washington also called on Hollywood to offer McDaniel better roles and urged Black audiences to support Black political theater while boycotting Hollywood movies featuring the traditional Black stereotypes of toms, coons, and mammies (Bogle 2003).

Other women of color were reduced to stereotype or erased altogether. An example is the Chinese American actress Anna May Wong, who fit stereotypes of the "Oriental" femme fatale and the "dragon lady" but was infamously overlooked to portray the struggling Chinese farmer O-Lan in the film adaptation of Pearl S. Buck's critically acclaimed novel *The Good Earth* (1937). The white actress Luise Rainer was instead selected for this role, for which she won an Academy Award. This film specifically used the racist practice of "yellowface," in which white actors would tape their eyes to create the stereotypically "slant-eyed" look of an East Asian.

Latinas faced similar restrictions. If they were not light enough to pass as white—such as the Latina actress Margarita Carmen Cansino, who became the famous redhead Rita Hayworth—they were relegated to performing all the brown and foreign characters, as was the case with Puerto Rican-born Rita Moreno. Even when Moreno was cast as the only Latina in *West Side Story*, for which she won an Academy Award, her own light skin was deemed inauthentic and was subsequently darkened to portray the Puerto Rican character Anita, much to her chagrin. Not all Latinas in the movies were depicted in "brownface," but they sometimes functioned as caricatures, such as the Brazilian entertainer Carmen Miranda.

Miranda's stereotypical depiction of the Latin woman in numerous Hollywood technicolor musicals turned her into a "Good Neighbor" policy with Latin America and the banana industries emerging from the region, resulting in her proudly proclaiming, "bananas is my business" (Enloe 1989). Her iconic look—the bananas she carried on her head, the headscarf, and bejeweled costume—was directly appropriated from the local Bahiana woman, an Afro-Brazilian woman whom she emulated while her musical band popularized the local "samba" music associated with Afro-Brazilian culture. Miranda's light skin made this Black aesthetic palatable for a white American audience, even if Miranda herself could not quite escape the caricature that she had become, which lived longer than her own brief life when adapted for the Chiquita Banana logo.

Rita Moreno, 1954

Black music has often occupied critical sound space in Hollywood cinema when the Black bodies performing such art were themselves marginalized, from the first "talkie," *The Jazz Singer* (1927) featuring its white star Al Jolson in blackface, to the "soundies" referenced earlier. As Julie Dash demonstrates in her film short *Illusions* (1983), film studios would use the voices of playback singers, some of whom were African American, and match these with the white female bodies onscreen for the various movie musicals produced during Hollywood's golden age of cinema. Hindi cinema, however, also known as "Bollywood," established a system for their numerous movie musicals that enabled the playback singers to emerge as stars in their own right. This occurred with famous playback singer Lata Mangeshkar, whose high-pitched soprano voice is recognizable as the "quintessential voice of Indian femininity" (Sundar 2008, 145). This was best aided when her voice was the star vehicle in the film *Mahal* (1949), which featured a ghostly figure who is not seen but only heard. Without a corporeal presence to distract from her vocal presence, Mangeshkar's voice emerged as the film's central feminine figure.

In the same era of 1950s Hollywood cinema, the studio system began to ease up on some of their racial representations, as Black women singers popular in the music scene made cameo appearances in key films

and expanded such movie roles beyond the stereotypical maid. Such examples include the international gospel star Mahalia Jackson, who performed the spiritual "Soon We'll Be Done" in Sirk's *Imitation of Life*, and before that, jazz singer Abbey Lincoln, who performed a secularized version of the gospel song "Spread the Word" in the comedy musical film *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956), starring Jayne Mansfield. Lincoln specifically occupied space as a Black sex symbol—similar to her actress peers Dorothy Dandridge and Eartha Kitt—when she wore the same red evening gown that Marilyn Monroe had worn in her iconic film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). But Lincoln claimed that she had burned that dress, thus ushering a new era in which she and her jazz drummer husband Max Roach promoted Black liberation and "Black is Beautiful" when she hosted in 1962 the first "Naturally" fashion show in Harlem, New York, that featured "Grandassa" models who emphasized Black women's beauty around dark skin, natural hairdos, and African-based fashions (Ford 2015).

The Beauty of the Self

by Sarah Baum

All women are beautiful, but not all beauty has been accepted by mainstream culture. For too long, beauty has been judged through a Eurocentric lens—blonde straight hair and pale skin. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the "Black Is Beautiful" movement began, celebrating the beauty of African women, their various skin tones and natural hair. Photographer Kwame Brathwaite documented this movement with his camera, and in 1962 he and several others formed Grandassa Models.

Grandassa Models promoted positive images of beautiful Black women by featuring curvy bodies, natural hair, a range of skin tones, and African-style fashions. They started in Harlem and spread across the United States, all the while encouraging Black women to embrace their own natural beauty. This was a radical idea in a time when the push to assimilate with European styles was almost mandatory across the country in both social and work settings. Black women had conformed by straightening their hair or wearing wigs in an effort to fit an impossible standard of beauty. Brathwaite and Grandassa Models held fashion shows and exalted the growing Black Is Beautiful movement.

While Grandassa Models may no longer be holding shows, the push for acceptance of all forms of beauty continues. Modern activists are working on the Crown Act, a law that would prohibit discrimination against race-based hair styles in employment, housing, and education. It's been written into law in seven states, the most recent being Virginia in 2020. We've reached a time where all our voices should speak up and declare that all women, no matter their race, are beautiful, and most of all that ethnic and racial differences are beautiful because beauty isn't about vanity, it's about self-expression and acceptance of all.

Reframing Beauty

The Grandassa movement continued the practice of local Black beauty shows and pageants that have existed within Black communities, but prior to this focus on Afrocentrism, such women often emulated the beauty and glamour of white womanhood: from being light-skinned to engaging in hair straightening products. The embrace of Black women as dark-skinned, Afro-wearing subjects of beauty reflected the social and cultural shifts that also took place in the 1960s and 1970s with the US civil rights movement and colonial independence movements abroad.

Such shifts also disrupted gender politics, as one of the first American feminist movements involved protesting the Miss America pageant in 1968, which was lambasted for its racial exclusions of non-white contestants and its adherence to a narrow definition of womanhood based on white heteropatriarchal standards of beauty, femininity, and respectability. Curiously, this mainstream protest paralleled the protest event of the first Miss Black America pageant the same night, which reinforced how Black women's protest against the sexism of the beauty pageant includes the right to even be seen as beauty subjects, if not beauty objects. Interestingly, in 1970, local feminists in England staged a similar protest of the Miss World competition, which incidentally crowned its first Black beauty winner, Jennifer Hosten from Grenada. Such conflicts between the protest of the patriarchal construction of beauty and the embrace of a non-white beauty queen to challenge the white supremacy inherent in the patriarchal beauty construct remain fraught for a multiracial women's movement.

Indeed, beauty pageants in 1970 began embracing Black women in a superficial demonstration of racial acceptance, including the first Black contestant in the Miss America pageant, Cheryl Browne, and the first Black semifinalist in the Miss USA pageant, Jayne Kennedy. By the time Vanessa Williams became the first Black Miss America in 1984, her win revitalized interest in the beauty pageant and helped salvage it from cultural irrelevance. Williams was controversial, however, not just as the first Black beauty queen, but also as one who was light-skinned with blue-green eyes and was therefore considered in proximity to whiteness and less representative of women in Black communities.

The publishing, without her consent, of explicit nude photos of her in sexual poses with another woman in the racy magazine *Penthouse* forced her to relinquish her crown, as the scandal disrupted the "ideal" of Miss America, implicitly understood to be ladylike, proper, and sexually chaste. That the first and only Miss America to give up her crown was also the first Black Miss America certainly highlights how intersectionality redefines womanhood. The Miss America pageant, which in 1937 had issued a clause that required all contestants be "in good health and of the white race," invoked the "ideal" Miss America at a time when it sought to rehabilitate its image from a risqué pageant that displayed women's bodies in skimpy bathing suits into one that was appropriate for young ladies (Ades 2002).

That respectability somehow equated with whiteness and able-bodiedness reinforced the unspoken eugenicist and white supremacist ideology of the pageant. Heather Whitestone, the first disabled Miss America in 1995, visibly fit the image of the white ladylike beauty queen because her disability—being hearing impaired—was invisible and unnoticeable until she spoke. She was allowed space to be disabled without disrupting the racial and able-bodied tenets of beauty on which the pageant relied. Such respectability politics undergirds why those who disapproved of an African American Miss America would seek to undermine her reign through the publication of explicit photos that reinforced stereotypes of Black female hypersexuality. To again rehabilitate its image, the Miss America pageant selected a blonde, "squeaky clean" Mormon as the successive winner after this scandal and after another light-skinned Black woman, Suzette Charles, who was the first runner-up to Vanessa Williams, briefly served as the second Black Miss America when Williams was forced to relinquish her crown. It took another six years before the pageant safely crowned another Black woman, this time the dark-skinned and born-again Christian Debbie Turner, in 1990, in order to rectify some of the criticisms of Vanessa Williams's win: from selecting a winner who was undeniably Black to one whose religiosity would have prevented her from engaging in similar sexual acts.

These racial and sexual politics via the beauty pageant especially highlight what Yaba Blay calls "commodity racism" through commodities—namely, soap—that "advertised whiteness as the color of civilization" (Blay 2011, 13). If soap advertisements specifically created links between the cleanliness of white skin in contrast to sullied Black skin—hence the popularization of skin-bleaching creams as exemplary of upward mobility and racial advancement—the same corollary applied to sexual mores, hence the "sullying" of the racial purity of white culture through racial integration, miscegenation, and diversity and inclusion. The Miss America scandal surrounding Vanessa Williams implicitly reflects this anxiety of racial contamination.

The "Black is Beautiful" movement was seen as essential in combating racism and doing so on a global scale. Similar to the Grandassa models show, the pro-Black carnival block Ilê Aiyê, which was founded in 1975 in the northern state of Bahia in Brazil, began hosting the Noite da Beleza Negra ("Night of Black Beauty") in 1980, during which the Deusa de Ébano ("Ebony Goddess") is crowned during the country's carnival season (Moraes-Liu 2010). Such local representations of Black pride countered the sexualized and often nude bodies of carnival "samba dancers," which reinforced stereotypes of Black women's hypersexuality that was broadcast to world media.

Woman performing at Ilê Aiyê

Such global images enticed European sex tourists to Brazil in a system that, as Erica Williams argues, continues the legacy of the early twentieth-century project of *embranquecimento*, or "whitening," in which state officials "encouraged Europeans to settle and hopefully, intermarry with the descendants of enslaved Africans . . . to 'dilute' the black population" (Williams 2010). The sex tourists—usually from European countries such as Italy and Germany to visit Brazil for Black and brown women—contrasted with the model scouts who visited the southern part of the country, specifically Sao Paulo, in search of the white ideal for the next top fashion model. For instance, Brazilian models like Giselle Bundchen and Adriana Lima dominated the global model industry in the first part of the twenty-first century. In this racial twist, "women of African descent in Brazil may be considered 'hot' or 'sexy,' [but] they are not considered 'beautiful' enough to be models" (Williams 2010).

Indeed, world media has continuously traveled the world in search of "white" ideals of womanhood to construct a "global norm" around women's bodies while relegating non-white women as exotic and racial others, reduced to the same "racial curiosities" that have shaped the first human exhibitions in the western world. The international beauty pageant exemplifies this dichotomy, in which women are paraded from around the world but are expected to adhere to the same global standard based in white, western concepts of femininity. Miss World 1994, Aishwarya Rai, for example, represented Miss India, but she was fair-skinned, blue-eyed, and incidentally became one of the biggest Bollywood stars who shaped her nation's idea of beauty. Reflecting both colorism and casteism—and outside influences such as its colonization under Great Britain—the Bollywood ideal in India resembles the Hollywood ideal, hence its preference for *goriya*. Even when African women are selected for pageants like Miss World, in the case of Nigeria's

Agbani Darego, who was the first Black African to be crowned in 2001, they must conform, if not to the fair-skinned ideal, then the body ideal of thinness, which was a departure from Nigeria's full-figured preference.

Aishwarya Rai, Superstar, Miss World 1994, and Humanitarian

by Sarah Baum

Born in Mangalore, India, Aishwarya Rai never could have dreamed of the life she would eventually lead. Her original goal was to become an architect, but while in school to learn her trade, she won an international supermodel contest in 1991, and that changed her life. In 1994, she competed in and won the Miss World Pageant. After she was crowned, she spoke about her desire to be an ambassador for peace during her yearlong reign. Miss World led to more modeling, which led to acting, and Aishwarya excelled. She won critical acclaim as well as the hearts of millions of fans.

Her massive success would have been enough for most people, but not for her was the quiet path. Instead, she used her fame to be a spokesperson for many worthy causes. She became an ambassador for the Eye Bank Association of India, reaching out to prompt eye donations across her home country and registering herself to be an eye donor. She also served as ambassador for Pulse Polio, a government organization that works to eradicate polio from India. At the same time, she served as spokesperson for the Year of Microcredit, a United Nations effort to end poverty.

All of this would have kept anyone busy enough, but Aishwarya's humanitarian heart called for her to do more. She lends her time to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) of India and has been a spokesperson for Smile Train, an international organization that provides free cleft palate surgeries to children in need in more than seventy-six countries. She has also been appointed a Goodwill ambassador to UNAIDS, a United Nations organization dealing with the HIV and AIDS crisis. Her focus as Goodwill Ambassador is raising awareness of infant and newborn infection rates, with the goal of making sure no child is born with HIV, as well as prompting access to antiretroviral treatments for mothers living with the virus.

Aishwarya Rai's dream of working toward peace has moved her to help many people in need, and she uses her fame to shine a spotlight on causes that move the entire world a little closer to that dream.

These global expectations inevitably shape global markets in which neoliberal capitalism finds a new frontier through women's bodies. As Kathryn Pauly Morgan (1991) argues, the "colonization of women's bodies" is reflected in cosmetic surgeries, from Jewish women fixing the shape of their noses to appear less Jewish to Asian women seeking double eyelid surgeries to appear less Asian. These capitalist desires

parallel the phenomenon of cultures that once traditionally embraced full-figured beauty now preferring thinness, as well as the popularity of skin-bleaching creams among African and South Asian women. This trend is perhaps best expressed in the consumption of Fair and Lovely creams from Unilever, which also sells Dove, an inclusive brand that embraces "real beauty" in advertisements highlighting different-sized women across all races and ethnicities, including cis and trans women. While US culture is careful to not promote skin-bleaching directly, the ideology is definitely reinforced through advertisements that craft their own skin-lightening techniques through airbrushing and light filters, as had occurred with L'Oreal advertisements featuring whitened images of Beyoncé and Aishwarya Rai, both of whom were already light-skinned in their racial categories.

Interestingly, in 2020, Fair and Lovely attempted a name change with "Glow and Lovely," a nod to solidarity with Black Lives Matter. But this name change does not alter the "culture of light" that "glow" suggests in its translucent qualities of whiteness, as Dyer (1997) argues. Perhaps a glaring example is Latina entertainer Jennifer Lopez and her "Glow by JLo" fragrance ads, which literally whitened her body to convey the "glow" of her appearance.

Muslim woman wearing hijab

As a multinational company, Unilever seems to be able to have their cake and eat it too, by promoting diversity and inclusion through Dove while also promoting whiteness through its skin-bleaching creams. Incidentally, the company has been accused of providing unfair wages for its workers and toxic work environments. Indian rapper Sofia Ashraf raised global awareness of these problems in such Global South areas as Kodaikanal, India, through her rap song "Kodaikanal Won't" (2015), a parody of rapper Nicki Minaj's immensely popular "Anaconda" (2014). Here, Ashraf shrewdly appropriates the popularity of hip-hop to address the problems of globalization while also highlighting how localized hip-hop cultures have enabled political performances by rappers and spoken-word poets, from Ashraf to Sri-Lankan-born M.I.A. who engages in complex South Asian and Muslim music and videos, to Afro-Cuban duos like Krudas Cubensi embracing queerness, to Muslimah rapper Mona Haydar, who once defiantly embraced her hijab to contest rampant Islamophobia with her rap song "Wrap My Hijab" (2017). These women rappers occupy subversive but marginalized space in comparison to the more visible and commercialized rappers represented in the performance of Nicki Minaj and her booty-enhanced twerking in "Anaconda," as well as similar hypersexual performances from chart-topping rappers like Iggy Azalea, Cardi B, and Megan Thee Stallion.

Unilever: Diversity and Inclusion, or "Beauty Is White"?

by Rebecca Lambert

How well do you know your favorite brands? Have you thought about the messages they send? How about the messages of the major corporations to which they belong? The Dove brand has gained attention in recent years with its campaigns to challenge beauty standards. In keeping with this strategy, Dove announced they would be removing the word "normal" from their beauty products as an attempt to disrupt the construction that beauty standards based on whiteness are "normal." But further research illuminates that Dove's parent company, Unilever, still markets and sells the skin-lightening cream Fair & Lovely (now renamed Glow & Lovely). These creams inherently promote whiteness and white beauty standards by promoting the idea that lighter skin is more beautiful.

Learning Activity

Do more research about Unilever and their brands. As you learn more, does the company act in a way that supports their statement that they promote "positive beauty" and "taking action to drive positive change . . . setting out to transform the systems that hold individuals back"? What actions could corporations and other media take to accomplish positive change?

Share what you learn with your friends, class, or group. What is one small step you can take together toward equity? It is important to question media and to critically think about the connections between messaging and the systems of oppression in which they, and we as a global community, operate.

From the ladylike beauty queen to the more vixenlike commercial rapper, womanhood is still dichotomized into good girl / bad girl imagery and broadcast around the globe in world media. And even when the category of womanhood is broadened to include gender nonbinary women, they are conveniently placed into this bifurcation, as demonstrated through highly visible and femme-appearing Black trans women entertainers like Laverne Cox and Janet Mock, or Miss Universe transgender contestants like Jenna Talackova (Miss Canada 2012) and Angela Ponce (Miss Spain 2018), who can all visibly pass as cisgender and thus be rendered as "acceptable" women. This is quite similar to representations of same-sex desire in which mostly feminine-appearing lesbian couples are depicted in media, especially in "girl-on-girl" pornographic constructions for the heterosexist male gaze. Attempts have been made to complicate these representations through more complex engagements with beauty and sexuality, however. For example, Barbadian-born pop star and fashion icon Rihanna (née Robin Fenty) has promoted the full embrace of diverse genders and races through her Fenty Beauty cosmetics, offering foundation shades for every

complexion, as well as her Savage X Fenty lingerie line that is inclusive of bodies across sizes, disability, cis- and transgender identities, races and ethnicities—succeeding where Victoria's Secret, in stubbornly excluding plus-sized and trans models from their fashion shows, has failed.

These changing representations and beliefs have flourished through our digital revolution, which travels globally. As mentioned above, our first "computers" were women, whose labor was eventually replaced with the computer machine. The first computer programmers were women until the personal computer industry flourished and placed this technology mostly into men's hands within the western world, subsequently erasing women's computer history, including that of Hedy Lamarr. Women's representations were instead re-objectified through online pornography, human trafficking networks (such as "mail-order brides"), and misogynistic video games, perhaps best represented by the "Gamergate" controversy in 2014, which targeted and ostracized women game developers through online and offline violence.

How Is Doxxing Used as a Tactic of Misogyny?

by Victoria Keenan

Doxxing is a method of online harassment in which a targeted individual's identity or personal information (such as their telephone number, address, photographs, emails, etc.) are released without their consent, generally for the purposes of intimidation or to call on others to threaten harm. Another use of this tactic is to undermine the credibility of the person being victimized, which can affect them professionally and financially, as well as sabotage legal allegations and serve to silence marginalized voices. This was the case in 2016 when Jessica Leeds accused Donald Trump of sexual assault, and Fox Business host Lou Dobbs retweeted Leeds's personal information.

The motivation for doxxing often has misogynistic, racist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory overtones, and women are more likely to receive sexualized forms of harassment as a result of being doxxed. This gendered abuse also intersects with other categories of identity, with women of color and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) being disproportionately affected.

Doxxing can be incredibly dangerous, as it can negatively affect the victim's mental health, lead to death by suicide, or provoke intimate partner violence or "honor" crimes. Another alarming trend is known as "swatting," whereby a false police report that warrants a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team response is made to the police at the victim's address. One example of this happened in 2017 when Kansas State Police killed Andrew Finch after his address was doxxed in retaliation to an online dispute.

The "digital divide" widened among those who could not financially or culturally access the Internet. Nonetheless, developing nations found innovative ways to incorporate mobile telephones, and social media widened this outreach, enabling a variety of voices to formulate progressive ideas about gender, race, class, and nationality—right alongside those on the more extreme, conservative side. In other words, voices from the margins can now shape those in the mainstream via global information networks, as represented by Rihanna's fashion show, which demonstrates how much she is listening, learning, and willing to incorporate the diversity that is representative of this world audience and to offer an inclusive vision of women's beauty. Such visibility, however, can only serve as the starting point for a political movement. As Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) reminds us, popular feminisms often coexist with popular misogyny. "Body positivity" must therefore transcend the individual at the neoliberalist consumer level to constitute the wider body politic of a collective movement focused on dismantling systemic oppressions.

Is Your Search Engine Biased?

by Shannon Garvin

I come from a family of mathematicians. I grew up in an era when research meant books. Today, in 2021, I love to use words to make the Google algorithms work for me. It's a kind of game—where I can be in control of the results, rather than the results of a Google search randomly leading me to who knows where.

Most people born after 2000 do not realize that search engines are not magical, fact-spitting machines allowing us to skip learning the "how" of research. By necessity, they are the results of human-written algorithms and AI (artificial intelligence) learning software. Billions of searches are made each hour without human supervision.

As a result, there is something called "search engine bias." Google and other search engines rank results. When you type a search, you are more likely to see ads and opinions that reflect cultural bias rather than content or research. Most people do not read past the first few entries, meaning the best information is almost never read.

Importantly, results also reflect dominant culture, rather than the voices of everyone. This leads people to believe they are getting the best data but they remain ignorant that most facts are missing from what they are quickly skimming. Today, the best place to learn how to research using Google or another search engine is the same best place it has been for hundreds of years: the library! Your local librarian can help you understand how words produce results.

Conclusion

In the neoliberal global market, diversity sells. Disney had already learned this lesson in its collection of animated Disney princesses from around the world: from the Indigenous American Pocahontas to Chinese woman warrior Mulan to the more progressive Moana of Polynesia. On the one hand, various cultures revel in this global attention from such a dominant commercial enterprise. On the other hand, they are ever cautious whenever Disney threatens to colonize their culture outright, as Disney once did when attempting to trademark Mexico's traditional Day of the Dead when creating *Coco* (2017), the Pixar animated film centered around this annual festivity. There is always the tension between what is cultural appreciation and what is outright cultural theft.

This brings us full circle to Beyoncé's *Black Is King*, which has been accused of appropriating African cultures. But the pop star utilized the big budget provided by Disney to construct a glorious vision of African people, cultures, and music, including the celebration of Black women's beauty in "Brown Skin Girl." And yet, as bell hooks once critiqued of her use of glamour to aestheticize the Black female body in a previous audio-visual project, *Lemonade* (2016), such emphasis on beauty is "all about the body, and the body as commodity. This is certainly not radical or revolutionary" (hooks 2016). While embracing dark skin in a reversal of white supremacist ideology, the Black body as commodity does not dismantle other ideologies, such as classism and ableism. In this reclamation of racialized aesthetics, the Black body beautiful can only be maintained through capitalist consumption and adherence to able-bodied physique and wellness.

And yet there is a power of sorts in this Disneyfication of restoring Black people's humanity, especially in the pop star's spinoff of *The Lion King*, a film based on the traditional animalization of Black people, a feature for which Disney is known. Not only that, but Beyoncé restores the original recording of South African Solomon Linda's "Mbube" (1939), which had become "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" as heard in *The Lion King*, generating millions in royalties that neither Linda nor his descendants had received. In adapting the Disney lens and splurging on wealth and glamour to reclaim and visualize African-descended people beyond the images of widespread poverty, ugliness, and suffering, Beyoncé subverts Disney's commercial worldview to make space for a radical and rarely seen depiction of Blackness.

Finally, the use of drone technology in *Black Is King* to pan in and out of shots of Beyoncé in the desert or in the middle of the ocean, or zooming through Earth's atmosphere, is a reminder of how the pop star has accessed the ultimate global vision that was once the preserve of western colonizers. As Shohat reminds us about early cinema, these films "often superimposed illustrated maps on shots of landscapes, subliminally imposing the map's 'claim over the land'" (Shohat 1991, 53). Rather than lay claim to the land—either of Africa or the planet itself, which is shown spinning in eternity from a celestial point of view—Beyoncé eschews the secularized western colonial gaze to envision a transnational Black feminist worldview in its place, one based in a spiritual sensibility.

Taking a page from Toni Morrison, Beyoncé "charts a map . . . without the mandate for conquest" (Morrison 1992, 3). Colonization is not necessary when feminist reclamations can subvert the commercial gaze of world media.

Abeer Abu Ghaith

by Shannon Garvin

Abeer Abu Ghaith is referred to as Palestine's "first female high-tech entrepreneur." Abeer grew up in the Madaba refugee camp. When she was 12, her family moved to Doura, near Hebron, in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank). As a traditional Bedouin family, they expected her to marry. Abeer had another passion. She wanted to work and help others. She graduated from a local Palestinian university with honors, but when she returned to teach, many of the male students would not agree to be her students. She turned to the Internet to gain additional skills in tutoring and specific computer coding languages. She also worked hard to develop her English.

She launched StayLinked, which matched Palestinian women with computer skills with companies seeking help with projects. Abeer's business grew, and when her programmers were able to keep working and deliver projects even as their homes in Palestine and Gaza were under siege, her family became proud of her work. By 2014, Abeer employed more than 350 Palestinians. She expanded her business under the name MENA Alliances.

Today, she continues as a speaker, trainer, visionary, and volunteer to educate and connect Palestinian women and men to meet the challenges and opportunities of a globalized world. She has received numerous international awards for her innovations in work and social justice. She faces many challenges, including personal safety while living in her family home in the West Bank, but she is proud to be empowering Palestinians and opening opportunities for companies to support Palestinians with paid employment. She believes that business and social justice should always work hand in hand.

Learning Activities

1. Hobson uses Beyoncé's video "Brown Skin Girl" to frame her discussion of intersections of race, gender, beauty standards, colorism, cultural appropriation, and capitalism within a transnational feminism framework. Take a few minutes to read the lyrics, and then watch the full video of "Brown Skin Girl." As you watch, jot down any ideas you have about it, including the people who are featured, clothing, song lyrics, settings, dance moves, lighting, and so on. What do you notice? What is your overall impression of the video? Next, watch the video again, keeping these questions in mind:
    - In this chapter, Hobson traces a history of the ways that live viewings, performances, films, and the like sexualize, exoticize, erase, and/or stereotype women of color while equating whiteness with beauty and acceptability. What aspects of that history seem most important to you? Why?
    - How does Beyoncé refute that history with "Brown Skin Girl"? How do other famous women of color engage with and refute that history?
2. What is "commodity racism," according to Hobson? What examples does she provide? Can you think of additional examples of commodity racism?
3. Do you think "Brown Skin Girl" engages in "Disneyfication" and "cultural appropriation"? Why or why not? Use the terms and concepts from this chapter to support your argument.
4. How are queer and trans bodies and voices represented in this discussion? How are they erased?
5. Working in a small group, continue to add to the glossary you started in the previous chapter. Here are some key terms from this chapter: diaspora, male gaze, racialization, cultural appropriation, commodity racism.

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Notes

1. Samples of such bronzers were exhibited in the historic *Le Modèle Noir de Géricault à Matisse,* curated by Denise Murrell, at the Musée D'Orsay, Paris (2019).

GLOBAL POLITICS OF THE BODY

Tracy Butts

The concept of body politics may be unfamiliar to those who are new to the discipline of women's and gender studies. In essence, *body politics* issues are at the center of individual, societal, and political struggles to claim control over one's own biological, social, and cultural "bodily" experiences. As a result, "the powers at play in body politics include institutional power expressed in government and laws, disciplinary power exacted in economic production, discretionary power exercised in consumption, and personal power negotiated in intimate relations" (Shaw 2021). The events of 2020, particularly the COVID-19 global pandemic and US presidential election, with its hot-button issues, have been the impetus for worldwide conversations about the ways in which human bodies are understood, governed, and used as sites of resistance.

Discussions about body politics during this time have revolved around the death of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, reproductive rights and freedoms, and women's health; immigration and the separation of parents and children at the border; police- and state-sanctioned acts of violence; anti-Black racism and Black Lives Matter protests; sexual identities; and identity politics.

Femicide in Turkey

by Lauren Grant

In July 2020, 27-year-old Pinar Gültekin was found murdered by her ex-partner. Gültekin's death, amid a growing wave of awareness and protests to combat violence against women, sparked outrage across Turkey and the world. As activists took to the streets, often they were met with further violence, where officers intervened with brutal force to quash protests. Gültekin's death increased national and international recognition of the systemic problem of femicide (murder of women). Calls for justice quickly moved beyond this incident, citing the increasing rates of violence against women perpetrated with impunity in Turkey and across the world.

As women's rights activists have evidenced, both in street protests and viral social media campaigns, femicide forms "part of a larger pattern that has been emerging in Turkey under the country's increasingly authoritarian Justice and Development Party (AKP) government." Since 2010, "more than 3,000

women have been murdered as a result of male violence," most commonly because of women's attempts to make decisions about their own lives or resistance to coercive control within relationships, "with the figure more than doubling over the years." The sociopolitical, patriarchal, and religious norms that dominate women's lives and confine their roles to the family are the root cause of persistent and increasing rates of femicide. A 2009 study conveyed that upward of 42 percent of Turkish women aged 15-60 had suffered from physical or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partners.

Amid increasing rates of violence, Turkish activists have demanded furtherance of the Istanbul Convention (2011), the Council of Europe's leading treaty on violence against women, including domestic violence. While the doctrine has been championed for its "progressive" approach to combating violence against women, the convention fails to mention "femicide" at all, a major concern. Further, in March 2021 the AKP withdrew from the convention, casting women's lives, safety, and rights out of legal, protectionary reach, in defiance of Turkey's legal obligations under international human rights law.

Anti-femicide movements in Turkey and elsewhere have highlighted how femicide occurs within a framework of patriarchal oppression. Femicide too often entails sexual violence, coupled with the brutal mutilation of women's bodies after they are murdered. The permittance of its occurrence and the absence of justice serve as public displays of the politics of the female body.

Femicide is genocide against women, and the failure of states, including Turkey, to punish perpetrators for the crime unveils how femicide "entails a partial breakdown of the rule of law because the state is incapable of guaranteeing respect for women's lives and human rights." While the state has proven an impediment to safeguarding women's rights, activists in Turkey and across the globe are leading a transformative movement that interrogates the politics behind femicide, standing up against the practice and the impunity that sustains it.

The human body is coded with meaning and significance. It yields insight into not just how we see ourselves but also how others see and ultimately understand us. Because our identities are read from our bodies, superficial physical characteristics—eye shape, hair texture, skin tone and complexion, and body shape—are used to divide and classify us into socially constructed racial groups. Within these groups, we are further divided and classified again based upon constructs such as class, gender, sexual identity and expression, age, religion, nationality, and ability. Consequently, we subscribe meaning to human bodies based upon our perceptions and interpretations of each of these groupings and subgroupings, where we are socialized and taught how to perform as members of the various communities to which we belong, through body rules—"implicit and explicit norms, standards, and socially enforced expectations for presenting and using bodies" (Otis 2016, 160). For example, in some communities, female pubic hair is frowned upon, viewed as unsightly and unsanitary. Therefore women who shave signal their conformity to this body rule, and those who do not shave signal their refusal to conform to the norm, for "the body is read as a sign of one's commitments to diet, lifestyle, fashion, and consumption. As the body signals the self, its priorities, ethics, morals, and health, its surface becomes a means of displaying such commitments" (Otis 2016, 160). The body groupings are hierarchical in nature, whereby individuals belonging to the dominant groups (i.e., white, male, able-bodied, cisgender) are afforded the most power and privilege. As individual bodies move further from the center, meaning the more they differ from the norm, they are afforded less and less power and privilege.

Learning to love our bodies can be a political act

In studying body politics, contemporary feminist scholars build upon the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1977) and American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (1993), whose works focus on the relationship between the body, power, and sexuality and the performative nature of gender and sex, respectively. Yet body politics have existed for as long as people have been embodied. Former slave, abolitionist, and women's rights activist Sojourner Truth provides an insightful case study on body politics. In 1851, Truth delivered her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. The text of her speech and the narrative around its delivery reveal how Truth's racialized and gendered body was governed, perceived, and othered. In the speech, reported in the June 21, 1851, edition of the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* by Marius Robinson, Truth acknowledges the oppositional thinking about men and women and confronts the myth that women are inferior to men based upon their perceived lack of physical strength and mental acumen:

> I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can

> any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal. I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now.
>
> As for intellect, all I can say is, if a woman have a pint, and a man a quart — why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, — for we can't take more than our pint'll hold. The poor men seems to be all in confusion, and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they won't be so much trouble.

Truth's speech also calls attention to the ways in which her Black female body is othered and not afforded the power and privileges given to white women and men, despite the fact that she does the work assigned to both groups. Moreover, Truth asserts that the granting of equal rights is not a zero-sum game, but rather an act that benefits everyone and poses no threat to the rights of men.

Feminist and abolitionist Frances Gage imposes her perceptions of Truth's Black body on her recounting of the speech in 1863. For one, Gage uses a Southern dialect to reflect Truth's speech and possibly Truth's illiteracy: "Well, chillen, what dar's so much racket dar must be som'ting out o'kilter. I tink dat 'twixt de [negroes] of de South and de women at de Norf, all a-talking 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking 'bout? Dat man ober dar say dat woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to have de best place eberywhar." In reality, Truth spoke with a Dutch accent, and though she never learned to read or write, Truth was well educated. Gage also focuses on Truth's bodily frame, describing her "almost Amazon form, which stood nearly six feet high" and her right arm with "its tremendous muscular power." Conjuring up imagery of the plantation mammy, Gage characterizes Truth as a savior and a protector, for just when "some of the tender- skinned friends were on the point of losing dignity, and the atmosphere betokened a storm," Truth spoke out. In doing so, Gage posits that Truth "had taken us up in her strong arms and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty turning the whole tide in our favor." Gage's fictionalizing of the text and events of the day reveals her inability to see Truth beyond her own perceptions of the identities mapped onto Truth's body and dismisses Truth's own account of her vulnerabilities as a Black woman as well as her relegation to a third-class citizenry (Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee, n.d.).

Feminist scholarship on the subject of body politics reveals that "bodies are powerful symbols and sources of social power and privilege on one hand and subordination and oppression on the other" (Waylen et al. 2013). Gage's treatment of Truth helps us to better see the development and evolution of feminist thought on the subject of bodies as well as the areas where it continues to falter, particularly with regard to race and ethnicity. March 2020 saw the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, referred to in some circles as the "feminist 'Bible of women's health'" (Davis 2002, 224). In 1969, a group of women, mostly young, white, middle class, and college educated, met in a workshop on "Women and Their Bodies," where they talked about issues of sexual and reproductive health. That group eventually morphed into the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC) and gave birth to "Women and

Their Bodies," a 193-page course book published in 1970, reissued a year later as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* "to emphasize women taking full ownership of their bodies" (Our Bodies, Ourselves, n.d.). Since that time, the book has been updated and revised nine times, most recently in 2011, has sold more than 4 million copies, has been named one of the best hundred nonfiction books (in English) by *Time* magazine, and has been reproduced in thirty-three languages.

But the project has also been met with criticism, namely that "'global feminism' is little more than an imperialistic move by primarily white, middle-class US feminists to establish their brand of feminism as universal, while ignoring the experiences, circumstances and struggles of women in other parts of the world" (Davis 2002, 240). Upon the insistence of "Black, Latina, Native American, and Asian feminists . . . that an inclusive feminism examine and redress the historic evaluations of bodily difference that structured oppression of women according to race" (Shaw 2021), *Our Bodies, Ourselves* transitioned from translations and adaptations to "inspired" versions that were grounded in a country's cultural exigencies as is the case with the Indian, South African, and Egyptian versions. The BWHBC's main concern was to ensure that feminists would have editorial control over the translation and could adapt the book to fit their own social, political and cultural context" (Davis 2002, 230).

Posture as Peace and Power

by Shannon Garvin

The placement and posture of our physical bodies hold great power. Since the majority of communication is through nonverbal cues, the look on our face or the way we hold ourselves tells others a lot about what we are thinking and intending to do.

In July 2016, Ieshia Evans, a licensed practical nurse from Pennsylvania, traveled to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, following the shooting death of Alton Sterling by police. Witnesses describe her calmly walking into the center of the road being blocked and cleared by police officers in riot gear, her outer serenity reflecting her inner belief in the rights of all people. In an incident lasting a mere thirty seconds, she was arrested by police for standing in the road. Reuters photographer Jonathon Bachman caught the stunning photo of the encounter as she stands upright, her dress billowing in the wind, and multiple officers in full riot gear rush her.

Alex Haynes, a friend of twenty years, said that Evans traveled to Baton Rouge "because she wanted to look her son in the eyes to tell him she fought for his freedom and rights." Many moments in history carry iconic images that pierce our souls and capture our imagination for a better world. The presence

> and poise of Iesha Evans provided one of the lasting images of the Black Lives Matter protests and hope for a more equitable future as we see a lone woman speaking truth to power with her body.

US feminists of color "objected to the narrow construction of gender politics by white feminists, and they moved to include the differences that race, class, and sexuality make in women's position in society" (Shaw 2021). A decade after the publication of *Our Bodies, Ourselves,* feminists of color produced *This Bridge Called My Back*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. In the preface to the fourth edition, published in 2015, Moraga writes,

> The first edition of *This Bridge Called My Back* was collectively penned nearly thirty- five years ago with a similar hope for revolutionary solidarity. For the first time in the United States, women of color, who had been historically denied a shared political voice, endeavored to create bridges of consciousness through the exploration, in print, of their diverse classes, cultures and sexualities.

In 1982, Akasha (Gloria T.) Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith edited *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women Studies* (2015). The editors speak to the necessity of the book in its introduction:

> The political position of Black women in America has been, in a single word, embattled. The extremity of our oppression has been determined by our very biological identity. The horrors we have faced historically and continue to face as Black women in a white-male dominated society have implications for every aspect of our lives, including what white men have termed "the life of the mind."

Both of these books, much like *Our Bodies Ourselves*, signaled the critical need for feminist scholarship that more thoughtfully and thoroughly examined the intersections of race and gender.

Sandra Cisneros highlights how our bodies serve as markers of our status and power in "Those Who Don't," the twelfth chapter of her short-story cycle *The House on Mango Street* (1984):

> Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous.
>
> They think we will attack them with shiny knives. They are stupid people who are lost and got here by mistake. But we aren't afraid. We know the guy with the crooked eye is Davey the Baby's brother, and the tall one next to him in the straw brim, that's Rosa's Eddie V., and the big one that looks like a dumb grown man, he's Fat Boy, though he's not fat anymore nor a boy.
>
> All brown all around, we are safe. But watch us drive into a neighborhood of another color and our knees go shakity-shake and our car windows get rolled up tight and our eyes look straight. Yeah. That is how it goes and goes. (28)

In the passage quoted above, Esperanza, Cisneros's young Chicana protagonist, shares how outsiders perceive her predominately Latinx and working-class neighborhood as being dangerous, yet she feels safe there, at home, among people who look like her. But Esperanza also suggests that this fear of the other is universal, for members of her community feel unsafe when they venture into "a neighborhood of another color," which for those groups is seen as safe and comforting but can feel dangerous for individuals outside of their community.

Standards of beauty are socially constructed

Ultimately, this chapter leads us to the understanding of how "the body becomes the basis for prejudice, but [it] is also through the body, its appearance, and behavior that prejudice can be challenged" (Cele and van der Burgt 2016).

Nalgona Positivity Pride

by Mateo Rosales Fertig

Nalgona Positivity Pride, or NPP, is an eating disorder education organization that focuses on body positivity and connection with community. Ingrained in "Xicana Indigenous feminisms and DIY punx praxis," NPP seeks to raise awareness of eating disorders and the influences of colonialism on body image in Black and Indigenous communities of color. They educate folks about the connection between ancestral trauma and disordered eating, teach harm-reduction practices, and focus on the specific needs of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). They do this educational work and community support through a mix of digital media, discussion and support groups, grassroots treatment models, and art.

NPP's goal is to make space for healing opportunities by and for Black and Indigenous communities of color. They also organize the Mujeres Market, where the work of women, queer and trans artists, and creators of color celebrate each other's artistry and hustle and sell their work through a pop-up community market in several cities in Southern California. NPP can be found on Instagram: @nalgonapositivitypride.

Much like where a person lives, items such as clothes, hairstyle, language, behavior, and bodily appearance/size can be used to interpret a person's socioeconomic status, political affiliation, and their commitments. For example, consider the red Make America Great Again ("MAGA") hat, colored and braided hair, and Kim Kardashian's derriere, which rivals the reality television star in popularity. The red MAGA hat worn by supporters of former US president Donald J. Trump signals the wearer's political affiliation. The hat informs other Trump supporters they are in the presence of someone who shares their political leanings and gives the feeling of a political mass, thereby lending credence to their claim of belonging to a "silent majority." To Trump opponents, conclusions can be drawn about the wearer's stance on a number of social issues—anti-abortion, anti-immigration, anti-marriage equality, anti-social welfare programs, anti-political correctness, anti-feminist, and so on.

The current fashion trend of women dyeing their hair with bright pastels and neon colors gets read differently depending upon the race/ethnicity of the wearer. Black women wearing brightly colored hair are often labelled as "ghetto," a term loaded with meaning about class, or lack thereof, and is often code for Black itself. Yet white women with colorful hair are often hailed as trendy, edgy, and daring. Kylie Jenner received similar praise back in 2015 when she posted a photo to Instagram of herself wearing her hair in two braids. *Hunger Games* actress Amandla Stenberg took the younger Kardashian sibling to task, pointing out the double standard from which Jenner benefits as well as her hypocrisy: "when you appropriate black features and culture but fail to use ur position of power to help black americans by directing attention towards ur wigs instead of police brutality or racism #whitegirlsdoitbetter" (Stenberg 2015).

Similarly, Jenner's older sister Kim Kardashian has literally built her career on her backside. Her posterior, which has been said to have broken the Internet, is a point of pride and the topic of much discussion, cementing Kardashian's status as a sex symbol. Yet the irony of Kardashian's celebrity and fame for the very attribute for which Black women have been labeled animalistic, bestial, and freakish is not lost on Black women (Butler 2014). What is even more ironic is the fact that many Black women are naturally, to quote Destiny's Child, "bootylicious," whereas Kardashian has been dogged by rumors that her rear end has been cosmetically enhanced— again, pointing to a double standard in the treatment of Black and white women.

Does Clean Have a Color?

by Sarah Baum

One of the longest racist themes in advertising, and seemingly one of the most difficult prejudices to remove, is the idea that whiteness is equal to cleanliness and purity. Soap and other cleaning products became linked with the idea that white was pure and anything not white was dirty. The early advertisements for Ivory soap often featured racist stereotypes that went well beyond the idea of white being clean to display black as being dirty, not just in clothing but also in shades of skin.

This theme should have been left to the pages of history decades ago, but the simple concept of clean having a color continues to reappear in modern advertising. A recent television commercial in China portrayed an African man flirting with a fair-skinned Asian woman; they approach each other, and then she suddenly stuffs a detergent pod into his mouth before forcibly shoving him into a washing machine. When he emerges, not only are his clothes clean, but he's now a light-skinned Asian man who winks at the camera.

Even the best of intentions often fail as advertisers trip over this old bigotry. An ad for Dove soap featured a Black woman in a darker-toned shirt; she removed the shirt to revel a fair-skinned white woman in a light-colored shirt underneath. Dove meant to promote diversity and instead fell into this old racist theme. What's even worse, in the case of the Chinese ad, is their oblivious response to international criticism and lack of response from Chinese consumers, who met the ad with apathy. What other deeply rooted racist tropes still float around in commercials that we consume every day? The next time the commercial break comes on, watch with a critical eye and an engaged mind.

Likewise, fat bodies get read differently depending upon the context in which they are viewed. In the mainstream United States and other western cultures, fat bodies are often labeled unhealthy, lazy, sexually and physically unattractive, and as belonging to a lower socioeconomic status. Fuller- figured women, who are held to a different standard of beauty than their heavyset male counterparts, are often pressured to eat healthy and exercise. Yet finding fashionable and functional exercise clothing in plus sizes is a rather difficult undertaking. Even the name—plus- sized—speaks to their difference and position as other. Larger female bodies are rendered simultaneously visible and invisible. On the one hand, they are resented and shamed for taking up too much space. On the other hand, they are summarily dismissed and largely omitted from media representations, except for when they are being subjected to ridicule. Depictions of fat female bodies in movies often cast them as the witty sidekick, the loveable friend, or the woman desperately in search of a romantic partner, but rarely the leading lady. And even then, she is more often than not cast as a comedic figure who bumbles her way into love.

Size oppression intersects with other forms of oppression, including gender, race, and class

In Jamaica, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, and Tahiti, fuller, curvier bodies are viewed as a sign of material and financial prosperity, good health, desirability, suitability for marriage, and beauty. The bodies of fuller-figured women are coveted, for they are believed to be well fed and healthy. During the height of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, fuller figures suggested the individual had a clean bill of health and was HIV-negative. In Samoa, larger bodies are the norm for both men and women, although western influence in more urban areas has resulted in a slimming down of the populace. In the early 2010s, the practice of *leblouh* experienced a resurgence of popularity in the West African country of Mauritania. Girls as young as five to seven years of age are sent to fat farms where they are forced by women called "fatteners" to consume as many as 16,000 calories a day in order to make themselves attractive to male suitors. The prevailing belief in Mauritania is that a woman's size is reflective of the amount of space she holds in her husband's heart. But younger generations of male and female Mauritanians are pushing back against the practice, which is often championed by older women who are fearful their daughters will be unable to secure a good and stable marriage and suffer as a result.

Behind the Virtual Velvet Rope

by Sarah Baum

In the 1970s heyday of nightclubs like Studio 54, it was common to line up and wait to be selected to enter the exclusive venue. How you looked, what you wore, and who you were determined whether you

gained entry. This was expected, but in the 2020s world of social media, we've moved beyond such superficial examinations. Or have we?

A 2019 document came to light dictating what was and was not acceptable on the social media platform TikTok. It turns out the standards were even more restrictive than back in the 1970s. Anyone deemed to have an "abnormal body shape, ugly facial looks, dwarfism, obvious beer belly, too many wrinkles, eye disorders," a disability, or other "low quality" traits were censored away from the global stream of sharing. Even if the user was found to be acceptable by physical appearance, they still might be disqualified for having a poor environment, literally. In addition to physical beauty, TikTok censors limited access to anyone whose environment appeared "shabby, dilapidated," or "poor." The reasoning TikTok gives for this draconian censorship is as an attempt to "prevent bullying," but their internal documents do not list this as an issue. Rather, they blatantly confirm it's for their own public image in an attempt to attract and retain their idea of the right kind of user.

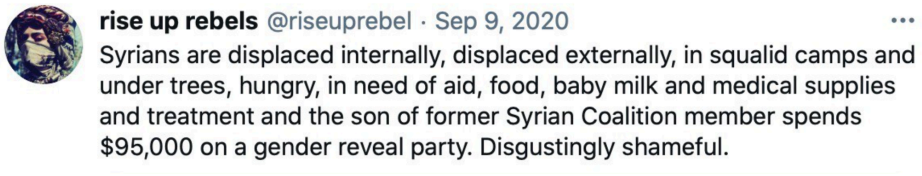
When we use social media, it's easy to overlook the ropes that section off the companies' perceived undesirables, but with the global reach of these platforms, our only real voice is in the choice to patronize these companies or not. How do you feel about TikTok's policy of excluding diversity and inclusion? Will their censorship of economic disadvantage and physical difference influence your desire to use their platform? What can you do to encourage equality and justice in the social media sphere?

The fact is that our bodies are imbued with meaning from almost the moment of conception. One question often posed to expectant parents is, "Do you know what you are having?" This question speaks to the importance of knowing the fetus's sex so that we might determine an "appropriate" means of understanding and treating the unborn child based upon whether they will be a boy or a girl. The body the child will inhabit determines all manner of things, from the theme and décor of their nursery, the color of their clothes, the toys they will play with, to the name they will bear.

The proliferation of gender-reveal parties in English-speaking countries underscores the emphasis on the body. Videos posted to social media sites depict friends and families gathering to celebrate the child's impending birth, sometimes to cringe-worthy effect, with would-be parents or siblings expressing their disappointment upon learning the fetus's sex is not that for which they had hoped. These celebrations usually play upon stereotypical notions of gender, replete with blue-for-a-boy and pink-for-a-girl decorations. Social media influencer Jenna Karvunidis is credited with starting the trend in 2008.

In 2020, following a party that sparked a massive wildfire in California that burned more than seven thousand acres of land, gender-reveal events came under fire. On the heels of the California party, a Syrian couple in the United Arab Emirates, Anas and Asala Marwah, hosted what has been dubbed the world's

biggest gender-reveal party. Broadcast on Instagram and viewed 1.7 million times, the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, was lit with blue lights and is believed to have cost more than $100,000. On social media, the celebration was panned for its lavishness and insensitivity. Twitter user @riseuprebel tweeted, "Syrians are displaced internally, displaced externally, in squalid camps and under trees, hungry, in need of aid, food, baby milk and medical supplies and treatment and the son of a former Syrian Coalition member spends $95,000 on a gender reveal party. Disgustingly shameful" (2020).



Interestingly, Karvunidis reversed her position on gender-reveal parties in 2019: "'I know it's been harmful to some individuals. It's 2019, we don't need to get our joy by giving others pain,' she says. 'I think there's a new way to have these parties.' 'Celebrate the baby,' she says. 'There's no way to have a cake to cut into it, to see if they're going to like chess. Let's just have cake'" (Garcia-Navarro 2019).

Just as advances in technology aided the popularization of gender-reveal parties, they have also provided expectant parents with the ability to discern the sex of the fetus before birth and delivery. As a country, China has a patrilineal family system, whereby sons are preferred over daughters because the family line descends through the former. Under the country's one-child policy, which dictated that married couples could have only one child, many families were forced to take drastic measures to ensure the birth of a male heir. The advent of small, portable ultrasound machines enabled expectant parents in China to determine the sex of the fetus, allowing them to terminate pregnancies that might bear female children. In 2015, China ended the thirty-five-year-old policy. On the one hand, the policy helped to curb China's rapid population growth and improved the quality of life for women and children in general as well as people living in rural areas. On the other hand, the policy resulted in host of societal issues, such as forced abortions, the confiscation of children by government officials, an impending shortage of workers, and "a population that's basically too old and too male and, down the line, maybe too few" (Gross 2016). More importantly, the policy resulted in 30 million (presumably heterosexual) bachelors (known as *guang guan*, or "broken branches") who cannot find women to marry, some of whom are now turning to human trafficking as a means of finding wives. An unintended consequence of China's one-child policy is that urban women born after 1980 have been afforded the opportunity to obtain an education and build professional careers.

China's one-child policy underscores the fact that bodies that are marked as different, as being outside of what is considered the norm, are vulnerable to violence. Even babies and children are not safe from violence being enacted upon their young bodies. Take, for instance, the medical interventions performed on intersex babies and children or girls in the Global South and immigrant communities. Amnesty Interna-

tional estimates that "1.7% of children in the world are born every year with variations of sex characteristics." As a result, these children do not fit "neatly" into either a male or female body. In order to make their bodies conform to the male/female binary, many of these children are forced to undergo surgery: "in Germany and Denmark, where Amnesty International recently conducted research, many people born with variations in sex characteristics undergo surgery during infancy and early childhood to 'normalise' their gender appearance, despite being too young to consent to such medical interventions." Parents, fearful their child "will face psychological problems or harassment in the future," are put in the position of having to make long-term decisions in the best interest of their child without full and adequate information. Many of these surgeries are thought to be medically unnecessary. Not only do these procedures deprive intersex children of their right to determine their own gender and force them into an outdated male/female binary, they also "have long-term consequences on their right to health and their sexual and reproductive rights, particularly since they can severely impede people's fertility." Amnesty International warns that "these interventions may violate human rights, including the rights of the child, the right to physical and bodily integrity and the right to the highest attainable standard of health" (Amnesty International, n.d.).

Similarly, in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as within diaspora communities around the world, girls, often before the age of 5, are forced to undergo female genital cutting (FGC) or female genital mutilation (FGM). FGC refers to the practice of surgically removing all or parts of a girls' external genitalia because of long-held communal beliefs born out of a desire to control women's bodies and their sexuality. To learn more about FGC, refer to chapter 4 in this volume, "Sexualities Worldwide." Ultimately, the parents of children who undergo FGC believe they are doing what is in their daughter's best interest—ensuring her marriageability, fertility, and safety. While medical interventions on intersex people in the United States and other western countries are framed as "corrective" and nonviolent, FGC is frequently viewed as "barbaric" and has been deemed an international human rights violation, although in both instances, medically unnecessary procedures are performed upon individuals without their consent.

The treatment of children, whether it be through the gendered socialization of their bodies, the use of unnecessary medical interventions for intersex children, the female genital cutting of girls in the Global South and immigrant communities, or the infanticide of girl children in China, underscores the assertion that "as children lack voices in public politics, the body is at the core of how [they] experience, negotiate, and communicate politics in their lives" (Cele and van der Burgt 2016). Like adults, especially members of minoritized and marginalized groups, children learn to understand and mediate body politics in a world that is not designed for them. Their very bodies, which are small in stature in comparison to most adult bodies, identify them as children. Most public spaces are intended for normative cisgender male bodies (think subway straps that are just out of reach), abled bodies (think curbs, stairs, and places without disabled access), and average-sized bodies (think narrow seats without much leg room on airplanes). Far too often, "the childish body is perceived as 'unruly' and in need of control in public spaces" (Colls and

Hörschelmann 2009). Ultimately, children become aware of their otherness and learn to behave in ways that are acceptable through their actions, clothing, and manner of speaking: "as children have no, or very limited, voice in society, the main tool they have to meet and resist exclusion, segregation, and injustice is the way they perform and present their physical body when meeting others" (Cele and van der Burgt 2016).

As we age, our bodies and the ways in which they are read and interpreted change. The onset of menses is a significant period in many cisgender young women's lives, signaling a transition from a girl to a woman in many cultures. The young woman's ability to bear and sustain children is viewed as both a blessing and a curse. In some instances, menstruation is shrouded in mystery and is a source of embarrassment: "the UK can be particularly guilty of this, with people often getting awkward around the very topic of periods. At best, we calmly hand a sanitary towel or a box of organic cotton tampons to a girl who has started her period, give her a brief anatomical 'birds and the bees' speech and call it a day—she probably doesn't want a fuss to be made after all" (Artsculture 2019) Fortunately, not every culture responds in the same manner.

Menstruation takes on different meanings in different social contexts

BuzzFeed asked its readers to share their experiences with menstruation in their culture. Many of the responses they received were about the respondents' first period. Below are seven stories describing their community's response in "21 First Period Traditions from Around the World" (Armitage 2017):

> You have a party thrown to celebrate your transition into womanhood where you don't leave the house for three days, then get presents and a huge party (typically). You mustn't be around children or men during your first period.
>
> —Nyiko, South Africa

> My mom rinsed my underwear (literally just with water) and smeared it all over my face because she said it would prevent pimples in the future. She made me jump three steps from the stairs because it signifies how many days you'll be on your period.
>
> —Shane, 23, Philippines

> When I got my first period I was at my grandparents' summer house. I called my grandma over to the toilet, told her what I saw on my panties, and when she saw the blood she SLAPPED ME. She literally slapped me. I had already been scared by blood and dried stains, and now I was terrorized.
>
> I thought I had done something wrong. I got very ashamed. Then she started to laugh and said that it is a conventional thing. She told me that young girls who got their first period should be slapped right there so that their cheeks will always seem red, and also they will have a sense of shame throughout their lives. I think the latter one is the actual reason though.
>
> —Damla, Turkey
>
> You need to lick a teaspoon of honey to make the future periods easier.
>
> —Peleg, 17, Israel
>
> I don't know if it happens in other countries, but here in Brazil, when a girl has her first period, every member of the family and the family's closer friends needs to know about it. It's like a ritual for celebrating.
>
> —Stéfani, 21, Brazil
>
> When you have your first period everyone starts to call you "signorina," which means "miss" or "young lady," and your relatives make sure that anybody who knows you gets informed about the good news. So it can become kind of awkward when your parents' old friends all congratulate you in the strangest ways.
>
> —Maria, 16, Italy
>
> Older family members tend to let you have a glass of red wine when you're having your first period.
>
> —Lucija, 20, Croatia
>
> I was in Walmart when it happened and my dad asked if he should buy me a cake.
>
> —Mandy, 28, United States

The stories BuzzFeed published revealed the onset of menses is commemorated by celebrations with family, friends, and community members, tradition, ritual, superstition, old wives' tales, a sense of mortification, a growing sense of reverence and respect, food, beverages, and, most importantly, lots of cake.

But as cisgender women's bodies mature and begin perimenopause before transitioning into menopause, the perception of women's bodies, their status and power, also undergoes a change. In the United States, there is a prevailing belief that with menopause comes the end of a woman's physical attractiveness and sexual desirability. This manner of thinking lends credence to the erroneous belief that a woman's body exists solely for the function of bearing children and satisfying men's sexual desires. It ultimately suggests that a woman's body is most powerful when it is fertile, a claim supported by R. A. Morton, J. R. Stone, and R. S. Singh in their 2013 article "Mate Choice and the Origin of Menopause." The authors

contend their research demonstrates "how male mating preference for younger females could lead to the accumulation of mutations deleterious to female fertility and thus provide a menopausal period" (Morton, Stone, and Singh 2013, 1). The trio's research sought to debunk American evolutionary biologist George Williams's "grandmother hypothesis," which posits that women enter into menopause to ensure "their children grew up to have grandchildren" (Saini 2014). "Our model demonstrates for the first time that neither an assumption of pre-existing diminished fertility in older women nor a requirement of benefits derived from older, non-reproducing women assisting younger women in rearing children is necessary to explain the origin of menopause" (Morton, Stone, and Singh 2013, 2). Scholar Kristen Hawkes, who has built upon Williams's grandmother hypothesis through her research on the Hazda people in Tanzania, found that older women are a vital and necessary part of the community, thus explaining how women have evolved to live long beyond their childbearing years: "There they were right in front of us. These old ladies who were just dynamos" (Saini 2014). According to scholar Rebecca Sears, the differing theories about the cause of menopause arise from gender bias that shapes the researcher's frame of reference: "a lot of menopause work is done by women . . . [and] a lot of work on sexual selection by men is done by men" (Saini 2014). In short, women researchers are inclined to approach the subject as a means of examining women's usefulness, whereas male researchers focus on women's lack of sexual desirability.

Aging women also tend to be underrepresented in media representations and popular culture and are in many ways rendered invisible despite the many contributions they make to family, community, industry, and society. "The Dinner," the third episode in the first season of Netflix's series *Grace and Frankie*, starring Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, dramatizes how older women are often ignored and overlooked. Fonda and Tomlin's titular characters, two divorcees in their eighties whose husbands left them to be together, go to a store to purchase cigarettes. They stand at the counter, where they are blatantly ignored by the young male cashier who turns instead to wait upon a young female customer. After Frankie warns, "I'm about to lose my shit!" in response to being ignored, Grace has the meltdown and admonishes the cashier, "Do you not see me? Do I not exist? Do you think it's alright to ignore us just because she has gray hair and I don't look like her?" Frankie leads Grace out of the store. Grace apologizes for her behavior but explains that she refuses to be irrelevant, to which Frankie responds, while pulling a pack of stolen cigarettes from her purse, "I learned something. We've got a superpower. You can't see me; you can't stop me." Grace's revelation speaks to the myriad ways women play upon existing gender stereotypes as acts of subversion.

The problem of being judged based solely upon one's sex and the supposed limitations of one's body is not limited to just those women whose bodies fall outside of the norm. In terms of choosing an academic major and ultimately a career, women are more likely to enter care- and service-oriented fields. A study published in 2015 found that the dearth of representation of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields "revealed that some fields are believed to require attributes such as brilliance and genius, whereas other fields are believed to require more empathy or hard work. In fields where people thought that raw talent was required, academic departments had lower percentages of women"

(Leslie et al. 2015, 262). Most of the ten lowest-paid jobs in the United States are female dominated, with child care workers, hosts and hostesses, and maids and housekeepers being the lowest paid (Thomson 2016).

The global COVID-19 pandemic has exposed lingering gender inequities and revealed the precarious state of progress made on this front. In "The Shadow Pandemic: How the Covid- 19 Crisis Is Exacerbating Gender Inequality," Morse and Anderson contend there are two pandemics—the one we hear about on the news and the one that's largely affecting women:

> this shadow pandemic can be seen in a spike in domestic violence as girls and women are sheltering in-place with their abusers; the loss of employment for women who hold the majority of insecure, informal and lower-paying jobs; the risk shouldered by the world's nurses, who are predominately women; and the rapid increase in unpaid care work that girls and women mostly provide already. The current emergency is poised to deeply exacerbate a stubborn one; while early reports suggest that men are most likely to succumb to COVID-19, the social and economic toll will be paid, disproportionately, by the world's girls and women. (Morse and Anderson 2020)

Issues of occupational segregation by gender in the field of health care make women particularly vulnerable in the age of COVID. According to Morse and Anderson (2020), "globally, women make up 70 percent of healthcare workers, and in hot spots such as China's Hubei Province and the United States, they make up 90 percent and 78 percent respectively. Women also do most of the support jobs at health facilities, including the cleaning, laundry, and food service. Thus, they are more likely to be exposed to the virus." For one, superadded to the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) is the fact that "masks and other equipment designed and produced using the 'default man' size often leave women more at risk." For another, although women make up 70 percent of health workers globally, men occupy 73 percent of the executive positions in global health. In short, "men make the decisions. Women do the work" (Morse and Anderson 2020). Because women lack a place at the table when decisions are made that can have a large impact on their lives, their voices are absent, and their needs go largely unheard. Women need to be represented in leadership positions and included in policy-making decisions.

Inasmuch as body politics are about interpreting bodies, it is also about controlling them. Women's bodies often function as battleground sites upon which men wage war. Sometimes, as in the case of actual warfare, women's bodies are used to send messages of male domination and conquest to other men. In the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and the Serbs, for example,

> [Serbs] forced fathers to castrate their sons or molest their daughters; they humiliated and raped (often impregnating) young women. Theirs [Serbs] was a deliberate policy of destruction and degradation: destruction so this avowed enemy race [Bosnian Muslims] would have no homes to which to return; degradation so the former inhabitants would not stand tall—and thus would not dare again stand—in Serb-held territory. (Power 2002, 251)

Girls' and women's bodies are also sites upon which battles are waged supposedly in their honor. The supposed need to protect girls and women are at the heart of the debate about the transgender bathroom usage and immigration policies in the United States. In 2016, when Target announced that it would allow transgender team members and guests to use the restrooms and dressing rooms that corresponded to their gender identity, the decision was met with calls from conservative groups for a boycott. After a man exposed himself in front of a young girl at a Target store in 2018, evangelist Franklin Graham took to Twitter to call, once again, for a boycott of the store. While Graham claims to be acting in defense of women, he conveniently overlooks the precarious and often dangerous situation that transgender women and girls, whose bodies are policed by violence because they are thought to deviate from normative ideas about heterosexuality and femininity, must navigate in performing an act as basic and necessary as going to the bathroom. Graham's outrage over Target's transgender bathroom policy is also a red herring that intentionally and disingenuously conflates transgender women and girls with pedophiles and sexual predators (Weinberg 2021).

Documenting Gender Dysphoria

by Rebecca Lambert

Gender dysphoria is a serious issue affecting many transgender people across the world. The American Psychiatric Association defines gender dysphoria as "psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity."

As a way to raise awareness around the challenges that the trans community faces and help others through similar experiences, the Korean American nonbinary photographer Salgu Wissmath created a photo series titled "Documenting Dysphoria." The series combines interviews with photography to share the lived experiences of people dealing with gender dysphoria. The photos represented specific moments in people's lives or general feelings associated with the experience of gender dysphoria. Wissmath notes that the project is not just about gender dysphoria but also gender euphoria, and focuses "on the feelings and experiences that have allowed people to understand their own identity."

Wissmath centered the trans community in this project and created a visual representation that is meant to support and empower trans people in their own lives. To find out more about the project, visit salguwissmath.com.

Using the right pronouns for people is a way to demonstrate respect and inclusivity

Much of the debate around immigration and immigration reform is rooted in rhetoric that focuses on the need to protect women and girls from harm. In a speech announcing his plan to run for president, Trump raised the specter of the immigrant rapist: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Ross 2016).

In order to discourage would-be asylum seekers from entering the country during the Trump administration, undocumented families were forcibly separated at the border, the children detained in cages, teenage migrants who were pregnant as a result of rape were being denied access to abortion services, and the women were coerced into undergoing sterilization procedures (Manian 2020).

Women's reproductive health and rights remain one of the most contested battleground sites. Around the globe, abortion rights are under attack with legislative efforts to restrict, outlaw, and criminalize abortion activities. In the United States, the death of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg highlighted the precariousness of *Roe vs. Wade* and the legal protections it has afforded women in need of abortion care. In January 2021, Poland enacted a near-total ban on abortion. Even before the most recent law,

> Poland already had one of Europe's most restrictive abortion laws with the procedure legal in only three instances: fetal abnormalities, pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, and threats to a woman's life. The latter two remain legal. But with 1,074 of 1,100 abortions performed in the country last year because of fetal abnormalities, the ban would outlaw abortion in most cases and critics say many women will resort to illegal procedures or travel abroad to obtain abortions. (Kwai, Pronczuk, and Magdziarz 2021)

The Hazards of Innovating: Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Constitutions Worldwide

by Shannon Garvin

In September 2020, US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died and left a gaping hole not only in the US Supreme Court, but also in the ranks of legal champions of human rights for all individuals. As a young lawyer, Ginsburg argued a number of high-profile cases, carefully chosen to create a web of judicial precedence on which lawyers could argue and judges could rule in favor of women, minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people, even though none of these groups have protected rights in the US Constitution. Eventually, RBG (as she would come to be known) was nominated to the Supreme Court, where she championed human rights until her death.

In 2004, RBG was present in South Africa at the inauguration of their constitution after the end of apartheid (a system of race segregation). In 2006, after the "Arab Spring" uprising, she was in Egypt and noted to the press that as Egypt was writing a new constitution, she would recommend looking to the South African constitution.

Backlash ensued. The following day she released a written speech on her full thoughts on the matter, noting that while US justices cannot look to external laws when forming court decisions, today the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and newer constitutions like South Africa's exist and flourish, ensuring human rights not guaranteed in our founding documents. RBG understood this dilemma we now face. The world has learned from us and improved on our pioneering beliefs, but how do we take the next steps to build on these in our current times?

In response to news of the Polish government's decision, proponents of the bill took to the streets to protest even though the country was experiencing a surge of new coronavirus cases. The protests in Poland are being hailed as transformative; "some are calling it the 'cardboard revolution' in reference to the handmade placards that have become a distinctive feature of the protests" (Muszel and Piotrowski 2020).

Your Body Is a Battleground Poster Resurfaces in Poland

by Shannon Garvin

Symbols hold power. Barbara Kruger's Your Body Is a Battleground poster, first created to defend *Roe v. Wade* at the 1989 Women's March in Washington, DC, has become the visual symbol of demonstrations in Poland.

Poland has some of the strictest abortion laws in Europe. Most Poles support less restrictive abortion laws, but the Catholic Church backs the conservative government and stricter controls over women's health care. In October 2020 the Constitutional Court, backed by the Catholic Church, ruled that the 1993 law allowing abortion for severe and irreversible fetal abnormalities (98 percent of abortions in 2019) is unconstitutional.

Kruger recently told Artnet News in an email, "It is both tragic and predictable that the brutal conditions that led to my producing this image so many decades ago are still at work controlling women's bodies and their access to reproductive care. The structures of power and containment are relentless in their choreographies of marginalization and exclusion." Asked why she is continuing to print posters in cooperation with TRAFO Center for Contemporary Art to defend the rights of women, Kruger replied, "the urgent and brave protesting of marginalized, disempowered and newly empowered bodies is an insistent threat to the dominant and extremist choreographies of religion, power, and politics in Poland. The brazen hypocrisy of the Church and its predictable fist-bumping with the political right make for a grotesque dance of male bonding and resolute abuse of power."

Every day, girls and women engage in subversive and outright acts of activism, resistance, and rebellion as they fight to gain autonomy over their lives and bodies. They do this by breaking into male-dominated fields, thereby shattering glass ceilings. In January 2021, Kamala Harris made history on a number of fronts, becoming the first woman, first Black woman, and first Asian American vice president of the United States. The United States is also currently experiencing an increase in the number of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) elected to public office: "particularly pronounced increases were seen in the number of LGBTQI+ majors, with a 35 percent year-over-year jump; the number of bisexual and queer-identified people, with increases of 53 percent and 71 percent, respectively; and the number of transgender women serving in elected office, with a 40 percent year-over-year rise" (Fitzsimmons 2020).

"Naked Athena" Exposes Her Body and Political Power

by Shannon Garvin

Portland, Oregon, became the center point of Black Lives Matter protestors and police and federal officials during its nightly demonstrations in 2020. Protesting itself holds a rich history in this quirky urban area. On July 18, 2020, at 1:45 a.m. during another night of stand-off between protestors and federal officers sent by the Trump Administration to "protect" federal buildings, an unidentified woman dressed only in a face mask and cap calmly walked to the center of the street, where rubber bullets and tear gas were flying. She sat, made ballet moves, and struck yoga poses. For ten minutes, police continued to shoot at the protestors behind her, and she side-stepped a man who attempted to shield her. Eventually, she wandered home anonymously around 2:00 a.m., unharmed.

Nakedness has long been considered an acceptable form of protest in Portland. In a place where everyone was wearing chemical filtering masks and using umbrellas to fend off bullets and spray, however, her nakedness was a shocking display of vulnerability. In summer 2020, as an Oregonian, I stayed up late each night to watch the bravery, stamina, and occasional stupidity of protestors who caught the ire of an oppressive presidential administration. In a world where men and religion compulsively seek to control female bodies, the use of a naked body by a woman in political protest unhinged men and exposed their lack of understanding and their fear. Body politics are powerful voices.

Girls and women also use their bodies to shatter stereotypical and outdated notions of beauty. The rise of body positive and fat influencers on social media sites such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok showing larger female bodies living and loving life, wearing fashionable clothes, and simply taking up space pushes back against the notion that fat bodies are shameful and need to be hidden away.

Feminist Protest Performance in Chile

by Rebecca Lambert

Las Tesis Collective is a Chilean feminist group that uses art to resist violence against women and challenge oppressive state structures. The group gained popularity in 2019 when their song "Un Violador en Tu Camino" ("A Rapist in Your Path") gained international attention. Las Tesis called for feminists

around the world to gather and protest violence against women, resulting in crowds of women across the globe coming together to sing the song. The song is a feminist anthem that challenges the violence of the patriarchy, including rape, slut-shaming, and victim-blaming.

Members of the collective include Lea Cáceres, Paula Cometa, Sibila Sotomayor, and Daffne Valdés; they performed their song in public for the first time in November 2019 at Chile's Supreme Court building. In May 2020, Las Tesis collaborated with Pussy Riot, a Russian feminist protest performance group, to release a song highlighting the increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic (Front Line Defenders). The national police filed a lawsuit against the collective accusing *them* of inciting violence, but the case was dismissed in January 2021.

In Chile, where "gender-based violence has reached epidemic proportions" (McGowan 2020), women lead the resistance efforts. The song "A Rapist in Your Path" (Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019), which has become an emblem of the movement in Chile as well as Colombia, France, Mexico, Spain, and the United Kingdom, "depicts a world in which state oppression mirrors sexual violence, and singles out police, judges and the president as accomplice in the aggression" (McGowan 2020). In 2016, a photographer captured an image of Ieshia Evans, a nurse from Pennsylvania who traveled to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to protest the extralegal killing of Alton Sterling and Philando Castille at the hands of police. The iconic photo depicts Evans, clad in nothing more than a flowy summer dress and flats, being rushed by officers in full riot gear. During the summer of 2020, women around the world joined Black Lives Matter protests in response to the killings of Americans George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbury. In Portland, Oregon, a group of women called Moms United for Black Lives (formerly Wall of Moms) stood in solidarity in front of Black Lives Matter protestors, shielding them from tear gas and the use of excessive force by police offices. Girls and women literally put their bodies on the line in the fight for gender equality, social justice, and political change. Their activism and resistance bring to mind the conclusion of Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?": "if the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them" (Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee, n.d.).

Learning Activities

1. Butts discusses the case of Frances Gage, who "fictionalized the text and the incidents the day" on which Sojourner Truth gave her famous speech. In Gage's version of the speech, Truth says, "Ain't I a woman?" But in the version of the speech that scholars consider to be the most accurate, Truth says, "I am a woman's rights." Using the terms and concepts from this chapter, consider the differences between the question, "Ain't I a woman?" and the statement, "I am a woman's rights." Which seems more rhetorically powerful? Why? Why might Gage, a white woman, prefer her fictionalized version? Take a look at the website TheSojournerTruthProject.com, which includes videos of Afro-Dutch women reading Truth's speech in order to demonstrate to viewers what Truth might have sounded like. What do you learn about the speech when listening to it performed by Afro-Dutch speakers?
2. Butts discusses at length the ways that bodies are gendered and socialized as male or female, even before babies are born. What examples does she provide? Can you provide additional examples?
3. What are the implications of menstruation and menopause on women's lives? Can you think of cultural representations of menstruation and menopause? What are they? What do they communicate about menstruating and/or postmenopausal women?
4. Butts discusses the ways that body politics are about controlling bodies. What examples does she provide? What examples can you add?
5. How are queer and trans bodies and voices represented in this discussion of body politics? Use the information you learned in this chapter to build on the discussion of queer and trans bodies from the previous chapter
6. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: body politics, body rules.

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SEXUALITIES WORLDWIDE

Sharadha Kalyanam

We're survivors of childhood violence with black eyes
in common from mothers who hated our difference...

Your people as well as mine slaughtered in millions
Queer we're still open season
My fingermarks on your ass are loving you...

Desire red & raw as wounds we disguise
we're open season.

—Chrystos, *In Her I Am*

These lines by Menominee poet and activist Chrystos tell stories of sexual violence and abuse and how colonial heteropatriarchy separated Indigenous women from their sexualities. Chrystos writes that it is possible for Indigenous queer and Two-Spirit people to reclaim and realize their sexuality and sexual freedom by engaging in healing through the erotic, which Cherokee Two-Spirit poet Qwo-Li Driskill has argued Chrystos does through her erotic poetry for Native Two-Spirit women. Chrystos's work shows how the genders and sexualities of Indigenous and other colonized peoples were regulated through colonialism and how Native peoples are healing themselves by theorizing the Indigenous erotic (Driskill 2004, 58-59).

Sexualities have been and continue to be closely and violently regulated by a number of historical and ongoing structures, including colonialism, globalization, and nationalism. Women's sexualities, queer sexualities, and other nonnormative sexualities are sites of intense scrutiny, regulation, and control. This chapter addresses sexualities in a global context and the ways in which they are connected with and shaped by race, gender, class, age, and (dis)ability. Sexuality requires an intersectional understanding, which asks that we center the ways that Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have historically had and continue to have their own systems of gender and sexuality prior to colonial contact as well as how colonial conquest took place through the violent control of Indigenous gender and sexual practices. Western colonial forces pathologized the sexualities of colonized peoples in order to justify European conquest and settlement against non-Christian "savages."

Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera

by Charissa V. Jones

Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were friends and gay and transgender activists from the mid-1960s until their respective deaths. Best known for their participation in the 1969 Stonewall Riots, they were admired within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex plus (LGBTQI+) community for unapologetically dressing and living their truth, even in the face of judgment, harassment, and ridicule. Marsha P. Johnson was a Black transwoman and drag queen known for her vibrant and flamboyant expression of her gender and personality. The "P." in Marsha's name stood for "Pay it no mind"—an expression that reflected how she felt about people who asked the intrusive question whether she was a "boy" or a "girl."

Sylvia Rivera was a Puerto Rican transwoman whose gender identity was complex and shifted throughout her life. Although she did refer to herself as a "half-sister," gay man / gay girl, drag queen, and later a transwoman, she was not a fan of labels and the power they held.

In 1970, Marsha, Sylvia, and a group of drag queens formed the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR). An offshoot of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), in which they were active, STAR provided support for gay people facing homelessness, gay people in prison, and youth who were becoming "street drag queens" to survive. Unfortunately, as some LGBTQI+ movements became normalized, their relationship with the radical politics of Marsha and Sylvia and other early gay activists became strained. Marsha and Sylvia were fighting for liberation—not just for gay and transgender people, but for everyone—as they worked against systemic racism, poverty, and health disparities. Neither has been completely acknowledged or celebrated for their contributions to civil rights within their racial and ethnic communities, either. It is important to understand Johnson's and Rivera's legacies, how they put their bodies on the line, and took up space to create places in the world for themselves and for others.

Through the various sections, this chapter outlines the key concepts and themes on sexualities worldwide. It begins with colonial histories of sexuality and the ways that processes and structures like colonialism, imperialism, globalization, and settler-colonialism impacted sexualities and continue to shape and control them. The chapter looks at how dominant western expressions and frameworks may not apply in Third World[1] settings and how they selectively erase local and regional expressions of gender and sexuality. It also examines how sexualities were viewed and regulated based on colonial binaries of white and non-white, normative and nonnormative. We will then explore the cultural variations in sexualities and the flow of dominant sexual cultures from the Global North to the Global South,[2] and discuss disability and sexuality

in a global context, followed by the sexual politics of pornography. The section then ends with a discussion on pinkwashing and reflections on ongoing activisms and movements to build radical coalitional futures.

Key Terminologies

Before getting into the various sections below, I discuss working definitions of several key terms used in this chapter. Some of these terminologies are settler-colonialism, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and genocide. Through this chapter, settler-colonialism is defined as the ongoing structure (Wolfe 2006) in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, where European settlers, through the process of stealing Indigenous lands, have claimed the land as their own. Settler-colonialism employs the "logic of elimination" (Wolfe 2016), whereby European settlers "engineer the disappearance of the original inhabitants everywhere except in nostalgia" (Shoemaker 2015). Arvin et al. (2013) write, "Settler-colonialism is a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonizers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there" (12). Settler-colonialism utilizes the strategy of genocide, both human and cultural, to destroy humans and their cultures, religions, languages, and memories.

Heterosexuality is the binary western organization of genders and sexualities where the heterosexual relationship between cisgender men and women is considered as the norm, and other forms of sexuality are considered deviant and abnormal. This relates to heteronormativity, which is the belief that heterosexuality is the "normal" or default sexual orientation. Michael Warner first defined heteronormativity by arguing, "Het[erosexual] culture thinks of itself as the elemental form of human association, as the very model of intergender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn't exist" (Warner 1993, xxi). Heteropatriarchy, then, is a system where heterosexuality and patriarchy are considered "normal" and "natural." The United States is a white supremacist heteropatriarchal society, where racialized and gendered people always already have a relationship with settler-colonialism (Smith 2016). Gender and sexuality are distinct but overlapping identities, and the systems of power that produce and uphold them are intertwined. Z. Nicolazzo (2017) has theorized the term "compulsory heterogenderism" to describe how gender and sexuality are often conflated by cisgender people who sometimes perceive the sexualities of trans folks as a result of their gender presentation. "Sexualities (e.g., being gay, lesbian, bisexual) are distinct vectors of identity from transgender identities," Nicolazzo (2017, 246) writes, the way cisgender folks (mis)understand gender by viewing it through sexuality-based stereotypes that render trans identities "invisible, unknown, and as a result, unknowable" (Nicolazzo 2017, 253). This understanding shows the ways in which categories of sexualities—like queer, straight—rely upon a rigid gender binary system and heterosexism, wherein only compulsory heterosexual relationships between cisgender men and women are considered "natural" and "normal."

Countries Where Homosexuality Is Accepted

by Janet Lockhart

Over the centuries, acceptance of homosexuality has varied widely. In Belgium, for example, homosexuality was legal as far back as the 1700s; however, it is illegal in many countries today. A Pew Research Center report shows that between 2013 and 2019, many countries have shown a marked increase in acceptance of homosexuality, but there are still differences.

Geographically, societal attitudes toward homosexuality tend to be more positive in Western Europe and North America (the United States ranks lower than most other countries in these regions, however). Several Latin American countries also indicated high levels of acceptance.

Across nations, the following groups of people tend to look more favorably upon homosexuality: people on the political left; people in wealthier and more developed economies; people who are unaffiliated with a religious group or not religious; women compared to men (in some places); people with higher levels of education; younger adults compared to older adults; and Catholics and some Jews, compared to Protestants, Evangelicals, and Muslims.

Besides laws protecting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+), such as legal same-sex marriage, another indicator of societal acceptance is the presence of LGBTQI+ Pride events, and specific cities or districts with venues and activities welcoming LGBTQI+ people. Some of these include Amsterdam, Auckland, Barcelona, Berlin, Bogota, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Copenhagen, Lisbon, London, Melbourne, Montreal, Ottawa, Paris, Reykjavik, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, and Vancouver.

Colonialism, Imperialism, and Chattel Slavery

Settler Colonialism and Colonial Binaries

Colonialism, imperialism, and globalization have and continue to police and control sexualities and sexual freedom around the world. Colonialism has and continues to manifest in several ways depending on the intentions and motivations of colonizing powers. In the context of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, settler-colonialism continues to be present and operate as a structure that actively erases Indigenous presence by rendering Indigenous people into the past. Settler-colonial projects center and enforce Euro-Christian heteronormativity onto Indigenous people's bodies and communities.

Picq (2020) writes, "Sexuality was a terrain to frame the Native as pervert and validate European violence against the non-Christian other, labeled as savage, heretic, and sodomite." Picq argues that colonizing processes were based on the "Western practice of temporalizing difference" (2020, 10), which means that European powers engaged in viewing and locating non-white, non-western "others" outside of Christian faith in a static, primitive past in need of modernizing and civilizing. This practice of othering continues in the way western lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) rights discourses and the connection between western liberal democracy in the developed world and "sexual modernity" continue to be centered in global discourses on gender and sexuality, locating non-western sexual expressions in a marginal, primitive, static past (Picq 2020). For example, let us look at same-sex marriage. Spade has argued that in the United States there is extensive focus on a conservative, equal rights-based model that is perpetuated through "the myth of equal opportunity" (2015, 30). He suggests that rather than focusing on activisms on radical restructuring of dominant institutions, which include the prison industrial complex, the nonprofit industrial complex, and the military industrial complex, there is an increasingly assimilative quest for inclusion and recognition by these institutions. The benefits of same-sex marriage are only available to privileged gay and lesbian people who can in turn access other benefits like child welfare, for example. Marriage, however, or "the government's privileged relationship status" (Spade 2015, 31), does not guarantee protection under family law and child welfare because reducing queer and trans recognition to marriage rights alone does not contend with how race, class, (dis)ability, immigration status, and other factors determine the distribution of these benefits as well as life chances (Spade 2015).

Colonization, Gender, and Two-Spirit People in Indigenous Communities

by Lily Sendroff

Two-Spirit is a modern umbrella term used by some Indigenous North Americans to refer to people and ceremonial roles outside of the gender binary. In Native American cultures, Two-Spirit people are not considered to be strictly male or female—instead, they occupy a distinct gender status beyond sex. Across North American tribes, there are certain similarities between Two-Spirit people. One of the most important similarities is specialized work roles—Two-Spirit men often take on traditionally feminized forms of labor and combine them with important ceremonial male roles. Two-Spirit women, in contrast, take on what is traditionally masculine work. Beyond labor, Two-Spirit people are distinguished by a variety of other traits, such as demeanor, dress, and social roles.

There are important variations in Two-Spirit identity between tribes—in some, Two-Spirit males and females are referred to by the same term, amounting to a "third gender." In others, there are distinctions

between Two-Spirit males and females, creating a fourth gender. For example, Navajo culture recognizes five genders: asdzaan (woman), hastiin (man), and nadleeh (the Navajo iteration of Two-Spirit), which is then subcategorized into female-bodied nadleeh (masculine female) and male-bodied nadleeh (feminine male).

Conceptualizations and articulations of gender vary between Indigenous communities—not all Indigenous tribes and people perceive Two-Spirit in the same way, and not all Indigenous people even recognize the term "Two-Spirit." For those who do embrace the term, Two-Spirit identity directly connects to ancestral practices that were intentionally targeted by colonization. Through religion, family separation via boarding schools, and state-sanctioned violence by government agencies, colonizers sought to eliminate Indigenous practices and people by forcefully imposing western ideals. Two-Spirit people and cultural roles were especially targeted owing to rigid western conceptualizations of gender and sexuality. Many Two-Spirit people went underground or disappeared altogether from certain tribes, erasing integral components of native cultures and histories.

Today, an increasing number of queer-identifying Indigenous people in North America use the term Two-Spirit. There have been Two-Spirit conferences since the 1990s, providing a space for community and opportunity to continue the ongoing process of Two-Spirit revival and resistance against Indigenous erasure.

The genders and sexualities of colonized peoples were outside of European, binary norms, and understandings and were framed as deviant or perverse. For example, under British colonial rule in the South Asian subcontinent, *hijras*[3] were classified as "eunuchs," and under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA), the colonial government vowed to slowly implement a "cultural elimination" of *hijras* by surveilling them and policing their public presence and then exterminating all of them (Hinchy 2019, 2). During this time, the colonial government saw them as a threat not only to morality but also as individuals that undermined British colonial authority. British administrators had "official concern" with the *hijras* and implemented policies that exercised control over gender expression, sexual behavior, as well as their kinship and intimate relationships (Hinchy 2019, 24). Managing the gender, sexuality, and domesticity of the *hijras* was one of the many ways in which the British colonial government implemented its idea of the ideal state. *Hijras* were a source of "heightened colonial panic" (Hinchy 2019, 24), deemed immoral or unfit to be moralized and governed, thereby inciting the British to attempt to eradicate them entirely. The colonial regulation of *hijra* bodies and laws that rendered them as criminals provide an important context and inform the stigmatization, marginalization, and continued criminalization that *hijra* communities experience today.

Hijras in Laxman Jhula

In North America, *joyas* (Spanish for "third-gender people") lived among the California Indian tribes (Miranda 2010). *Joyas* were targeted and killed through the Spaniards' genocidal policies in what Esselen and Chumash writer and poet Miranda calls the "gendercide." The Spaniards saw *joyas* and perceived them through their "third gender," and the fact that they dressed and behaved like women and had sexual relations with men was incomprehensible to the Spaniards. In different colonial moments, for example, in British and Spanish imperialisms, gender and sexuality were not considered as separate categories, and there was no conception of sexualities. Colonized peoples were sorted based on their gender and racial embodiments as heteropatriarchy was violently imposed on them. Writing about Cherokee Two-Spirit communities, Driskill (2016) argues that the term "Two-Spirit" in itself is a critique of the terminologies and labels used in dominant white LGBTQI+ communities. The word "queer" refers to identities, sexualities, and sexualized practices, whereas Two-Spirit is about "gendered experiences and identities that fall outside of dominant European gender constructions" (Driskill 2016, 30). In order to understand how colonial projects and technologies continue to control sexualities and genders, it is critical to understand the constructions of genders and sexualities on colonized lands; "gender" and "sexuality" are colonial constructions and ideas that are projected to make sense of precolonial pasts (42).

Two-Spirit Society of Denver

Mytheli Sreenivas writes that even before Europeans invaded territories in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, their conception of the primitive, unconquered lands and peoples was based on highly sexualized imagery. "Romantic visions of the 'virgin' land of the Americas, the hypersexual African woman, and the lush sexualities of Pacific Islanders all shaped how European traders and conquerors understood and justified their imperial ventures" (Sreenivas 2014, 60), she explains. The military forces kept in the Indian subcontinent by the British East India Company relied on and exploited the sexuality and sexual labor of women in the subcontinent, who were seen as "highly serviceable" and provided British soldiers with both sexual and domestic services (Sreenivas 2014). Further, patterns of interracial intimacies and sexual relationships between imperial men and local women were fraught and varied throughout eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century colonial encounters across continents, Sreenivas explains. Sexuality and race were intertwined to render colonized non-European peoples as sexually perverse and racially degenerate.

Queer Nature

by Mateo Rosales Fertig

Queer Nature, co-created by Pinar and So Sinopolous-Lloyd, is a skillshare, education, and social-support organization based in the Pacific Northwest. They facilitate and help create workshops, spaces, and multiday immersive events for 2S (Two-Spirit) lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people and queer and trans people of color (QTPOCs).

In these events, Pinar and So seek to create "narratives of belonging for folks who have often been made to feel by systems of oppression that they biologically, socially, or culturally don't belong." They focus on remembering the history of colonialism and environmental harm and centering the experiences of Indigenous peoples and their relationships with lands. Queer Nature offers events and classes on nature connection and place-based skills and studies, including tracking, handcrafts, queer wilderness project skillshares, workshops on the ecology of power and privilege, and queer stealthcraft. Queer Nature can be found on Instagram: @queernature.

Anti-Blackness and Chattel Slavery

Black women's bodies and sexualities have been historically objectified by and for the colonial European gaze. Hortense Spillers describes how during the transatlantic slave trade the enslaved Black body became "the source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality" (Spillers 1987, 67) devoid of any humanity (Wynter 2003). The rendering of Black bodies as "chattel" was executed through the process of "ungendering" (Spillers 1987), which collapsed the male and female genders together and rendered nonexistent any possibility of personhood, desire, sexuality, embodied relationships, and familial kinships (Spillers 1987). In such an arrangement the captive Black woman's body no longer retains her gender, sex, and sexuality—what Spillers calls the "customary lexis of sexuality including 'reproduction,' 'motherhood,' 'pleasure'" (76).

The "deviant" sexualities of the Black body rendered it the non-white "other" under slavery and reduced it to the state of being a "commodity" (Hartman 2008) and nonhuman "flesh" (Spillers 1987) existing at a nexus of a racial inferiority and sexual perversion mapped onto Black people and the lands from which they were stolen. "Pornotroping," which Spillers (1987) describes as a process of objectification, rendered the Black body a site of fantasy and "powerlessness." Amber Jamilla Musser (2018) writes that pornotroping "violently reduces people into commodities while simultaneously rendering them sexually available." Yvette Abrahams argues that there was an overlap between the periods of heightened pornotroping of KhoiSan women and the slavery of KhoiSan peoples in South Africa (1998, 220-36, 223). And it was around this time that Sara Baartman, a KhoiSan woman, was taken to Europe in 1810 to be exhibited before audiences to highlight her bodily features. Abrahams (1998) further argues that prior to the exhibition of Baartman, expositions and representations of the "savage" did not explicitly show women or Black sexuality.

With the exhibition of Baartman, the "connection between bestiality and unbridled sexuality was made explicit," and it became impossible to separate Baartman's sexualization from her public representation

(Abrahams 1998, 226). "Freak shows" during this period, such as the ones in which Baartman was forced to participate, functioned as a site where the savage became equated with "raw sexuality" (Abrahams 1998) and the colonizer-colonized binary also acquired a sexualized, gendered, and racialized form with her embodiment, which stood in contrast with white femininity. Christina Sharpe, Yvette Abrahams, and other Black feminist scholars urge that we see how much of the writings about Baartman show too much of a focus and obsession on her bodily features. The repeated circulation of her images and narratives about her life continue to generate "a certain prurient pleasure" (Sharpe 2010). The story of Baartman has been removed from its histories and historiographic contexts, placed outside of it, completely isolating her from the world and times in which she lived (Abrahams 1998).

Using the example of how enslaved Black women's bodies were used by plantation doctors for gynecological experiments, Snorton (2017, 52) describes chattel slavery as "a cultural apparatus that brought sex and gender into arrangement" where Black flesh became the "instrument" for that apparatus.

Caste and Sexuality

In other colonies—for example, in the Indian subcontinent—sexuality was shaped along the axes of not only race, religion, and class, but also caste. Precolonial domestic arrangements around sexuality and intimacy were changed by imperial policies, both through government intervention as well as missionization.[4] The family model of heterosexual conjugal domesticity was held up by missionaries and imperial administrations, viewing other forms of kinships, including polygyny and polyandry,[5] as perverse and nonnormative. Heterosexual patriarchal authority was upheld as the structural norm that decided familial arrangements, labor patterns, distribution of economic resources, and so on (Sreenivas 2014). For example, missionaries upheld heterosexual, monogamous marriages as the ideal, civilized institution, and along with this there was a clear, gendered division of domestic roles and labor. Women were to perform their wifely duties of taking care of the home, whereas economic activities and outdoor work were the responsibility of men, an arrangement developed in the West as a result of the industrial revolution was brought into the colonies. In colonial Nigeria, for example, wives played the central economic roles in families, a focal point that shifted toward men being at the center as a result of colonial rule. Men belonging to the colonized elite echelons of society benefited from the assumption of such colonial patriarchal authority. While working with the colonial government, native elite men along with colonial authorities gained patriarchal control over women's sexualities as well as alternative sexualities (Sreenivas 2014).

Nishant Upadhyay has argued that connections between heteropatriarchal power and sexuality need to also take into account caste practices within both the geographical region constituting colonial and precolonial South Asia as well as within the South Asian diaspora. The connection between caste mobility and the control over women's sexuality predates colonialism and conversations about race and gender, and formations of gender hierarchies during colonialism should also be informed by caste and caste-based sex-

ualities (Chandra 2011, 127-53). We must complicate the colonizer-colonized binary by analyzing how caste power shaped "heteronormative sexual contracts" in these local contexts as well as the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized (130). Produced at the nexus of coloniality and caste, there was a rise in Brahmin hegemonic power, which in the late nineteenth century created "new patriarchies of caste Hindu society," pushing prostitutes and temple dancers into the margins because their nonnormative, nonreproductive sexual practices as prostitutes were seen as being outside of respectable, upper-caste Hindu femininity (Chandra 2011, 135).

Even after the colonial administrations physically withdrew from their colonies, laws criminalizing nonnormative sexualities continued to remain in effect in the "post-" colonial states until recently. For example, in the Indian subcontinent, Section 377, which is a colonial law that criminalizes homosexuality, was operational until the Indian Supreme Court overturned it in 2018 after years of court battles. Women's sexuality is controlled by enforcing intracaste marriages to strictly maintain caste structures and upper-caste Brahmin supremacy (Upadhyay and Bakshi 2020). Upadhyay and Bakshi (2020) argue that it is impossible to achieve sexual/queer/trans liberations without dismantling upper-caste Brahmin cis-heteropatriarchy, colonialism, and Islamophobia. Grewal and Kaplan (2001) draw our attention to the tradition-modernity binary and the ways the United States and Europe are seen as liberal havens where people can find sexual freedom, whereas other countries, especially in the Global South, are sites of sexual oppression. Dominant discourses built on this binary often normalize dominant gender and sexual identities while completely erasing other, more local expressions. As Grewal and Kaplan (2001) suggest, "nation-states, economic formations, consumer cultures, and forms of governmentality all work together to produce and uphold subjectivities and communities" (670). Using the example of migration and refugee flows into the West, they suggest that particular types of mainstream discourses normalize narratives of traditional, backward rural subjects fleeing their repressive environments back home and looking for a sexually liberated modern West.

Sex Education around the World

by Shaina Khan

According to the United Nations, comprehensive sex education is a human right. The UN Population Fund defines comprehensive sex education as "a rights-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education." It occurs "over several years [and provides] age-appropriate information."

Countries take different approaches to sex education, and sex ed can even vary from state to state within a country. In countries like China and Indonesia, schools aren't required to teach sex ed. In some of

those countries, rates of sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies are increasing, as parents often aren't equipped to teach their children about sex, or they assume that schools cover sex education.

In a few countries, like Sweden and New Zealand, sex education is mandatory. The Netherlands engages all students in age-appropriate sex ed starting when they are 4 years old. Their program includes teaching not only about contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and reproduction, but also about consent and pleasure. In the United Kingdom, sex education became compulsory in 2020. The new curriculum is broad and includes topics like healthy relationships, online safety, and domestic abuse.

In parts of the United Kingdom, as in other countries like the United States, critics have thwarted attempts to teach about lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) sexuality and relationships. Although sex education is not compulsory in Nicaragua, many schools do discuss LGBTQI+ concerns. The Samaritan Project in Nicaragua also teaches boys about masculinity and how sexual harassment harms women.

Sex education can take different names. In Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, and other African countries, classes in "Life Skills Education" include topics related to sexual health and relationships. These kinds of indirect names for sex education can counter stigma in communities where sex and dating are taboo topics.

Sexual Expressions and Sexual Politics

We saw in the previous section how sexualities are connected with gender, race, colonialism, and caste. Sexualities need to be situated and understood through an intersectional perspective. Intersectionality is a framework that talks about how a person's race, class, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability work together to produce their unique experiences based on their overlapping identities and social location. In particular, intersectionality helps us see ways Black women experience interlocking forms of oppression produced at the nexus of gender and race (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Collins and Bilge 2016). Intersectionality has been described as an analytical framework, and its "historical arc" (Nash 2019, 77) includes Black feminist scholars Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, and other feminists of color, including Gloria Anzaldúa and the Combahee River Collective. They argue that oppression is not a sum of simply these different factors, but complex interactions between them, situated within specific historical and cultural contexts. Applying an intersectional approach to understanding sexualities enables us to see how these different factors decide whether we are able to express our sexuality and have relationships based on our gender identity, sexual expressions, and social locations. The political and cultural contexts in which we live tend to also control and regulate whether our nonnormative family and/or kinship networks are validated

on the basis of our gender and sexuality. The current politics of sexuality determine its social constructions.

Sexual norms and practices are shaped by a variety of histories, politics, and gendered expectations, producing cultural variations in the social construction of gender and sexuality worldwide. "Sexual scripts" (Pereira and Kandaswamy 2010, 168-94) are determined by the way power is distributed in different societies and how sexual and bodily autonomy is only selectively available to some but denied to marginalized communities. For example, the reproductive rights of women are tightly controlled by interlocking systems of power and oppression. Black women's sexuality has been increasingly deployed as a tool to drive globalized capitalism and further white supremacy and rightwing attacks on the Keynesian welfare state (Ross 2017). Loretta Ross, a prominent activist in the reproductive justice movement, argues that racialized and misogynist discourses have historically vilified and pathologized Black women's sexuality as reflected in popular discourses and understandings, and there is a need to deconstruct these discourses. Black women's sexuality and reproductive rights need an intersectional analysis and cannot be understood with a single-axis approach. Ross (2017) asks that we center sexual freedom and bodily autonomy in envisioning an intersectional praxis of reproductive justice. The reproductive rights of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) have historically been controlled by nation-states through forced sterilization programs.

Gender Reassignment Surgery

by Shannon Garvin

Gender reassignment surgery (GRS) allows a person to reconstruct their own body to reflect their gender. The reassignment, which is irreversible, consists of several individual surgeries, depending on which gender is being changed, and within those surgeries, several options are available, from cosmetic on the outside to fully functional. For now, GRS does not include the ability to bear children.

GRS is available in many countries of the world depending on local law. The European Union provides an information page. Access is extremely limited in Africa and parts of the Middle East. Iran has offered surgery for years, but there is controversy over its intentions, as it made homosexual men into women instead of integrating homosexuality into its culture. Currently, Thailand offers a number of destinations for surgery, which costs a fraction of what it does in the United States. As with any surgical procedure, GRS patients will remind anyone that research and learning about the reputation of a potential doctor is paramount. GRS is a politically hot issue in many countries but entirely accepted and com-

monplace in others. Blogs of patients and videos about the procedures share the stories of those who have transitioned to their own gender.

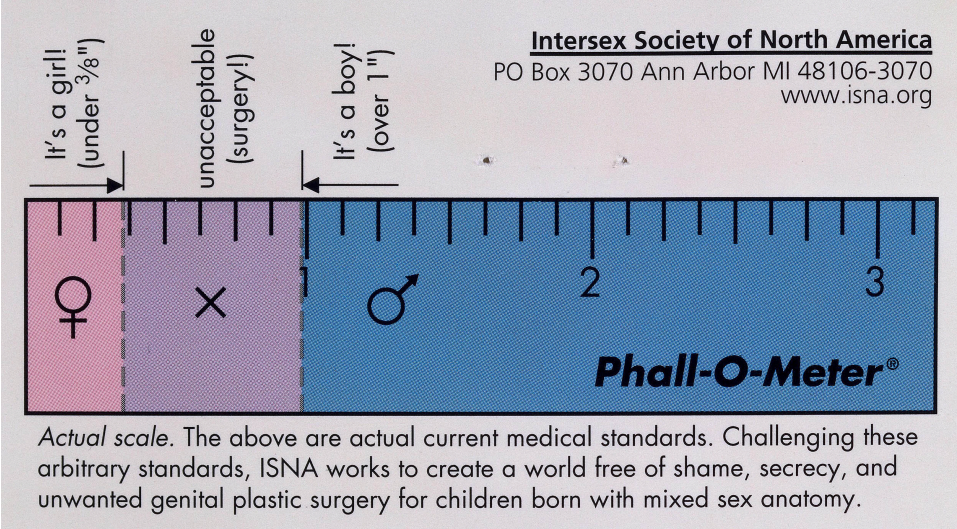
Another medical procedure that is important to discuss here is female genital cutting (FGC),[6] which is a culturally specific procedure practiced in a variety of locations around the globe. Female genital cutting involves the surgical removal of external genital organs for nonmedical reasons. It is a cultural practice in parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Although the procedure may not affect one's ability to become pregnant, it puts women at high risk of complications and can even result in death during childbirth. FGC also causes severe short- and long-term health complications, including severe pain, hemorrhage, other genital problems, shock, and death, according to the World Health Organization (2020).

Students and teachers at a midwifery school in North Darfur committed to ending the practice of female genital cutting

The World Health Organization (2020) describes female genital cutting in the context of the Global South as "inhuman," "degrading," and "cruel," and "medical interventions" on children with intersex traits are framed and perceived as acceptable "corrective" procedures to "normalize" their bodily sexual development, which is pathologized and seen as anomalous within the western sex/gender binary. In the United States, children with intersex traits are forced into undergoing medicalized genital cutting; these medical procedures are often performed on infants, and thus consent is impossible to obtain. While non-western

communities in the Global South and immigrant communities of color are vilified for subjecting their children to FGC, western parents often coerced by medical establishments into having their intersex children undergo surgeries are seen as having their children's well-being in mind (Jafar 2019). The violent, gendered practice of FGC needs critical analysis that can challenge western-centric approaches in how popular discourses around it get framed. It is important to also understand that female genital cutting and "medical interventions" done on intersex children are not similar or equivalent procedures, but that looking at them closely allows us to see how the dominant discourses about these procedures are embedded in unequal power relations between the Global North and the South, where the North holds power to produce narratives and discourses about the Global South from its own viewpoint.



Satirical ruler critiquing the medical standards that determine whether an intersex child should be assigned male or female

What Does "Intersex" Mean?

by Janet Lockhart

Intersex is a scientific term referring to a person whose biological sex differs in some way from what is considered clearly female or male. This may be due to variations present at birth in a person's genes, chromosomes, or hormones, or it is sometimes caused by an environmental factor such as an endocrine disruptor (a natural or manufactured chemical that affects a body's hormones). These variations may be visible in a person's genitalia (external sex organs) or secondary sex characteristics (such as breasts and

pubic hair), or they may be internal to the person's body, such as their internal sex organs or hormones. Estimates are that about 2 percent of human beings have intersex characteristics.

"Intersex" does not necessarily describe a person's gender identity—an intersex person may identify as female, male, nonbinary, or some other identity—or sexual orientation: a person with intersex characteristics may be gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, or any of the other sexual orientations that occur in the human community.

Intersex people may, however, be affected by some of the same biases that affect people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+). They may also be affected by laws that prescribe how their identity is presented on documents and may struggle to access resources, such as health care, that respect their identity and their specific needs. Perhaps most difficult is the fact that many intersex people were and are subjected at birth or in infancy to surgeries to "correct" or "determine" their identity as clearly either female or male.

Organizations that support and advocate for intersex people include InterAct Advocates for Intersex Youth and the Organization Intersex International. Intersex Awareness Day is observed on October 26th.

The process of forced sterilization and other ways of covertly controlling sexuality is part of the lived reality of disabled people who are deprived of sexual and bodily autonomy. It is helpful here to look at the example of Ashley X, an American child who was born with static encephalopathy, which resulted in severe developmental disabilities. Ashley's prognosis indicated that her disabilities would prevent her from having a "normal" quality of life, and her doctor suggested that removing her sexual and reproductive organs would "reduce her pain and discomfort" (Kafer 2013, 47). Because of her disabilities, Ashley was seen as having no gender, and the treatment courses suggested by her doctors through the years show the ways that the medical industrial complex sees disabled children as not requiring reproductive organs because not only do they lack sexuality, but also they should not be permitted to reproduce. Through hysterectomy and mastectomy, Ashley's body was rendered small in size, flat-chested, and infertile, so that her physical and cognitive age could match and "reflect the lack of sexuality befitting a disabled person/baby" (Kafer 2013, 57). Kafer further argues that disabled people become completely disassociated with the possibility of sexual pleasure, indicated by the range of medical procedures that Ashley was made to undergo in order to control her sexuality. Disabled sexualities are seldom seen as positive or as something that can be "self-generated and self-directed" (2013, 65).

Woman speaking against the forced sterilization of disabled individuals at the Orange the World, 2016

Pornography, Sexual Exploitation, and Globalization

In the previous sections, we saw how colonialism, imperialism, and globalization have historically affected sexualities worldwide. Globalization and capitalism under globalization and histories of imperialist exploitation of countries in the Global South have resulted in normalized hierarchies between economically advanced countries in the Global North and countries in the Global South. Globalization also determines how money and culture flow between these regions, reinforcing different economic and cultural hierarchies. This section explores the connection between neoliberal capitalist globalization and sexuality. It looks at the issues of popular culture and pornography to determine how they are shaped in complex ways by economic and cultural globalization.

Pornography is a contested site for feminist analysis. While degrading and hypersexualized imagery of women in popular culture like music and mainstream cinema is seen as a violation of their human rights, the self-sexualization of women of color in popular culture is also seen as their way of asserting their subjecthood and agency. In her work on the imagery of Black women in popular culture, Akeia A. F. Benard draws attention to the connection between colonially structured gender, race, sex, and class relationships and the ways they continue to exist under patriarchal capitalist structures in the present day. Benard argues that colonialism and globalized patriarchal capitalism, which are both instituted by white patriarchy, are not very different in how they exploit brown and Black women's bodies for profit, and that the sex, sexuality, and the eroticism of women of color are all commodities that are considered to be always available and exploitable by white supremacist systems. There is also a fundamental difference in the way middle-class white women get to define and explore their sexuality, whereas Black women are "defined *by* their sexuality and *as* their sexuality" (Benard 2016, 3, emphasis original). Although white and Black women share patri-

archal oppression, it is not only white patriarchy but also white women who benefit from the continued colonial exploitation of Black bodies, Benard writes.

Bernard (2016) also finds that pornography is a site where legacies of colonial oppression of Black women is clearly visible in the way their bodies are "bound, gagged, and/or in chains" (4), and along with Asian women, they are depicted as being docile and sexually submissive. The exploitation of Black women's bodies in violent pornographic media, even if they are engaging in self-sexualization and self-marketing, is a type of symbolic and structural violence, which is in conflict with their sexual health, Benard writes. She frames "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu 1994) as "a form of domination that is exercised on social actors with their own involvement and complicity" that "operates under an illusion of choice" (Benard 2016, 2). The circulation of the hypersexualized imagery of Black women's bodies takes place within a capitalist patriarchal system and is controlled by individuals and systems holding power. Women engaging in self-sexualization are committing structural violence, as they hold more power than their counterparts who might ultimately become victims of symbolic violence and "choose" to consume such cultural productions and mass media (Benard 2016).

Challenging readings of self-sexualizing women of color as completely lacking agency, Celine Parreñas Shimizu (2007) suggests that the "perverse sexuality" attributed to Asian American women could be a source of knowledge about their racialization and the subjectivity. She argues that the "pleasure and fantasy from the sexualization of race must be part of race politics" (6). Shimizu challenges western white feminists' theorizing on Asian prostitutes, denying them voice, agency, and subjecthood, and argues that frameworks like sexual slavery are reductive. Mainstream representations of Asian American women are shaped by the histories of racialization and pathologization through immigration and exclusionary US policies. The sexualities of Asian American women were used as a weapon in order to render them without agency and keep them subjugated. Observing the representations of women of color in visual/public cultures helps us see the inseparability of race and sexuality, which are situated in complex histories of colonialism, and immigration law, and patriarchal capitalist presents.

hues and the Safe Zone Project

by Shannon Garvin

The Safe Zone Project (SZP) is one of the many educational and social justice resources that has been created by hues. "hues is a global justice collective of artists, educators, & activists. It was co-created in 2017 as a place for Sam Killermann's creations & collaborations to live . . . We create art that inspires

action, tools that facilitate change, and resources that bolster efforts for global justice–all embodied in the spirit of the gift."

The Safe Zone Project is a two-hour curriculum that can be downloaded and used for free to educate and support "safe" spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people. If you need help communicating or want to learn more, both the hues website and the SZP are excellent places to start. The websites are packed with information, resources, and links to other resources. Killermann relies on the support of patrons so that he can live out his desire for social justice. Access to economic resources creates barriers in nearly every part of our culture now—who can afford and who cannot afford to "buy." With outside support, he removes the economic barriers and is able to offer, as a social activist, his gifts of art as socially just and available to all.

Pinkwashing and Radical Coalitional Futures

In the previous sections of this chapter, we saw how framing queer liberation and sexual freedoms within dominant institutions and inclusion-based approaches reinforces the power that these institutions already hold and wield. With the centrality of such LGBTQI+ rights-based and equality-based approaches, there has been a co-optation of queer social movements by dominant institutions—like conservative political parties, neoliberal capitalist institutions and organizations, and governments—toward corporate and/or political interests. Activists have described this process as "pinkwashing." This term was first coined by Palestinian queer and trans activists while describing how the Israeli government promotes itself as being LGBTQI+ friendly while erasing and diverting attention away from its ongoing genocidal, settler-colonial projects on the Palestinian lands and peoples ("Pinkwatching Israel," n.d.). Within this narrative, the Israeli nation-state also frames Arab and Muslim communities as being queerphobic, homophobic, and transphobic. More examples of pinkwashing include corporate organizations funding Pride marches, framing themselves to be LGBTQI+ friendly, and claiming to provide inclusive hiring and work environments while funding war and weapons, for example, indirectly endorsing human rights abuses in other locations around the globe (Miller 2019). The issue of marriage equality and gay and lesbian inclusion in the military are examples of pinkwashing (Spade 2015). More recently, trans politics and specifically the inclusion of trans people in the military is pinkwashing the US military. Allowing trans people to join the military, similar to marriage equality, produces a kind of narrow and highly visible agenda that creates advocacy for trans communities but does not stop police violence and brutality against them; nor address the precarity, houselessness, and health care crises they face; nor disrupt the military-imperialist interventions of the United States in different parts of the world; nor dismantle racist and xenophobic immigration and border control regulations (Spade 2015).

The issue of pinkwashing separates queerness from other identities, and sexuality from other intersecting dimensions of life and social inequalities, like gender, race, class, and (dis)ability. So, what is the way forward? Cathy Cohen's work is useful in thinking about strategies to bridge these gaps and to think about radical coalitional work for the future. Cohen (1997) describes "transformational coalition politics," which starts with destabilizing identity categories and identity-based politics that isolate only one aspect of a person's identity. She asks that we challenge the binary between "heterosexual" and "queer" in a way that centers the intersectional workings of gender, race, class, and sexuality, which help make sense of the oppressions experienced by marginalized communities.

"No Pinkwashing" sign on bus shelter in San Francisco

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Learning Activities

1. When engaging in intersectional feminist analysis, western feminists sometimes focus on the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality without considering other axes of analysis. In this chapter, Kalyanam adds axes of analysis such as caste; histories of colonialism, chattel slavery, and/or genocide; geographic location (e.g., Global North / Global South); and (dis)ability to her discussion of sexualities worldwide. How do Kalyanam's additions allow feminists to engage in more effective analyses of transnational feminist issues?
2. Kalyanam describes cultural examples of gender and sexuality that "were outside of European, binary norms and understandings and were framed as deviant or perverse," such as Two-Spirit and *joyas* in North America and *hijiras* in the South Asian subcontinent. What do you know about Two-Spirit communities, *joyas*, and *hijiras*? Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these topics and take a few minutes to conduct some online research. What do you learn? How are/were people who identify as such framed as "deviant or perverse"? How might the existence of such peoples challenge European heteropatriarchal norms for gender and sexuality?
3. Kalyanam discusses the relationship between female genital cutting (FGC) and "medical interventions" on intersex children. She argues, "The violent, gendered practice of FGC needs critical analysis that can challenge western-centric approaches in how popular discourses around it get framed. It is important to also understand that female genital cutting and 'medical interventions' done on intersex children are not similar or equivalent procedures, but that looking at them closely allows us to see how the dominant discourses about these procedures are embedded in unequal power relations between the Global North and the South, where the North holds power to produce narratives and discourses about the Global South from its own viewpoint." Take a look at discussions of FGC and "medical interventions" of intersex children online. How are such conversations framed? Are the two ever considered in relation to each other? How might Kalyanam's argument transform the discussion about these practices, both separately and in relationship to each other?
4. How does Kalyanam define *pinkwashing*? What examples does Kalyanam use to support her arguments? What additional examples of pinkwashing can you provide?
5. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: Two-Spirit, settler-colonialism, Global North / Global South, First World / Second World / Third World, pinkwashing, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy, genocide, binary, cisgender, transgender, compulsory hetero-

genderism, prison industrial complex, nonprofit industrial complex, *hijras*, *joyas*, pornotroping, Keynesian welfare state, transformational coalition politics.

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Notes

1. The term Third World has been reclaimed by feminists from formerly colonized places. The term is considered problematic and outdated, and it does not adequately address the social, political, economic, racial, cultural differences within the regions that are a part of it. Mohanty argues that despite its shortcomings, Third World carries a "heuristic value and explanatory specificity in relation to the inheritance of colonialism and contemporary neocolonial economic and geopolitical processes that the other formulations lack" (Mohanty 1997, 7). The other formulations Mohanty is referring to here are the Global North and South, as well as developed nations, developing nations, and underdeveloped nations.
2. he terms Global North and Global South emerged from the Brandt Line during the 1980s, which delineated the globe into the North and the South based on their economic status. The Global North was relatively richer, and the Global South consisted of poorer nations. These terms initially replaced "developed" and "developing" nations but have been problematized for the way they erase local specificities and do not acknowledge histories of colonialism and how it operated to create inequal distribution of resources and power between imperial metropoles and colonies. Susan Friedman writes in Planetary Modernisms, "Although rhetorically spatial, these terms are as geographically imprecise and ideologically weighted as East/West. Akin to the West, the Global North signifies modern global hegemony; the Global South (which includes many countries north of the equator) indicates the subaltern, that is, the unmodern or still modernizing Rest—a binary construction that continues to place the West at the controlling center of the plot" (Friedman 2015, 123).
3. Hijras are a "publicly institutionalized subculture" (Hossain 2018, 1) of people in South Asia assigned male at birth and are sex-/gender-nonconforming, feminine-identified, and live in structured communities of acquired kin.
4. Missionization is the practice of religious missionary work, and in this context, it refers specifically to the work of Christian missionaries who played important and sometimes central roles in projects of colonialism around the world. Through missionization, colonized peoples' religious, cultural, and faith-based practices were rendered savage and destroyed as Christianity was imposed. In addition to churches, missionary schools were also key institutions that furthered projects of missionization, which also went hand in hand with the implementation of English language.
5. Polygyny is the practice where a man has multiple romantic and/or sexual partners, whereas polyandry is the practice where a woman has multiple romantic and/or sexual partners.
6. Female genital cutting is the collective name for a number of procedures and operations performed to partially or totally remove the external genitalia or injuries to the genital organs. These operations are not medically necessary.

POLITICS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mehra Shirazi

later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?

it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere

—Warsan Shire

The COVID-19 pandemic reveals global health disparities

During the course of writing this chapter, COVID-19 has had an unprecedented global impact, taking the lives of more than 6 million people worldwide. It is critical to understand the specific dire effects the pandemic has had on the health of women and girls. There has been a 148 percent increase in gender-based violence during the quarantine period, increased economic and food insecurity, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care (Chosid 2020). Additionally, while women comprise 70 percent of the global health workforce, they hold only 25 percent of senior decision-making roles (van Daalen et al. 2020). Only 3.5 percent of 115 identified COVID-19 expert task forces have gender parity in their membership. Male dominance in global health leadership positions is the symptom of a broken system. These power structures fail to reflect gender, sex, geographic, racial, or socioeconomic equity within and beyond health, and the lack of women and gender-responsive practices in COVID-19 decision-making bodies has ultimately cost lives (van Daalen et al. 2020). Thus the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fact that women across the globe suffer from tremendous health

inequities, including those related to unequal power relations, poverty, violence, and decreased access to education (Mark 2020).

The denial of access to health care, combined with the disparities compounded by systemic racism and violence against women, create an overwhelming international health crisis. In order to enact and maintain functional health care systems, radical and systemic change that utilizes gender-responsive and intersectional practices is crucial. Such work requires an intersectional framework to health analysis and intervention, which recognizes the existence of inequities based on gender, race, income, class, sexuality, geography, ability, and more.

This chapter focuses on gender and health within a transnational context. It presents health as a human right and discusses ways the politics of gender, or the ways power and resources are distributed according to gender, help construct health outcomes. Using an intersectional feminist framework and centering marginalized communities, the first part of the chapter seeks to understand health inequities. Later in the chapter, I conceptualize various approaches to health equity and health care that address historical roots of oppression and structures of power. The chapter ends with a focus on disability justice, taking into consideration the context of the present global pandemic.

The World Health Organization (WHO) makes the case for health as a human right, defining it as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases and infirmity" (1948). Central to this definition is the point that health involves not merely a right to be healthy or to access health care, but also a holistic notion of "well-being" grounded in a wide range of social, cultural, and economic factors that promote conditions in which people can lead healthy lives.

Image from a 2009 rally to protect women's health

Human rights related to health are embedded in international rights instruments as well as national constitutions all over the world. More than fifty years ago, in 1966, for example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) declared "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health." According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it specifically called for the reduction of infant mortality and the maintenance of child health; the improvement of environmental and industrial conditions to ensure good health; and the prevention, treatment, and control of common diseases that occur at a constant but relatively low rate (endemic) and those that involve new cases in ways that exceed what might be expected (epidemic) (UNHCR 1966).

In 2000 the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clarified the right to health to include: (1) availability of "functioning public health and health-care facilities, goods and services, as well

as programs" in sufficient quantity; (2) accessibility of health facilities and goods and services for everyone (accessibility implies the idea that no one should be denied access as a result of discrimination, physical disability, lack of economic resources, or lack of access to information); (3) acceptability of health services and facilities in terms of medical ethics that included cultural and gender sensitivity; and (4) ample quality of health services that meet scientific and medical standards.

This report also emphasized the need for timely and appropriate primary health care; access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation; an adequate supply of safe food, improved nutrition, and housing; healthy occupational and environmental conditions; and access to health-related education and information, including information on sexual and reproductive health. A final section required nations to create national public health plans of action that address the health concerns of the entire population. In this way, the right to health is not to be interpreted as only a right to have health services, but it should also embrace a wide range of socioeconomic factors for healthy living (Gruskin and Tarantola 2005).

The Sustainable Development Goals: Is It Time to Reexamine?

The United Nations General Assembly (2015) agreed upon seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), listed below, under the overarching principle of "leaving no one behind."

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people at every age.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Lost in the Desert

by Sarah Baum

When we think of a desert, a dry, desolate place comes to mind. The same thing is true when it comes to food deserts. The US Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as an "area . . . with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly lower income neighborhoods and communities." For urban areas to qualify as a region of low access, they must have at least five hundred people and/or at least 33 percent of the census population residing more than one mile from a supermarket; in rural areas the distance is ten miles.We tend to think of food deserts as a US problem, but it's a global one, affecting people across the globe in both developed and developing countries. Living in a food desert doesn't just mean limited access to a grocery store, but also limited selection of affordable, healthy options, leaving residents to rely on junk foods, limited variety, and options with low nutritional value.

In Cape Town, South Africa, there is an 81 percent rate of food insecurity; because of the fractured transportation system, people spend so much time commuting that they rely on ready-to-eat foods, which are expensive and unhealthy. Australia also is dealing with the food desert issue. In Western Australia, access to fruits and vegetables is often limited by season, distance, and much higher prices. In some areas, families would need to spend nearly 60 percent of their income to buy healthy food. Food deserts are a growing global problem that is not easily solved, but one to which we must find a solution.

Originally, the core goal of these policies was to set an agenda to reduce global health inequities within the population by enabling access to comprehensive health care and services. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, considering these SDGs from a feminist perspective gave rise to both praise and critique. Praise emerged primarily in response to how the SDGs have improved upon or departed from limitations in the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In particular, the SDGs have attempted to not only address gender and women's rights through a specific goal, but also to incorporate these issues as parameters into several other goals. Furthermore, the creation of SDGs entailed a more equitable and inclusive process than the top-down approach that led to the MDGs. The SDGs are applicable worldwide, allowing individual countries to adapt them as their needs require, whereas the MDGs targeted low-income nations. The SDGs also addressed hierarchies within countries and the inequalities between the Global North and the Global South. Lastly, the SDGs set forth a more comprehensive framework for implementation and outcomes than did the MDGs (Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights 2017).

Nevertheless, feminist perspectives also offer criticism of the SDGs. Specifically, these critiques focus on structural issues of the SDGs, noting that the SDGs encourage traditional economic models and fail to address power relations and social structures. These critiques apply to areas in which the SDGs remain silent or undeveloped; for example, the SDGs fail to discuss their impact on nonconforming genders and different sexual orientations, lack a focus on collective action, and are absent of human rights language. Specific critiques address the SDGs themselves; for example, Goal 5 is critiqued for its assumption that greater presence of women in politics will benefit all women, and it falsely equates gender equality with economic equality. Finally, critics points out weaknesses surrounding the implementation of these goals, asking whether the goals are too ambitious and abstract, and whether they will be weakened as a result of adapting to pressures within different countries (Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights 2017).

To address these concerns and to reexamine the progress of the SDGs, the United Nations' High-Level Political Forum convenes annually. Each year, they focus on a specific set of goals and review the implementation progress in certain countries. After the 2017 forum, the Women's Major Group laid out five

critiques of the current progress: they recommended that SDGs be implemented with a human rights approach; a meaningful representation of women should be involved; civil society spaces should be maintained and strengthened through diversity; finances should resource women's rights groups; and accountability must be taken by all. Until these criticisms are addressed, women's rights and feminist groups will continue to ensure these areas of improvement or need are brought to the public's attention (Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights 2017). Progress across the SDGs before the pandemic was slow, and of the seventeen SDGs, only two were close to being achieved. But because of the global pandemic, most of these goals are now out of reach, and advocates are calling for a radical shift in SDGs, specifically in relation to gender inequities and violence against women, girls, and other marginalized communities. The impacts of COVID-19 have contributed to a significant rise in domestic violence as well as additional access barriers to sexual and reproductive health care for women. It is estimated that more than 71 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, and women suffered disproportionately from loss of employment and additional difficulties accessing food, shelter, child care, education, health care, and disaster relief services (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020).

Although health has been constituted as a human right, it must also be understood in the context of gender relations and other differences among women. A recent article from the *Lancet* Commission on Gender and Health argued that despite the body of knowledge regarding gender and health, for decades consideration of gender in global health has been neglected, with the authors stating that "Gender is everywhere in global health discourse and promises, but nowhere in action or accountability plans," meaning the world's community is not on track to meet its Sustainable Development Goals (Hawkes et al. 2020, 528).

We must consider the links among women, gender, and health beyond increased risk factors, and look at historical structures and systems that create health inequities. An intersectional approach to health and health research has gained widespread interest and momentum in recent years. The term *intersectionality* was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and is rooted in Black feminist theory and scholarship. It has been widely recognized as an approach to analyze the systems of power and oppression that produce and maintain health inequities and other kinds of inequities. Further, "intersectionality moves beyond examining individual factors such as biology, socioeconomic status, sex, gender, and race. Instead, it focuses on the relationships and interactions between such factors, and across multiple levels of society, to determine how health is shaped across population groups and geographical contexts" (Kapilashrami and Hankivsky 2018, 2589). Understanding global health inequities requires an intersectional approach, and gender cannot be considered in isolation without acknowledging the complex ways that power operates to create inequities in health and other layers of marginalization and discrimination.

Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Health Inequities

Globalization and neoliberalism play a major role in shaping political and economic relationships across the world and are a driving force for health inequities. Structural adjustment policies, or SAPs, are imposed by global multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as a condition of international lending, thus furthering neoliberalism. SAPs require indebted countries to reduce levels of public expenditure in order to assist the repayment of international debt and/or readjust spending patterns in line with perceived needs of a globalizing world economy. These policies directly influence health outcomes as a result of what is sometimes called a "hollowing out" of individual states that reduces the provision of health care and other services (Reinsberg et al. 2019). While these practices may increase gross national product (GNP), measures in these countries destroy national infrastructure and bring hardship to individual citizens, especially women and minoritized communities. In high-income countries, such conditions mainly affect low-income and communities of Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC). By expanding markets for transnational corporations, economic globalization tends to drive out rural production in industrializing countries and instead provides work with low pay, little job security, shelter, or benefits, and potential health hazards. The end result has been loss of livelihood and ancestral farms along with increased health problems.

One example of the toll these global health inequities have disproportionately had on certain populations can be seen in the marginalized workforces of both the majority and minority worlds. Economic globalization has created transnational factory production as a result of the relocation of labor-intensive factories (such as garment and some electronics manufacturing) to lower-wage areas in Asia and Latin America. In these zones, companies are often exempt from health, safety, and environmental regulations that affect the health and well-being of workers. Often, young women are sought as cheap, easily controlled labor and treated as disposable with no or few concerns about long-term health consequences. For example, since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, Mexico is home to more than three thousand *maquiladoras* (assembly sweatshops producing for export) that employ mostly female Mexican workers. *Maquiladoras* are owned by US, Japanese, and European companies, and some could be considered "sweatshops," with young women working for as little as 50¢ an hour, for up to ten hours a day, six days a week. These women workers have no job security or benefits and are often subject to sexual harassment and unsafe working conditions (Demeter 2019). The high number of *maquiladoras* in Ciudad Juárez have made the state of Chihuahua the epicenter of the pandemic. But with direct reports of more than two hundred deaths of *maquiladoras* workers alone, only 50 of the city's 320 factories closed, with workers' rights violated and their lives put at risk repeatedly since the start of the pandemic (López 2020).

Incarcerated Women of Color Are Especially Vulnerable to COVID-19

by Cristina Rodriguez

Women are always at high risk of disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis) while incarcerated in crowded prisons. The COVID-19 pandemic is an extreme example. In many facilities, there is a shortage of PPE (personal protective equipment), such as masks, and air may be recirculated, spreading the virus. Some of these facilities have unclean/unsanitary conditions in general as well as inadequate medical care.

Women may be forced into rehabilitation programs to comply with probation requirements and are therefore put in difficult situations in order to better themselves and reunite with their families. For example, Elizabeth Lozano from California wrote Governor Gavin Newsom a letter expressing her concerns about being forced to attend a drug reentry program after being diagnosed with COVID-19 the week of July 15, 2020.

Women of color are disproportionately affected by such poor conditions. They already face higher rates of incarceration than white women, they may be economically and educationally disadvantaged, and they may have mental health issues, all of which make them more vulnerable to disease. As the COVID-19 crisis intensifies, women will continue to suffer the consequences from a flawed justice system that puts them in vulnerable positions.

India is another place where marginalized groups and workforces have suffered disproportionately from COVID-19. There, migrants and urban slum dwellers have faced multiple challenges brought about by the pandemic. India was first locked down by government order in March 2020. Because these lockdown restrictions severely affected the economy, they were gradually relaxed and lifted over the following months despite infections continuing to rise. As of April 2021, India was third in the world in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases, with more than 10 million people reported infected; the actual number of infections was likely significantly higher owing to limitations in testing and tracing (Raju, Dutta, and Ayeb-Karlsson 2021).

In considering the Indian subpopulations hit hardest by COVID-19, 95 percent of reported infections were localized to urban spaces (e.g., Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai), and one in six urban Indians resides in an area characterized by high poverty, with several factors that increase the risk of COVID-19, such as high population density, weak health services, and informal income structures. Furthermore, 35 percent of those living in such areas have no access to clean water or sanitation, and these areas are already prone to high rates of infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and tuberculosis; such comorbidi-

ties present a grim outlook for people living there to successfully fight off COVID-19. Also contributing to this poor outlook is the fact that social inequality, poverty, and mental health issues decrease one's ability to respond to stress (Raju, Dutta, and Ayeb-Karlsson 2021).

Migrants in India have also been especially hard-hit by the pandemic. Migrant workers typically reside in informal settlements built around existing factories or industrial areas. Here, they lack access to affordable health care and face heightened health and safety risks. The travel and lockdown restrictions often left these migrant workers unable to leave, but without work, they became stranded, impoverished, and without sustenance. These groups already faced high levels of discrimination and stigmatization before the pandemic, and the current global health crisis has exacerbated these issues (Raju, Dutta, and Ayeb-Karlsson 2021).

Gender disparities and food insecurities have also worsened in impoverished and migrant communities. Women have been forced to perform more unpaid work, and often people are forced to choose between starving or finding food and potentially increasing their risk of COVID-19. In migrant communities, pregnant women have died without access to maternal health services. Women have suffered from increases in domestic abuse during the pandemic, and with many women losing their employment and source of income, they become more susceptible to this abuse, creating a vicious cycle (Raju, Dutta, and Ayeb-Karlsson 2021).

Racial Inequity in COVID-19

by Christiana Huss

Inequities in health care are by no means limited to the Majority World. COVID-19 has highlighted the inequities inherent in the US health care system. In Michigan in particular, this divide has been underscored during the pandemic: the state is made up of 13 percent Black people, yet Black people accounted for more than 40 percent of COVID-19 deaths early on. In attempting to understand this pattern, the particularly tragic story of one woman is notable. Dr. Susan Moore studied medicine at the University of Michigan and graduated in 2002. In 2020, during the height of the pandemic, Dr. Moore reported to her hospital colleagues the symptoms and pain she was experiencing, advocating repeatedly for proper care. Nevertheless, her pleas were repeatedly dismissed. Less than a week before Christmas, Dr. Moore died of COVID-19 (Wixson 2021).

Realizing how tragically easy it was for a highly educated medical professional—who happened to be a Black woman—to be so easily disregarded stresses how profoundly ingrained systemic racism is

> in the US health care system. The University of Michigan is working to rectify this imbalance with the Antiracism Oversight Committee and university-wide plans to address diversity, yet Moore's story exposes this devastating reality for people of color in the United States. How will the rest of the states and our society holistically address this inequity?

Health inequities also exist as a result of the environments our systems create and impose upon marginalized groups. Globalization has precipitated environmental degradation and has endangered the health of agricultural workers and families living in communities through exposures to toxic herbicides and pesticides. Paul Webster in his article, "Canadian Petrochemical Plants and Gender Imbalances," discusses the health problems among the North American Chippewa on Canada's Aamjiwnaang Reserve, where petrochemical plants pollute the environment. The tribe's complaints were ignored until a recent study found a significant reduction of male births caused by the toxins. This was not the first time toxins have posed serious environmental and health effects to this region, though earlier events have been grossly understudied; oil workers in the 1970s faced high levels of exposure to asbestos, and in 1985, more than thirty toxins—including arsenic, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—coagulated at the bottom of the St. Clair River after a chemical dump. Air quality is also highly jeopardized by emissions from nearby refineries, some of which are located across the street from Aboriginal homes and a kindergarten (Webster 2006).

These problems gained greater attention after a medical intern at the University of Ottawa noted declines in the male birth rate during the 1990s into the 2000s. From 1999 to 2003, only 46 of 132 babies born were male; historically, the ratio of male:female births was 105:100. Though Webster (2006) reports that "the link between pollutants and reproductive effects remains speculative," indication of such a link has been widely shown in animal studies, as various species exposed to the chemicals in this area have displayed significant reproductive abnormalities such as embryonic mortality and interference of hormone production. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of the issues faced by these marginalized people remained out of reach without the monetary support of the Canadian government (Webster 2006).

Economic globalization has affected marginalized groups in ways beyond these environmental detriments. It has facilitated wars worldwide that disproportionately affect women and other underrepresented populations' health. Women face displacement and destruction caused by conflict, and they are often targets of gender-based violence. Of the more than 79 million refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of armed conflict or natural disasters, 52 percent were women and more than 40 percent were children in 2019 (UNHCR 2020). Wars often limit access to clean drinking water, food, adequate shelter, sanitary facilities, and health services, resulting in higher risk of epidemics and nutritional problems. Armed

conflict threatens women's rights, including reproductive rights and health, and can exacerbate culturally rooted gender inequalities. Women refugees also often face unwanted and unplanned pregnancies owing to sexual violence and a lack of access to contraceptive services (Kapilashrami and Hankivsky 2018). Access to sufficient nutrition and health care during these pregnancies is often lacking or absent. Forced pregnancies (often as means of dishonor or furthering the nationality of the perpetrator), sterilization, and trafficking are also common (International Committee of the Red Cross 2004). The lack of sanitary supplies for menstruation can impede the mobility of women and girls and may cause them to experience discomfort, shame, and isolation for several days each month. Pregnant women and nursing mothers may also find that there is limited care available. While fleeing or during early settlement, or because of delays and perilous conditions required to reach a hospital even when this is an option, women may have to give birth in conditions hazardous both to them and their children (International Committee of the Red Cross 2004).

Such conditions often result in higher maternal mortality rates. A study of Afghan refugees, for example, showed that 41 percent of women's deaths were from maternal causes, exceeding any other cause (Bartlett et al. 2005). Comparing women of reproductive age, those living near areas of high conflict have a mortality rate three times higher than those in peaceful environments, and the number of women living near areas of high conflict has increased significantly in recent years, from 185 million in 2000 to 265 million in 2017 (Singh et al. 2021). Rape, sexual exploitation, and sex for survival during war lead to early pregnancies and put women at greater risk of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), an increase in (often unsafe) abortions, psychological harm, and immediate and serious physical injuries, such as infertility, obstetric fistulas, and vaginal bleeding.

The negative effects of war and displacement on mental health also disproportionately affect women, likely as a result of gender-based violence. Depression and anxiety disorders among those who have been displaced are estimated to be two to four times higher than those in peaceful settings. Children, too, have significantly higher rates of mental health problems in the face of war and displacement, likely attributable to increased domestic and sexual violence, and structural breakdown in the familial unit (Singh et al. 2021).

War and Birth Defects in Iraq

by Maysa Shakibnia

War and its repercussions are another way that systems of violence affect communities. In Iraq, unfortunately, babies and children bear the brunt of reproductive violence, as birth defects are a visible embod-

iment of the enduring toxic legacy of war for future generations and the environment (Rubaii 2020). It is not uncommon for babies in Fallujah, Iraq, to be born with hydrocephaly, cleft palates, tumors, elongated heads, overgrown limbs, short limbs, and malformed ears, noses, and spines. Case reports of babies who are "incompatible with life" or "stillborn" are also not unusual.

Dr. Samira Alaani, a pediatrician at Fallujah General Hospital, first began noticing the wide range of uncommon birth defects among infants just after the US occupation in 2003 (Rubaii 2020). The birth defects were strange in that they were numerous, with 144 babies being born with deformities for every 1,000 live births. These alarming rates exceed those of Hiroshima and emphasize the connections of militarism, public health, global inequities, and environmental racism (Rubaii 2020). The bodies of these children are a consequence of the toxic legacy of war in Iraq, as it has been suffering under decades of war, bombings, burn pits (military-based waste disposal), sanctions, and other military interventions that cause cascades of environmental degradation as well as destroy necessary health care and public systems (Rubaii 2020).

While human-made environmental effects tend to disproportionately affect marginalized groups, natural environmental changes and disasters also severely impact these groups. In terms of climate change, the health consequences (including death) of tsunamis, hurricanes, and tornadoes are tremendous for all involved. The 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean highlights the disproportionate harms women face in disaster situations. According to Oxfam Briefing Note (2005), in the four villages of the Indonesian Aceh Besar district, 189 of the 676 survivors were female. In four villages in Indonesia's North Aceh district, women accounted for more than three-quarters of the deaths, and in Cuddalore, India, almost three times as many women were killed as men. In fact, in one entire village, the only people to die were women (Oxfam Briefing Note 2005). From the time disaster strikes, women become more susceptible to violence that compromises their physical and emotional health. For example, after the Indian Ocean tsunami, some women who were pulled out of the water alive were assaulted as "payment" for being saved (Oxfam Briefing Note 2005).

Such environmental health effects again came into focus this past year. In 2020 the world suffered from both the repercussions of COVID-19 and an onslaught of climate crises, including wildfires, rising sea levels, hurricanes, and droughts. As has been observed historically, these natural disasters have disproportionately affected minority groups. Communities of color have been hit the hardest by both the pandemic and climate crises. Anti-Asian hate crimes have spiked in the United States, as have discriminatory actions toward Muslims. Racial minorities, often making up a large proportion of farmworkers, domestic servers, and food preparers, commonly lose their jobs as a result of climate change. Exacerbating these disparities is the fact that there are significant gender imbalances in positions of decision-making regarding the

pandemic and climate. Class lines have also been highlighted. Those with greater wealth have been able to shield themselves from many of the negative effects of the pandemic and environmental changes (e.g., being able to travel by private jet, having greater access to health care and financial resources) (Sultana 2021).

Community Health Workers: Providing Most of the World's Health Care

by Shannon Garvin

In rural communities across the globe, community health workers (CHWs) are the backbone of medical care. CHWs are defined as "any health worker carrying out functions related to health care delivery; trained in some way in the context of the intervention; and having no formal professional or paraprofessional certificated or degreed tertiary education."

The United Nations (UN) estimates nearly a million people work as CHWs across sub-Saharan Africa. In communities without hospitals, clinics, or even a local nurse, CHWs help with childbirth, family planning, diagnosing malaria, bandaging wounds, immunizations, and other vital health services. CHWs go door to door in their local villages—they are generally lay members of the same communities they are seeking to serve.

The value of their services is evident: Muyingo Prossie, a community health worker in Uganda, says, "Ever since I became a community health worker in my community, no woman or child has died during delivery." The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional challenges; shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, and the need to change between each patient, means services may be slower. Mariam Traoré of Mali says, "I typically visit up to 32 homes a day. However, when there are many children requiring my attention, I may not be able to visit as many homes."

CHWs also offer the majority of health services across Southeast Asia, and in Russia, CHWs are being trained to administer first aid in remote villages where there are no medical professionals or clinics have been closed for lack of funding. The UN notes this can be a sustainable path for women to gain employment as they work in their communities.

The year 2020 also laid bare the state of reality for different groups of women. As mentioned above, white upper-class women were able to avoid many pitfalls of the virus, while this period simultaneously "heightened marginalizations for others, whereby socially reproductive labor burdens on migrant women and working-class women allowed for greater 'success' for others based on whiteness and class" (Sultana 2021). Traversing the lines of class and race, all women faced reduced access to reproductive and preventative medical care. Furthermore, climate crises increase the workload for many women who shoulder daily bur-

dens of water provision in the Global South. In flood-prone and drought-ridden areas, this task became onerous when water was needed more than ever for handwashing and sanitation measures necessary to combat COVID-19. When women were not able to carry out this critical role, increases in gender-based domestic violence rose (Sultana 2021).

In terms of both wars and natural disasters, alongside the health hazards of living in refugee and displacement camps in crowded conditions without adequate sanitation levels and with limited resources, patriarchal practices (such as serving a greater portion of nutritious foods to males and avoiding medical attention for women exhibiting signs of malnutrition) can result in women's decreased immunity and increased disease. Female children, both inside and outside of refugee camps, who have lost one or both parents in conflicts or disasters may be forced into child marriage or trafficking for economic and survival reasons fueled by patriarchy. Other than child marriage and human trafficking, wars, natural disasters, and global crises also lead to increased gender-biased sex selection and intimate partner violence (IPV). The humanitarian crisis as a result of COVID-19 has proven no different. A recent report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) shows that COVID-19 has undermined critical efforts to end child marriage and gender-based violence as well as access to education and reproductive health services for women and girls (UNFPA 2020a).

Economic globalization has led to a widened gap and increased inequality around the world, placing a greater burden on women and children. Today, 736 million people are living on less than $2 a day, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia. During the past twenty years, for example, despite several decades of "development," poverty levels for rural women in forty-one countries of the Majority World have increased by almost a fifth. Female poverty affects women's roles in maintaining food security for families and households and therefore affects community health (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020). Globally, one in nine people is hungry or undernourished. Data show that nearly 690 million people, or 8.9 percent of the world population, are hungry—up by 10 million people in one year and by nearly 60 million in five years. The majority of the world's undernourished—381 million—are still found in Asia. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), more than 250 million live in Africa, where the number of undernourished people is growing faster than in any other region of the world (FAO 2020). The majority of undernourished people in Africa are found in the sub-Saharan subregion, which shows an increase of about 32 million undernourished people since 2015. Hunger has been on the rise throughout sub-Saharan Africa since 2014, though the increase has been especially significant in the eastern and the western subregions, and women and children are especially affected (FAO 2020).

As already mentioned, women and girls have access to fewer household resources like food, leading to higher malnutrition and mortality rates. Because of their lower social and economic status as well as their physiological needs (such as childbirth and lactation), women are often more vulnerable to nutritional

problems. As the price of food has increased around the world, women face higher risks of malnutrition because they usually eat last, and less, after providing for their children and family. Food security and nutrition are closely connected. Since households in the Majority World spend an average of 70 percent of their incomes on food (compared to the 15 to 18 percent spent in high-income countries), increases in food prices cause them to sink further into poverty. Poor female nutrition early in life reduces learning potential, increases reproductive and maternal health risks, and lowers productivity. Frequent pregnancies and heavy workloads, combined with poor diets and frequent infections, can severely weaken a woman's health. In South and Southeast Asia, 45 to 60 percent of reproductive-age women are underweight, and up to 80 percent of pregnant women are iron deficient.

Period Poverty and the Tampon Tax

by Shannon Garvin

Period poverty and *tampon tax* have become international catchphrases as activists, government officials, corporations, and brave individuals have worked to break millennia-old taboos against speaking about menstruation and the need for girls and women to have safe access to supplies. In many parts of the world, women still use rags when they menstruate and because of local religious rules are not allowed to wash and dry their rags outdoors. Rags are hidden under beds and bacteria grow quickly, leading to illness.

Period poverty describes the economic reality that most women cannot afford basic hygiene supplies when they menstruate. As part of this, the tampon tax (which refers to the fact that in many places menstrual products are subject to sales taxes rather than being exempt, as are other essential supplies) has been recalled in several countries and thirteen states in the United States. Kenya ended its tax in 2004 and South Africa in 2019.

In addition to adding menstrual supplies to tax-exempt medical lists, period poverty has seen a number of groups partnering to bring free supplies to schools and communities. While rewashable supplies are more eco-friendly, in countries without water or with religious taboos, women need disposable supplies to menstruate safely. In Africa, one in ten girls still misses school on days she is having her period. In some countries, girls are simply withdrawn from school when they start menstruating. Indian inventor of a sanitary pad-making machine Arunachalam Muruganantham is featured in *Pad Man*, a film available on Netflix. Because this topic is so urgent and affects half of the world's population, we invite you to further explore locations and topics of interest. Follow the links to learn more.

All these factors contribute to women's diminished ability to gain access to other assets later in life and undermine attempts to eliminate gender inequalities (FAO 2008, 2020). In addition, malnutrition is perpetuated from one generation to the next, as up to 20 million children are born annually with low birth weight as a result of maternal malnourishment. Low-birth-weight babies are four times more likely to die in the first week of life from infections such as diarrhea and face a tenfold higher risk of dying during the first month of life. Those who survive are more likely to remain malnourished throughout childhood and face cognitive difficulties that impair their ability to learn (FAO 2020). In these ways, investment in women's nutrition improves not only household nutrition generally but also overall human capacity, given women's key roles in maintaining family welfare.

Why Do Women Still Die Giving Birth?

The disparities women face do not merely threaten the health or educational prospects of them and their children; their very survival is threatened. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death for women of reproductive age in many parts of the Majority World. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR), or number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, is an approximation of the risk of death of women for reasons related to pregnancy and childbirth. According to the most recent data, around 303,000 girls and women die every year—830 every day—from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Death is not the only tragic consequence of complications associated with reproductive health, since nonfatal complications can also have serious effects. For every woman who dies, an estimated 20 or 30 encounter injuries, infections, or disabilities that have painful and long-lasting effects on a woman's quality of life.

These high maternal mortality rates draw attention to the vast disparities in reproductive health status as a result of poverty, conflict, natural disasters, displacement, and inadequate and poor-quality services that contribute to these high numbers. Sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia accounted for approximately 88 percent of the estimated global maternal deaths in 2017. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for roughly two-thirds (196,000) of maternal deaths, while southern Asia accounted for nearly one-fifth (58,000) (UNFPA 2019).

Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth can be deadly for women

Nevertheless, progress has been made in maternal health, and the maternal mortality ratio fell by 38 percent between 2000 and 2017, from 342 deaths to 211 deaths per 100,000 live births worldwide. On average, the global maternal mortality ratio declined by 2.9 percent each year over this period. Still, this is less than half of the 6.4 percent annual rate needed to achieve the global target of 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030. Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, according to United Nations data. There, 638 women die per 100,000 live births, and fewer than 60 percent of births are overseen by skilled health professionals. The causes of maternal death are consistent around the world. Some 80 percent are due to direct obstetric complications: hemorrhage, sepsis, complications of abortion, preeclampsia and eclampsia, and prolonged/obstructed labor. About one-fifth of deaths have indirect causes: generally, existing medical conditions that are aggravated by pregnancy or delivery. These include anemia, malaria, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS (UNFPA 2019).

Women's Health Care and Childbirth in Afghanistan

by Christiana Huss

In Afghanistan, 638 of every 100,000 live births result in the mother's death—one of the highest maternal mortality rates worldwide. Several variables contribute to this statistic, including inaccessibility to health services, poverty, and a low rate of skilled health professionals overseeing births. In response to these deficiencies, Afghanistan's community midwifery program is supported by the Canadian Govern-

ment and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA); the trained midwives that graduate from this program establish family health houses to provide health care to rural and remote areas of the country (UNFPA 2020b).

The value and skill of these midwives cannot be understated. Shirin, a graduate who manages a family health house in Usho Golaka, has provided critical, life-saving medical care to hundreds of women in her village. When one of her patients became pregnant with her seventh child, Shirin advised the patient to seek medical care at the provincial hospital because of the baby's breech position. Nevertheless, it was Shirin whom Fatima's family called upon in the middle of the night as Fatima began labor. Though this delivery was beyond the scope of Shirin's training and education, she had no other option but to carry it out; Fatima's family could not afford to travel to the hospital. Shirin called a gynecologist at the provincial hospital and helped deliver the baby with no more than oral instructions. After less than two hours, Shirin successfully helped Fatima deliver a healthy baby boy (UNFPA 2020).

Although this experience was undoubtedly stressful, Shirin walked away from it with a sense of pride. The implications of this account are both hopeful and indicative of the reality that still disproportionately affects women worldwide; adequate medical training, services, and accessibility are essential to decrease the mortality rates facing pregnant mothers in certain countries.

A steady decline has also been observed worldwide in the adolescent birth rate. It fell from 48 births annually per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 years in 2010 to 45 in 2015 and 41 in 2020. Contributing factors include efforts to promote healthy reproductive and sexual behavior among adolescents, a reduction in child marriage, and increased access to modern contraception. Yet stark disparities persist across regions: in sub-Saharan Africa, the adolescent birth rate remains at 101 births annually per 1,000 women.

The Global Gag Rule

In seeking to understand why these disparities still exist and so profoundly affect marginalized groups, it is imperative to realize the impact that US foreign policy has had and continues to have on a global scale, particularly on women. The federal Mexico City Policy of 1984 prohibits all foreign nongovernmental organizations that received US international family planning assistance from utilizing their own non-US-provided funds to provide, counsel, or refer abortion services as a method of family planning (Mavodza, Goldman, and Cooper 2019). These strict restrictions became known as the global gag rule (GGR) owing to their inhibitive and silencing effect on any sort of abortion advocacy. Until 2017, these restrictions had only been limited to family planning; however, a presidential memorandum expanded the gag rule to almost all $8.8 billion in global health foreign assistance provided by the United States. Studies have

concluded that the GGR does not decrease rates of abortion, and its implementation has been associated with consistently poor impacts of health systems' functions and outcomes on a global scale (Mavodza, Goldman, and Cooper 2019). The gag rule limits women's access to family planning worldwide by closing health clinics that provided a range of reproductive health services as well as HIV testing and counseling. Although the Biden administration rescinded the GGR in 2021, enacting the Global HERact Bill would prevent future presidents from unilaterally reinstating the global gag rule via executive action and end the policy's intermittent use (Sadinsky and Ahmed 2021).

Activists protest the ban on abortion

US Women in Contraceptive Deserts

by Sophie Brodish

Within the United States, more than 19 million women of reproductive age are living in contraceptive deserts. Despite the increased development of modern contraception methods, limitations in practice are still found. As of 2016, nearly half of the pregnancies within the United States were unintended, even with North America having the highest male sterilization rate in the world.

Contraceptive deserts are locations where the quantity of health centers is inadequate to meet the needs for the population of women eligible for publicly funded contraception. In order for a county to not be considered a contraceptive desert, there must be one available health center per 1,000 women of the population. Around 1.5 million women in these contraceptive deserts live in counties that lack any form

of health center, requiring them to travel multiple hours while they must take off time from work or pay for childcare services in order to be able to receive the care they need.

There are numerous other barriers that can impede a person's access even within existing clinics across the country. Unavailability of same-gender providers, cost, environment, transportation services, same-day service, and other factors can stand in the way. Environment pertains directly to the treatment of individuals when they seek care at a health clinic. Trans men, trans women, nonbinary folks, and others that the gender binary does not include face an increased difficulty in the number of health centers available to them owing to discrimination.

The primary populations affected by contraceptive deserts are low-income communities and the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities. The Title X Family Planning Program was introduced in 1970 as a mode of providing reproductive health services and family planning for low-income communities. In 2019, however, under the Trump administration, a Title X gag rule was implemented, putting affordable care even further out of reach for many, predominantly transgender people and Black women. In October 2021 the Biden administration repealed the rule, bringing hope to the hundreds of thousands across the United States who need affordable and accessible reproductive health services.

Women Should Be Able to Live without Fear of Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related death among women around the globe. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics from 2020, about 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020, resulting in an estimated 685,000 deaths. Breast cancer incidence and rates vary considerably by region. Rates are highest in higher-income Australia, North America, and northern and western Europe, and lowest in the low- and middle-income countries of Asia and Africa. Intermediate levels are reported in Eastern Europe. Five-year survival rates vary significantly based on country: for example, it is more than 90 percent in high-income countries versus 66 percent in India and 40 percent in South Africa. Breast cancer has now surpassed lung cancer as the world's mostly commonly diagnosed cancer, and it is responsible for one in six of all cancer deaths among women (WHO 2021).

While age is an important factor affecting breast cancer risk, biological risk is also increased by inheritance of genetic mutations (BRCA1, BRCA2, PALB-2), a personal or family history of breast cancer, high breast tissue density (a mammographic measure of the amount of glandular tissue relative to fatty tissue in the breast), and high-dose radiation to the chest as a result of medical procedures. According to WHO (2021), almost half of breast cancers develop in women who have no identifiable breast cancer risk factor

other than sex (female) and age (over 40 years). Other factors that increase the risk of breast cancer include increasing age, weight, excessive use of alcohol, reproductive history (age that menstrual periods began and age at first pregnancy), tobacco use, and postmenopausal hormone therapy.

Cigarette Smoke Continues to Cloud Our Health

by Shannon Garvin

Despite all we know about the long-term effects of smoking, people still pick up cigarettes every day. In that process, they also expose others to secondhand smoke and its negative health effects.

While tobacco use is not banned outright, it is considered "wrong" by some religions such as Islam and Christianity. In the United States, tobacco is no longer allowed to advertise as an appealing product. All cigarettes carry warning labels, and the law sets minimum age requirements for purchase. Around the world, however, smoking is still common in most countries. In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) put forth a tobacco treaty. In it, countries have agreed to specific measures much like those in the United States, where taxes discourage purchase, age limits are set, and advertising is eliminated.

Tobacco companies that have lost market share in the United States have switched to aggressive marketing internationally. Asia in particular has long been a market for promoting smoking. The European Union is following the US lead in decreasing smoking, but areas such as Africa and Oceania offer opportunities to grow markets of new smokers. In Vanuatu, for example, more than 60 percent of men smoke, but less than 20 percent of women do. Slim cigarettes are marketed to women and children to increase revenue for companies. The death rates in places like the island nations of Oceania reflect the success of these efforts. One-third of men and a quarter of women die from noncommunicable diseases such as heart attacks, diabetes, and other diseases related to smoking and obesity. In homes where the men smoke, 22 percent of the monthly household income is spent on tobacco products instead of food and education.

In high-resource countries, guidelines outlining best approaches to early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer have resulted in increased cancer survival rates. Even so, women of color in the United States are more likely than white women to be diagnosed at an advanced stage of the disease and have higher death rates. For example, Black women have a lower incidence rate but a higher mortality rate of breast cancer compared with their white counterparts. Black women have the highest breast cancer death rates of all racial and ethnic groups and a 41 percent higher rate of breast cancer death than white women. These breast cancer disparities mainly stem from institutional racism, racial segregation, discrim-

ination, socioeconomic factors, and reduced access to resources and care such as inadequate screening, inadequate treatment, and lack of access to treatment (Coughlin 2019; Yedjou et al. 2019).

On the global scale, the overall five-year survival rates for Australia, Canada, northern Europe, the United Kingdom, and western Europe is estimated to be higher than 85 percent. Five-year survival rates are much lower in low- and middle-income countries like Algeria (38.8 percent), Brazil (58.4 percent), and South Africa (53 percent), mostly as a result of late-stage diagnoses that lead to higher death rates when accompanied by limited treatment capacities. Many low- and middle-income countries have less than 5 percent of the resources required for adequate cancer control, and according to WHO (2021), more than 80 percent of cancer patients in these countries will be incurable at the time of diagnosis. Alongside insufficient resources, barriers to improving cancer care arise from lack of public knowledge and awareness, lack of efficient screening guidelines, and lack of effective measures for early diagnosis and treatment by the government and the organizing health care facilities (WHO 2021).

Medical Racism: A Case in Point

by Charissa V. Jones

In August 2020, Dr. Asia Muhammad said, "there's absolutely no reason why any Black person should trust the medical institution." To understand this statement, we need to look at the historical lack of access to health care among Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). Medical racism, also called medical apartheid, is the systemic use of racism against BIPOC within the medical system. It is the reason people say racism is a public health issue. Medical mistrust is justified by the centuries of abuse, mistreatment, and neglect that have killed communities of BIPOC.

It has been said that doctors are to Black women what police are to Black men. A case in point is the experience of well-known athlete Serena Williams during the birth of her daughter, Alexis. Even her wealth and fame didn't afford her the luxury of being heard. The day after she underwent a cesarean section, she explained her history of pulmonary embolisms and shortness of breath, requesting a computed tomography (CT) scan and a heparin drip. Instead of listening and doing as she requested, her nurse assumed the medication she was receiving was the problem, and her doctor ordered an ultrasound instead. When the ultrasound didn't reveal anything, she was finally granted a CT scan, revealing several small blood clots in her lungs. Williams's birth experience highlights a recurring theme of Black women (and BIPOC in general) being devalued and disrespected by the medical field. It illustrates that bias shapes how medical professionals perceive and treat their patients.

A Transnational Feminist Approach to Reproductive Justice

Women across the globe suffer adversely from institutional systems, both medical and societal, that are not designed with their best interests in mind. Another realm that disproportionately affects women, some more than others, is that of reproductive rights. It was in 1994 that the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (UN ICPD), held in Cairo, eventually articulated the concept of reproductive rights in a clear statement in its program of action. Three rights in particular were identified: "the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents" (UN ICPD 2014 [1994], 58).

The question is whether these ambitious goals are within reach in most parts of the world where there is no universal health care and various governmental policies and agendas limit and control women's access to reproductive rights. Thus the idea of *choice* and such framing of the reproductive rights movement has come under criticism by social justice activists as mainly fitting the needs and experiences of privileged women in western countries with access to health care. For example, in the United States, pregnancy-related death for Black women is more than three times higher than that of white women, implicating the devastating impacts of racism in access to high-quality health care and health care delivery (Planned Parenthood 2019).

Anti-Abortion Bill Disguised as "Women's Protection"

by Kelsey Limnell

Senator Eduardo Girão, of Brazil's "We Can" (Podemos) Party, introduced PL 5435/2020 in December 2020. This bill, known as the "Statute of the Pregnant Woman," was said to *protect* women who become pregnant as the result of rape, while actually *restricting* their legal rights to abortion (already strictly limited), coercing them to continue with unwanted pregnancies, and giving the men who raped them the status of parents.

Girão claimed that the bill "would be an advance in the 'humanitarian point of view' by protecting pregnant women and holding men accountable." But local feminists say it put on a facade of activism, and

instead of working to aid in proper women's rights and reproductive safety, it took the form of a "rape subsidy."

The bill prompts the creation of a fund to financially support survivors of rape—but only if the woman proceeds with the pregnancy. Unfortunately, the bill doesn't identify a source for the funding or specify how long it will last, and it excludes women who have financial resources.

In addition, the proposal includes a requirement that women in all contexts must "provide information to the father about the child," even if that "father" was their abuser—forcing women to stay in contact with the men who raped them. Finally, the bill would prohibit harm to the fetus starting from conception, by "act or decision of any of its parents," so that not only would abortion be illegal, but pregnant women might avoid other needed medical treatments, such as chemotherapy.

PL 5435/2020 would ignore the fundamentals of women's rights and instead create a situation where women are not only at risk for lack of proper health care but also face further mental and physical dangers in keeping in contact with the men who abused them.

Feminist and anthropologist Debora Diniz summed it up by stating, "Criminal laws are not the best way to protect health needs, and abortion is a health need."

Explore further: PL 5435/2020 had not yet been voted upon at this writing. Follow up and find out whether the bill was passed, modified, or coded into law.

To get a better sense of the reproductive disparities in the United States, we must consider maternal mortality rates. Though the maternal mortality rate in the United States declined steadily from 1900 to 1987, this statistic has increased significantly since then; in 1987, 7.2 of every 100,000 live births resulted in the mother's death, while 26.4 of every 100,000 live births resulted in the mother's death in 2015. This trend has been observed in no other developed nation. As a frame of reference, the 2015 maternal mortality rates in Australia, Japan, and Canada were 5.5, 6.4, and 7.3 out of 100,000, respectively (Planned Parenthood 2019).

We cannot look at these numbers in isolation. From 2011 to 2014, the rate of pregnancy-related death for Black women in America was 40 per 100,000, more than three times that for white women: 12.4 per 100,000. It is no trivial task to identify the factors responsible for this imbalance, especially as there are likely many at play. One variable that has been posited is "weathering," which is premature cellular aging that results from the stress of racism, disrespect, and bias inherent in the medical system in the United States (Planned Parenthood 2019).

Considering that more money per capita is spent on health care in the United States than in any other country, this trend is particularly disturbing. Nonetheless, the United States is the only high-income country where employers are not required to offer paid leave to new parents. Though it is not medically recommended, nearly 25 percent of new mothers return to work within two weeks of childbirth. Furthermore, the status quo of health insurance in the United States has resulted in over 30 million Americans being uninsured, and significant proportions of those who do have insurance are underinsured. As a result, many people are unable to afford adequate medical care throughout their pregnancies and childbirths; this is particularly true among women in rural areas and among Black women. Tragically, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that approximately 60 percent of maternal deaths in the United States are preventable (Planned Parenthood 2019).

How do we address these shortcomings in the structural fabric of (maternal) medical care in the United States? To remedy the microaggressions that lead to a hostile environment for people of color, the Harvard Chan School Maternal Health Task Force suggests hiring a diverse staff and providing training on unconscious and overt biases. Furthermore, they vie for the importance of making prenatal and postpartum care affordable and accessible to all. Several other organizations, including the Black Mamas Matter Alliance and the Center for American Progress, are working to decrease the maternal mortality rate among Black women. Some have argued for doulas to assist with the birth of Black mothers, as they can help advocate against the biases these women are likely to face (Planned Parenthood 2019).

As these issues and systems of oppression against women of color are deeply ingrained into the medical motherhood process in the United States, the efforts of groups such as these are critical in decreasing the maternal mortality rate. Yet will they be enough, or will more radical change to our medical system be necessary?

Studies have found that the severe levels of stress that result from experiencing racism are highly impactful on maternal health. This high maternal mortality rate is found consistently among Black mothers at all levels of education and is also higher than that of Latina women, who are twice as likely as Black women to be without health care (Planned Parenthood 2019). A study that spanned across hospitals in seven states showed that hospitals that predominantly served Black patients performed worse in twelve of fifteen health care delivery indicators, including deliveries, nonelective cesarean births, and maternal mortality (Planned Parenthood 2019). The effects of racism on the outcomes of expectant mothers are incriminating, which is why it is urgent that we apply an intersectional lens when seeking solutions to our broken health care system.

Fueled by the concept of intersectionality as a source of empowerment, reproductive justice is a framework that was coined by twelve Black women in 1994 in order to "recognize the commonality of our experiences, and from the sharing and growing consciousness, to a politics that will change our lives and inevitably end our oppression" (Ross 2017, 286). Reproductive justice is defined by the core belief that

every woman has the right to determine "if and when she will have a baby, to decide if she will not have a baby, and to parent the child she already has in a safe environment and healthy community without the threat of either interpersonal or state violence" (Stevens 2017). The definition thus implies that all women, including poor women, who are disproportionately likely to also be women of color, have access to free and legal abortion without barriers.

Reproductive justice is not solely about abortion, however, though abortion access is critical. A "broad approach to reproductive justice addresses aspects of women's social status that promote or interfere with her power in relationships, bodily integrity, and ability to engage in family planning and reproductive decision-making" (Chrisler 2013, 5). It also encompasses equitable access to contraception, comprehensive sex education, STI prevention and care, alternative birth options, adequate prenatal and pregnancy care, domestic violence assistance, sufficient wages to support our families, environmental justice, and much more. In order to achieve reproductive justice, we must analyze systems of power in order to eradicate gendered, sexualized, and racialized acts of dominance (Sister Song, n.d.).

Reproductive justice asserts that people should have the right to have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities

The issues surrounding reproductive justice in the United States have by no means been limited to acts of omission or matters of merely conforming to the status quo. To the contrary, those in power have actively sought out ways to harm and impair the reproductive rights of marginalized groups. The United States has a long and problematic history with eugenics, forced sterilizations, experimentation, and medical procedures without consent, particularly within vulnerable communities. In response to the momentum of the eugenics movement, US states began passing laws to permit the forcible sterilization of "feebleminded" persons in 1907. The Supreme Court upheld these controversial practices in *Buck v. Bell* (1927), and more than sixty thousand people were forcibly sterilized under these laws. Those who were subjected to coerced and violating procedures included people of color, immigrants, disabled people, and poor people, as well as women working in the sex industry and girls who transgressed gender and sexual norms (Manian 2020). The initial wave of support for eugenics was eventually quelled when Nazi Germany adopted similar practices, causing a shift in public opinion among US citizens and eventually leading to the 1942 *Skinner v. Oklahoma* Supreme Court decision to reject forcible sterilizations. Nevertheless, forcible sterilizations again gained traction here after World War II owing to anti-immigrant sentiments and population growth. The situation decades later was eerily reminiscent of that at the turn of the century: Indigenous communities, people of color, immigrants, and the poor were again the targets (Manian 2020). As laws to justify these procedures were lacking after World War II, those in power often used surreptitious means to subject these groups to sterilizations; patients were obliged to sign consent forms they couldn't read or under-

stand but that nonetheless permitted medical professionals to sterilize them (*Relf v. Weinberger*); doctors compelled their patients to undergo these procedures for fear of losing medical or welfare benefits; heavily medicated women who could not understand English had their tubes tied after childbirth (*Madrigal v. Quilligan*). These practices happened from coast to coast and to various racial minorities (Manian 2020). Such practices have been compared to Nazi sterilization campaigns, which were in fact modeled after eugenic sterilization laws in the United States in the early twentieth century (Manian 2020). In 1970, a whistleblower leaked evidence of rampant sterilization abuse at the University of Southern California Medical Center, where hospital staff repeatedly approached women whose primary language was Spanish for consent for sterilization while they were in active labor and with English consent forms they could not understand. And in 1974, in the case of *Relf v. Weinberger*, two Black sisters, aged 12 and 14, were sterilized by a federally funded family planning clinic in Alabama after their mother signed a consent form that she was unable to read (Manian 2020). These atrocities were and continue to be widespread across the United States.

Eugenics programs were also enacted within a colonial social context, once again with the belief that some people are more fit to reproduce. In Puerto Rico, fertility control was developed and fostered under colonialism after the United States seized the Caribbean archipelago in 1898 (Reichard 2020). Rich, able-bodied, white colonizers were encouraged to reproduce while poor people of color in so-called underdeveloped nations were labeled as unfit to reproduce (Reichard 2020). In 1937, Law 116 was passed, eugenics-based sterilization was subsidized and promoted by the US federal government, and the policy became so well known and normalized that it was referred to as *la operación* (Reichard 2020).

By the 1970s, Puerto Rico had the highest rate of sterilization in the world, with one-third of Puerto Rican women having undergone the procedure. Additionally, US eugenicist Clarence Gamble, heir to the Proctor and Gamble fortune, enacted another method of reproductive violence by using his facilities on the archipelago to test contraceptives that had not been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration on fifteen hundred women, many of whom lived in in impoverished neighborhoods (Reichard 2020). None of the deaths caused by the trials were investigated. Currently, in Puerto Rico, almost half the population lives below the poverty line, further complicating any sort of reproductive freedom. Some birth control methods, such as intrauterine devices, can cost more than $1,000, and other options such as the patch or the pill range from $10 to $150 a month (Reichard 2020).

The testing of contraceptives on and forced sterilizations of marginalized communities represents a form of eugenics

Sterilizations in 2020 reflect US history over the past five hundred years, where people who have been deemed "undesirable"—women, girls, people of color, people with disabilities, and people who have been convicted of crimes—are considered unfit to have children and are subject to horrendous medical violations (Deaderick 2020). There are many forms of violence that the United States has inflicted on Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color, including genocide, enslavement, and family separations. These forced sterilizations represent reproductive violence that is the implementation of racist and eugenic practices executed by the federal government.

Tragically, a new wave of forced sterilizations in the United States arose in 2020. Dawn Wooten, a whistleblowing nurse from the Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia, detailed how officials and medical professionals have been violating the rights of countless immigrants at this facility. Wooten described how women were frequently subjected to "forced hysterectomies and other unwanted gynecological procedures," and informed consent was lacking (Manian 2020). Without professional interpreters, some nurses attempted to use cursory tools such as Google Translate to communicate with their patients; nonetheless, many of these patients could not understand what was happening to them. Again, for at least the third time in US history, these practices target particularly vulnerable groups, solidifying just how perilous it is to be an immigrant, a person of color, or poor in the United States (Manian 2020).

Anti-Trans Violence and Trans Care

Transgender, gender-diverse, and nonbinary people experience high rates of health disparities and violence. A total of 350 known trans and gender-diverse people were murdered globally in 2020, indicating a

6 percent rise from 2019 (Clifton 2020). Trans women or transfeminine people accounted for 98 percent of those killed, and 79 percent of trans people murdered in the United States are people of color (Clifton 2020). It is also important to remember that many cases of trans murders aren't known to the public, as they are under- or misreported. Trans people of color, particularly Black trans people, are more likely to experience discrimination and violence in housing, employment, and health care, while also being 6.2 times more likely to experience police violence and 1.6 more times likely to experience physical violence (SPARK Family 2015).

The trans community is a diverse population with a high prevalence of adverse health outcomes (Reisner et al. 2016). Though, overall, most aspects of health remain understudied and lacking, the most prominent outcomes among trans communities include HIV and other STIs, mental health distress, and substance use and abuse. The lack of resources invested in minimizing health inequities in the trans community implies a dire need to acknowledge the complex ways that institutional systems operate to create these inequities in health outcomes in the first place.

Our institutional systems have stigmatized trans people for decades. In 1975, gender transition processes were classified as a mental disorder within diagnostic classification manuals, including the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). The ICD and *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* only recently removed this classification. Nevertheless, trans people still suffer the daily repercussions of transphobic laws and practices, social discrimination, and violence, both inside and outside the medical community. In several countries, they are still required to undergo psychiatric treatment to access trans health care and are often subject to reparative therapies. Scientific literature has also historically pathologized trans people (Schwend 2020).

Efforts are being made to address these inequities. The Human Rights in Patient Care Framework helps to prevent abuse within the health care system and hold governments accountable. The Yogyakarta Principles, published in 2007 and updated ten years later, establish a basis of human rights laws to protect people from discrimination based on gender expression, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics. Nevertheless, the situation has by no means been made right, as trans people still suffer widespread discrimination in health care and employment, and they are highly exposed to a spectrum of human rights violations (Schwend 2020).

Aurat March

by Qamar Ahmed

Since 2018, coalitions of feminist organizations across Pakistan have been taking to the streets on International Working Women's Day, under the banner "Aurat March" (which means "Women's Freedom") or "Aurat Azadi March." They demonstrate for the liberation of Khwaja Siras (third-gender people), transgender people, nonbinary people, and women, and for the abolition of patriarchy and all forms of gender oppression and exploitation.

Ahead of its 2021 demonstration, Aurat March Lahore issued a comprehensive "Feminist Manifesto on Healthcare." The manifesto calls for universal access to health care for all people "regardless of gender identity, financial/social class, religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, dis/ability and citizenship." Staunchly opposed to the privatization of health care in Pakistan, it specifically advocates transforming the health care system to fully and equitably meet the needs of Khwaja Sira communities, transgender people, disabled people, working-class women, people living with HIV, survivors of abuse, drug users, sex workers, and incarcerated women and children.

Specific demands include access to hormone therapies, drug recovery programs, HIV/AIDS medications, medical care for disabled people and for sex workers, and an end to forced sex-assignment procedures on intersex people.

Similarly, the Aurat Azadi March's Charter of Demands, titled "Feminist Care in the Time of the Coronavirus" for 2021, addressed health care, disability justice, patriarchal violence, labor rights and protections, welfare, affordable housing and land redistribution, militarized state violence, students' oppression, justice for religious and ethnic minorities, and environmental justice.

Select demands from this charter include free health care for people with mental and physical disabilities, taxation and environmental regulation of corporations, universal basic income, land redistribution, an end to enforced disappearances, demilitarization of educational institutions and reinstatement of student unions, legislation against forced conversions, and an end to police brutality, harassment, and murder.

As Loretta Ross explains, intersectionality through a reproductive justice lens is crucial to address reproductive vulnerabilities. She writes,

> Not only biologically defined women experience reproductive oppression. By highlighting the distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender, our analysis includes transmen, transwomen, and gender-nonconforming individuals. For example, trans and intersex people are frequently coerced to undergo gender reassignment surgery that results in involuntary sterilizations in order to obtain vital identity documentation such as driver's licenses that match their preferred identities. Such policies limit their reproductive options as a form of covert reproductive control by the state. Reproductive justice addresses the essentialism of gender-specific accounts that neglect how differences shape people's material realities, leaving undiscovered reproductive vulnerabilities shaped by white supremacy and neoliberalism. White supremacy as used in this article is a lethal body of ideas comprised of racism, Christian nationalism, homophobia, nativism, settler colonialism, transphobia, misogyny, and authoritarianism. (Ross 2017, 292)

Ross's words demonstrate the need for an intersectional framework to understanding health inequities and an approach to reproductive justice that is inclusive of all people and centers the experiences, needs, and power of those who are most marginalized.

In the words of Audre Lorde, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (2007, 131). All forms of oppressions affect reproductive lives, so marginalized groups, who experience multiple layers of structural oppression, need to be at the forefront of conversations on reproductive justice.

Disability Justice

The COVID-19 pandemic has focused attention on the health disparities experienced by people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have historically been erased and mistreated by the institutional systems of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. Before the disability rights movement, public places were inaccessible, and people with disabilities were mistreated without legal repercussions. This movement critically established civil rights for people living with disabilities through the creation of organizations and movements such as service provision agencies, constituency-led centers, academic spaces, and advocacy organizations (Sins Invalid 2020).

Nevertheless, while the disability rights movement was important in raising awareness and demanding civil rights, both its context and content lacked in several regards. For one, its approach often based disability rights on a single issue rather than considering the disabled person as a whole (e.g., immigration status, race, gender, sexuality); the importance of intersectionality should be noted here. Furthermore, the leadership of the disability rights movement was based on white experience and privilege, and a more diverse framework is necessary to comprehensively serve all disabled people. The mainstream disability

rights framework also historically focused on people with mobility impairments, with other disabilities being relatively neglected. Achieving justice through this movement has often hinged on pursuing a legal pathway, but this option is not always available or appropriate (Sins Invalid 2020).

In response to these shortcomings, queer disabled persons and people of color spearheaded a movement for disability justice in 2005, with activists like Patty Berne and Mia Mingus leading many of these first initiatives and conversations. Central to the tenets of this movement is the idea that "disability justice work is largely done by individuals within their respective settings" (Sins Invalid 2020). Also pivotal is the fact that leadership is composed of disabled persons that offer diverse perspectives (e.g., queer, gender-nonconforming, people of color). Through these efforts, the disability justice movement seeks to create "a world that values and celebrates us in all our beauty," with a focus on the principle that "we move together, with no body left behind" (Sins Invalid 2020).

Ten Principles of Disability Justice

from Sins Invalid

1. *Intersectionality:* Simply put, this principle says that we are many things, and they all affect our lived experience. We may be not only disabled, but we also each come from a specific experience of race, class, sexuality, age, religious background, geographical location, immigration status, and more. Depending on context, we all have areas where we experience privilege as well as oppression. The term *intersectionality* was first introduced by feminist theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe the experiences of Black women, who experience both racism and sexism in specific ways. We gratefully embrace the nuance that this principle brings to our lived experiences and the ways it shapes the perspectives we offer.
2. *Leadership of Those Most Impacted:* When we talk about ableism, racism, sexism and transmisogyny, colonization, police violence, and the like, we are not looking to academics and experts to tell us what's what—we are lifting up, listening to, reading, following, and highlighting the perspectives of those who are most impacted by the systems we fight against. By centering the leadership of those most affected, we keep ourselves grounded in real-world problems and find creative strategies for resistance.
3. *Anti-Capitalist Politics:* Capitalism depends on wealth accumulation for some (the white ruling class) at the expense of others and encourages competition as a means of survival. The nature of our disabled body/minds means that we resist conforming to "normative" levels of productivity in a capitalist culture, and our labor is often invisible to a system that defines labor by able-bodied,

white supremacist, gender-normative standards. Our worth is not dependent on what and how much we can produce.

4. *Cross-Movement Solidarity:* Disability justice can only grow into its potential as a movement by aligning itself with racial justice, reproductive justice, queer and trans liberation, prison abolition, environmental justice, anti-police terror, Deaf activism, fat liberation, and other movements working for justice and liberation. This means challenging white disability communities around racism and challenging other movements to confront ableism. Through cross-movement solidarity, we create a united front.

5. *Recognizing Wholeness:* Each person is full of history and life experience. Each person has an internal experience composed of our own thoughts, sensations, emotions, sexual fantasies, perceptions, and quirks. Disabled people are whole people.

6. *Sustainability:* We learn to pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained over the long term. We value the teachings of our bodies and experiences and use them as a critical guide and reference point to help us move away from urgency and into a deep, slow, transformative, unstoppable wave of justice and liberation.

7. *Commitment to Cross-Disability Solidarity:* We value and honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, even and especially those who are most often left out of political conversations. We are building a movement that breaks down isolation between people with physical impairments, people who are sick or chronically ill, psych survivors and people with mental health disabilities, neurodiverse people, people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, Deaf people, Blind people, people with environmental injuries and chemical sensitivities, and all others who experience ableism and isolation that undermines our collective liberation.

8. *Interdependence:* Before the massive colonial project of Western European expansion, we understood the nature of interdependence within our communities. We see the liberation of all living systems and the land as integral to the liberation of our own communities, as we all share one planet. We work to meet each other's needs as we build toward liberation, without always reaching for state solutions that inevitably extend state control further into our lives.

9. *Collective Access:* As Black and brown and queer crips, we bring flexibility and creative nuance to our engagement with each other. We create and explore ways of doing things that go beyond able-bodied and neurotypical norms. Access needs aren't shameful—we all function differently depending on context and environment. Access needs can be articulated and met privately, through a collective, or in community, depending upon an individual's needs, desires, and the capacity of the group. We can share responsibility for our access needs, we can ask that our needs

be met without compromising our integrity, we can balance autonomy while being in community, we can be unafraid of our vulnerabilities, knowing our strengths are respected.

10. *Collective Liberation:* We move together as people with mixed abilities, multiracial, multi-gendered, mixed class, across the sexual spectrum, with a vision that leaves no body/mind behind. This is disability justice. We honor the long-standing legacies of resilience and resistance that are the inheritance of all of us whose bodies and minds will not conform. Disability justice is not yet a broad-based popular movement. Disability justice is a vision and practice of what is yet to be, a map that we create with our ancestors and our great-grandchildren onward, in the width and depth of our multiplicities and histories, a movement toward a world in which every body and mind is known as beautiful.

Transnational Engagements and Health Equity: A Way Forward

Throughout the world, women are addressing inequalities that deny their human rights, endanger their health, keep them from productive opportunities, and threaten them with violence. This happens in various settings: within the family, in schools, and in commercial and political institutions. Women's social, economic, and political status undermines their ability to protect and promote their own physical, emotional, and mental health, including their effective use of health information and services. Women deserve better.

The inequities ingrained in the daily lives of women have been exacerbated by COVID-19. With more time spent at home during the pandemic, the hours devoted to domestic work such as meal preparation, cleaning, and child care have increased dramatically, and the brunt of this labor has fallen upon women. This division of household labor was already severe before the pandemic, with 42 percent of women unable to maintain a paid working position because of their domestic responsibilities, in contrast to 6 percent of men. The unpaid and domestic workload also increased for men during this time, but it has increased more significantly for women (Bolis et al. 2020). The effects of this disparity cannot be neglected. Among women surveyed about the changes to their lives and workload during the COVID-19 pandemic, 43 percent reported heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and isolation; they also noted feeling overworked and becoming physically ill due to these unpaid responsibilities. Furthermore, this disparity is more rampant in lower-income countries, with women there shouldering even more responsibilities

and lacking the means that might make their labor less onerous (e.g., labor-saving equipment, water, electricity) (Bolis et al. 2020).

Gender equality is a goal in its own right, and it is central for the attainment of social policies in a wide range of areas, including the improvement of health. As this chapter emphasizes, we must address discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, migrant status, nationality, and other statuses and health care practices by using an intersectional framework to ensure that interventions in health benefit those who have the least resources. Changes are occurring, but not quickly enough. A woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth every minute. One in three women experience gender-based violence in their lifetimes. In 2020, 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer, resulting in 685,000 deaths globally. Trans people experience high levels of violence, discrimination, and stigma that also limit their access to much needed health care. Armed conflict disproportionality affects the well-being and health of women and children (Singh et al. 2021). And too many women are not receiving the benefits of their productive labor. Women want a different future.

Change must take place at the local level as well as within international policy. In other words, it is imperative to realize the importance of community-based and grassroots approaches to health issues that are inclusive of marginalized voices. These efforts require collaborative action by a wide range of actors outside the government and development agencies, such as people's organizations, community-based organizations, underrepresented and marginalized women's groups at the local and national levels, the media, and all others concerned with building a fair and just society. To obtain health equity, we must call out and dismantle the systems that perpetuate inequality. Such collective action creates pressure for accountability and puts social change onto the political agenda. Activist Peggy Antrobus (2004, 25) identifies the "common difference" that "links us all in a political struggle for recognition and redistributive justice." She explains that its difference from other social movements "lies not only in the absence of homogeneity . . . but in the value it places on diversity, its commitment to solidarity with women everywhere, its, feminist politics, and its method of organizing." And, as Rhoda Reddock states, "sexuality and reproductive rights and health, including freedom from violence, are the foundation of women's ability to engage in the political struggle against inequality and injustice, not just for women but for everyone" (Antrobus 2006, 1375).

Recognizing the connections between individual health and community health makes it vital that all research, policies, and programs/projects are committed to achieving health equity in a systematic and sustainable manner. Such goals cannot be achieved through isolated actions by any one group of society, no matter how committed. The root causes of these problems and power relations must be identified, and a feminist, human rights perspective must be employed to understand health in the context of wider social, cultural, and economic issues. Thus the priorities for equity should be identified and based on the community's struggles with colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberal national and oppressive policies within

global and transnational sociohistorical contexts. The challenges to eradicating health inequities and shifting the distribution of power across all social institutions cannot be addressed merely through technical or managerial interventions, but instead require an emphasis on social justice and health equity through intersectional practices and policies.

Learning Activities

1. Shirazi begins the chapter by arguing that health and adequate health care are a human right. What does/should the right to health and health care include, according to Shirazi and the sources she cites?
2. Shirazi discusses the ways that COVID-19, environmental changes and disasters, and war have negatively affected—and continue to negatively affect—health outcomes for women and girls around the globe. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of the three topics listed above. How does Shirazi support her argument about the way COVID-19, environmental changes and disasters, and war negatively affect health outcomes for girls and women? What do you learn about your chosen topic that you didn't previously know?
3. One chapter heading asks, "Why Do Women Still Die Giving Birth?" How does Shirazi answer that question?
4. What is the global gag rule? How does this US foreign policy negatively affect women around the globe?
5. What is reproductive justice? How does the concept of reproductive justice broaden the conversation about reproductive rights beyond a pro-choice / pro-life framework?
6. What is "the way forward" to health equity, according to Shirazi? How do transnational feminist theories and principles serve as the foundation for the way forward?
7. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Majority World / Minority World, global gag rule, medical racism / medical apartheid, reproductive justice, disability justice.

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REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOMS

Jayamala Mayilsamy and Kamalaveni Veni

It is the mission of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), "to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled." (2014, 10).

Reproductive freedom is essential for all women and men to have self-determination over their bodies and sexuality. Reproductive rights for women are critical for the achievement of gender equality to ensure global progress toward fair and democratic societies. For decades, the decisions and choices related to bearing and nurturing children have been debated and discussed between spouses and their families in many societies. "Marriage," the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship, has been traditionally considered as the only right time for giving birth to a child; some religions considered out-of-wedlock births to be a sin.

Planned pregnancy

Studies have shown that in many societies, early marriage, giving birth to a child, space between children, and restrictions to the number of children borne are mostly decided by the spouse and by the family members based on their psychological needs and socioeconomic conditions of the family. Beyond that, global sociopolitical movements over the years have attempted to manipulate women's lives, sexuality, and fertility for political purposes, fundamentalist revivals, or population control.

Overview

Gender norms often create a double standard with regard to men's and women's sexuality; for example, unmarried women who engage in sexual activity are shamed, whereas their male peers who do the same are celebrated. Social stigma can prevent unmarried women from seeking sexual and reproductive health care, especially contraception and abortion. Conversely, in societies with more equitable gender norms,

men do support women's autonomy and rights and facilitate women's access to information and services (Blanc 2001).

Women have responded to repressive gender norms and resurgences of gender violence by building an internationally recognized legal framework for the universal defense of women's autonomy, bodily integrity, and personhood. The framework identifies how human rights instruments may be interpreted to condemn abuse of women's rights. It also proposes modifications to existing legal tools and social policies. With explicit provisions protecting women's right to bodily integrity, the framework is a key instrument for guaranteeing that population programs respect women.

This chapter gives a historical overview of population and birth control and its essentiality by examining culture-specific myths regarding national and global growth. The chapter describes the historical reproductive rights movement that has promoted a human rights-based approach to reproductive health; laws relating to reproductive rights; institutions working toward reproductive rights; the international commitment to reproductive health; contraceptives and the impact of new technologies related to reproductive health; and cases explaining how the existing patriarchal system plays a role in reproductive behavior.

Population Control and the Birth Control Movement

Humans have attempted to control their reproduction since ancient times, using techniques such as abstinence, withdrawal, and abortion. Contraceptive methods such as vaginal sponges and cervical caps were used in the Middle East several thousand years before Christ. Population control as a major international development strategy is a phenomenon that dates only to the aftermath of World War II. Yet its origins reach back to the intellectual currents and social movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which culminated in an organized birth control movement in Europe and the United States (Hartmann 1997).

Eugenicists and racists attempted to use birth control for social engineering. Eugenics is a set of beliefs and practices that aim to improve the genetic "quality" of a human population, historically by excluding people and groups judged to be inferior or promoting those judged to be superior. The motive of eugenics was to limit "deviant" populations; the population control movement aimed to solve social and economic problems through fertility control. It was used again as a tool in a new era of social planning after World War II when it metamorphosed into "family planning." The efforts of English radical neo-Malthusians (who believed that rapid population growth would lead to depletion of the Earth's resources) that promoted birth control and emphasized poverty reduction somehow evolved into women's rights. Initially, the US birth control movement reflected the emergence of family planning policy resulting from the efforts of Margaret Sanger, feminists, and the civil rights movement. By the twentieth century, changing views of sexuality and working-class militancy ignited the US birth control movement.

The Women's Health Movement

Margaret Sanger

Linda Gordon's "Woman's Body, Woman's Right" and Bonnie Mass's "Population Target" analyze the history of the birth control movement and trace the elements present in the current debate to their origins in the conflicts and contradictions of the movement's history. They have written about the women's health movement and noted that it positively influenced gynecological practice. They have also described problems with the first generation of oral contraceptives.

Margaret Sanger

Population control moved through three stages: from the cause of "voluntary motherhood," to advance suffrage and women's political and social status; to the concept of "birth control," promoted by socialist feminists to help empower women and the working class; and, from 1920 on, to a liberal movement for civil rights and population control.

Physicians such as Robert Latou Dickinson legitimized the movement via formation of the Committee on Maternal Health in 1925, but the movement remained divided until 1939, when Sanger's group merged with the American Birth Control League, the predecessor of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. A key US legal decision in 1939 allowed for the distribution of birth control devices by mail to physicians. After a brief retirement, Sanger formed the International Planned Parenthood Federation and supported research into the birth control pill. Eugenicists through the Committee on Maternal Health supported Christopher Tietze and others developing "The Pill." Final constitutional access to contraception based on the right to privacy was granted in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965).[1] The ruling in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972)[2] extended this right to unmarried persons. The right to privacy was further extended in the *Roe v. Wade* decision on legal abortion in 1973.[3]

Barriers to Contraceptive Use

by Sophie Brodish

Across the globe, contraception use has reached a record high. Modern forms of contraception globally include, but are not limited to, female sterilization, male sterilization, pill, injectables, implants, intrauterine devices, and male condoms. Within Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania the most popular contraception method are injectables, while sterilization is more common in other places, such as Guatemala.* In countries where there is a strong skew toward one or two contraception methods, however, questions about equal access arise. Data suggest that women may not have a choice when choosing contraceptive methods or are limited from the full array of existing options. Existence does not guarantee access in the world of reproductive freedom.

In countries where women with unmet needs are not using contraception despite not desiring a pregnancy, they cite concerns related to contraception side effects, postpartum amenorrhea (also known as postpartum infertility), and lack of necessity as a result of infrequent sex. But one of the most significant concerns is the lack of knowledge itself. Within the Democratic Republic of Congo, nearly 19 percent under the age of 25 and 10 percent above the age of 25 cite their reason for not using contraception as being a lack of knowledge surrounding the method and the method's source, the main concern still being postpartum and breastfeeding effects from the use of contraception. Complications related to postpartum breastfeeding are a primary concern for many women under the age of 25, leading to a decreased use of contraception by this population, increasing their chances of an unintended pregnancy. Improving knowledge surrounding contraception will decrease the risk of not just unintended pregnancy, but also the spread of sexually transmitted infections, which can be transmitted further without proper knowledge.

**One organization that seeks to spread awareness is WINGS Guatemala (Women's International Network for Guatemala Solutions), an organization founded to improve the education and access to reproductive and family planning services for rural Guatemalan youth, women, and men. They provide free contraceptives to those under 19 years of age and offer a wide array of methods to choose from, as well as offer counseling pertaining to sexual and reproductive health.*

The argument for improving the "quality" of the population remained from the formation of the Population Reference Bureau in 1929 through the 1960s. US government support for national and international family planning proceeded slowly through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The US need for the resources of developing countries led to concerns about population growth fueling nationalistic fires. Thus private agencies

began a postwar population control effort in developing countries. This received official US approval with the 1958 report of the Draper Committee,[4] which identified world population growth as a US security issue. From 1967 to 1970, Congress enacted strong legislation in support of national and international family planning. The Bucharest Conference in 1974 highlighted the inadequacies of international population control that deemphasized economic development.

About $5 billion is spent annually on family planning in the Third World. Third World governments spend about $3 billion, with China, India, and Indonesia being the biggest spenders. More than $1 billion is donated by the governments of developed countries, multilateral institutions, and private agencies, and the rest is spent by individual contraceptive users.

While the level of population assistance has increased over time, it still accounts for only 1 percent of Official Development Assistance (ODA). This percentage is significant, however, since less than 7 percent of ODA is allocated to human welfare concerns and population aid, and the policies it helps to generate influence many other aspects of development planning. The organizations that comprise the population establishment have the common purpose of reducing population growth in developing countries, but they are nonetheless different entities with sometimes conflicting goals and strategies.

Reproductive Rights Are Human Rights: Progress from 1945 to 1994

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was first ratified in the United Nations Charter in 1945. The declaration affirmed equality between the sexes as a basic principle in 1948. Yet inequality remained between men and women until the international body seriously examined women's conditions in 1975. The United Nations (UN) then sponsored meetings to launch the women's decade in 1975. The International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City (1975) initiated the decadelong process that culminated in Nairobi in 1985 (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

The International Women's Year Conference denounced coercive practices in contraceptive research and services as human rights abuses. Women activists were instrumental in ensuring that the women's conference grounded its assertion of rights to reproductive choice on a notion of bodily integrity and control. The UN Decade for Women played the role of an international legal instrument for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1979. CEDAW was a major victory in the battle to secure women's equality with men, including the right to bodily integrity. But CEDAW failed to specify a number of women's reproductive rights, except to affirm women's rights to family planning information, counseling, and services, and to have equal rights with men to decide the number and spacing of their children. In addition, CEDAW confirms women's rights

to maintain their job during and after pregnancy, including maternity leave and childcare (UN Women 1979, Part I, Article 4, Appendix A).

Global Protections against Pregnancy Discrimination

by Ramona Flores

MaternityAction.org defines pregnancy discrimination as "treating a woman unfavourably because of her pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness." Many countries have laws and regulations in place that serve to legally protect pregnant people from pregnancy-based discrimination, like New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, there are still many countries with policies that fall short of being effective or exclude women who aren't citizens, such as migrant workers.

The Fair Labor Association published a report in 2018 that highlighted the struggles of pregnant migrant workers in Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand. The study not only identified the problems in each country's treatment of pregnant migrant women, but also outlined possible solutions. Some connecting themes across all three countries were a push for civil rights education for expectant mothers, improving health care access for both mothers and their children, and access to pre- and postnatal care regardless of citizenship status.

A 2021 study published in the *Qualitative Report* found that more than 800,000 women in Italy reported being forced to resign after becoming pregnant and had undated resignation letters used against them. Alternatively, some Kenyan women were made to sign contracts for their employer pledging that they would not get pregnant during their employment. Human Rights Watch found that several girls who were still enrolled in Kenyan schools and became pregnant were routinely told they had to leave and not return until after their delivery.

While there are some protections in place for pregnant women globally, they are rarely implemented in countries with the most vulnerable populations and consistently fall short of protecting women and girls.

Parallel to the women's decade and the consolidation of internationally recognized women's rights instruments, the United Nations held a series of international human rights and population conferences that also dealt directly with women's reproductive rights. The concept of universal rights was first applied to family planning twenty years after the Universal Declaration, at the 1968 International Human Rights Conference in Tehran: "Couples have a basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and a right to adequate education and information in this respect" (Freedman and Isaacs 1993).

The various UN conference resolutions on women's rights represented significant advances over the restricted civil and political human rights recognized by the previous UN covenants. But population and family planning provisions were consistently oriented to birth control rather than an integrated approach to reproductive health, and their gender neutrality disregarded women's specific reproductive responsibility. The UN resolutions also utterly failed to address abortion rights (Dixon-Mueller 1990).

At the time of the UN conferences (both the Decade for Women and the population conferences) the concept of reproductive rights had not yet been formalized in feminist discourse. The International Campaign on Abortion, Sterilization, and Contraception (ICASC), founded in Europe in 1978 to counter both pro-natalist and anti-natalist movements, may have been the first to formalize a concept that many women's organizations around the world had come to define as reproductive rights: women's right to decide whether, when, and how to have children—regardless of nationality, class, race, age, religion, disability, sexuality, or marital status in the social, economic, and political conditions that make such decisions possible (Petchesky and Weiner 1990).

The Amsterdam Conference is often cited as the birth of the international reproductive health and rights movement, bringing together individuals representing initiatives taken throughout the world. On that occasion the campaign changed its name to the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), under pressure from Global South activists, who felt that the explicit reference to reproductive rights would more appropriately encompass southern women's health agenda.

One underlying principle that formed the basis for communication among the profusion of diverse women's groups was the belief that women should be seen as the subjects and not the objects of population policies. In January 1994, women from all over the world issued a declaration to be delivered to heads of state and drafts of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

Systematic Global Attention toward Reproductive Rights (UN 2005), (UNFPA 2014, 7.3)

1968: Final Act of the Tehran Conference on Human Rights	*"Parents have a basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children and a right to adequate education and information in this respect."* The General Assembly endorsed the Final Act in December 1968. (UN 1968)
1975: Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace and Plans of Action	Principle 12, *"every couple and every individual has the right to decide freely and responsibly whether or not to have children as well as to determine their number and spacing, and to have the information, education and means to do so."* (UN 1975)
1993: World Conference on Human Rights adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action	Section 3 of the Programme of Action deals with women's rights and their right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning services, as well as equal access to education at all levels, including sexuality education. (UN Human Rights Council 1993)
1994: ICPD and Programme of Action	The Programme of Action clearly affirmed and articulated that reproductive and sexual health is protected by the human rights already recognized by both national and international law. In addition, the Programme of Action contributed to the recognition of the complex links between population growth and gender equality. The generally acknowledged definition of reproductive rights is taken from the ICPD Programme of Action paragraph 7.3. (UNFPA 2014)
1995: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—IV World Conference on Women	The conference reaffirmed the goals and standards on sexual and reproductive health and rights set out in the ICPD but elaborated on women's interests, stating that "equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behavior and its consequences." The 1995 conference also directly called upon UN member states to review their laws, especially those that still imposed punitive measures upon women who "have undergone illegal abortions."

2000: Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration and subsequent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	In September 2000 the then-189 members of the United Nations in the Millennium Summit adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Based on the Millennium Declaration, primarily Section III on development and poverty eradication, the eight MDGs were established. Four out of eight MDGs were related to reproductive and sexual health and rights. MDG 5 concerns maternal health and contains two targets: to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015, and to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015. MDG 4 is to reduce the mortality of children under age five by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. MDG 3 deals with promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. Finally, MDG 6 concerns the combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Based on current data, MDG 5 is considered the least likely of all the MDGs to be achieved within the timeline set. (UN Women 1995)
2005: World Summit Outcome	The 2005 World Summit Outcome confirms the commitment to the Millennium Declaration and reiterates the *"determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the . . . Millennium Development Goals."* In addition, the World Summit Outcome contains new commitments, four of which became part of the revised MDGs during 2006-7. One is the achievement of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 (that became an addition to MDG 5); another is universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment by 2010 (that became an addition to MDG 6).

ICPD Programme of Action 1994

The ICPD Programme of Action revealed that reproductive health services should include safe contraception, abortion, and prevention as well as early diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The United Nations and other donors and governments should recognize the right to safe and legal abortion as an intrinsic part of women's rights, and governments should change legislation and implement policies to reflect such recognition. Better health services are one element of women's

rights. In addition, sexuality and gender power relationships must be addressed as a central aspect of reproductive rights (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

Reproductive rights are human rights, which are inalienable and inseparable from basic rights, such as the rights to food, shelter, health, security, livelihood, education, and political empowerment. The conference emphasized that women are entitled to bodily integrity (security from personal harm or control). Within this principle, violence against women and harmful practices like female genital mutilation must be recognized as major reproductive rights and health issues. Governments should be held accountable for taking measures to combat such practices. Women should be involved in decision-making processes national and internationally, where any laws or policies affecting their rights and health are designed and implemented (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

Vaginal Birth after C-Section Birth

by Victoria Keenan

People who have had a surgical birth in the past may have heard the saying, "once a C-section, always a C-section" (Enkin et al. 2000). This attitude can be reinforced through subtle negative language, such as when it is suggested that a woman or birthing person is being "allowed" a "trial of labor" by their doctor. Such phrasing suggests that the pregnant person is not in a position of authority in their own care, and they should not expect their labor will lead to a physiologic birth. This is in opposition to consistent high-quality evidence that shows vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) as a safe and achievable mode of delivery for many women.

Despite resistance, some pregnant people choose a VBAC, or even a home birth after cesarean (HBAC). Owing to lack of experience, ignorance of evidence-based practice, or fears of litigation, some medical providers may refuse to accept the pregnant person unless they abandon their VBAC and comply with a planned cesarean birth. Pregnant people can also feel coerced into having repeat C-section births as a result of threats to contact the police or child welfare services. Some obstetricians have even taken it upon themselves to override women's human right to bodily autonomy by performing this major abdominal surgery without consent.

Such extreme actions are often based on misinformation about risks and obstructive hospital policies, rather than inherent risk or an individualized risk assessment.

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The Cairo document included concerns for gender equality, the right to physical integrity, security of the person, and reproductive rights. The ICPD Programme of Action declared that sexual and reproductive rights include certain human rights that are already officially recognized, including the basic rights of individuals and couples to decide on the number and spacing of their children and the right to information and accessible services to that end, the right to respect for security of the person and physical integrity of the human body, and the right to non-discrimination and freedom from violence. In this context the concept of reproductive health gained momentum, and abortion was considered a legal right of women.

In order to extend the struggle for abortion rights beyond the boundaries of the feminist movement, women must engage allies in dialogue to define advocacy strategies appropriate to diverse cultural and political contexts. In many settings the women's movement has opted to pursue the health rationale, viewing it as more morally compelling than the argument in favor of individual rights. The two rationales should not be seen as opposing alternatives, but rather as lines of reasoning and argument that converge upon the same goal: women's access to safe, legal abortion (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

Talking through the Taboos

by Sarah Baum

In many places in the world, talking about sexuality and reproductive rights remains an unbreakable taboo subject. This is especially true in highly religious countries where abortion is banned and access to contraceptives is limited. It would be easy for an international organization to simply step in and try to enforce their beliefs onto another person's culture, but that isn't what groups like the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPFF) do.

Instead, they work with local communities and women's rights groups to integrate into the region's cultural history and system of beliefs, all without compromising their own dedication to women's reproductive rights. They work with local volunteers everywhere, from Jamaica, to Colombia, to Indonesia,

> addressing the needs of the communities on a case-by-case basis. From starting men's groups to offer "the other half" information on women's rights and contraception, to confidential use of injectable birth control, each program is tailored to provide the best care possible while remaining sensitive to local traditions. With the help of groups like the IPPF and others, women now can learn about reproductive health in a supportive and understanding way.
>
> Talking about sex and sexuality isn't always a comfortable subject, but it's a vital one to allow women to gain control over their own bodies. And while it's never easy to venture into taboo subjects, family planning is a right all women should have access to, no matter where in the world they live.

Serious barriers to implement the reproductive health and rights framework in many countries are the persistent practices that are harmful to women but justified by customary legal systems. The gap between abortion laws and practices worldwide is probably the most striking example of the contradiction. In Brazil, for example, 1942 legislation permitted abortion in cases of rape or risk to the mother's life. But the public health system provided services for women legally entitled to an abortion only in 1989, in response to an order from the São Paulo Municipal Health Department (Araujo 1993).

In many countries, abortion is illegal under any circumstances. In Kenya it is legally restricted but widely practiced with the full knowledge of public authorities. In some countries, such as Bangladesh, abortion is accepted by customary legal systems but is a crime under statutory law. Finally, before abortion had been fully legal for even two decades, as in Croatia, Germany, Poland, Russia, and the United States, neoconservative social forces began working to roll back women's hard-won access to safe abortion (Correa and Reichmann 1994).

Global Laws Relating to Reproductive Rights

This section describes laws relating to reproductive rights around the world. The Center for Reproductive Rights (n.d.) reports the following as of 2019:

- New South Wales joined the rest of the Australian states in decriminalizing abortion, permitting abortion on request up to twenty-two weeks' gestation.
- Oaxaca became the second state in Mexico to decriminalize abortion.
- The UK parliament voted overwhelmingly to adopt legislative provisions extending abortion rights to Northern Ireland and legalizing same-sex marriage.
- Kenya's High Court ruled that the withdrawal of 2012 standards and guidelines on Reducing

Maternal Mortality and Morbidity from Unsafe Abortion in Kenya was illegal, holding abortion lawful on both physical and mental health grounds.

- Iceland passed one of Europe's most liberal abortion laws, permitting abortion on request up to twenty-two weeks' gestation.
- North Macedonia removed regressive barriers to abortion and extended the gestational limit to abortion on request to twelve weeks, making abortion care more accessible.
- South Korea's Constitutional Court ruled that restrictive abortion laws are unconstitutional, giving lawmakers until 2020 to pass new legislation that legalizes abortion.
- India recognized women's reproductive rights as part of the "inalienable survival rights," which are implicitly protected under the fundamental right to life. Article 51(c) of the Indian constitution and the judiciary have established that the government has a constitutional obligation to respect international law and treaty obligations (Supreme Court of India 1999).

Legal Abortion Access around the World

by Lily Sendroff

Legal access to abortion varies significantly both between and within countries. It has long been known that regardless of the continent, country, or region, outlawing abortion does not stop abortion: it only stops safe abortion. Instead of sterile procedures performed by medical professionals, people with no other option turn to dangerous methods for self-managed abortion. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 23,000 people die annually from unsafe abortion, and countless others suffer significant health complications.

Abortion access varies significantly across nations; 90 million women of reproductive age live in countries where abortion is not permitted for any reason. For example, El Salvador has some of the world's strictest abortion laws. In that country, if found guilty of receiving an abortion, a woman can be imprisoned for up to eight years. Worldwide, 360 million women of reproductive age—accounting for 22 percent of the global population of women of reproductive age—live in countries where abortion is only permitted to save the life of the pregnant person. The majority of countries that fall into these two harshest categories of abortion policy are in the Global South.

A third category uses a broad interpretation of law that allows abortion in a variety of contexts based on social or economic reasons. If someone wants an abortion in these countries, the impact of pregnancy and child rearing on a woman's livelihood based on her socioeconomic circumstance is evaluated. In all, 23 percent of the global population of reproductive-age women live in countries with these

laws—roughly equal to the proportion of women living in countries where abortion is only permitted to save the parent's life. Finally, the most flexible category permits abortion upon request without contingencies on maternal health outcome, social, or economic reasons. Globally, seventy-two countries fall into this legal category, accounting for the experiences of 601 million women of reproductive age.

Even in places where abortion is allowed on request, access still varies significantly based on geographic location. For example, in the United States, gestational limits are determined on a state-by-state basis. This means that someone who wants an abortion at 23 weeks into their pregnancy cannot legally receive one in Texas, where the limit is now about 6 weeks, but they can travel to Florida, where the limit is 24 weeks, and obtain a legal abortion. Globally, the average gestational limit for countries where abortion is available upon request is only 12 weeks.

Limits on abortion access have serious economic, social, and mental health implications for those who miss gestational limits or live in countries with legal restrictions. Tracking abortion around the world helps to show where and how women are treated, their level of physical autonomy, and in the most basic terms: their power to determine the course of their own lives.

International Commitment to Reproductive Health

The main aim of the reproductive health movement is to support physiological functions such as pregnancy and child health and reduce adverse outcomes of sexual activity and reproduction. It is meant to ensure that people of all ages, including adolescents and those of reproductive age, have safe and satisfying sexual relationships. The reproductive health movement helps tackle obstacles such as gender discrimination, inequalities in access to health care services, restrictive laws, sexual coercion, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

According to the United Nations Fund for Reproductive Activities (UNFPR), "reproductive healthcare is defined as the constellation of methods, techniques, services, goods, and facilities that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems" (UN 2014). It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relationships, not merely counseling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases. Sexual and reproductive health involve five key components (World Health Organization 2008):

1. Ensuring contraceptive choice and safety and infertility services.
2. Improving maternal and newborn health.
3. Reducing sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and other reproductive morbidities.

4. Eliminating unsafe abortion and providing postabortion care.
5. Promoting healthy sexuality, including adolescent health, and reducing harmful practices.

Help for Survivors of Birth Trauma

by Victoria Keenan

Some people who experience or witness birth trauma may develop perinatal (just before or after birth) posttraumatic stress disorder. They might have distressing flashbacks or nightmares, avoid anything that could trigger negative memories, feel anxious or hypervigilant, or have feelings of unhappiness (Centre of Perinatal Excellence 2021).

If you are suffering, contact an organization like the ones below:

Australasia

Australasian Birth Trauma Association

Advocacy, education, research, peer support, and informative downloadable guides for Australians and New Zealanders

PANDA—Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia

Support for families affected by anxiety and depression during pregnancy and the first year of parenthood

PANDA National Helpline: 1300 726 306

International

Postpartum Support International (PSI)

Members all over the world, including volunteer coordinators in every one of the United States and more than thirty-six other countries

Helpline: 1-800-944-4773 #1 En Español or #2 English

Text in English: 800-944-4773

Text en Español: 971-203-7773

United Kingdom

The Birth Trauma Association

For parents and health professionals

The PND Awareness and Support Helpline (PANDAS)

The free helpline provides information, support, and guidance

+44 (0)808 1961 776

Make Birth Better

Support for families and professionals through training, campaigning, and collaborative academic research

United States

Improving Birth

Aims to empower consumers, community leaders, and care providers with tools to improve birth

Reproductive Freedom and Justice Concerns in India

In Indian society, women are under patriarchal control, and they are often compelled by their husbands to have sex and forced by the government to be sterilized. Women's liberties are limited by religious practices and social traditions. The evolution of the movement for women's rights in India gave birth to the movements for reproductive rights in the early 1980s. The slogan "the personal is political" gained prominence among women's groups in India. The slogan came to represent much of what the feminist movement was discovering about women's oppression and ultimately liberation. Oppression perpetrated on women's bodies in their homes and bedrooms had a direct effect on their position and treatment in the public sphere (Hussain et al. 2015).

Access to needed health services and education about contraceptive methods are limited, and therefore women face unplanned pregnancies that carry higher risks of maternal deaths and injury, unsafe abortion, mental anguish, and agony. The Indian government and its agencies have not taken the steps necessary to avoid these problems. The absence of information about contraceptives and the inaction of government

agencies has resulted in violations of women's fundamental rights as guaranteed under the constitution of India (Hussain et al. 2015).

In 1971 the government of India passed an act related to medical termination of pregnancy, prescribing and regulating the matters connected to abortion and related medication (Hussain et al. 2015). Though this act legalized abortion in India, most women do not have access to safe abortion services. Sometimes, women who approach government facilities for abortion are forced to accept contraception or sterilization. The government population policy and two-child norm often clash with reproductive rights and the right to safe sterilization (Hussain et al. 2015).

After the ICPD conference in 1994 at Cairo (popularly known as the Cairo Conference), reproductive health issues gained importance in various parts of the world. The Cairo Document includes concerns for gender equality, the right to physical integrity, security of the person, and reproductive rights. Similarly, the ICPD Programme of Action declares that sexual and reproductive rights include certain human rights that are already officially recognized: the basic right of individuals and couples to decide on the number and spacing of their children; the right to information and accessible services; the right to respect for security of the person and physical integrity of the human body; and the right to nondiscrimination and freedom from violence.

Maternal Racism and the Benefits of Doulas

by Victoria Keenan

African American women give birth prematurely twice as often as any other racial population and die during pregnancy and childbirth at three to four times the rate of white American women (Davis 2019). In the United Kingdom, women of African descent are five times more likely to die than their white counterparts.

Birth-givers of color also experience more prenatal issues and interventions like induction and cesarean births than white women. These disparities have historically been attributed to biological racial differences and/or socioeconomic or educational status, but research has now demonstrated that it is systemic *racism*, not *race,* that affects perinatal health outcomes. Well-educated and affluent professional Black women also experience disproportionately poor outcomes (Oparah and Bonaparte 2015).

Doula care is one cost-effective way to mitigate these systemic global health inequalities. Doulas provide nonclinical physical, emotional, and informational support before, during, and after birth. Those using doulas have fewer low-birth-weight babies, complications, cesarean births, and maternal distress. Doulas

facilitate communication between clinicians and pregnant women, bridge linguistic and cultural barriers to appropriate care, and recognize and protect against conscious and unconscious bias in medical practice.

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India recognizes women's reproductive rights as part of the "inalienable survival rights" that are implicitly protected under the fundamental right to life. India is a signatory to international conventions like CEDAW, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which all recognize reproductive rights. Reproductive health rights are reflected in Indian policies and laws. For example, the National Population Policy 2000 affirms the right to voluntary and informed choices in matters related to contraceptive use. There are many nongovernmental organizations committed to work on the reproductive rights of women. But a large segment of women continues to face constraints and pressures that limit their ability to make reproductive health decisions. In particular, the continued pressure of son preference is widespread in Indian culture. The National Family Health Survey reveals that 18.8 percent of women and 18.7 percent of men would like to have more sons, compared to 3.5 percent of women and men who would like to have more daughters.

Case: Observation of Child Preference in India

I have a few friends who went for a third child in order to have a boy baby. In my childhood, I had a relative who had five girl-children one after the other, a year and a half apart, in strong hope of having a boy baby. They were strongly criticized for having five girl-children and were economically poor.

The south Indian Tamil culture has a proverb that says, "If a man has five daughters even a king would become a pauper." My relatives struggled a lot to get all five of their daughters married. This example

shows that the strong son preference still prevails in India. In all these instances, women did not have decision-making capacity; it was their husbands and in-laws who made the decisions. So, although reproductive rights are technically conferred on the couples, in an Indian context it is a collective decision of the family.

Contraceptives and the Impact of Reproductive Technologies on Women's Health

Gender discriminatory practices with respect to contraceptive usage are an important concern. Contraceptives in the medical market are targeted toward women. Contraceptives can be divided into temporary and permanent methods. There are many temporary contraceptives for women, like pills and injections. To add to the burden, permanent sterilization methods tend to focus on women. Discriminatory practices are built into the attitudes of both males and females in such a way that they appear "natural."

A partial range of birth control options. Others include tubal ligation (female sterilization), vasectomy (male sterilization), nonreproductive sexual activities, and abstinence from sexual activity

				
Birth control pills (female)	Condom (male)	Condom (female)	Emergency contraception (female)	Injectable contraceptive (female)

India's National Population Policy guarantees women voluntary access to the full range of contraceptive methods. In practice, however, state governments continue to introduce schemes that promote female sterilization, leading to coercion, risky substandard sterilization procedures, and denial of access to non-permanent methods. India has legalized abortion on multiple grounds until twenty weeks of gestation under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971. But 56 percent of the 6.4 million abortions estimated to occur in India annually are unsafe and result in 9 percent of all maternal deaths (Stillman et al. 2014, 14).

The advent of new reproductive technologies as a solution to infertility has oppressed women to an extent, with women—especially poor Indian women—being used as biological laboratories to bear children. Childbearing is the most significant social protection for women's respectability. For instance, Chatter-

jee and Janwalkar (2014) reported on a woman in Tamilnadu who was pressured to sell her eggs. Sakunthala, 27 years old, had approached a political party office with her neighbor to file a complaint against her abusive husband, Navaraj. In the eight years of her married life, Sakunthala was forced by Navaraj and his mother to donate her eggs eighteen times at various hospitals in Tamilnadu and Kerala. (Police officials also revealed that she was forced to sell one of her kidneys soon after her wedding in 2006.) When Sakunthala finally resisted donating, she was attacked by her husband.

After Sakunthala's attack, 17-year-old Sushma Pandey of Mumbai died of "brain hemorrhage and pulmonary hemorrhage due to ovarian hyper-stimulation shock syndrome" (Chatterjee and Janwalkar 2014) after donating eggs three times in ten months. This incident was a severe violation of the Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines, which restricts the age of women donating eggs to between 18 and 35. In another incident, Yuma Sherpa, a 23-year-old shop assistant, died in New Delhi following an oocyte (immature egg) extraction procedure (Chatterjee and Janwalkar 2014). These incidents gained national attention and raised questions about the legal and ethical aspects of assisted reproductive technology (ART). The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare introduced the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill in 2020 in Lok Sabha, the Parliament of India.

Despite the legal measures introduced to protect women from various societal pressures, patriarchal pressures on women making reproductive decisions continue. It also shows that women do not have control over their bodies, even with the advent of new reproductive technologies. In fact, ART treats women's bodies as commodities, where all of a woman's reproductive organs are for sale. What a sad commentary.

Obstetric Violence

by Victoria Keenan

Obstetric violence is institutionalized gender-based medical violence against pregnant women and birthing people. It includes overt physical abuse and more nuanced forms of violence, such as verbal abuse, humiliation, coercion, medical procedures without informed consent (including vaginal examinations, episiotomies, and sterilizations), confidentiality breaches, withholding pain relief, privacy violations, refusing admission to facilities, neglectful care, use of restraints, and detaining women and infants unable to pay for treatment.

Although their experiences are shaped by their circumstances, women worldwide experience obstetric violence. In poor and marginalized communities, medical care might be best described as "too little too late," as opposed to the "too much too soon" approach in wealthy populations. *Obstetric racism* reflects

> the differential reproductive outcomes that result from the intersection of medical racism and obstetric violence faced by Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), irrespective of their socioeconomic or educational status.
>
> Patriarchy has historically silenced women's voices, and those who are giving birth and caring for infants can be particularly vulnerable to an oppressive medical system. There is a growing movement to challenge this dehumanizing treatment, however. ImprovingBirth.org supported the #breakthesilence campaign, and many pregnant people and birth workers are using the hashtag #metoointhebirthroom to spread awareness.

Finally, the noninvolvement of men and boys in matters related to reproductive rights contributes to "the poor preparation of men for adulthood, contraceptive use, and safe sex" (Kumar 2007). Men have a stake in reproductive rights through their multiple roles as sexual partners, husbands, fathers, family and household members, community leaders, and gatekeepers to health information and services. In addition, not all men live in traditional families but still have needs related to their sexual and reproductive health.

To be effective, reproductive health programs need to address men's behavior in these various roles as well as their reproductive rights and needs as human beings. Involving men can enhance equity and gender equality, share the burden of preventing diseases and health complications, and promote satisfying sexual lives for men and women. The right to legal and safe abortion; to control one's reproductive functions; to be able to make reproductive choices free of coercion, discrimination, and violence; to access education about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases and freedom from coerced sterilization and contraception; to be protected from gender-based practices such as female genital cutting and male genital mutilation should all be high priorities of any government.

Learning Activities

1. In this chapter, Mayilsamy and Veni trace the ongoing international conversation about reproductive rights and freedoms during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. How has that conversation changed over time? What are the current international guidelines for women's reproductive health, rights, and freedoms? How do international statutes and agreements support the argument that "reproductive rights are human rights"? What examples do Mayilsamy and Veni provide of ways that nations support and/or thwart international recommendations for reproductive freedoms?
2. Why is it important to apply an intersectional lens when examining issues related to reproductive health, rights, and freedoms within particular contexts?
3. Mayilsamy and Veni argue for the importance of women's bodily autonomy while also concluding that men and boys should be involved in matters of reproductive rights. What might it look like for women to have bodily autonomy in matters of reproductive rights, health, and freedoms while still involving men in such matters?
4. How might moving beyond a male/female sex and gender binary complicate and enrich international discussions of reproductive health, rights, and freedoms?
5. Add this key term to your glossary: eugenics.

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Notes

1. In *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), the US Supreme Court ruled that a state's ban on the use of contraceptives violated the right to marital privacy. The case concerned a Connecticut law that criminalized the encouragement or use of birth control.
2. *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972) was a landmark decision of the US Supreme Court that established the right of unmarried people to possess contraception on the same basis as married couples. The court struck down a Massachusetts law prohibiting the distribution of contraceptives to unmarried people for the purpose of preventing pregnancy, ruling that it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.
3. *Roe v. Wade* was the legal case in which the US Supreme Court on January 22, 1973, ruled (7–2) that unduly restrictive state regulation of abortion is unconstitutional.
4. The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program (known as the Draper Committee) was created in November 1958 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, with bipartisan support, to undertake a completely independent, objective, and nonpartisan analysis of the military assistance aspects of the 1949 Mutual Defense Assistance Act.

FAMILIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Rebecca J. Lambert

What comes to mind when you think of family? Is it the people that you live with? Perhaps it is the people you are related to through bloodlines. Or does your family consist of a network of people you choose to consider your family? One might also consider the structure of a family. What makes a family? Is family a concept, a relation, a network? Who counts as family? Can family relationships be established as opposed to being born into? The idea of family raises many questions, and there are more factors to consider when defining family than one might initially think.

Think about the systems of power that might guide the family to which you belong. What do they look like? How are the members of your family affected by these systems? It might feel strange to think about the ways that power infiltrates and shapes family structures, but we see the effects of such systems every day, when men in a family are expected to be the protectors and breadwinners, when women are expected to be caregivers, and when it's often assumed that ideal families consist of heterosexual married couples and their biological children.

Feminism offers a framework to examine the socially constructed ideas attached to the concept of family while coming up with alternatives for what a family can be and look like. In truth, family is different for everyone you meet, yet the version of family that has been normalized is a model of family rooted in white supremacist, colonial, patriarchal, and heteronormative ideals. One way to reimagine family is by recentering those who are often marginalized within systems of oppression. An intersectional feminist approach to families allows us to analyze how systems of power and oppression regarding gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability affect ideas about what or who constitutes a family. Feminism challenges traditional ideas of family and the idea that families exist in isolation from other social structures (Ferree 1990). Feminist sociologist Myra Marx Ferree states that "neither families nor households can be conceptualized as separate . . . spheres of distinctive relationships; both family and household are ever more firmly situated in their specific historical context, in which they take on diverse forms and significance" (1990, 879). In other words, family members experience gendered expectations tied to constructed gender roles and this positions the idea of family within frameworks of power.

This chapter examines the ways that the concept of family is constructed, particularly through systems of oppression that are used to socialize people. The first section unpacks definitions of the concept of family and introduces alternative family forms. The following sections explore how normative family systems maintain systems of power and focus on current issues related to family, including family separation at the

Mexico-US border and family experiences during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I conclude by highlighting strategies for engaging in activism that supports families in all forms.

Families, especially those related through blood and legal connections, are shaped by concepts such as inheritance and kinship. Inheritance can broadly be described as the transfer of wealth from one person to another (or others). Patrilineal and unilineal kinship structures (which are discussed in the next section) often dictate whether inheritance occurs from one or both descent lines (Lowes 2020). Inheritance is most often thought of occurring within families when an older member dies and passes their assets on to members of the younger generation. In western societies, inheritance is often split evenly among recipients (Lowes 2020). For example, countries including France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, and the United States are patriarchal societies, but there is no legal requirement for inheritance to go directly to male heirs, and asset divisions are determined by marriage associations (Lowes 2020). In other patriarchal societies such as China, inheritance transfers to the male line of descent. This structure of passing family assets through male descent lines has far-reaching implications for women and families, often resulting in less generational wealth for women.

It is also helpful to consider the idea of kinship, and how it shapes modern notions of what families look like across the world. The concept of kinship is often taken up in anthropological studies and used to describe how culture defines people's connections to one another. This can be through blood relations, marriage, or chosen family relationships. Kinship groups are organized in many ways. For example, a unilineal descent structure represents family lineage traced through one of the parents (Lowes 2020). Within different cultural and historical contexts, there are matrilineal kinship structures and patrilineal kinship structures. Matrilineal is traced through the female family members, and patrilineal is traced through the male family members (Lowes 2020).

Kinship is closely related to descent, another concept that affects families. This is especially important because descent structures and kinship influence inheritance patterns for families. Descent recognizes connections to ancestors and often dictates inheritance structures. Often, power and family roles are attached to inheritance. Most societies are patrilineal, favoring the men in a family when it comes to inheritance. A 2009 report by the Rural Development Institute for the World Justice Project offers examples of inheritance policies in South Asia. The report states that in Pakistan, under Islamic law, "women (as wives or daughters) sharers receive half as much as their male counterparts." Under customary law in Pakistan, inheritance of agricultural land is "decided by the personal law of the citizen" (Scalise 2009). A patrilineal family structure reifies power systems attached to men and masculine gender roles within the family.

Definitions of Family

Scholarly definitions of family are frequently attributed to scholars in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Within traditional understandings of family, familial relationships are those represented by blood or legal connections. The family is often the site of socialization, where people initially experience relationships that mimic systems of oppression that occur within society. For example, as a social system, patriarchy values male authority and rule, male dominance, and male control. Within a patriarchal family, this looks like the father or male figure of the household acting as the authority for the family. According to the cycle of socialization, families are where people are socialized or learn societal values, expectations, and norms (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007). The oppressive structure of patriarchal society is implemented within the family, re-creating gender oppression.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs describes family as consisting in two forms, the nuclear family and the extended family (UN DESA n.d.). A nuclear family is frequently defined as including two adults and their children. In a society dominated by heteronormativity and patriarchy, the nuclear family is most often depicted as a heterosexual married couple and their biological children. The extended family is defined as the familial relationships outside of the nuclear family, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins (UN DESA 2020) These versions of family do exist but should not be set as the standard or norm for every family to meet. Many other forms of family are just as valid as the heterosexual nuclear and extended two-parent family, and they are often described as nontraditional or alternative families. Such families consist of various reimaginings of relationships considered family and the dynamics that shape those relationships. Some examples include single-parent households, same-sex couples and parents, households where women are the primary source of income, intergenerational families living together, living communities, and so many more. This is in no way an exhaustive list of alternative forms of family, as it is impossible to name all the ways people create family.

Families come in many different forms

Adding to a reconceptualization of family, Family Story, a US think tank, conducts research that disrupts traditional notions of family and supports and promotes the various connections that people make in order to form family structures and kinship networks. Their mission is to "address and dismantle privilege in America . . . [and] create cutting-edge research to expose the ways family privilege causes harm and create cultural and political strategies to advance equity for all types of families" (Family Story Project, n.d.). Their research also challenges popular myths about family structures. For example, they challenge the idea that the nuclear family is the historical standard for families in the United States by pointing out that this structure of family was popularized after World War II and was only attainable for white, middle-class families. Family Story also debunks the ill-conceived idea that Black families are dysfunctional by highlighting how racism affects the way that Black parents are able to parent. These are just a couple of the myths that Family Story interrogates while offering examples of various family structures.

As mentioned, many family structures exist outside of the western idea of the nuclear family, which consists of adult parents and their children under 18 years of age living together. The notion of family is expanded when considering the role that intergenerational families play in family structures. Intergenerational families are those in which multiple generations live together for various reasons, including cultural traditions, economic concerns, or assistance with childcare, among other reasons. A report by the United Nations details various living arrangements of older adults, people over the age of 65, and points out that intergenerational families are most common in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America (UN DESA 2019). In Pakistan and Afghanistan, for example, 90 percent of people over the age of 65 live with their children or other family members (UN DESA 2019).

Intergenerational families take various forms. The nonprofit organization Generations United offers four classifications to contextualize multigenerational living. A three-generation family is defined as "one or more working-age adults, one or more of their children (who may also be adults), and either aging parent(s) or grandchildren" (Generations United 2021). Grandfamilies are composed of older adults living with their grandchildren who are under the age of 18. Two adult generations represent parents and children living together, and four (or five) generation families represent a household made up of parents, adult children and possibly their children, grandparents, and great-grandparents (Generations United 2021). These family structures are defined by blood relations, but multigenerational households composed of non-blood-related people exist too.

Families can be established through adoption, the legal process of placing a child in a home to be raised by people other than biological parents. Within the broad concept of adoption, transracial and transnational adoptions often spark much debate. The US Department of Health and Human Services describes these adoption processes as "placing a child who is of one race or ethnic group with adoptive parents of another race or ethnic group" (Child Welfare Information Gateway 1994). During the 2020 fiscal year, 1,622 transnational adoptions occurred in the United States (US Department of State, n.d.). Transracial adoption and transnational adoption are viewed in both positive and negative ways. In addition to gender, race and ethnicity shape family structures, and in terms of building families, it is important to consider the needs of those who are adopted. In *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*, feminist scholar Laura Briggs (2012) argues that transracial and transnational adoptions are more complicated than simply finding a home for a child. Briggs draws attention to the fact that adoption is entrenched in the power relations of race, class, sexuality, and international politics (5). In other words, systems of oppression affect who is allowed to adopt and which children are adopted.

Effects of Later Marriage and Childbearing in Japan

by Victoria Keenan

In Japan's traditional patriarchal culture, women were often under intense social pressure to marry before they turned 25. In 1975, women generally had their first child before they turned 26. As a result of political and social changes, by 2017, Japanese women were marrying at around age 29 and having their first child at 30.

For many women, delaying marriage and children allows them the freedom to access further education, establish their careers, and build a sense of identity before taking on the traditional role of "mother," in which they are expected to focus solely on the needs of the family. But the age at which a birthing per-

son has their first child can affect whether and how many subsequent children they go on to have. As a result, women are often blamed for the country's low birth rates, as they are seen to be pursuing western individualized values.

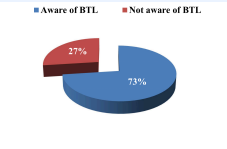
Women may also have fewer children than they consider ideal, as they do not feel supported by their partner, their family, the state, their employer, or society. The taxing physical and mental work of raising children later in life, along with the Japanese culture of long working hours, may limit the number of children born.

Family structures are shaped not only through cultural expectation, but also economic shifts. For example, the economic crisis of 2008 in the United States saw an increase in intergenerational households. Additionally, sub-Saharan Africa experienced an increase in multigenerational families in order to care for children that lost parents due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s (UN DESA 2016) Most recently, families have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a 2021 report by Generations United (2021), "1 in 4 Americans are living in a household with 3 or more generations," which is a 271 percent increase in ten years. The global pandemic is a contributing factor to that increase, with 57 percent of people surveyed saying they are living in an intergenerational home because of the pandemic.

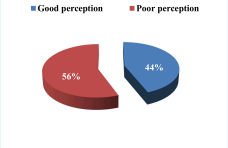
Access and Barriers to Voluntary Tubal Ligation/Sterilization in Sub-Saharan Africa

by Abigail Manciu

Tubal ligation/sterilization, colloquially known as the act of "getting your tubes tied," is a surgical procedure in which a woman's fallopian tubes are blocked or cut. The procedure prevents eggs from reaching the uterus and being fertilized. As a permanent form of birth control, sterilization plays an important role in the prevention of unplanned pregnancy as well as the reduction of maternal mortality. In countries like Australia and the United States, it is difficult for young, child-free women to undergo sterilization, as many surgeons push back or refuse to perform the procedure, believing women will regret not being able to have children in the future.



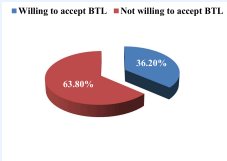
Awareness of BTL



Perception on BTL

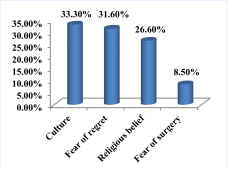
The United Nations estimates that 180 million couples worldwide have relied on surgical contraception to limit their family size. In sub-Saharan African countries like Nigeria, however, the practice of bilateral tubal ligation (BTL) is limited because of great desire for large families, cultural and religious factors, misunderstanding, and fear of health risks thought to be associated with the procedure.

The figures show the results of a survey of 26- to 30-year-old African participants on their awareness, perception, acceptance of, and reasons for not accepting BTL.



Acceptability of BTL

In Africa in general, the rate of BTL is low because of deep-rooted sociocultural and religious barriers, poverty, inadequate counseling, and limited facilities.



Reasons for not accepting BTL

Most of the reasons given by participants in the study revealed they could not accept BTL for contraception because of cultural beliefs, fear of regret for being unable to have another child in the event an existing child is lost, and religion. More public education involving both the cultural and religious leaders as well as providing more measures to prevent infant and childhood mortality will go a long way toward increasing women's access to options such as bilateral tubal ligation/sterilization.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a report by the Pew Research Center found that people around the world claimed that family ties have weakened (Poushter and Fetterolf 2019). From the twenty-seven countries involved in the study, 58 percent of the participants believe that family ties weakened in the past twenty years. In Tunisia, 74 percent say that family ties are weaker; 59 percent in Brazil and Kenya say it is weaker, and 83 percent in South Korea agree that family ties are weaker.

A mother comforts a child on her lap

Most people in the study agreed that it was not good to see weaker family ties and expressed support for strengthening family ties. The pandemic has influenced family structures in ways that are only now being examined. For example, how did the pandemic bring people together in communities that are not related by blood or marriage?

The Effects of a Global Pandemic on Families

In a patriarchal society, women are often expected to be the caretakers for the family. Even if they work outside of the home, this caregiving role follows them when they return to the household, and they are frequently expected to do the same amount of unpaid labor in the home. Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung (2012) have described the additional labor women are expected to perform at home as the "second shift." The load of this additional labor is intensified in a global pandemic. The number of people living in a family's home may grow in a pandemic, resulting in expanded caretaking responsibilities. Not only can the number of people increase, but so can the issues one is balancing in the home. What does this mean for women, children, and families in the midst of a global pandemic?

Why Is Child Care So Important?

by Sarah Baum

Imagine paying nearly 40 cents of every dollar you earn just for child care. This isn't a nightmare; it's a reality for many working families in New Zealand, which has an average of 37.3 percent of a cou-

ple's earnings going toward child care. This is an almost impossible barrier to women wanting to join the workforce, and it contributes to the earned wage gap between men and women. Compared to New Zealand, the Czech Republic subsidizes child care costs and caps the parents' outlay to a mere 2.6 percent of their income.

Child care isn't just a passing whim, but a vital necessity in developed and developing countries alike. In the Korogocho slum in Nairobi, Kenya, 30 percent of mothers with young children were paying for child care services, showing that child care needs were already in high demand. A recent study offering child care vouchers to a group of mothers living in Korogocho found that at the end of the study, these mothers were 17.3 percent more likely than those in the control group to still be employed. The study proved that access to safe, quality child care opens opportunities for women in even the poorest regions of the world.

Beyond allowing women to join the workforce, quality, affordable child care gives children access to early education and a jumpstart to their school years. Every child deserves this start to their lives, no matter the socioeconomic status of their parents, and the only way to guarantee it is to support affordable access to quality child care on a global level.

Every continent has reported cases of COVID-19 (Slisco 2020). As of February 16, 2022, there were 450,229,635 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally (World Health Organization, n.d.). COVID-19 has created an economic crisis that exacerbates the already unstable economic status of women around the world. The UN Women website points out that women are affected more by economic crises because they earn less money; have fewer savings; have less access to social protections; are more likely to be responsible for unpaid care work, causing them to leave the work force; and represent the majority of single-parent households (UN Women 2020).

Although women have experienced gains in joining the public workforce, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many women back into the private sphere, with consequences that may take years to fully understand and mitigate. The full impact of the pandemic on families will take time to understand, but there is some initial research on this topic. A UN Women report titled "From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19," offers a summary of the various effects of the pandemic on women and families that can currently be assessed. Key findings show that the global pandemic will likely increase the number of women in poverty, increase the gender gap, and intensify women's care workload, including the work of leading their children's education at home because of school shutdowns and online education programs (Azcona et al. 2020). Women around the world are losing their livelihoods faster because they are more exposed to hard-hit economic sectors. According to a new analysis commissioned by UN

Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "by 2021 around 435 million women and girls will be living on less than $1.90 a day—including 47 million pushed into poverty as a result of COVID-19" (Azcona et al. 2020).

Global Parental Leave

by Ramona Flores

Every country in the world has a policy on the national level that guarantees maternity leave for new mothers, except for Papua New Guinea, Suriname, and the United States. The United States is also one of fifteen on the list of forty-one richest countries that does not offer paternity leave.

Several major players on the global stage, including France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, have laws that ensure parental leave for both parents. The countries that offer the most comprehensive parental leave are listed in this piece from Culture Trip, with Finland offering both the longest leave, at 170 weeks, and 26 weeks of paid leave at 70 percent salary for both parents. For context, the average maternity leave in the United States, the availability and length of which is left up to the discretion of the employer, averages between 6 and 12 weeks, varying by the woman's income. In contrast, regardless of income, fathers took an average of 1 week off for paternity leave.

Why is parental leave, both maternal and paternal, so important?

A 2020 study done by two Turkish professors published in the *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research* outlined just how essential offering both parents family leave after a child's birth is to developing and strengthening mother-child *and* father-child relationships. The study also found that in countries like Greece, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, where parents are offered between 14 and 17 weeks of parental leave at full pay, more significant headway was made in combating the gender gap (wherein women tend to do more of the domestic work) that is engrained in child-rearing. To accommodate single-parent households, countries like Finland offer the single parent the amount of leave dedicated to two parents.

Paid, universal parental leave is one way to ensure that children have consistent access to the care of their parent or parents.

One way that the global pandemic affects families is through the disruption of education, particularly school closures. According to a UNESCO report, COVID-19 resulted in school closures in 185 countries. The report highlights that more than 89 percent of enrolled students were or are out of school due to the pandemic. In numeric terms, this represents 743 million girls out of school. This disruption in education is especially hard for girls in countries where extreme poverty and economic instability already pose obsta-

cles to education. The report points out that more than 4 million girls have been forced out of school in Mali, Niger, and South Sudan, countries that already see low enrollment for girls. While there are immediate challenges to this drop in enrollment, the long-term effects of disruption in education are hard to predict. UNESCO highlights that dropout rates will increase, which will "further entrench gender gaps in education and lead to increased risk of sexual exploitation, early pregnancy and early and forced marriage" (Giannini 2020). As the pandemic continues and countries respond to this crisis in education, girls must be centered in the response.

Students in Indonesia gather around their teacher

While the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, UNESCO offers that there are lessons to be learned from the 2014 Ebola crisis in terms of girls' education. During the Ebola crisis in Africa, "5 million children were affected by school closures across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, countries hardest hit by the outbreak. And poverty levels rose significantly as education was interrupted" (Giannini 2020). School closures and dropouts due to the closures left more girls at home to take on household responsibilities. UNESCO reported that this time out of school "increased girls' vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse both by their peers and by older men, as girls were often are at home alone and unsupervised. Transactional sex was also widely reported as vulnerable girls and their families struggled to cover basic needs. As family breadwinners perished from Ebola and livelihoods were destroyed, many families chose to marry their daughters off, falsely hoping this would offer them protection" (Giannini 2020). UNESCO offers the following six "gender-responsive, evidence-based, and context-specific" actions, which may inform current recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Leverage teachers and communities**: Work closely with teachers, school staff and communities to ensure inclusive methods of distance learning are adopted and communicated to call for continued investments in girls' learning. Community sensitization on the importance of girls' education should continue as part of any distance learning programme.
- **Adopt appropriate distance learning practices**: In contexts where digital solutions are less accessible, consider low-tech and gender-responsive approaches. Send reading and writing materials home and use radio and television broadcasts to reach the most marginalised. Ensure programme scheduling and learning structures are flexible and allow self-paced learning so as not to deter girls who often disproportionately shoulder the burden of care.
- **Consider the gender digital divide**: In contexts where digital solutions to distance learning and internet is accessible, ensure that girls are trained with the necessary digital skills, including the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe online.
- **Safeguard vital services**: Girls and the most vulnerable children and youth miss out on vital services when schools are closed, specifically school meals and social protection. Make schools access points for psychosocial support and food distribution, work across sectors to ensure alternative social services and deliver support over the phone, text or other forms of media.
- **Engage young people**: Give space to youth, particularly girls, to shape the decisions made about their education. Include them in the development of strategies and policies around school closures and distance learning based on their experiences and needs.
- **Ensure return to school**: Provide flexible learning approaches so that girls are not deterred from returning to school when they re-open. This includes pregnant girls and young mothers who often face stigma and discriminatory school re-entry laws that prevent them from accessing education. Allow automatic promotion and appropriate opportunities in admissions processes that recognize the particular challenges faced by girls. Catch-up courses and accelerated learning may be necessary for girls who return to school.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) communities have a long history of establishing family outside of traditional conceptions. For example, in San Francisco in 1956, the group Daughters of Bilitis held discussion groups focused on lesbian motherhood. In the 1960s and 1970s, other groups emerged to support gay and lesbian parents (Rudolph 2017), as LGBTQI+ people have experienced much discrimination as they sought to build families. It wasn't until the 1970s that courts started to uphold custody rights for LGBTQI+ parents (Rudolph 2017). And it was only in 2015 that the US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all states, resulting in more (legal) opportunities for family-building in LGBTQI+ communities. Although the first gay couple to adopt a child did so in 1979, it wasn't until 1997 that New Jersey legally allowed same-sex adoption, the first state to do so. As LGBTQI+ rights expand, so do options for creating families. The Family Equality Council released

a report in 2019 titled *LGBTQ Family Building Survey* that offered significant findings for LGBTQI+ families in the United States. The report offers that the "number of LGBTQ-headed families . . . is set to grow dramatically in coming years," with 77 percent already being parents or considering having children. The report also shares data on the various ways that participants discussed building their families, which include foster care, adoption, and assisted reproductive technology. As family structures continue to change and grow, so do the options for creating and choosing families.

Banning Same-Sex Couple Adoptions in Hungary

by Lauren Grant

In December 2020, Hungary's nationalist ruling party, Fidesz, under Prime Minister Victor Orbán, passed a controversial amendment altering the constitutional definition of "family." The new amendment bars individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) from adopting children and from retaining recognized rights as family units under Hungarian law. The amendment defines the basis of family as "marriage and the parent-child relationship," wherein "the mother is a woman, and the father is a man."

Since 2009, same-sex couples in Hungary could access registered civil partnerships, granting them most of the rights and privileges of marriage, except adoption, which is exclusive to heterosexual married couples. Until the amendment, same-sex couples could apply for adoption if one partner applied as a single person. The new amendment bars unmarried couples from adopting children domestically or from abroad, a cruel attack on the rights of same-sex couples, who cannot marry under national law. Excluding "same-sex couples, single people, and unmarried different-sex couples from adopting children" under the amendment, the minister of family affairs will approve applications for adoption on a case-by-case basis. The amendment openly rejects diversity and inclusivity by mandating that children's upbringing should be "in accordance with the values based on [Hungary's] constitutional identity and Christian culture."

This tightening of LGBTQI+ rights comes as Hungarian law and policy under Orbán's hyperconservative and Christian party are persistently shrinking the country's civil space, moving in the direction of illiberal democracy. Human Rights Watch recently described Orbán's party as an authoritarian regime.

Hungarian civil society organizations point out that the amendment was passed during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when the rights of assembly, speech, expression, and protest have been drastically curtailed. Fighting the denial of same-sex couples' access to adoption as well as Article XV of the Hungarian Constitution (2012), which fails to protect LGBTQI+ persons from discrimination, the oldest Hungar-

ian LGBTQI+ human rights organization is "encouraging same-sex couples to initiate adoptions 'as if nothing happened,' preparing to challenge the law on the grounds of the equal treatment law."

Countries with Legal Same-Sex Marriage

by Janet Lockhart

There have always been unions between people of the same gender; however, same-sex marriage has only been legal for about the past twenty years, first being made so in the Netherlands. Today, more than half the countries in the world that do allow same-sex marriage are in Europe, mostly western and northern countries, such as Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The European Court of Justice declared that all members of the European Union must recognize the same-sex marriages of immigrants moving into a country, regardless of whether same-sex marriage is legal in the receiving country.

Outside Europe, same-sex marriage is legal in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States, and Uruguay. Most countries that have legalized same-sex marriage have done so on the basis of equal rights under their system of government. Possible next countries to legalize same-sex marriage include Chile, the Czech Republic, Japan, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Same-sex married couples still may not enjoy the same rights as opposite-sex couples; for example, the right to adopt children.

Explore further: Do some research to see whether any or all of the above countries have legalized same-sex marriage since this writing.

Family Separation

Politics, elected officials, and the policies implemented in response to migration and immigration practices can have a profound effect on families. Family separation occurs when people seek to enter a country and are separated from their children or other family members while the immigration process continues. While family separation is not a new phenomenon, it has been exacerbated in recent years. The family separation occurring at the Mexico-US border is a result of the policy changes implemented by the Trump administration of the United States (National Immigration Forum 2018). This practice became particu-

larly rampant at the Mexico-US border in 2017 after the Trump administration instituted a "zero tolerance" policy regarding immigration. This policy allowed for the US Department of Justice to file criminal charges against every adult who crossed the border into to the United States without legal documentation (Alvarez 2020). Families were separated because a previous policy, the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement, prohibited detaining children in adult facilities (National Immigration Forum 2018). Parents were forcibly separated from their children as they awaited the next steps in the immigration process, which often resulted in their deportation. Once separated, children were taken to and held in separate detention facilities. Despite a directive to reunite children with their parents, hundreds of children are still separated from their parents (Dickerson 2020).

Many expected that the violent immigration and family separation policies of the Trump administration would end once Joe Biden became president of the United States. When Biden took office, he signed various executive orders focused on immigration. In particular, Biden implemented a task force to reunite families that were separated at the border (Rodriguez 2021). In an attempt to undo the policies of the previous administration, Biden's orders focus on a family reunification process that will make recommendations for how to reunite the more than six hundred children still separated from their families (Rodriguez 2021).

An activist holds a sign protesting the separations of families at the border

Even with this current directive to end family separation, the effects of such actions are traumatic for children and families, and it is critical to examine the ways that power and privilege operate within immigration policies in order to highlight why certain families experience this type of separation. Discussions of immigration are often framed around terms such as "legal" and "illegal," constructing a system of power between those assigned to each of these categories. In the book *Borders of Belonging: Struggle and Solidarity in Mixed-Status Immigrant Families* (2019), scholar Heide Casteñeda explores the way that illegality is constructed for immigrant families. She defines the term illegality to "refer to a sociopolitical condition, juridical status, and relationship to the state" (5). In this context, *illegal* is not simply something that is against the law but situates an individual within systems of power. Casteñeda's analysis helps to center the family and enables an examination of the impact of immigration policies—or, often, anti-immigrant policies—on families, not just individuals.

The National Council on Family Relations (n.d.) put together resources that describe the negative impact of separating families at the Mexico-US border. These effects range from psychological impacts such as depression, fear, and anxiety, to academic challenges, to behavioral issues. The impact of family separation

is both immediate and long-term, although it is hard to know the full impact of such policies on children and their families.

An activist at a rally against family separation in Cleveland, Ohio, holds a sign stating "Seeking Asylum in Not a Crime"

Feminist scholars Eithne Luibhéid and Karma Chávez write that "except for those who can show that they fit into a narrow spectrum of state-designated family ties, skill sets, large bank accounts, or protection needs, possibilities for acquiring legal status have been greatly reduced or entirely cut" (Luibhéid and Chávez 2020, 1). Often lost in the mainstream narrative of family separation are the effects of harmful immigration policies on LGBTQI+ migrants, their families, and communities of people that often do not fit into state-defined systems. Scholar Suyapa G. Portillo Villeda (2020) conducted research on the immigration process for queer and trans people from Honduras. In the essay "Central American Migrants: LGBTQI Asylum Cases Seeking Justice and Making History," Villeda argues that LGBTQI+ immigrants must be included in any sort of immigration reform in order for policies to be useful in preventing harm to queer and trans migrants. An important point that Villeda makes is that the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants are often erased, increasing vulnerability. For example, trans migrants are often misgendered and sent through the immigration process according to the gender they were assigned at birth, resulting in additional mistreatment.

The issue of forced separation is critical for any family that does not fit the norm, and for communities that create family outside of the traditional conception of blood-related family. Including various family structures within immigration policies ensures that people are not stripped away from those that offer the support and care they need as they move into new spaces and create home.

Strategies to Support Families

Various organizations exist around the world to support and advocate for families. Advocacy efforts may be specific to a region, or they may be more broad and work globally for a range of issues. For example, the Family Equality Council (n.d.) seeks "to advance legal and lived equality for LGBTQ families, and for those who wish to form them, through building community, changing hearts and minds, and driving policy change." This organization covers a wide range of issues that affect LGBTQI+ families, including adoption and foster care, parental supports, transgender rights, and fertility.

There are various ways that social justice efforts can support families. Another example of an organization that supports families is RAICES, the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services. Based in Texas in the United States, the organization's mission is to "defend the rights of immigrants

and refugees, empower individuals, families, and communities, and advocate for liberty and justice" (RAICES, n.d.). The organization offers legal services to immigrant and refugee families, having established a bond fund that secures the release of people from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and trained additional lawyers to help families being detained at the Mexico-US border. Activism is a vital component of feminist movement, and advocating for the health and well-being of families is an important issue in feminist organizing. An intersectional approach to activism and issue advocacy is also a core component of feminist movement.

An activist holds a sign that reads "LGBT Families for Immigration Reform"

Learning Activities

1. Lambert begins the chapter with questions about how readers think about family. How do you define the concept of family? What does Lambert mean when she argues that families are shaped by systems of power? According to Lambert, what concept of family has been normalized? How is the normalized family a system of power? How does it support other systems of power?
2. Lambert discusses the organization Family Story, whose mission is to "address and dismantle privilege in America . . . [and] create cutting-edge research to expose the ways family privilege causes harm and create cultural and political strategies to advance equity for all types of families" (familystoryproject.org). Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, visit the Family Story website. How does Family Story challenge myths about family structures? Choose at least one family myth that the organization challenges, and explain how Family Story does so. How do Family Story's challenges to family myths also challenge structures of power?
3. How has the global COVID-19 pandemic challenged and/or changed family structures, according to Lambert?
4. How and why do US immigration policies negatively affect immigrant families, according to Lambert? What challenges do queer and trans migrants face?
5. Lambert discusses activist organizations that support and advocate for families, such as The Family Equality Council and RAICES. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, review the website for one of these organizations. What kinds of activist work does the organization engage in? How does the organization's activism challenge and/or uphold traditional definitions of family?
6. Working in a small group, add these terms to your glossary: inheritance, kinship, matrilineal, patrilineal, nuclear family, extended family, intergenerational family, transracial adoption, transnational adoption.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WORLDWIDE

Patti Duncan

During the COVID-19 pandemic, while people sheltered at home, communities reported dramatic increases in domestic violence, where many women and girls found themselves in lockdown with their abusers. As many people experienced anxieties about their health, loved ones, job insecurity, financial challenges, and other stressors, survivors of violence lost access to key support systems and experienced greater isolation. In addition, it became more difficult to access support and resources. According to a recent report by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the risk of gender-based violence has increased during the pandemic, "exacerbating the already pandemic levels of violence women and girls face" (IRC 2020). In fact, reports of violence against women and girls have increased worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, France, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Benham 2020; Crossette 2020; IRC 2020).

Research demonstrates that crises disproportionately affect women and girls, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. As Hellerstein reports, six months of lockdown could result in 31 million more cases of gender-based violence. The nonprofit Save the Children asserts that COVID-19 could force 2.5 million more girls into child marriage (Hellerstein 2021). Women and girls in conflict areas, crisis settings, and refugee camps are particularly at risk for violence (Benham 2020). In addition, domestic violence during the pandemic has increased in both prevalence and severity, and researchers also report that victims of violence are avoiding seeking medical treatment due to the pandemic (Luthra 2020).

Gendered forms of violence occur within every continent, country, and cultural context, affecting women, nonbinary, and trans people of all racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, socioeconomic, and age groups, including all sexualities. Gender-based violence is one of the most pervasive, yet least prosecuted, human rights violations worldwide. This chapter provides a framework for understanding gender-based violence within families, within communities, and as perpetrated by the state. We will also consider forms of resistance to gendered violence.

Violence against women is normalized in its ordinariness, despite the magnitude of the crimes and their effects on the lives of women and girls. The 1993 United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (UN General Assembly 2006, 48/100). Forms of gendered violence include domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, rape, forced prostitution, trafficking, stalking, "honor" killings, dowry-associated violence, female genital cutting, and hate crimes directed at particular groups, including lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Black, Indigenous, and other women of color, and/or women of particular ethnic, religious, or cultural groups. Violence exists on a continuum and may range from sexual harassment in the workplace to mass rapes and even genocidal practices. Recent writings have focused on violence targeting vulnerable groups, including trans women, women in the sex industry, Indigenous women, and Rohingya women.

Violence against women—and resistance to it—is global

Many authors, activists, and organizations such as the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO) employ the terms "gendered violence," "gender-based violence," "sexual and gender-based violence," and "violence against women" to describe these forms of violence against women and other minoritized groups, including nonbinary, transgender, and Two-Spirit people. While such terms are frequently used interchangeably in the literature, some authors suggest that "violence against women" is an important term because it stresses the fact that most victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence are women and girls, and that these forms of violence, while they may be directed at all genders, are most likely to target women and girls. Others attempt to highlight the ways that "gendered violence" may specifically target women—including trans women—as well as those who challenge or transgress local gender norms within their societies. In this chapter, I use these terms somewhat interchangeably, specifying when I discuss forms of violence against particular groups.

It is difficult to assess the incidence of gender-based violence because such violence is often accepted, seen as normal, natural, harmless, or even deserved. Also, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and family-based violence are often viewed as private matters to be resolved between intimate partners or family members. Victims of gender-based violence are also deeply stigmatized in many societies, and many survivors feel shame and humiliation, or they may be reluctant to report the violence for fear of additional violence perpetrated by law enforcement officials. Indeed, WHO identifies violence against women as a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights, citing the statistic that at least one in three (or approximately 30 percent of) women worldwide has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lifetime (WHO 2021). It is important to recognize that violence against women is

not simply a private matter, or the acts of individual men against individual women. Rather, such violence forms a larger social, structural issue, created and perpetuated by social institutions worldwide, serving as a means to maintain control over women and other minoritized groups.

Justice for Migrant Women

by Miranda Findlay

Justice for Migrant Women is an organization that promotes human and civil rights of migrant women in the United States. They were founded in 2014 by Mónica Ramírez, a Latina activist who found connection to the project through her own experience as part of a farmworker family. Justice for Migrant Women seeks to make change through several endeavors, such as policy and administrative advocacy, culture shift initiatives, power-building, education, and international migration and immigration protections. They engage with the community to increase voter turnout, and they also elevate the stories of rural women through the creation of the Rural Women Collective Fellowship and on their podcast series. One of the organization's latest initiatives is The Latinx House, which seeks to change public perception of the Latinx community by creating spaces to amplify authentic experiences and voices and discuss policy priorities that are brought to the forefront by grassroots organizers, policy experts, and artists.

Justice for Migrant Women works to build power through multi-ethnic and multi-sector partnerships to create issue-focused organizing that reaches multiple workforces, many of which employ migrant women workers. They also work closely with leaders and allies to provide education and tools to advance the policy and advocacy goals that have been established by migrant women for their communities and for themselves. More recently, Justice for Migrant Women founded the Always Essential national campaign to join the "essential work" narrative sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this work, they aim to catalyze public opinion to support policy change that will raise standards for low-wage workers' health and safety, as well as their income.

The passing of DEVAW by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 represented a turning point in international discourse on violence against women. For the first time, the international community explicitly recognized gendered violence as not simply a private issue, but a human rights concern requiring state intervention. As a result, the Commission on Human Rights adopted Resolution 1994/45 in March 1994 and appointed Radhika Coomaraswamy as the first special rapporteur on violence against women. Coomaraswamy was charged with collecting and analyzing information about violence against women, particularly its causes and consequences, in order to recommend measures to eliminate such violence at national, regional, and international levels.

In her investigation, Coomaraswamy focused on three areas of concern in which women are particularly vulnerable: (1) the family, in which women and girls may experience domestic violence, sexual abuse, marital rape, and practices such as infanticide, female genital cutting, and dowry-related violence; (2) the general community, in which women may be subjected to rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, labor exploitation, and trafficking; and (3) the state, in which women and girls may experience violence perpetrated or condoned by the government and other agencies, including violence associated with reproductive health, detention, and the criminal justice system. In considering these categories, it is important to emphasize the effects of the processes of economic and cultural globalization that include increasing militarism in many regions of the world, and to remember that these categories are overlapping and interconnected. Women and girls particularly vulnerable to violence include members of ethnic minority groups; Indigenous, displaced, and refugee women and girls; migrant women, including migrant women workers; women and girls in the sex industry; those living in poverty and/or on the street; women in detention; women and girls with disabilities; elderly women; and those in situations of armed conflict. Such an extensive list encompasses millions of people around the world.

A girl in a refugee camp

Over the past several decades, gendered forms of violence have received increasing international political attention. For example, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action document, which emerged from the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, asserted that violence against women constitutes not only a human rights violation but also a direct obstacle to achieving equality, peace, and development. A decade later, a ten-country study suggested that domestic violence remains just as prevalent, representing both a public policy and human rights issue that affects women and the children who experience and/or witness such abuse (WHO 2005).

Violence against women has profound and long-term consequences. For women and girls ages 15 to 44 years, violence is a major cause of death and disability. Forms of violence may lead to additional health problems, including a wide range of physical issues and disorders and reproductive health problems (injuries, HIV infection, unintended pregnancy, trauma to the reproductive tract), as well as emotional distress, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and suicide attempts. Unfortunately, many survivors of violence are unable to report the assault because of shame, stigma, fear of rejection by one's family and/or community, and even the risk of further violence or death. It is therefore likely that there are many more incidents of violence than are currently reported. In addition, many scholars and activists note the fear and insecurity that results from threats of violence. Such fear severely limits women's movement and basic activities, as well as access to resources. Violence or the threat of violence creates barriers to women's and girls' full participation in society, and represents a serious obstacle to women's empowerment, gender equality, reproductive justice, and human rights.

Economic and social costs associated with violence against women are also considerable. Women who experience violence often experience isolation and are unable to work, participate in regular activities, or care for their children (WHO 2021). Additional social costs associated with violence against women include stigma and rejection by partners, husbands, families, and communities (WHO 2005, 2021). Alongside the inability to work and loss of wages on the part of individuals, gender-based violence severely affects economic development for nations. A report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2003 estimated the costs of intimate partner violence in the United States to exceed $5.8 billion in productivity losses.

Of central importance in this discussion of gender-based violence is consideration of the ways western paradigms shape discourse on violence against women worldwide, particularly how they may produce stereotypes and misunderstandings about women and communities in the Global South. For example, cultural relativism, the idea that individuals should be understood in the context of their particular society, is often used to suggest that "culture" can explain or rationalize violence against women. Feminist scholars including Uma Narayan, Chandra Mohanty, and others have asked why "culture" is so often invoked as an explanation for violence against women in the Global South, and/or in communities of color in the Global North, but not in discussions of forms of violence that affect mainstream white, middle-class communities (Narayan 1997). These scholars critique the colonizing tendencies of constructions of a monolithic "Third World woman" within a universal patriarchal framework. Such constructions often result in women in the Global South and Black, Indigenous, and other women of color in western contexts being stereotyped, frozen in time, decontextualized, and seen as always already victimized by male violence, family, religion, and culture (Mohanty 2003). In fact, women negotiate oppression and resistance in distinct ways, in various contexts. An intersectional, transnational feminist analysis helps us understand the necessity of focusing on social, historical, and political explanations and contexts that shape women's

lives across multiple differences. Categories of violence often referred to as "traditional" should be understood in relation to shifting cultural, socioeconomic, and political processes.

Resistance to oppression takes many forms

This chapter explores the realities of gender-based violence worldwide and is organized around the categories discussed above from the Commission on Human Rights. The first section addresses gender-based violence in the family and between intimate partners, with a focus on the consequences of gender-based violence. This is followed by a section on violence against women and girls in communities, focused on sexual harassment and assault, hate crimes, trafficking, and militarized forms of violence. The third section addresses violence perpetuated or condoned by the state and discusses violence against women and girls by law officials, health and reproductive issues, armed conflict, and globalization. This chapter concludes with a focus on movements to address and resist gender-based violence worldwide.

Violence within Families and by Intimate Partners

Violence affects women of all ages throughout the life cycle, and harm against women and girls in family contexts is all too common. Some researchers suggest that violence begins even before birth through a preference for sons, which may lead to sex-selective abortions. But while prenatal sex selection in Global South contexts has been denounced as an act of violence against women by the international community, Rajani Bhatia discusses the contradictions that arise when sex selection practices occur in the United States through assisted reproductive technologies, described as "family balancing" (Bhatia 2018). In many cultures, sons are expected to take care of aging parents, whereas daughters are seen as marrying into other families and therefore may be perceived as financial burdens to their parents. After birth, girls may also be vulnerable to neglect in terms of food, education, and basic health care, as well as multiple forms of phys-

ical, sexual, and emotional abuse that include infanticide (Plan International 2018). Son preference may also lead to child marriage in some countries, particularly within sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and parts of the Middle East. Children are often married at young ages for economic reasons, and parents may justify the practice as a means of escaping poverty and securing a better future for their children and themselves. Also, in contexts of armed conflict, parents may marry their daughters off early to protect them from sexual violence or kidnapping. For example, a recent report published in *Ms*. suggests that approximately 41 percent of displaced Syrian girls in Lebanon were married before the age of 18, as they were viewed as "an extra mouth to feed, a vulnerable body to protect and an economic liability" (Ladly 2021). Early forced marriages often result in young girls' increased risk for gender-based violence and exposure to HIV/AIDS and limit their ability to obtain an education. Girls who marry early also tend to have less economic and household power, less mobility, less exposure to media, limited social networks, and greater reproductive health risks. It is estimated that at least 12 million girls under the age of 18 are married each year, and there are currently more than 650 million women in the world who were married as children (UNICEF 2021).

Child Marriage

by Sadaf Farooq

Child marriage, defined by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) as the marriage or formal union between two people in which one or both parties are younger than 18 years of age (ICRW 2012), occurs in many different parts of the world. It is widely practiced in the Global South, including parts of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South Asia. Based on different socioeconomic factors and gender disparities, women and girls are more commonly compelled to marry at a younger age than their male counterparts (Chowdhury et al. 2013). Estimates by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and United Nations Children's Fund (UNFPA-UNICEF) reveal that one in three women aged 20 to 24 in the Global South is married before 18 years (UNFPA-UNICEF 2018). However, a decline in child marriage has been observed in various countries owing to increasing education enrollment and changing gender roles in the labor market (Karamat 2016).

Various socioeconomic factors such as poverty, lower level of education, cultural and regional traditions, place of residence, ethnicity, conflict, age of puberty, and religious practices increase the risk of early marriage of young girls (Wodon et al. 2016). Studies in South Asian countries have shown that patriarchal structures, gender disparities, and prevailing cultural taboos are associated with women's and girls' early marriage, affecting their personal and social development (Edmeades and Hayes 2014). Child brides experience multiple negative consequences, including the deprivation of education, a loss of social and economic freedom, poor health, less personal development, and a lower standard of well-being. Child

marriage also increases the risk of early childbearing, maternal and infant mortality, female genital cutting, HIV/AIDS, marital rape, domestic violence, little or no education, low decision-making power, and limited access to social services, thus affecting women's and girls' physical and socioeconomic capabilities.

Notably, reduction of child marriage coincides with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as universal education, poverty eradication, gender equality, better health, and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Treaties have been signed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to discourage and prohibit the harmful practice of child marriage in different parts of the world. But child marriage is permitted and practiced in different countries based on parental consent or religious or customary laws. Therefore changes are required to end this harmful practice and to ensure gender equality and a safer future for girls.

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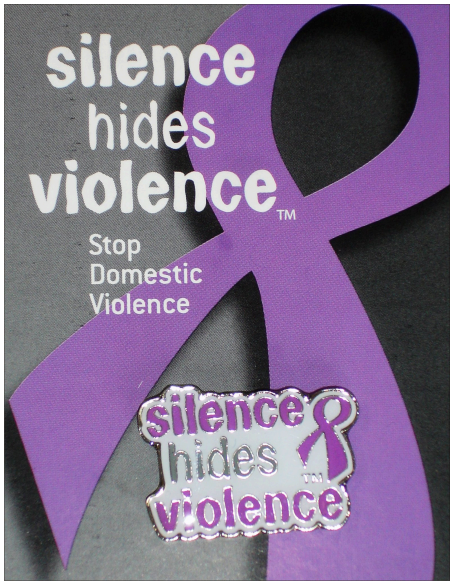
Wodon, Quentin, Minh Cong Nguyen, and Clarence Tsimpo. 2016. "Child Marriage, Education, and Agency in Uganda." *Feminist Economics* 22, no. 1, 54-79.

By far the most common form of violence against women globally is domestic violence, or "intimate partner violence." Intimate partner violence, according to WHO, refers to "behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours" (2021). A 2013 study conducted by the World Health Organization in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the South Africa Medical Research Council found that worldwide, one in three (or approximately 35 percent of) women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner (WHO 2021). As many as 38 percent of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner (WHO 2021). The US Department of Justice defines domestic violence as "a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner" (2011).



The devastating effects of domestic violence are often overlooked

Globally, the term "domestic violence" is used interchangeably with "family violence," "intimate partner violence," and "wife abuse." Domestic violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological, emotional, and economic actions that influence another person in the home, within the family, or within an intimate relationship. It may include verbal or emotional abuse, threatening behavior, intimidation, insults and put-downs, shaming, humiliation, harassment, isolation, confinement, manipulation, coercion, and the control of physical, economic, and other resources. It may also include threats to take custody of children, or the use of a woman's racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, or sexual identity against her by threatening to withhold legal documents, for example. Given the fact that domestic violence is often underreported because of survivors' feelings of confusion, shame, and self-blame, as well as fear of public reprisals and the fact that domestic violence has long been considered a private matter, it is likely that actual incidence rates are much higher than reported. Additional studies indicate that women are more likely to be injured or killed by their own partners than by anyone else.

Domestic or family violence may be so extreme that some researchers liken it to torture (Coomaraswamy 2002). Domestic violence cuts across national, geographic, socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural lines, and occurs in heterosexual and same-sex relationships, though most reported victims of domestic violence are women who have experienced violence by male perpetrators. In the United States, for example, domestic violence is one of the leading causes of injury to women (US Department of Justice 2011). Between 22 and 35 percent of US women's emergency room visits result from domestic violence. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in four women and one in

ten men experience some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and Black and Indigenous women are at greater risk of death from intimate partner violence (Luthra 2020). Injuries associated with domestic violence include bruises, broken bones, cuts, burns, knife wounds, permanent injuries such as partial loss of vision or hearing, damage to joints, miscarriage, physical disfigurement, extreme trauma, and death (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2004). While a growing number of countries are attempting to strengthen legislation against violence against women, in some parts of the world there are no laws or social sanctions against domestic violence. Even where laws do exist, there is a greater need for their implementation and enforcement. And even in contexts where there are resources for survivors of domestic violence, members of marginalized communities, such as ethnic minorities, generally face additional barriers and more difficulty accessing available resources. Because they often do not fit into mainstream strategies for addressing domestic violence, marginalized groups of women are often more reluctant to report such violence, as they are aware that they may face additional forms of violence, including state regulation and surveillance within their communities.

Rape and sexual violence are also widespread within families and between intimate partners. Sexual assault is defined as sexual contact or behavior that occurs without consent, whereas rape is forced sexual intercourse that may involve vaginal, anal, or oral penetration (US Department of Justice 2011). Rape is a form of sexual assault, although sexual assault can occur without incidence of rape. It is estimated that one in three women worldwide experiences sexual assault in their lifetime (Marshall 2006). Women everywhere face the risk of sexual assault from perpetrators who are more likely to be friends, family members, or acquaintances than strangers.

Approximately one in four women experiences sexual violence by an intimate partner, and between one- and two-thirds of all victims are aged 15 years or under (WHO 2005; Plan International 2018). In the United States, research indicates that a woman is raped every six minutes, with the majority of rapes committed against women by male acquaintances, dates, or partners (US Department of Justice 2011). Girls and young women may also experience forms of control, surveillance and stalking, threats, and intimidation from boyfriends, sometimes classified as dating or courtship violence (Larkin and Popaleni 1997; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2004). Sexual assault may also specifically target children—of all genders—within families, and childhood sexual abuse is most commonly perpetrated by male family members.

While forced sex within marriage—marital rape—is considered a crime under international law as defined by DEVAW, it is still not taken seriously in many places, and men are frequently seen as having a legal right to unlimited sexual access to their wives. Many countries in southern Africa, for example, have no explicit legal provisions criminalizing marital rape (Ali 2008). In the United States, marital rape was legal until 1976 and is still considered a lesser crime in several states.

Violence within Communities

Within all communities, women are at risk for violence that includes physical violence, sexual harassment and assault, homophobic and transphobic violence, hate violence targeting particular groups of women and girls, trafficking for forced labor or sex, and forced prostitution. In each of these cases, violence is used as a tool of control and domination, and in some contexts, as a tool of terror. As discussed later in this chapter, forms of gendered violence that occur within communities can also be initiated or regulated by the state.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances that occur in public spaces, in the workplace, and in educational settings. It includes any unwanted verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, as well as intimidation and pressure for sexual favors. In the workplace, sexual harassment may involve a hostile work environment through an abuse of power by those in authority as well as coworkers. Worldwide, women and girls in educational settings report high rates of sexual harassment that affects their ability to learn. Applying an intersectional lens, we can also understand the ways that sexual harassment may be racialized. Asian and Asian American women, for example, are often negatively affected by converging racial and gender stereotypes that assume they will be receptive to sexual advances (Cho 1997). This results in higher levels of sexual harassment from employers who may become increasingly violent when their advances are rebuffed.

Unwelcome advances are a form of violence

Although rape and sexual assault are perpetrated most often by men in intimate relationships with women, stranger assaults also occur. Youth living on the streets may be particularly vulnerable to sexual

violence by strangers. Youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) experience homophobic and transphobic bullying and violence within schools and in public spaces. Other vulnerable groups include Indigenous women, girls, and gender-nonconforming people, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, and those who are held in detention, are refugees, or live in conflict areas (Plan International 2018). In India, Nepal, and other parts of Asia, Dalit (lower-caste) women and girls face extreme rates of violence. In the United States and Canada, Native American and First Nations women and girls have experienced high rates of sexual violence. According to a recent study by the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, Native American women are twice as likely to experience sexual assault as members of other groups, and one in three Native American women reports having been raped (US Department of Justice 2011). Rape, according to Sarah Deer (2015), is "a fundamental result of colonialism, a history of violence reaching back centuries," and "is experienced at such high rates in some tribal communities that it becomes 'normalized'" (x, 5), with subsequent impunity for perpetrators. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) movement draws attention to the extreme rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls across North America, frequently referred to as a human rights crisis.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

by Renea Perry and Patti Duncan

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), sometimes referred to as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S), or #MMIW on social media, is a movement to raise awareness and address the crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, nonbinary, and trans people in the United States and Canada.

In the United States, Native women are more than twice as likely to experience violence as other groups, and the US Department of Justice has reported that Indigenous women face murder rates that are more than ten times the national average. In Canada, thousands of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people have been reported missing or murdered in the past several decades, prompting the government to establish the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016.

In the United States, President Biden signed the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in March 2022, after several years of delay, owing to disputes between liberal and conversative legislators over issues such as inclusion of same-sex couples and undocumented immigrants, as well as federal and tribal jurisdictional issues regarding the prosecution of non-Natives for crimes committed on tribal reservations (which have treaty rights that were established in the 1800s and are part of US constitutional

law). Originally passed in 1994, the act had been reauthorized in 2000, 2005, and 2013, but it had expired in 2018 and was briefly re-funded in 2019. The newest version of VAWA contained an amendment that sought to change the language to include Native American women and Alaska Native women living in urban areas and those in the states of Alaska and Maine, who under previous versions of VAWA had no legal protections from violence committed against them. Out of the 573 federally recognized tribes, 227 are Alaska Native villages. The final bill includes expanded language about circumstances of abuse and perpetrators, as well as inclusive language for protections of immigrant women and trans women.

Violence against Indigenous communities is rooted in a long history of colonialism and conquest, continuing today with settler colonialism and ongoing state violence against Indigenous people. The disproportionate violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people is compounded by a lack of reporting, a deeply flawed justice system, and institutional racism.

Activists have organized many responses to the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people, including public marches and protests, vigils, and arts-based responses. For example, the REDressProject, a public art installation featuring red dresses, and Walking with Our Sisters, a community-led art project featuring moccasin vamps, are two responses created to remember and honor the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. For more information, visit the Indian Law Resource Center and the National Congress of American Indians websites.

Hate Crimes

As examples in the previous section demonstrate, some forms of violence target specific groups. In South Africa, for example, Black women faced numerous forms of violence both during and after apartheid. "Curative rape"—sexual violence targeting queer women for the purpose of "curing" them of their sexual identity—has been directed specifically at Black queer women in townships. Often there are multiple perpetrators, and many women report more than one rape. This situation, reflecting the ways sexism intersects with homophobia and heterosexism, as well as racism and classism, is so critical that activists like Wendy Isaack have declared a state of emergency. They suggest that high rates of hate crimes against Black lesbians and transgender women in South Africa can be likened to torture as defined by international law, illustrating the ways they are systematically abused within the community and by the state (Gqola 2006). Isaack discusses the ways state actors such as police and judges perpetrate a secondary victimization by not investigating these cases and by not recognizing the human rights of Black lesbian and transgender women.

According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), in the United States and elsewhere, trans and gender-nonconforming people encounter violence often driven by transphobia and frequently linked to other effects of transphobia, including poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and/or engagement in survival sex work (HRC 2020a). Approximately 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQI+, an indication of a lack of family support and acceptance. A 2015 US survey of transgender people indicates that nearly half of respondents reported being verbally harassed in the past year because of being trans, and 9 percent reported being physically attacked in the past year (VAWnet, n.d.). According to the HRC Foundation's report *Dismantling a Culture of Violence*, more than two hundred transgender and gender-nonconforming people have been killed in the United States since 2013, and "this epidemic disproportionately impacts trans women of color," with Black and Latinx trans women particularly at risk. Worldwide, over thirty-six hundred trans people have been killed over the past decade, according to Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide (HRC 2020a). Anti-trans violence is linked to the dehumanization of trans people, intertwined with racism and sexism, as well as other systems of oppression. HRC reports that 40 percent of trans people held in state and federal detention in the United States experience sexual abuse. Furthermore, it is likely that many cases of violence against trans women are not reported or underreported, and victims are frequently misgendered in the media.

Violence against trans people is gendered violence

Even in countries where violence against protected groups is considered hate violence and prosecuted accordingly, it is difficult to get many people to recognize that violence against women is also a hate crime. For example, in her discussion of hate violence against Asian and Asian American women in the United States, Helen Zia (1997) asks why it appears that most (documented) victims of anti-Asian violence are male. Even while violence against women is the most pervasive form of violence throughout society, gender was not added as a protected category or class in the United States until the 1994 Violence against Women Act. Despite this addition, violence against women has not generally been classified as a hate crime. If it were, hate crime statistics would increase exponentially.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-Asian violence has escalated sharply in the United States, and hate incidents targeting Asian Americans, especially Asian American women, have surged by nearly 150 percent (Duncan, Dutt-Ballerstadt, and Lo 2021). According to a recent report by Stop AAPI Hate and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), more than 6,600 incidents of anti-Asian violence were reported between March 2020 and March 2021, and the greatest numbers were

reported among Asian American and Pacific Islander women, girls, and nonbinary people (Stop AAPI Hate and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum 2021).

Forced Migration, Trafficking, and the Global Sex Industry

Today, almost 300 million people live as international migrants or internally displaced people (Luibhéid and Chávez 2020). People migrate for many reasons, for example, to seek economic or educational opportunities, to escape war or unstable political situations, to seek asylum, or to reunite with family members. Sometimes people are trafficked, however, which involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion. It is estimated that 40.3 million people are trafficked worldwide, with the majority trapped in forced labor. According to the International Labour Organization, approximately 25 percent of trafficking victims are children. Most reports indicate that the majority of victims of trafficking are women, and many are trafficked into the informal economy to work in the sex industry, as domestic workers, and/or in agriculture or garment industries. Because trafficked women and girls generally lack legal documentation, they are vulnerable to multiple forms of violence. According to a recent UN global report, trafficking occurs all over the world, including throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, North America, South America, and the Middle East. It also occurs domestically. Recent research indicates that people who are LGBTQI+ are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, especially LGBTQI+ children and young adults (UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2020).

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by the General Assembly in 2000, is the main UN entity addressing issues of human trafficking, focusing primarily on the criminal justice element of trafficking. It is supplemented by three protocols, including the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, adopted in 2003, which enables international cooperation, including law enforcement cooperation and extradition between and among countries. At the nongovernmental level, the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) comprises nongovernmental organizations from all over the world, including anti- trafficking organizations, survivors of trafficking, human rights and women's rights organizations, and self-organized groups of sex workers, migrant workers, and domestic workers. GAATW understands that the trafficking of women and children is deeply embedded in processes of globalization and a globalized labor market, and therefore works for the human and labor rights of all migrant workers.

While the global sex industry is often framed in terms of trafficking and "sex slavery," scholars like Kamala Kempadoo (2001) suggest that "the global sex trade cannot be simply reduced to one monolithic explanation of violence to women" (28). Rather, we must recognize how specific local histories and contexts—including colonialism, militarization, and globalization—shape women's experiences of the sex industry. Kempadoo urges readers to recognize the fact that, globally, women of color are disproportionately represented in sex industries, particularly through prostitution around military bases, migrant labor,

and sex tourism, often associated with the ways that women of color are sexualized and racialized as exotic "others" and thereby objectified. It is problematic to view sex work within a "voluntary" versus "forced" dichotomy since this model often results in viewing women as either innocent victims or people responsible for their own potential victimization. Such a framework may simply become another method for denying sex workers their human rights (Doezema 1998). Similarly, Jennifer Suchland (2015) critiques the ways that mainstream anti-trafficking discourse frequently frames trafficking in terms of individual victims rather than as a larger, structural problem. By considering trafficking in terms of structural violence, linked to economic and political systems, we begin to see the economies of violence that sustain trafficking and other forms of gendered, racialized exploitation and oppression (Suchland 2015).

Sometimes women leave their homelands voluntarily as a result of processes associated with globalization and structural adjustment programs. For example, many women in the Philippines face great pressure to migrate for employment opportunities at the same time that the Philippines' national economy depends on remittances sent home by migrant women workers. Scholars like Rhacel Parreñas and Valerie Francisco-Menchavez have described the transnational family arrangements that result from the fact that many migrant workers are also mothers.

Women may leave their country of origin to support families at home

Filipina migrants in the United States engage creative strategies to care for children and family members back home in the Philippines, including the use of technology to maintain relationships and create intimacy (Francisco-Menchavez 2018). As domestic workers, women migrant laborers are vulnerable to exploitative working conditions, abuse from employers, sexual harassment, physical and sexual violence, and threats to withhold pay or important documents, including passports, as well as the fear of deportation. They may find their movement and mobility severely limited (Parreñas 2001). Similarly, some

women migrate for the purposes of international marriage, sometimes referred to as "mail-order brides." Vulnerable under the law and subject to the risk of deportation, these women may migrate for economic reasons, and they often experience domestic violence, including marital rape, with few resources for legal protection.

Others migrate to escape war or violence associated with political conflict. Globally, international migrants are increasingly criminalized, while borders between nations become militarized. As Luibhéid and Chávez (2020) point out, today's migration crises involve increases in processes of migrant illegalization, detention, and deportation, in which migrants are frequently scapegoated as dangerous or threatening and blamed for economic and social problems. And queer and trans migrants are particularly vulnerable to violence. As Eithne Luibhéid writes, immigration controls "reproduce the nation and citizenship as sites of inequality, too, by legally admitting migrants who serve white, patriarchal, heterosexual, middle-class norms, while criminalizing, 'illegalizing,' and making disposable other migrants" (2020, 20). Queer and trans migrants in detention are regularly subjected to sexual and gendered harassment and violence, as well as lack of medical care.

Militarism in Communities

Finally, violence targeting women in communities may also include forms of violence associated with militarism. As discussed in the next section, while women experience extremely high rates of violence in situations of armed conflict, they also suffer as a result of living and working in militarized communities and especially in communities with military bases (Enloe 2007; Moon 2007). Militarism, defined here as a system and process that often relies on objectification of others, should be distinguished from individuals in the military, who may or may not support a militarized worldview. But militarism as an institution often encourages both violence and misogyny and results in increasing rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault committed against civilians by military personnel, including both local and foreign militaries. For example, US military personnel in South Korea have committed more than a hundred thousand criminal acts (about two per day) against members of the local population, often targeting women and children in the military camptowns surrounding US bases (Moon 2007). Violence against civilian women in this context also includes forced prostitution, trafficking, and murder. Many trafficking routes tend to appear close to military bases, and in the mid-1990s, more than five thousand women were reportedly trafficked into South Korea for the purposes of prostitution in US military camptowns (Marshall 2006). Finally, incidences of violence within military families are also key problems.

The reality of high rates of violence in militarized communities exists despite the rhetoric of "security" linked to military presence and occupation. The US bases in South Korea, Okinawa, and the Philippines, for example, have long been justified in the name of national security for these countries (Fukumura and Matsuoka 2002; Enloe 2007). In recent years, groups such as the East Asia-US Women's Network against

Militarism have challenged this premise, arguing that militarism does not provide security for local civilians, and that women in such environments become more vulnerable to violence. Other scholars, like Anna Agathangelou (2004), suggest that globalization is actually constituted through militarization, with both processes resulting in increased poverty in the Global South, affecting women disproportionately and increasing rates of sexual violence against them.

US Military Bases and Women's Struggles in Okinawa

by Risako Sakai

Okinawa, in the southernmost part of Japan, is often considered merely as a region of Japan. It used to be the independent Ryukyu Kingdom but was annexed and colonized by Japan in 1879 and turned into the Okinawa Prefecture. During World War II, American soldiers landed on Okinawan islands in what was later known as the Battle of Okinawa. The Japanese military used Okinawa as a breakwater and prolonged the fighting in Okinawa to lessen major assaults on the mainland of Japan. During this battle, one in four civilians died. Right after the Battle of Okinawa, the US military took over Okinawa's land and built bases, while civilians were housed in transit camps. Local towns formed around the US military bases. The US military occupied Okinawa between 1945 and 1972, and Okinawa reverted to Japan on July 30, 1972. But 70.4 percent of American military bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa, which accounts for only 0.6 percent of Japan's total land territory.

Okinawa's situation today is sometimes likened to that of "a prostituted daughter" (Takazato and Kutsuzawa 1999). That is, Japan, as a violent father, sells his daughter, Okinawa, to the US military. Japan rationalizes Okinawa's situation with the US-Japan Security Treaty and "host nation support" called *Omoiyori yosan* ("sympathy budget") (Ginoza 2012).

The US military views Okinawa as a geopolitical keystone to surveil Asia Pacific regions while also using Okinawa as rest and recreation (R&R) for US soldiers (Simpson, Broudy, and Arakaki 2013). But the presence of US military bases poses a great threat, particularly to women and children in the region, since women are regarded as "rewards" for male soldiers. During World War II, Okinawan women, along with Korean women, were forced to serve as "comfort women" for the Japanese military (Takazato and Kutsuzawa 1999). After the Battle of Okinawa, many orphaned girls, lured onto bases with food, were sexually assaulted. Hoping to rise out of poverty, some Okinawan women became prostitutes, and many of them were raped or killed by US soldiers. Rape cases are often not reported because of victim-blaming and stigma for survivors. Thus the fear "it could have been me" always sticks in women's minds.

Victims of rape and murder include not only adult women but also children. In 1955, a 6-year-old Okinawan girl was kidnapped, raped, and murdered, now known as the Yumiko-chan incident after the

girl's name. This incident triggered the first massive protest of US occupation of Okinawa. And on September 4, 1995, a 12-year-old girl was abducted, gang-raped, and dumped on the side of the road. Considering this brutal violence, the feminist movement and organization Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence (Okinawa Kichi Guntai wo Yurusanai Koudousuru On'natachi no Kai) was established in 1995.

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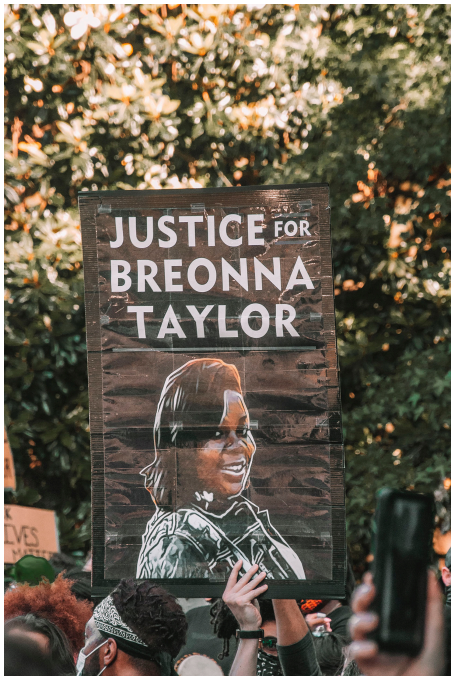
State Violence

In March 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman and emergency medical technician, was shot and killed in her Louisville, Kentucky home by the police, who had forced entry into Taylor's home in the middle of the night. Three white male police officers, who were searching for Taylor's ex-boyfriend, fired thirty-two rounds in her home. After shooting Breonna Taylor multiple times, they left her without medical care for more than twenty minutes. Amid nationwide and international protests, a grand jury finally indicted one of them, Brett Hankison, not with murder but with "wanton endangerment" for firing into Taylor's neighbor's apartment. The other officers were not charged. No one was charged for causing Taylor's death.

Tragically, the murder of Breonna Taylor is one more death in a long history of police brutality and violence against Black communities, highlighting systemic racism and racialized gender violence. Black women including Tanisha Anderson, Sandra Bland, Atatiana Jefferson, Natasha McKenna, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and many others have been killed by police or died in police custody in recent years. As Kimberlé Crenshaw and other Black feminist scholars and activists have noted, the recurring police violence against Black women rarely gets the attention it deserves. In her talk "The Urgency of Intersectionality," Crenshaw (2016) discusses the way that police brutality against Black women brings together the issues of police violence against African Americans and violence against women, but somehow this violence against Black women is not adequately addressed in our society.



Saying their names helps keep our awareness alive

As Crenshaw states, "Police violence against Black women is very real . . . Black girls as young as seven, great grandmothers as old as 95, have been killed by the police . . . Why don't we know these stories? Why is it that their lost lives don't generate the same amount of media attention and communal outcry as the lost lives of their fallen brothers?" To collectively bear witness to the magnitude of police violence against Black women and girls, Crenshaw asks that we say their names. She created the hashtag #SayHerName as a collective social media response and form of public activism that we can all participate in. #SayHerName asks us to remember the lives of Black women and girls who have been killed by the police and state violence (Crenshaw et al. 2015).

Physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state takes numerous forms that include police harassment and violence, violence against women and girls in detention, violence perpetrated by the criminal justice system (such as by immigration officials and border police), and violence associated with reproductive health. Also, women experience forms of violence associated with poverty, racism, homophobia, transphobia, colonization, and war, among other systems. As mentioned in the previous section, Indigenous women are often subjected to extreme forms of violence, including sexual violence, which can be used as a tool of conquest and even genocide (Smith 2005). The numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people in the settler colonial context of North America have reached epidemic proportions. In situations of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence, as the political motives underlying war are also often used to justify sexual violence against women and girls. While the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women asserts that states should condemn violence against women, such violence nonetheless continues.

Violence by Law Enforcement and "Justice" Systems

Worldwide, women experience violence, including physical abuse, sexual assault, and psychological and verbal abuse by members of law enforcement and criminal justice systems. In the United States, women of color, poor women, queer women, trans women, disabled women, and women in the sex industry are at greater risk for police harassment and forms of violence by the criminal justice system. This situation influences their willingness to report the violence they experience. Globally, women in the sex industry and women migrant workers experience high levels of police harassment and violence. For example, 70 percent of sex workers in India report being beaten by police, and more than 80 percent report being arrested without evidence (WHO 2005). In Bangladesh, between 52 and 60 percent of street-based sex workers reported being raped by men in uniform in the previous year. In many countries, police also use anti-prostitution laws to harass, threaten, abuse, and sexually coerce or assault women in the sex industry. In South Africa, policies created during apartheid exacerbated structural inequalities, and state-sponsored forces intentionally used gender-based violence as a tool to enforce racial segregation, destabilize communities, and undermine and demoralize the resistance movement (Britton 2020).

As noted above, migrant women lacking legal documentation are also the targets of police harassment and violence. Women attempting to cross into the United States are regularly subjected to harassment, beatings, and assault, including sexual assault by both representatives of the state and members of racist vigilante groups (Falcón 2006). Women migrant workers, usually domestic workers, are particularly vulnerable and report suffering violence when seeking police protection (Amnesty International 2001). Finally, there is widespread violence against women in custody. Women held in prisons or pretrial detention are at risk for physical and sexual assault.

Amnesty International reports that women held in custody by police routinely endure rape and torture. In Lebanon, for example, women detainees have reported widespread abuses, including rape and attempted rape, beatings, torture, forcible stripping, constant invasion of privacy by male guards, and lack of adequate facilities for pregnant women (Amnesty International 2001).

At the Mexico-US border, many national media outlets have reported systematic sexual assault of women held in detention. In addition, more than forty-five hundred children reported sexual abuse in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention and immigrant youth facilities between 2015 and 2019 (Wilson 2020). And as noted above, queer and trans migrants are particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based harassment and violence (Luibhéid 2020). As women's presence in prisons increases worldwide, it becomes more and more important to examine the conditions for women in detention, as well as the reasons for women's imprisonment. In the United States, poor women and women of color make up the greatest numbers of women in prison, and their mass incarceration is often linked to structural forms of oppression as well as neoliberal economic policies (Reynolds 2008). Women living in refugee camps

or camps for internally displaced persons (known as IDP camps) also face higher incidence rates of violence and exploitation. Representing the majority of displaced people, women and children are subject to violence, including sexual violence, from military and immigration personnel as well as male refugees and rival ethnic groups.

Violence Associated with Reproductive Health

Another form of gender-based violence is associated with lack of access to health care and reproductive justice worldwide. Women and girls experience state-inflicted violence through a lack of access to safe abortions, reproductive health care, family planning, and safe contraception. They may also experience forced sterilization and/or forced impregnation, as these two practices have been used as tools of eugenics, ethnic cleansing, colonialism, and genocide. Reproductive justice is a framework developed by women of color, emphasizing the right to not have children, to have children, and to parent children in safe and healthy environments (Ross and Solinger 2017, 9). As Silliman et al. (2004) have demonstrated, women of color have a long history of resisting policies directed at controlling their fertility.

Population control tactics were used during the colonization of the United States and during slavery. Throughout the twentieth century, the targeting of Indigenous and Black women and other people of color, immigrants, poor people, and disabled people was often justified by eugenics and racist, classist, and ableist ideologies (Ko 2016). Women of color and women in the Global South have been targets of provider-controlled hormonal methods of contraception whose side effects and risks are not yet known, including Depo-Provera and Norplant. While white, middle-class, abled women have often experienced difficulties securing safe access to contraception and abortion, many poor women, women of color, and disabled women have been targets for coercive sterilization campaigns, linked to a model of population control that suggests that poor women and women of color are to blame for the world's overpopulation and dwindling resources (Hartmann 2002). This ideology can also be linked to specific economic policies. When people of color no longer function as "cheap labor," the fertility of women of color becomes problematic to systems of power and is subject to state control.

Many countries report high mortality rates related to lack of access to safe abortions. Young women and girls in forced early marriages also face increased risk for complications associated with pregnancy, as well as a lack of medical resources and obstetric care in many countries. And women in poverty often face difficulty accessing prenatal care and medical care during childbirth. Approximately 536,000 women die each year due to maternal health complications, with 533,000 of these deaths occurring in the Global South (Alsop 2007).

Gender-based violence and substandard medical care are commonplace in ICE detention and in prisons (Ko 2016; Wilson 2020). Recently, at an immigration detention facility at the Mexico-US border, mass

hysterectomies were performed on women without their consent. And in women's prisons, forced sterilization has continued for decades (Ko 2016). The United Nations considers compulsory sterilization to be a crime against humanity, and when directed at a particular racial, ethnic, or nation group, it is considered an act of genocide.

Forced Sterilization of Migrant Women in the United States

by Miranda Findlay

Many women and girls seek refuge in the United States to escape severe gender-based violence in their home countries, and yet thousands have reported various violations and mistreatment in the United States. In September 2020, a nurse who worked at the Irwin County Detention Center—an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) center—in Ocilla, Georgia, claimed that migrant women have been subjected to gynecological procedures without their knowledge or informed consent. This whistleblower alleged that hysterectomies, operations to remove the uterus, were performed on women who did not need them and were not fully aware that the procedures were going to take place. Though the whistleblower did not personally witness the hysterectomies, she spoke to several women who were subjected to the procedure.

The US Department of Homeland Security complaint alleged several other violations, including that the Ocilla detention center allowed employees to work while awaiting COVID-19 test results, refused to test detainees for COVID-19, shredded detainee medical requests, fabricated medical records, and withheld information from detainees and employees about who tested positive for COVID-19. In a statement to the Associated Press, ICE explained that while it takes all allegations seriously, "in general, anonymous, unproven allegations, made without any fact-checkable specifics, should be treated with the appropriate skepticism they deserve." This alarming statement reflects a long history of neglect and violence against migrants and the state's unwillingness to take responsibility for its violations of human rights.

Finally, a collaborative report by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) links gender-based violence to an increase in HIV/AIDS, with women who have experienced violence being at higher risk for HIV infection (UNAIDS, UNFPA, and UNIFEM 2004). Women and girls trafficked for sex work experience greater risk for infection (Ertürk 2005), and women in situations of armed conflict may be deliberately infected with HIV as a weapon of war. Women who have HIV/AIDS may avoid treatment because they fear the possibility of violence and abandonment that result from such disclosure.

Armed Conflict

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable within situations of armed conflict, during which gender-based violence often increases. Worldwide, 70 percent of casualties during armed conflict are civilians, many of them women and children. In such contexts, women may experience physical and sexual assault, including mass rape, forced marriage, forced prostitution, military sexual slavery, and increased domestic violence. Rape is consistently used as a weapon of war, but according to Coomaraswamy (2002), it is "the least condemned war crime." In some instances, mass rape is used as an instrument of policy and a deliberate tool of genocide (Tétreault 2001; WHO 2005). Often, young women and girls are targeted for rape, and victims of rape face increased risk for HIV infection, the possibility of unwanted pregnancy, and potential rejection by families and communities (Ertürk 2008).

Between 1992 and 1995, up to 60,000 Muslim and Croatian women and girls were raped by Serbian soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina; many were forcibly impregnated as part of a campaign for "ethnic cleansing." Similarly, during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, approximately half a million women and girls experienced war-related sexual violence, and it is estimated that 70 percent contracted HIV (Kolluri 2018). Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) suggest that some women were purposefully infected with HIV as a tool of war. In Sierra Leone, as many as 64,000 internally displaced women were raped between 1991 and 2001, and as many as 257,000 Sierra Leonean women and girls may have been subjected to sexual violence, perpetrated predominantly by rebel forces. In Colombia, rape has been used not only by soldiers in government armed forces, but also by guerillas and paramilitary forces. In Darfur, thousands of women and girls have been raped, with about 40 percent of victims under 18 years of age. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual violence reached unprecedented levels, and women and girls face violence perpetrated not only by armed combatants but also by UN peacekeepers.

Violence against women during or immediately following armed conflict has also been reported in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chechnya/Russian Federation, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, Haiti, Iraq, Kuwait, Liberia, Mexico, Peru, northern Uganda, and the former Yugoslavia (Ertürk 2008). In refugee camps, women may be abused or raped by military, immigration personnel, male refugees, and men of rival ethnic groups. They may also be forced into prostitution or the sex industry. Particularly vulnerable groups include members of ethnic minorities, unaccompanied women and children, female heads of household, disabled women and girls, and elderly women (WHO 2021).

Women are affected by war in numerous ways

Systematic rape during armed conflict has been recognized as a human rights violation, yet it continues to occur. The UN identifies four categories of wartime rape: (1) genocidal rape, intended to destroy an entire ethnic, cultural, or political group; (2) opportunistic rape, in which crimes against women increase when male perpetrators take advantage of the breakdown in law and order; and (3) political rape, where women are punished for their association with men, as a means to subjugate men holding particular political perspectives. In such cases, women are often viewed as property, and sexual violence against them is used to subjugate and humiliate the men of their communities, including husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons (WHO 2005). Finally, (4) forced concubinage, the forced sexual servitude of women, often in "rape camps" such as those established by the Japanese during World War II, is another category of wartime rape. Approximately 200,000 women were forced into a system of sexual slavery in which they were systematically raped in what were called "comfort" camps (Duncan 2004).

Although the Beijing "Platform for Action" from the 1995 World Conference on Women declared rape in armed conflict to be war crime that can be classified as genocide in some cases, impunity for perpetrators is common. Until recently, no perpetrators of war rape had ever been prosecuted for crimes of war. In 1996, a UN tribunal indicted eight Bosnian Serb military and police officers in connection with their rape of Muslim women during the Bosnian war, and more recently the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1820, which recognizes sexual violence in situations of armed conflict as a threat to national and international peace and security. In postconflict periods, gender-based violence often continues. Reports associated with the recent war in Afghanistan show higher rates of rape, acid attacks, forced marriages,

forced prostitution, and bombings of girls' schools (Marshall 2006). Since 2014, Yazidi people have been targeted for genocide by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq (ISIL). Thousands of Yazidi men have been killed, and thousands of Yazidi women have been kidnapped, systematically raped, tortured, forced into sexual slavery, and murdered. Mass rape has also been used a wartime strategy and tool of genocide against other marginalized communities, including the Rohingya people, an ethnic minority group in Myanmar, and the Uighur people in China.

Razia Sultana, Rohingya Activist

by Shaina Khan

In 2021 the world's largest refugee camp was found in the tiny country of Bangladesh. In 2017, in neighboring Myanmar, military forces began murdering, raping, and destroying the homes of Rohingya people, an ethnic minority in the region. Since then, almost 1 million Rohingya refugees have fled from Myanmar to Kutupalong camp. Many of the women and girls in Kutupalong are dealing with the aftermath of violence they experienced in Myanmar and while fleeing. Even in the camp, they face risks of kidnapping and sexual assault.

Razia Sultana at The Hague

Razia Sultana, a Rohingya woman who grew up in Bangladesh, visits the women at Kutupalong, documenting their stories and helping them overcome feelings of shame about the sexual violence they experienced. She began a women's center at the camp to spread messages about women's empowerment and reduce gendered discrimination and violence. Sultana also speaks with refugee men, who can be hostile toward the idea of women's rights, to convince them that women should have a voice, too. In 2017, Sultana left her job to be a full-time activist for Rohingya people. That same year, she spoke at the United Nations Security Council. Knowing that Rohingya women faced continuing violence—both in Bangladesh and in Myanmar—she says she surprised the council members when she told them, "The security council has failed."

Sultana travels the world to speak on behalf of Rohingya women. She also coordinates the Free Rohingya Coalition and is a director of the women's section of the Arakan Rohingya National Organization. In 2019, she was nominated for the US State Department's International Women of Courage Awards. Despite all her international work, Sultana continues to visit the community at Kutupalong so she can listen to the women's stories and understand what resources they need.

Globalization

Gendered violence can be linked to processes of globalization associated with both state and nonstate actors. As discussed above, hundreds of thousands of women worldwide are forced to migrate in search of work opportunities, often as a direct result of economic restructuring in their home countries. While gendered violence is shaped by unequal gender relations and women's subjugated status in society, we can also see that it increases with processes of globalization that may heighten and intensify problems associated with unequal gender relations. For example, violence against women in Juarez, Mexico, where hundreds of women have disappeared and have been found raped and murdered, must be understood in the context of globalization that contributes to the "cheapening" of women's labor and therefore their bodies. Such forces are exacerbated by problems associated with organized crime, the sex industry, drug trafficking, and police corruption (Livingston 2004). We might ask what role the global economy plays in making women's bodies and labor expendable and disposable. Economic systems that devalue women and cheapen their labor make it easier for state actors and legal and political systems to inflict violence upon them.

Resisting Gendered Forms of Violence

In 2006, activist Tarana Burke used the phrase "Me Too" on social media as a way to name her experience as a survivor of sexual harassment and express solidarity with other survivors. By naming her own experience by using this phrase, Burke wanted other survivors to know that they are not alone. Then, in 2017, Alyssa Milano started using the phrase as a hashtag to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. #MeToo soon became a movement across various social media platforms, in which people named sexual abuse and sexual violence, and expressed solidarity with other survivors. By sharing the hashtag #MeToo, survivors speak out about their experiences and make visible how many people have been affected by sexual harassment, abuse, and violence. The movement has spread to many places around the world, in multiple languages, trending in at least eighty-five countries, including Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, India, Iran, Nigeria, Palestine, South Korea, and Turkey. Florence Njoki describes how increased Internet access has allowed women in Africa to participate in the #MeToo conversation (Njoki 2019), and Carrie Baker details how state legislators in the United States were inspired to propose more than two hundred sexual harassment laws in two years (Baker 2020). Burke has recently referred to #MeToo as an international movement focused on community action and healing (Snyder and Lopez 2017).

Tarana Burke and #MeToo

by Miranda Findlay

Tarana Burke became involved in activism in the 1980s with the organization 21st Century. She met many young women of color who were survivors of sexual violence and abuse. A survivor herself, Burke focused on finding ways to provide resources and safe spaces for these women to share their stories. In 2007, Burke founded the nonprofit Just Be, Inc., which encouraged young Black girls through workshops and other educational programs. Just Be, Inc. was so impactful that its programs were adopted by every public school in Selma, Alabama.

Tarana Burke

Shortly afterward, Burke began using the phrase "me too" to empower young women of color to share their stories. Although the concept originated in 2006, Burke's hashtag #MeToo went viral during the 2017 Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse scandal. In addition to Hollywood, statements of "Me Too" provoked sexual harassment and abuse discussions in the music industry, sciences, academia, and politics. Women spoke out about harassment by political leaders such as Michael Bloomberg and Donald Trump. In higher education, students and faculty stepped forward to disclose harassment and assault by tenured professors from prominent schools, including Harvard University and the University of Virginia. In 2017, *Time* named Burke, Susan Fowler, Isabel Pascual, and other women dubbed the "Silence Breakers" as the magazine's annual Person of the Year. Burke has become a global leader in conversations about sexual violence and has been invited to speak across the country.

Gender-based violence both results from and reinforces gender inequality and women's subordination in society. It affects women in the family, the community, the workplace, and in society in general. It is a public health issue as well as an obstacle to peace and development, and it is a human rights violation. Addressing gender-based violence must involve recognition of multiple levels of violence that include both individual experiences of victimization as well as the long-term structural or systemic violence that accompanies it, including the lack of accountability for perpetrators, a general lack of resources for survivors, and the stigma associated with many forms of violence. Ending gender-based violence requires education, resources, support for survivors, political movement, and a change in how laws are understood and applied.

At the World Health Assembly in 2016, member states agreed to a multisector approach to address violence against women. They endorsed "a global plan of action on strengthening the role of health systems in addressing interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls and against children" (WHO 2021). State support to end gender-based violence is problematic, however, since states are also involved in the oppression of women and girls (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2004). As we have seen, states condone and legitimize violence against women through the legal system, police violence, violence against women in detention, rape of women in prisons, violence against women by military personnel, and assaults against women at the national border by immigration officials. As many feminist scholars and activists have argued, carceral approaches to gender-based violence, which emphasize individual cases rather than structural forms of violence, have failed (Bernstein 2010; Britton 2020). Such strategies rely on criminalization, prosecution, and incarceration, and conflict with movements for racial, gender, and economic justice.

Women's, feminist, and human rights organizations continue to challenge gender-based violence around the world. In each case, it is important to consider specific local histories and contexts of gender-based violence. Only then it is possible to develop methods and strategies of intervention that will be effective within a particular context. It is also crucial to keep in mind that gendered forms of violence always exist alongside, and in fact are sustained by, structural inequities, which must also be addressed.

CARE: Reducing Rates of Child Marriage in Bangladesh

by Shaina Khan

Bangladesh has the fourth-highest recorded rate of child marriage in the world. Although boys are also married as children, girls are more likely to be married before they are 18 years old. About 60 percent of women in Bangladesh were married as children. Although illegal, widespread government corruption ensures that the law is not enforced. Child marriage carries risks for girls and women, including increased domestic abuse and marital rape, financial insecurity, and higher chances of maternal and infant mortality.

When asked, parents who have married away their young daughters cited multiple reasons. Impoverished families sometimes marry off daughters to reduce the number of mouths to feed. In a culture that views sons as future providers, marrying away daughters can free up resources for parents to invest in their sons' education. In addition, many parents marry away their daughters to protect them from harassment and sexual assault. Girls in Bangladesh are frequently harassed or sometimes even abducted and raped while walking between home and school, and a common belief is that married girls experience less harass-

ment. Because police do little to prevent these crimes against girls and women, marriage sometimes seems like the safest option for worried parents.

CARE is one of many organizations working to end child marriage in Bangladesh. CARE's Tipping Point Project engages communities to demonstrate that girls and women are valuable members of those communities. With help from CARE, in some towns, children put on skits for their community members that show positive futures for girls who were educated, who eventually found jobs, and who remained unmarried even in adulthood. To change gender norms in Bangladeshi societies, CARE created the Amra-o-Korchi ("We are doing it, too") program to change beliefs that certain work is only for women. For example, CARE organizes cooking competitions for men and boys. Involving men in activities like cooking and caregiving reduces the burden on women and develops men's and boys' empathy for women and girls. CARE has also facilitated discussions at tea stalls, where men in Bangladesh commonly gather. The facilitators steered conversation toward men's perceptions of women and girls and encouraged the men to think differently. After participating in CARE programs, adults say that they have begun to view child marriage as more harmful than beneficial to girls. Many participants become convinced that child marriage is not an acceptable practice. Men, who tend to make decisions for their households, often decide to send their daughters back to school rather than get them married. While some community members, particularly religious groups, disapprove of CARE's activities, the overwhelming majority of participants say that the programs changed their attitudes about gender roles. Activities like CARE's, which directly challenge patriarchal thinking within specific local contexts, seem to be most effective in delaying girls' marriages.

Learning Activities

1. What is gender-based violence, according to Duncan?
2. What is family and intimate partner violence? Why is it so pervasive?
3. What does Duncan include in the category community violence?
4. What constitutes state violence, according to Duncan?
5. Duncan discusses activists' attempts to bring attention to violence against women and girls, such as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) movement, #SayHerName, and #MeToo. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these movements and look for information online about it. What do you learn? How does the organization/movement you've selected work to resist gender-based violence?
6. Here are two terms to add to your glossary: gender-based violence, cultural relativism.

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WOMEN'S WORK IN A GLOBAL ECOMONY

Paula Sheridan

Exploring women's work in a global economy is an ongoing challenge and delight. The statistics and narratives vary depending on who, what, and how you ask. But the overall picture is generally the same: women in our global economy have more difficulty than men in getting a job and earning equitable wages.

We acknowledge women's intersecting identities and roles: women of different ages, sexual orientations and identities, geographic locations, social classes, political and spiritual beliefs, physical abilities, immigration status, and women with and without children. Mainstream literature and research inadequately represent the many identities of working women in a global economy. Many databases provide binary information, making it difficult to understand the experiences of women with diverse identities. Therefore we learn how to use the data we have and create new ways of asking questions that represent all women and their experiences, giving voice to those who are silenced or made invisible by multiple oppressions.

What challenges do working women encounter? Some of these barriers include the power of patriarchy, unequal wages, educational inequality, and unequal access to opportunities. A Thomson Reuters Foundation poll identified work-life balance and the gender pay gap as the top two of five major concerns of the women participants. Do you see any connections that shape your ability to succeed in the workplace?

Banking Deserts and Gender Inequality

by Shannon Garvin

Banking deserts are areas of the world where people have little to no access to basic banking services. The World Bank's Global Findex report finds that "more than half of adults in the world's poorest areas still have no access to the financial system."

Technology is making banking more accessible in some parts of the world, but it is not narrowing the gender gap. In Southeast Asia, only 37 percent of women have bank accounts, versus 65 percent of men. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a boom in account ownership with the easier access to smartphones in the

past few years. This has raised account ownership from 51 percent to 62 percent globally. World Bank Group president Jim Yong Kim said, "Access to financial services can serve as a bridge out of poverty."

But we might consider that there are numerous additional factors women face when banking in their countries, including exclusion from legal rights to own accounts, male guardianship or permission required, not having access to money of their own, or, having so little money it is kept in cash.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is backing a US initiative to offer basic banking services at local post offices to protect people from the outrageous fees offered at check-cashing storefronts. In an increasingly global, digitized economy, without access to digital funds, it is harder to accomplish basic financial transactions.

How do the challenges that working women face relate to their daily consumptions of food, clothing, lifestyle? The products and services we consume are global commodities and connected to a gendered workforce. Many of these items are produced in women's homes, neighborhoods, or workplaces. If we want to understand the global commodity chain, we need to comprehend the role that gender plays on the global level (Cravey 2015, 15).

Working Women in a Global Economy: Perspectives

We discuss several theoretical lenses and perspectives in this chapter. But two overarching perspectives help us organize and understand women's work in a global economy. The ecological perspective allows us to see many connected systems that shape women's work and the types of relationships between systems that enhance or deter human thriving. The empowerment perspective helps us look at these systems, analyze the power relationships, and develop strategies that build more life-enhancing systems.

An Ecological Perspective

The ecological or ecosystems perspective views individuals as complex systems that shape and are shaped by physical and social environments, allowing us to see the connections between and within an individual, group, community, and global interactions. Building on human ecology, we see humans and their physical and social environments as being interconnected. This perspective also identifies the type of interactions between people, social, and physical environments that can enhance or deter the quality of life for all (Brown and Mills 2001, 16). We can group systems according to size: microsystems (individuals and fami-

lies), mezzosystems (communities and organizations), and macrosystems (national and global institutions such as government, health, education, commerce, and others).

Gitterman and Germain (2008) help us think about living spaces or niches and habitats in ecosystems, our social structure in the environment. We develop our niches through attributes attributed to us (gender, race, ethnicity) and those we earn (education, income) (Brown and Mills 2001, 16). Solomon (1976, 13) discusses how niches can injure Black individuals, families, and communities when a niche is not valued or is systemically oppressed through gender, age, and/or ethnicity. Thus the workplace can be a safe or dangerous niche, depending on the resources in the physical and social environments. Habitats, the places where we live and dwell, can also suffer from systemic oppression and power imbalances. The physical layouts of urban and rural community settings, including our workplaces, schools, homes, communities, can damage our sense of self when they are inadequate, unsafe, and fail to provide education and other resources that help us thrive (Brown and Mills 2001, 17).

Solomon (1976) identifies ways that power and resources are blocked from women and other disenfranchised groups by looking at unequal accesses to power and resources in systems (Brown and Mills 2001, 16). This perspective can help us link the many systems and structures of women's work in a global economy. Systems connected to women's successful work include such things as the presence of health care, reproductive rights, child care, legal advocacy, and workplace advocacy.

An ecological perspective provides a way to map the systems that affect women's global work and the quality of the relationships between systems. For example, companies may benefit from women's labor and production. Still, women can be exploited by companies with unfair wages and unsafe or neglected work environments, making this an imbalanced and unjust interaction. An ecological perspective helps us target strengths and challenges on micro-, mezzo-, and macrosystem levels that women encounter as workers in a global economy.

An Empowerment Perspective

Empowerment is a process and an outcome that occurs on micro-, mezzo-, and macrosystem levels. With roots in feminist theory and community organization methods, empowerment theory and practice increase "personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situation" (Gutiérrez 1990, 149). An empowerment perspective or approach addresses barriers to problem-solving imposed on stigmatized groups by an external or dominant society (Solomon 1976, 21). Empowerment perspectives, used in advocacy work to support the disenfranchised and counteract feelings of powerlessness created by unfavorable valuations of stigmatized group, identify the direct and indirect power blocks that contribute to the problem, and develop an action response to reduce or eliminate resistance (Solomon 1976, 19).

We can confuse empowerment as saving, rescuing, or depriving others of their own decision-making and action. In this context, however, empowerment means developing power, seizing power from oppressive places. Empowerment lies in the person and structure.

Janet Townsend et al. (2000) learned about transforming forms of power as they listened to women in Tapalehui, Mexico. These women, living in a poor, rural area, shared their approaches to advocacy and change with Townsend, who identified four forms of power. The women of Tapalehui described power that oppressed their growth and change, which Townsend defined as *power over*. When women shared their hopes and struggles with other women, they experienced *power from within*. When women joined together to address their concerns, they experienced *power with*. Women expressed a *power to do* when they made concrete changes that improved their lives, such as earning wages and completing projects (Finn 2001, 275; 2016, 36). Such broader understandings of power originate from the life experiences of these poor, rural women in Mexico.

Afghan Women Leading the Way

by Renea Perry

The women of Afghanistan are leading the way for each other and for the future of their country. In September 2020, Afghan Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Fawza Koofi was one of four women delegates (of twenty-one delegates total) selected to attend peace talks with the Taliban in Qatar. In her negotiations, she sought to have the Taliban respect Afghan women's rights to education, to work, and to travel freely as well as the things that are important for the country to thrive. Women's right to be a visible part of Afghan society is gaining traction. "I'm not asking a charity from them. It's my right," she says.

An all-women's soccer team was formed in 2007. The league shut down in 2017 because of a lack of funding, but it was reinstated by the Afghan government in 2018 after allegations of rape and physical abuse by the Afghan Soccer Federation president were reported by women players and he was banned from the sport for life. The players who came forward about the abuses, and those who continue to play despite threats from the Taliban and the dislike of some community members, have dreams of playing for the national team.

As time goes on, women in Afghanistan are also gaining family support for attending school and working. In early 2021, an all-female Afghan flight crew for a private airline flew a Boeing 737 from Kabul to Herat with two women pilots and four women cabin crew members. This is the first such flight in the country's history. Pilot Mohadese Mirzaee explained that her mother suggested she go to flight school, telling her, "everything is possible."

Addendum: Since the above was written, massive changes have taken place in Afghanistan. The United States withdrew its military forces, and the Taliban immediately moved in and took over the country. In spite of reassurances from the US government, the rights of women and girls have not been protected under this new oppressive regime.

Take action: Start with the link above, and do some research into current conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan. Choose one small action—send an email, make a donation, host a fundraising event, educate others. If you can, do more to support the women and children struggling to recover some of the freedoms they have lost.

Influenced by Paulo Freire's belief in critical reflection and critical awareness, the empowerment perspective analyzes power and how people and systems distribute power in society. Power and empowerment come from individuals and groups and are not bestowed from a more dominant group (Finn 2016, 158). We don't empower other people. We support others in empowering themselves. Empowerment approaches develop consciousness-raising and capacity building in ways that challenge oppressive structures and conditions, working simultaneously toward personal agency and social change.

Like the ecosystems perspective, an empowerment perspective makes connections between and among the multiple systems in our lives. This lens identifies systems that affect women who work in a global economy, analyzes power relationships that support or deter women, and removes the blocks of unmet needs on multiple system levels. In summary, ecological and empowerment perspectives and frameworks inform how we understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities of working women in a global economy.

Working Women in a Global Economy: Challenges

We are the oil in the wheels.
It is our work in households which enables others to go out and be economically active....
It is us who take care of your precious children and your sick and elderly; we cook your food to keep you healthy and we look after your property when you are away.

—Vicky Kanyoka, Tanzanian Trade Unionist, 2010 (Boris 2019)

The ecosystems perspective allows us to identify and critique the many systems that shape women and are shaped by women in a global economy. The empowerment perspective and approach give us strategies and skills to evaluate and implement needed changes in our lives and the systems that women in a global

economy encounter. In this section, we look at the systemic challenges that women who work in a global economy face.

Gender Gaps in Labor Force Participation Rates

Someone who is employed or actively looking for work is a participant in the labor force. The global labor force has an unequal percentage of women and men. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded in 1919 as a nongovernmental organization designed to establish global labor standards. For many years, women's inequality was not a focus for the organization, but now the ILO addresses women's inequality in the workplace and labor unions, unsafe working conditions, and efforts to improve women's lives (Faue 2018, 509). In March 2018 the ILO reported that 49 percent of women were employed, compared to 75 percent of men. What does this mean? The ILO suggests that women have more difficulty finding a job than men and are more likely to be employed in vulnerable jobs with fewer work hours, unpaid work, lack of maternity coverage, and less job security.

Women spend about three times as many hours as men in domestic and care work, and women with young children at home do even more. Additional stressors reduce women's participation in the workforce by 75 percent. During challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic, however, women and men take more responsibility for home duties and child care. Still, women and girls assume most of the duties, returning to the prepandemic pattern.

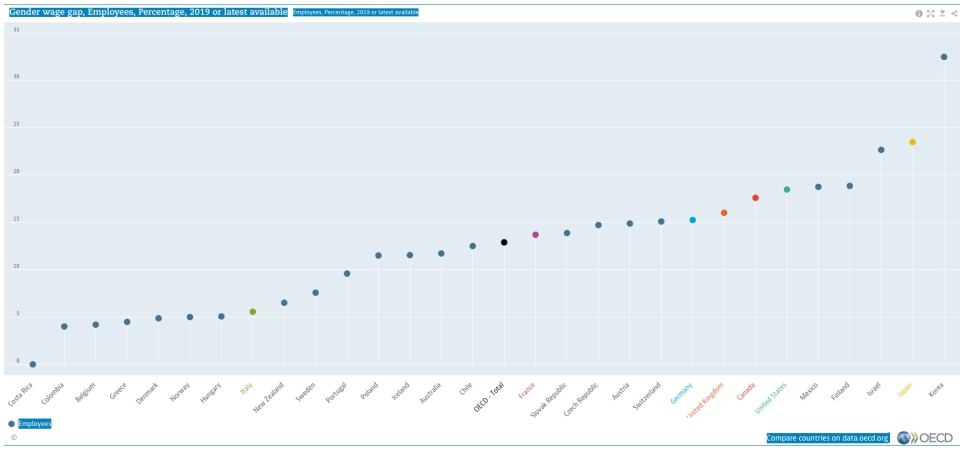
ILO and Gallup global surveys of women suggest that 70 percent of women prefer to work in paid jobs. Some women, depending on where they live, experience unwanted moves and resettlement, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and cultural/family codes that discourage women from formal education, employment, and mobility without male supervision. Traveling to work can be dangerous. The ILO provides a series of InfoStories to help us understand both the big picture of global data and the personal narratives that are worthy of our attention.

Women in Tanzania cross a body of water

Gender Wage Gaps in the US and the Global Economies

Wage gaps are differences in wages between groups of people, particularly the earning disparities between women and men. Generally, organizations measure wage gaps in hourly rather than annual wages to more accurately compare the earnings of women and men who do the same amount of work.

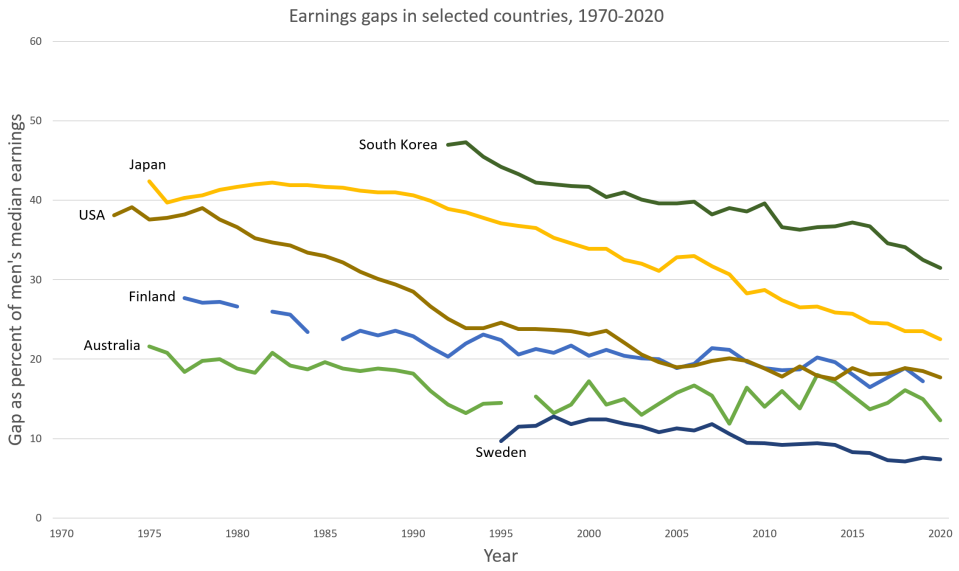
The Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization that includes policy makers, governments, and citizens to develop policies for better lives. Some of the initiatives include economic, social, and environmental changes. The ILO focuses on a different measure of the gender wage gap, the median earnings of men compared to women's median earnings in full-time employment from 2015 to 2019. The wage gaps range from lower disparities (Costa Rica, 4.0 percent; Denmark, 4.9 percent; Italy, 5.6 percent; Chile 12.5 percent) to larger disparities (United States, 18.5 percent; Israel, 22.7 percent; Japan, 23.5 percent; and Korea, 32.5 percent). The following chart shows the wage gaps in OECD countries. Even with multiple measures, most data show that women still earn lower wages than men in the global labor market.



OECD gender wage gap data by percentage, 2019

In the United States, women's wages have increased but still are less than those of men. In an analysis of wages from 1979 to 2016, Nunn and Mumford (2017, 19-22) report that US women have made significant progress in education, salary increases, and workforce participation; as women's wages have increased, men's wages have fallen. The unadjusted wage gap accounts for the wage differences between women and men caused by discrimination, occupation, and other factors. It is larger than the adjusted wage gap, which shows the differences in wages after accounting for the observable factors. Both the unadjusted and adjusted wage gaps have declined between women and men (Nunn and Mumford 2017, 23).

When we compare US wage gaps to other industrialized countries, the US wage gap in unadjusted earnings among women and men was higher than in comparable countries but is now more in the middle range. The OECD compiles earnings data from national agencies to compare the differences in unadjusted wage gaps from full-time employed men and women. Countries with higher wage gaps, such as South Korea and Japan, have slight reductions in their wage gaps. Countries that began with smaller wage gaps, such as Australia, Finland, and Sweden, are still narrowing the wage gaps, as illustrated in the following chart.



OECD earnings gaps in selected countries, 1970-2020

These gains occur with continued occupational segregation, the degree to which women or men fill an occupation such as nursing, social work, and education. Other factors that sustain the gender wage gap include wage discrimination and challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities that women experience (Nunn and Mumford 2017, 28-29).

Decreased Participation in the US Labor Force

From 1960 to 2000, up to 78 percent of prime-age women (ages 25-54) in the United States who vary in age, race and ethnicity, marital status, education, and with and without children were in the labor force, with numbers increasing over time. The growth of women in the labor force contributed to family income and US economic growth. Since 2000, however, the percentage of prime-age women of the same profile decreased by 3.5 percent in the labor force. Not all participating OECD countries reflect this trend. Canada, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom show a rise of prime-age women in the labor force.

Compared to those of other developed countries, the US labor force receives fewer unemployment benefits, has no paid maternity leave, and has fewer policies that support family integration and work in women's lives (Black, Schanzenbach, and Breitwieser 2017, 19). In comparison, Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) and Finland have welfare systems, called the Nordic model, financed by taxes that support citizens throughout the life cycle. The Nordic model includes early childhood education and day care, extensive family leave policies, equality for persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+), extended work holidays, strong labor unions who support worker salaries and benefits, retirement pensions, health care, and other services. Danish citizens bear the highest tax burden

(49.5 percent), but wages are high. These resources are available for all citizens and many noncitizens. The Nordic model is most successful when a large percentage of the population is employed and paying taxes.

The Laws of Jante

by Lily Sendroff

The Laws of Jante, or Janteloven, is a cultural concept that dictates social code in Nordic societies (the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). Janteloven is not a literal law enforced in the region, but a general moral code that emphasizes the greater good over the individual. The term was first coined by Danish Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose in his 1933 novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. Janteloven is ingrained into Nordic people from a young age, and it shows up culturally in a tendency to champion collective accomplishments and disdain individual triumphs.

In his novel, Sandemose lays out ten written laws that encapsulate the relationship between the collective and the individual in Nordic culture. The general message: Do not think you are smarter than anyone, better than anyone, more important than anyone, or can teach anybody anything they do not already know.

The impact of Janteloven is apparent in Nordic welfare states, where high taxes are endured for robust social services. In places like the Nordic countries—where collective well-being is prioritized—aspects of socialism are able to gain more public support than in places like the United States, where health care is privatized, welfare programs are comparatively weaker, and there is a cultural emphasis on the individual. Another major contributor to the success of socialized welfare and Janteloven is the ethnic homogeneity of the region, which political economists find to be correlated with support for public programs.

Despite strong welfare states, Nordic countries are still capitalist. In fact, many blame the modesty and discouragement of competition upheld by Janteloven for hindering economic growth in Nordic countries on the global scale. Especially among younger generations, the Laws of Jante have been losing both relevance and influence socially and culturally.

There are more downsides to be seen in the extreme modesty encouraged by Janteloven. While the Nordic region is a global pillar for gender equality, their economic model results in gender segregation by occupation. Janteloven's emphasis on modesty in professional settings can ultimately discourage women from speaking out, which masks and sustains structural gender discrimination, including a gender-based pay gap, in these countries.

> Whether the critique of Janteloven comes from those who believe it is time to do away with modesty for economic growth or those who see its imperfect application, the relevance of Jante has been called into question. Its influence, however, remains undeniably present.

Gender Segregation in the Workforce

The global labor force includes many segregations or segments (age, region, class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, and identity). Some segregations are bound by gender (lower wages, "women's work," maternity leave). Women who experience an intersection of gender and other segregations in the labor force are affected more intensely.

Domestic labor is a primary factor in the gender segmentation in the labor force in many cultures. Women with lower incomes and women in developing countries are overrepresented in paid and unpaid domestic labor. Practices include child-rearing, the primary responsibility for home management, and other unsalaried but essential care tasks. This domestic model has been replicated in the marketplace and supported by social values, norms, and, in some countries, laws. Other influencing factors that segment women from equal wages include legal policies, trade unions that do not challenge local practices such as lower wages for women, formal and informal organizational policies and practices, and lower job negotiations for and by women (Peetz 2019, 213-21).

Sexual Harassment

Only six countries legally mandate equal rights at work: Belgium, Denmark, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Sweden, according to the World Bank. In these countries, laws protect men and women against sexual harassment, provide equal pay, and offer family leave. Even countries such as Denmark and Sweden, known for a heritage of feminist movements and women in government leadership, have recently addressed women's claims of harassment in the workplace. These two national economies receive the highest ratings from a World Bank index that examined laws related to women's economic empowerment in different phases of their working lives (World Bank 2019, 2), but significant numbers of women in each country challenged sexual harassment at work.

In 2019, a Danish-Swedish university study compared each country's response to the #MeToo movements. The study found that Swedish news reports described the "systematic, structural, gender-related violence" of politicians and citizens in different ways. Danish media focused on witch hunts and excessive political correctness. But both countries enacted legislation that now offers more protections to women.

In Sweden, explicit consent is the standard for sexual interactions, with the onus on criminal defendants to prove that their victims granted consent. Amnesty International initially criticized Denmark for vague and confusing wording about consent laws. In 2019, new Danish legislation created more specific protection for consent, stating that "sex without consent isn't sex" (Rosenblad 2020).

France also has a mixed picture of gender equality, with the highest percentage of women in the workforce in Europe and accessible day care, but a gender pay gap of 15.2 percent less earnings than men in 2016 and heightened claims of sexual harassment and assault related to the French #MeToo movement, known as #BalanceTonPorc, or "out your pig." The government has a gender equality minister and legislation to punish "harassment in the streets" with fines of €750 ($840). Critics note that older citizens are more likely to tolerate excuses of male harassment that are unacceptable to younger men and women (Beardsley 2019).

A Thomson Reuters poll of ninety-five hundred working women in developed countries listed harassment as the third workplace concern, following work-family balance and equal pay. Approximately 29 percent of participants interviewed experienced sexual harassment, but more than 60 percent did not report it. Indian women were the most likely to speak out (53 percent).

Unprotected Class in Workplace Discrimination: Challenge and Hope

LGBTQI+ rights are human rights and economic issues. In addition to the personal costs of social stigma and exclusion, the economy loses access to talents and abilities that enhance a global workforce. LGBTQI+ harassment in the workplace also diminishes the capacity of LGBTQI+ workers. Studies in Canada of

LGB (not including transgender people) and India of LGBTQI+ exclusion suggest that employment discrimination and health disparities yield losses of billions of dollars to their economies (Badgett, Park, and Flores 2018, 4). Everyone loses.

Conversely, when LGBTQI+ people can develop and use their skills in the economy, more talent is accessible for economic development. The research findings of Badgett, Park, and Flores (2018, 10–11) suggest that LGBTQI+ inclusion increases economic performance as measured by the gross domestic product. Countries that include and support LGBTQI+ people may be more likely to have stronger economies. When countries enhance the health and welfare of LGBTQI+ persons and remove stigma and barriers, the economy and LGBTQI+ persons are more likely to achieve a higher potential (Badgett, Park, and Flores 2018, 11).

In the United States, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, and national origin. Later, Congress extended workplace protection on the basis of age (1967), disability (1990), and some veteran statuses (1974). People who belong to these groups are members of a protected class. The United States made some progress in LGBTQI+ rights with the US Supreme Court decision affirming marriage equality (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015) and President Obama's executive orders that prevented LGBTQI+ discrimination for federal contractors and established equality laws in cities and states. In 2020, the US Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* ruled that LGBTQI+ discrimination is a type of sex discrimination and therefore illegal under the Civil Rights Act.

Equal under the Law?

by Shannon Garvin

The Constitution of the United States was groundbreaking when it was written, guaranteeing rights never so clearly afforded to citizens. But the framers could not foresee the ways in which their work would change the world and how the homogeneity of the men present did not represent the whole of humanity.

Since 1781, Congress and the states have continued to revise and expand the meanings of the original words. As culture has changed to recognize the full humanity of people with all shades of skin and all genders, we must continue to work to afford full legal status and human rights to all people.

While the Equal Rights Amendment was passed in 1972, its ratification still has not been officially recognized as part of the constitution. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 clearly outlined the civil rights of peo-

> ple of color who, while freed from slavery, continue to struggle for equal treatment under the law and in practice. Likewise, today, H.R.-5, known as the Equality Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, continues to come before Congress, intending to expand and ensure the full legal status of persons of all static and gender-fluid identities. The work for equality for all presses on.

During his first day in office on January 20, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed an Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation (White House 2021). This order builds on the *Bostock* decision, which protects those who identify as LGBTQI+ from employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Alphonso David, president of the Human Rights Campaign, called it "the most substantive, wide-ranging executive order concerning sexual orientation and gender identity ever issued by a United States president." Biden reversed discriminatory policies from the previous Trump administration that would allow sports teams and bathrooms to be exempt from the effects of the *Bostock* decision.

While this executive order is liberating, the United States still has no national law that extends protected-class status to LGBTQI+ persons in the workplace. Only federal employees have been protected by antidiscrimination policies that include sexual identity since 1998 and gender expression since 2012. Congress repeatedly failed to pass national legislation that would include sexual orientation and gender identity expression as a protected class since it was first introduced in 1994.

On February 18, 2021, however, Representative David Cicilline (D-RI), an openly gay congressman, reintroduced the Equality Act, which he has proposed since 2015. The bill would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal legislation to protect the LGBTQI+ community from discrimination in key areas of life, included housing, credit, employment, education, and public spaces and services. This bill builds on the *Bostock* ruling and civil rights legislation over the past forty years.

While we advocate for federal legislation establishing LGBTQI+ persons as a protected class in the workplace, some companies have voluntarily adopted nondiscrimination policies for LGBTQI+ persons, including formal LGBTQI+ employee resource groups that advocate for inclusive policies and practices, Safe Zone trainings (Safe Zone Training, n.d.) to diffuse anti-LGBTQI+ bias, and fair resource distribution (Cech and Rothwell 2020, 56; Steiger and Henry 2020, 27).

How can we keep track of our elected representatives? What legislation is relevant for your life and work? Check out GovTrack.us so that you can be aware and speak out about national justice.

The ecological perspective allows us to see the structures of injustices that transgender people face in multiple systems throughout their life spans: as children in their homes, in schools, in social settings, in the doctor's office, with police officers, and judges. Each one of these barriers is related to one's right to work. The National LGBTQ Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (2011) report that 6,450 transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals completed a survey about the far-reaching injustices in their lives. The feedback of participants from fifty US states and territories provide data that enable policy makers, activists, and legal advocates to address the unsettling and unjust realities. A summary of the metafindings, the big picture, suggests that "the combination of anti-transgender bias and persistent, structural racism" was devasting, particularly for people of color (Grant et al. 2011). African American transgender respondents fared worse than others in most areas examined. The findings report that transgender respondents live in extreme poverty and are "nearly four times more likely to have a household income of less than $10,000 a year than the general population." Forty-one percent of the respondents reported attempting suicide, compared to 1.6 percent of the general population. Those who lost a job due to bias (55 percent), were bullied/harassed in school (51 percent), or were victims of physical assault (61 percent) or sexual assault (64 percent) reflected higher rates of suicide attempts.

Working while Trans

by Ramona Flores

In the United States, no company or organization is legally allowed to deny a transgender employee a raise or promotion based on their gender identity, with the same being true about termination. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission bluntly outlines, "discrimination against an individual because of gender identity, including transgender status, or because of sexual orientation is discrimination because of sex in violation of Title VII."

Many states, including California, Colorado, Iowa, Maine, and New Mexico, have explicit state laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Similarly, section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act prohibits sex discrimination but doesn't outline explicit protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people.

The decision in *Franciscan Alliance, Inc. v. Burwell*, however, combined prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of gender identity for the nation. While this was seen as a small victory, in 2020 the prohibitions were fully eliminated, allowing for gender identity-based discrimination in health care and insurance. Bolstered by the US Supreme Court case Bostock v. Clayton County, both homosexual and transgender employees reserve the right not to face any professional backlash because of their sexuality or gender identity and therefore have the precedent to pursue legal action if they do experience discrimination.

Transgender people also have to worry about whether their company will recognize their partners/spouses for maternity or paternity leave, whether their company's dress code will allow them to dress according to their identity, and whether their company will support them if they report a hostile work environment or discriminatory language.

The National Center for Transgender Equality in the United States reports that "more than one in four transgender people have lost a job due to bias and more than three-fourths have experienced some form of workplace discrimination" (Grant et al. 2011). This could include refusal to hire, workplace discrimination, privacy violations, harassment, and physical or sexual violence. Transgender people of color report even higher numbers. While recent US legal rulings such as *Bostock v. Clayton County* ensure more equity and inclusion, trans women still seek safety and normalcy when using the bathroom, wearing clothes that are consistent with their gender expression, and being addressed in a respectful manner. Jane Fae, a transgender activist, notes that "changing your forename and gender at work remains troublesome for many, despite its relative ease in the eyes of the law" (Jenkin 2012). Fae suggests that employers and employees should have clarity on issues surrounding transition and being transgender as well as provide a safe space for people to discuss their anxieties and fears. This includes a work culture that is inclusive and intolerant of discrimination. The results of this study are limited to the United States and US territories, so we do not assume these findings are the same in other countries.

To learn more about transgender rights at work and strategies for employment discrimination, see the National Center for Transgender Equality website, transequality.org.

Disabilities and Disablism

It is normal to experience a disability during our life cycle, though we may see disability as far removed from our own experiences. Disabilities, which vary widely and can include one's vision, hearing, movement, mental health, thinking, ability to communicate, and more, can be visible or unseen by others.

We view disabilities through various lenses, particularly the social and medical models. The social model, developed by people with disabilities, advocates that societal barriers and attitudes disable people, such as buildings without accessible toilets, stairs, and assumptions that people with disabilities cannot do what others can do. The social model helps us acknowledge that human-constructed barriers make life more difficult. The medical model assumes that people are impaired or different, focusing on deficiencies rather than human potential. Such a model could lead to the loss of human agency, creating dependence and loss of choice and opportunity for people with disabilities.

Disablism is a term that describes discrimination or prejudice against people who have disabilities. Disablism manifests in a person's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. We see structural forms of disablism when people with disabilities are excluded from participation because of the social biases in training, hiring, promotions and in the physical design of buildings that deny access (stairs instead of ramps or elevators, inaccessible bathrooms).

People with disabilities represent at least 15 percent of the world's population. According to ILO (2015b), there are more than 1 billion people with disabilities in our world, and at least 785 million are of working age. A UN Women report on women and girls with disabilities (UN Women, n.d.) identifies that one in five women lives with a disability, and these women are among the most vulnerable populations. They are diverse in intersectional identities such as ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, and health. Approximately 36 million women in the United States have disabilities, with 44 percent of individuals 65 or older living with a disability. In the United States, 26 percent of adults, more than 61 million people, have a disability. One in four is a woman. These numbers are higher in Indigenous communities, such as non-Hispanic American Indians or Alaskan Natives.

The ecosystems perspective (Brown and Mills 2001, 16) helps us understand that women's geographic, economic, and social positions can shape one's inaccessibility to resources. For example, in the United States, women with disabilities are less likely to receive regular health screenings for breast cancer and cervical cancer. Women and girls who reside in countries at war, with internal political conflict, poverty, and natural disasters are even more likely to be invisible, marginalized, or harmed. Human Rights Campaign (2012) has documented barriers to education and violence to children in schools. Sex- and gender-based discrimination and other abuses highlight the vulnerability of people with disabilities, particularly women and girls, who have more limited access to health care, education, employment, and civic involvement.

Even though a woman's right to make personal reproductive choices is protected in numerous human rights treaties, disabled women are subjected to forced or coerced sterilization in some parts of the world.

The empowerment perspective (Finn 2016, 158) shapes our critique of life-affirming actions for people with disabilities. Disability inclusion is a commitment to include people with disabilities in roles like their peers. Many inclusion strategies reflect principles and strategies of the empowerment perspective, involving people with disabilities in developing inclusive policies and practices in the workplace, creating, and utilizing knowledge and statistics that shape innovative inclusion.

Woman in Kazakhstan advocating for rights of disabled persons

Social protection is a form of disability inclusion founded in the human rights framework that facilitates moving beyond traditional welfare approaches to interventions that promote "active citizenship, social inclusion, and community participation while avoiding paternalism and dependence" (Social Protection-Human Rights, n.d.). The 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) informs social protection, specifically Article 28, recognizes the right to adequate living standards and social protection without discrimination based on ability. These provisions, ranging from housing, education, training, medical care, would persist throughout the life cycle.

One example of social protection for employed women with disabilities is the work of the Trade Union Congress (2021), the national center for trade unions in Britain representing more than 5 million workers and forty-eight member organizations. Their 2016 report researched the intersectional discrimination of disabled women in member unions and provided intervention strategies that include women with disabilities. Disabled women have a 32.5 percent higher gap of unemployment than nondisabled women and are paid 36 percent less than nondisabled men. In 2015, the report *Still Just a Bit of Banter?* explored the experiences of more than a thousand disabled women. Approximately 68 percent reported sexual harassment at work, compared to 52 percent of women in general. Employed women with disabilities reported multiple harassments (54 percent) and described lasting effects on mental health, physical well-being, and security in the workplace. Two-thirds of the women did not report harassment to their employer, believing it would either not be taken seriously or harm their careers.

The ILO provides two approaches for disability inclusion: both mainstream services and activities (skills training, employment promotion, social protection, poverty reduction) and disability-specific programs that address particular barriers or disadvantages. The ILO recommends additional actions for disability

inclusion: providing capacity-building opportunities such as the inclusion of people with disabilities at policy and planning on local, national, and global levels; linking disability issues to national development and poverty reduction efforts (youth employment; offering more opportunities for women and girls, rural development); and improving work opportunities in rural and informal economies (International Labour Office, 2015a).

Paid and Unpaid Care Work

How do we determine whether an occupation is defined as caring labor? One way is to notice the emotional demands on workers. Are workers expected to invest emotional labor, care work, to others in their jobs? Child care workers, nurses, teachers, social workers, and elder care workers, which are predominantly women, fall in this category. The International Labour Organization categorizes care work as paid and unpaid. Unpaid care work is provided without monetary reward and was determined by the ILO to be work (ILO 2018a, 29). Women perform more than 76 percent of unpaid care work in the world. Women care workers are more likely to have less paid work hours, more obstacles to having high-quality jobs, and work in informal economies with fewer contributions to pensions and employee benefits.

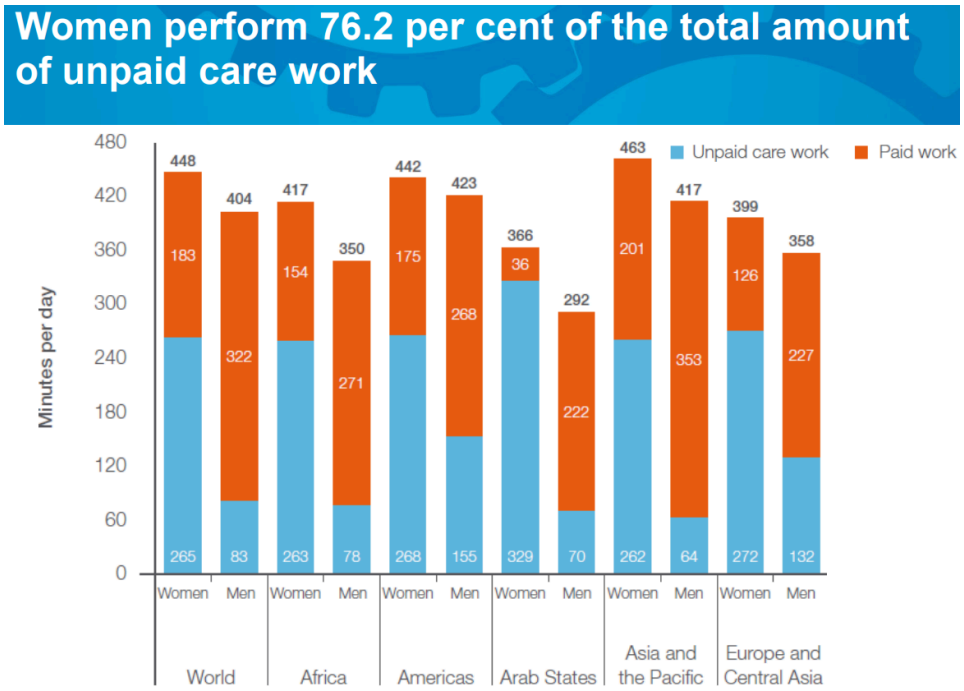
Refugee from Cameroon holds her granddaughter while taking an adult education class

Arlie Hochschild (2000) explored how paid and unpaid labor mirrors and reproduces women's subordination. She coined the term "global care chain" to describe patterns of women in developing countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia migrating to more developed countries to care for children of affluent families. But who cares for the children the immigrant caregivers left at home? Hochschild links household duties to a larger political economy. The migrating caregiver represents an economy that is neocolonial and unequal in power dynamics (Boris and Fish 2014, 415; Nadasen 2017, 124).

Some feminists have developed and challenged some of Hochschild's ideas. We cannot assume that all female migrants are mothers, heterosexual, or emotionally care about the children under their responsibility. Manalanson (2008) encourages a queering of migration studies to allow for a broader range of gender identity and the unlinking of biological parenting and care.

Unpaid care work is work that is more invisible. Unpaid care work includes housekeeping, child-rearing, family care, and domestic tasks that support family and community. It may be done as an act of love or survival. Care work is shaped by culture, law, and economic need. Care is associated with women and embeds stereotypes of nurture and tenderness. This embodiment limits women and dismisses the caregiving abilities of others. Caregivers are often women of color and immigrants who have been invisible in the world of white women's feminism (Peetz 2019, 213-15).

The following chart shows the minutes per day that men and women perform unpaid care work in a global setting.



Source: ILO (2018a)

Ai-jen Poo, director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, advocates for Universal Family Care, a plan that provides domestic workers, the majority of whom are immigrants and women of color, with resources to care for children, elders, and other family members while they are working. This shifts the care work from an individual person to a social network that is supported by law (Poo 2019).

Women Working in a Global Economy: Sustaining Strategies

The world is our picket line.

—Liverpool Dockers (Sagmoen 2020, 325)

Strategies that target gender equity for women in a global workforce are most successful when they are designed and implemented on the micro-, mezzo-, and macrosystem levels in women's lives. This section examines selected interventions and initiatives from global groups and grassroots organizations.

Global Policies for Gender Equity at Work: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, all United Nations member states adopted an action plan of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a global partnership to address challenges to world peace and prosperity by 2030 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020). The UN created the Division for Sustainable Development Goals to oversee, support, and promote global ownership of the goals and action plans. Examples of individualized SDGs address poverty, hunger, health and well-being, education, gender equality, environmental sustainability, climate action, economic issues, and reduced inequalities.

UN Women, an entity of the United Nations, furthers gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It supports member states by supporting governments and civil society in planning and implementing policies and programs that benefit women and girls. UN Women (2021) attests that gender equality is essential for attaining these goals and reviews each of the seventeen SDGs with gender-specific indicators.

> The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs World Women Report 2020 provides an overview of current trends for women in the global work force.

Because women's work connects to multiple ecosystems represented in the SDGs, we can identify goals that support a more equitable, sustainable global workforce. When women are safe at home, work, and in their communities; are healthy; and have the agency to make life decisions, they have a more significant opportunity to be successful at work. SDG 5 plans to achieve gender equality and power among women

and girls by ending harmful practices such as forced marriage, genital mutilation, violence, and discrimination against women. SDG 5 also supports issues connected to women's global work: eliminating the gap in value between paid and unpaid women's work, increasing access to sexual and maternal health and reproductive rights, providing women with equal rights to economic resources and ownership according to national laws, enhancing technologies that promote women's empowerment, and adopting and strengthening policies and legislation that promote gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

Women receiving free skill development in Faridabad, India

The UN Foundation works with global companies in implementing practices to attain the SDGs. Five global companies with more than 585,000 women workers announced in September 2020 new and expanded commitments to improving the health and well-being of women employees. Some of the participating corporations, convened by the UN Foundation, include Del Monte Kenya, the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association, Farida Group, MAS Holdings, and PVH Corp. These corporations will provide workers in Ethiopia, India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and other countries with services on health, well-being, contraception, maternal health, noncommunicable diseases, and protection from sexual harassment and gender-based violence. This intervention makes more opportunities possible as women's participation in the supply chain increases.

The International Labour Conference: Challenges and Supports for Global Women Workers

The International Labour Conference, founded in 1919, consists of governments, employers, and workers of 187 member states to set labor standards, policies, and programs that "promote decent work for all women and men." While it is not a feminist organization, feminists have used the ILO to address

issues of care, violence against women at work, and most importantly, gender inequality. Historically, the ILO wavered between universal standards for all workers and protections for women workers, reflecting regional and legal restrictions on women's freedoms. Now the focus is the mainstreaming of women in the global workforce. Recently, the ILO factored the role of care work in the equation of equity. Care work is not adequately addressed by nondiscrimination and safe working conditions (Boris 2019, 4-12). Care work, particularly unpaid care work, is more difficult to document and can be invisible when provided in homes or other caregiving settings. It can be invisible to others, leaving the care worker vulnerable to unreasonable demands from the employer, unsuitable working conditions, and inadequate wages. Care work is often sheltered by cultural norms of male dominance and law.

Public and Private Regulations in a Global Economy

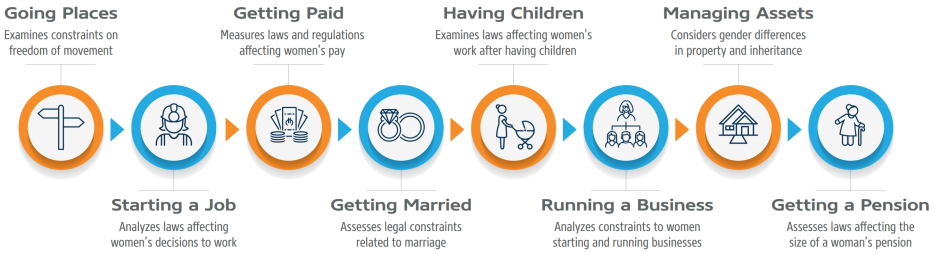
The global supply chain shapes worker conditions. The effects range from cheap goods, corporate profits, and worker exploitation, most often found in the Global South. Labor rights and working conditions require ongoing oversight from government and private regulations. It is not enough for corporations or governments to do this independently through laws and funding incentives. Rather, gender equity along the global supply chain is more possible when government and businesses share responsibility and monitor policies and practices in the workplace (Sagmoen 2020, 324).

Expanding Gender Equity in the Workforce

Organizations often focus on antidiscrimination in the entry process of a job, such as employee searches and hiring. Research in academic settings suggests that institutions focus on formal and informal biases and unintended interactions that are more difficult to identify and monitor.

The World Bank (2019) along with external contributors used an index of economic decisions that women make throughout their work cycle to examine how women's economic decisions are shaped by law. The study collected data on eight indicators that represent preparing to work, entering work, family life, business experiences, and retirement. The findings, published as *Women, Business, and the Law: 2019,* show that 131 economies have enacted 274 reform laws and regulations, leading to an increase in gender equality over the past decade. Thirty-five economies implemented laws that protect 2 billion more women from sexual harassment in the workplace. Yet the findings indicate that a typical economy gives women only three-quarters of the rights of men in the areas measured.

FIGURE 1 **THE INDICATORS MEASURE HOW LAWS AFFECT WOMEN THROUGHOUT THEIR WORKING LIVES**



Source: Women, Business and the Law team.

Gender equity also includes a thriving work environment for people who identify as nonbinary and trans. The American Civil Liberties Union (2021) urged the Biden administration to do more than reverse discriminatory policies from the Trump era. The ACLU advocates the issuing of accurate federal identification for transgender and nonbinary people. The IDs would include two changes: self-declaring of gender markers so that people can confirm their own gender without medical verification, and adding a gender-neutral "X" designation on all federal records and IDs.

The Role of Collective Organizing in Women's Work

Labor unions are a part of the United States' political, social, and economic history. In many cases, unions historically shape most workers' quality of life with wage premiums, health, and retirement benefits. In the past, labor unions were more influential in providing pay rates and benefit packages that set labor market trends. Often, nonunion employers matched the packages to keep union organizing at bay. In 2014, only 6.7 percent of the private sector was unionized (Berg 2015). Until the 1960s, labor unions reflected the cultural norms of countries and organizations rather than challenging them. Since that time, unions have advocated for higher women's wages, but women are still underrepresented in unions as members and in leadership positions. This trend is recently changing in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom. Now, women are as likely as men to join unions in similar markets and gain more from unionization. Women in unions are more likely to have a lower pay gap (Peetz 2019, 218-20).

Mural of Dolores Huerta, first female Mexican American union leader, in Los Angeles

In the United States, unions lost political influence with declining membership and the 2010 ruling by the Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. This decision enables corporations and other outside groups to spend unlimited funds on elections, giving greater access to wealthy donors, corporations, and special interest groups.

As membership in labor unions has declined, their political strength to motivate voter activity and advocacy for policies that shape vulnerable workers' lives has diminished (Berg 2015, 396). As a result, underrepresented union members such as African Americans and immigrants were disproportionately hit.

More recent labor representation models include labor unions, community-based organizations, and worker centers. In New York City, groups of workers who are traditionally unrepresented in unions (street vendors, domestic workers, migrants) organize themselves or collaborate with unions. Such alternative partnerships "improve social justice beyond the workplace" and expand the models nationally (Berg 2015, 396). Students and faculty at City University of New York created a collection of essays of innovative examples of how immigrants, worker centers, labor unions, and others can organize to address the needs of workers within and beyond the workplace and the limits they encounter (Berg 2015, 397).

Artisan woodworker and entrepreneur Sandy Lyen is a member and partial owner of a Beirut-based artisan cooperative

The global labor force reflects the challenges of local and global economies, reinforcing that work is not only about production and economic growth. For labor to be effective, the needs of vulnerable populations such as women, children, older workers, and people with disabilities should be addressed in the global workplace and market. Workplace safety is also essential to productive labor and product outcomes.

Grow Where You're Planted

by Sarah Baum

What do you do when your country falls apart around you, and the government that is supposed to help you doesn't? The easy option is to simply give up and give in to want and poverty, but the women of Haiti refuse to back down. Known as Madan Sara, these rural women run marketplace stalls, selling produce and other necessities. With each sale, they build a life for themselves and their families, creating opportunities for their children out of the efforts of their own creativity and hard work. Madan Sara are the backbone of the Haitian economy and have made themselves economically indispensable.

Even so, they receive no acknowledgment from a hostile government that too often ignores the struggles of these clever and amazing women. Madan Sara have been the glue that's held the Haitian economy together since almost the beginning of the country, yet these women still have not earned the respect and

support they deserve. Every day, they face a lack of infrastructure, social injustice, and highly unstable political settings. Their success alone would be something to be admired, but Madan Sara go beyond merely looking out for their own homes and families. They bind together and help one another against sometimes impossible odds, facing down everything from thefts, threats of rape and physical violence, to debt collectors, and even government-sponsored arson in marketplaces—and they face all of these together, collectively. The power of Madan Sara working together to build a better life is stronger than any adversity they come up against.

It is important to critically analyze attempts to "empower" women in industries that have historically paid low wages and provide unsafe settings. The garment industry in Southeast Asia may appear empowering because women are hired to work in the factories, but they are suppressed by lack of representation, low wages, and unsafe conditions. Women garment workers are self-empowered when they earn decent wages and participate in leadership that determines their best interests in management and unions (Huq 2019, 138).

Ecomaps: A Tool for Mapping Women's Work and Our Own

by Paula Sheridan

We use the ecosystems and empowerment perspectives to frame our understanding of women in the global workplace. The ecosystems perspective helps us identify the barriers women experience at work and ways that these barriers influence women in their personal, family, work, and community experiences. We also identify resources and organizations that women can use to empower themselves in the global workplace, looking for and creating strengths in many system levels: individual, family, community, workplace, and national and global laws and policies.

We can map these strengths and challenges with a tool, an ecomap, that is used by mental health professionals and organizations to understand a person/persons in the multiple environments they experience. Ecomaps are diagrams that show us the many connections we have to people and systems in our world. We can map information in this chapter and map our own work/life experiences.

Ecomap symbols describe the quality of relationships in the ecomaps. Symbols show us where people find support, conflict, disconnection, ambivalence in our support systems, and more. Symbols can also be used to map health, migration, substance use disorders, losses, and gains in our lives. Here is one of

many examples of symbols we use in an ecomap to illustrate relationships between people and systems. Ecomaps belong to the creator. This is a snapshot of how one experiences relationships in life and can change over time. There is no right or wrong, just one's standpoint.

Create an Ecomap of Women's Challenges and Supports in the Global Workforce

Create an ecomap that charts the barriers and supports women encounter in the global workforce. Your ecomap can begin with a person in the center. Use the symbols from the above links to show the following structures and relationships that working women may experience:

- Barriers to Success
    - In the home
    - In the workplace
    - From other organizations outside of work (health, education, religion)
    - From laws and policies
- Supports That Enhance Success
    - In the home
    - In the workplace
    - From other organizations outside of work (health, education, religion)
    - From laws and policies
- Relationships That Provide Support and Challenge
    - Many relationships can be ambivalent, both supportive and challenging. Try to map this to show the complex experiences that women face in a global workforce.

Create Your Personal Ecomap of Life and Work

Using the ecomap tools, make an ecomap that represents your experiences with work and the other systems that affect your vocational success (family, school, friends, finances, geographic location, diverse identities, and more). Use the symbols to describe the quality of these relationships. You may see patterns of support, vulnerability, success, or concern. Many times, creating an ecomap can help you clarify your challenges and resources. It can help you see your big picture and the multiple roles in your life. Ecomaps

can empower you to be intentional about how you develop your goals, your relationships, and your resources. It can also be something you create over time to see the long view of your life. You may see unexpected connections between your lifestyle and local/global issues that you value.

Conclusion: Knowledge Is Gender Power

In this chapter, we explored perspectives as lenses that help us see the many global systems in the lives of working women. We identified challenges that working women face. We learned about global organizations that target gender equity in the workforce as a human right, not a privilege for some. We see how diverse identity and intersectionality of health, education, sexual orientation, class, and geographic location shape women's inclusion and exclusion in the workforce.

Who and what did we not address? What women are in the margins, underrepresented in the literature? We need to unearth the stories of women who reside in the Global South—a geographic location and place of limited access to resources—including women who work at home and who identify as nonbinary, and we need to understand how their locations shape their work experiences.

In closing, listen to the stories of women who work in the fashion industry as an example of a gendered global supply chain. These are women who grow cotton for clothes, sew garments in substandard factories or at home, endure exposure to chemicals, and dispose of used clothing in landfills in developing nations. These are the faces of a global supply chain. We see hands and hear the voices of women who prepare products that we purchase online or in a local store. They tell us about the systems that oppress them. They also show us resilience. They invite us to join them by examining the systems that provide us the clothes that fill our closets.

250 Million Children

by Sarah Baum

Who doesn't love a bargain? Fashion today is ever-changing and disposable. Most of all, it has become cheap, costing the consumer far less than it should because clothing is being made for pennies by sweatshop laborers in developing countries. Women make up 85 to 90 percent of all sweatshop workers,

and worldwide over 250 million children—children who should be in schools and dreaming of their futures—labor alongside them. It's the ugly side of fashion that the consumer never sees.

Sweatshop workers endure abusive conditions and insanely long hours, but the sweatshop isn't a modern invention. In 1934, Tillie Olsen wrote a poem, "I Want You Women Up North to Know," about sweatshop conditions in Texas. Little has changed since her poem was published, except the sweatshop workers are now farther away and even easier to overlook.

What can you do about sweatshop labor and conditions?

- Contact your favorite brands and let them know you won't be spending your money with them if they continue to look the other way.
- Support organizations like the Fair Labor Association and United Students against Sweatshops, who are working to end these awful abuses.
- Finally, don't give in to fast fashion. If it seems too cheap to be true, remember that someone, somewhere suffered to make it so. Consider repurposing, swapping, or saving up to buy non-sweatshop items. You will have the comfort of knowing you did the right thing.

Learning Activities

1. What is an ecological perspective? What is an empowerment perspective? What are the similarities and differences between these two perspectives?
2. What are the systemic challenges facing women in a global economy? How does thinking about these challenges as being systemic, rather than as problems facing individual women, change your perspective on them—and on possible approaches to addressing these challenges?
3. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, take a few minutes to look at the ILO InfoStories website. Choose one topic and read through it. What do you learn about women and work? How does what you learn relate to the topics discussed in this chapter? Please provide specific examples from the textbook and the website to support your assertions.
4. What is care work? Take a few minutes to review the chart titled "Women Perform 72.6 Percent of Unpaid Care Work." What do you learn about the different amount of time that men and women spend on paid and unpaid work across different regions of the world? Why is this information a key component of a transnational feminist analysis of women's work in a global economy?
5. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: ecological perspective, empowerment perspective, micro-/mezzo-/macrosystem levels, occupational segregation, Nordic model, disablism, social model of disability, medical model of disability, care work.

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WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Luhui Whitebear

You were a whole island, once / Who remembers you beyond your death?

—Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, "Anointed" (2018)

In the crossroads of life and death for living beings on earth, there is a clear path to ensuring that life continues, and a path that leads to destruction. Far too many times the path of consumption and globalization is chosen, with devastating consequences for people and the earth. In resistance to this choice, women raise strong voices in helping the world understand the dangers that lie ahead.

This chapter brings in some of these voices to explain the ways in which women and girls have been involved in environmental politics. The work they are involved with is personal, based in their cultural understandings of the earth, and on behalf of all life. Their stories are powerful; coupled with in-depth conversations, they lead us to understanding the root causes of the global environmental crisis in which we all currently live.

Understanding Terminology

"Environmental politics" refers to the ways in which humans interact with the natural world, and how these interactions are shaped by rules, customs, and policies. Environmental politics are determined by our identities, our cultures, and the types of systems in which we live. In many times and places, these systems have been affected by the process of settler colonialism.

"Settler colonialism" occurs when an outside society moves to a new area with the intent of replacing existing societal customs, norms, and governing systems (Tuck and Yang 2012, 5). Settler colonialism has occurred throughout history and in all parts of the world, including the Baltics, China, the Nordic countries, Okinawa, the Philippines, Siberia, Singapore, and Taiwan, just as a few examples. But how it is experienced depends on who is colonizing and the Indigenous communities that are colonized. The use of othering and inferiority are discussed further throughout this chapter.

Possibly more familiar examples of settler colonizing include British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish colonizers in Australia, New Zealand, North and South America, the Pacific Islands, and African countries such as Algeria, the Congo, and South Africa. Yet the argument that settler colonization is a his-

torical process is often used to "normalize" the continued occupations and exploitations of Indigenous peoples.

An example of settler colonialism

Settler colonial societies are heavily reliant on heteropatriarchy, in which cisgender men assert a voice of authority and control, a process of systematic power. Women are generally disadvantaged in these systems and limited in their ability to influence policies that govern their lives and the environments in which they live. (Note: in this chapter the terms *woman* and *women* always include trans women.)

Little Miss Flint

by Charissa V. Jones

Amariyanna "Mari" Copeny, also known as "Little Miss Flint," entered the public eye in 2016 when she helped bring national exposure to the water crisis in her community of Flint, Michigan. In 2014 the City of Flint changed its water source from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (which provided treated water) to the Flint River. Since City officials did not apply proper treatment procedures to the Flint River water, from April

Little Miss Flint

2014 through 2019, citizens dealt with murky water contaminated with lead and Legionnaires' disease.

Fed up with the lack of response from city officials, 8-year-old Mari wrote a letter to then-president Barack Obama outlining the crisis and asking for help. President Obama replied to her letter and brought national and federal awareness to the issue. Unfortunately, local officials and the media maintained that the water was safe and that residents were being paranoid. These narratives, coupled with the city's inaction, led the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to declare the poor governmental response a result of "systemic racism." Today, Little Miss Flint (a nickname Mari earned after she won a beauty pageant in 2015 but has become synonymous with her social justice work) continues to speak out about the Flint water crisis and other social justice issues, such as former President Trump's immigration policies.

Since settler colonial systems rely on the replacement of existing societies, Indigenous practices are also dismissed and/or disregarded by those who govern the settler colonial societies. Indigenous-based land management practices are grounded in local knowledge of lands, waters, animals, and plants that have been passed down orally through generations, predating settler colonial influences. The practices are sometimes referred to as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK is more than practices; it is knowledge based in traditional stories, often protected by Indigenous communities as a way to prevent exploitation by settler colonial societies.

TEK is not the focus of this chapter but an important part of Indigenous-based land practices. Because settler colonialism relies on the continued dispossession of Indigenous people from their original lands and waters, Indigenous-based land practices are viewed as "alternative," "decorative," or simply in opposition to colonial land-use practices.

Also at odds with Indigenous-based land practices is frontier capitalism, in which previously "undeveloped" areas are moved into for economically profitable uses (usually at odds with sustainability), such as clearing of forests for agricultural land or drilling for oil. Pinkaew Laungaramsri explains that frontiers are "where the confusion of boundaries between law and theft, governance and violence, usage and destruction, public and private, and discipline and wilderness facilitate capitalist proliferation" (Laungaramsri 2012, 464). Frontier capitalism relies on these confusions to capitalize on Indigenous lands and waters with little regard for the impact on the Indigenous peoples of those areas.

Frontier Capitalism: A Case in Point

by Janet Lockhart

An example of the misuse of lands for profit at the expense of Indigenous people is the island of Nauru, in the Pacific, which was mined by British and Australian companies for phosphate, a mineral with industrial uses.

The mining has rendered most of the small island uninhabitable, disrupted local culture, and left the Nauruan people highly dependent on foreign aid. (Since only the coastline is still inhabitable, as climate change causes sea levels to rise, the inhabitants are increasingly vulnerable.)

Environmental results of phosphate mining on Nauru

The primary goal of frontier capitalism is profit, fueled by the commodification of lands, waters, and bodies at the expense of Indigenous peoples, who have often been pushed into areas that become new frontiers. The impacts of pollution and labor exploitation are significant and include minimal pay, child labor, high exposure to factory pollutants, and sexual violence. Reproductive health is also affected, often from pollutants that lead to infertility, birth defects, and higher rates of cancer.

Frontier capitalism relies on these types of exploitations in what settler societies call "'backward' area[s]" in which they impose "the will to civilise the ethnic other, bringing them into order" (Laungaramsri 2012, 466). Since it is an extension of settler colonialism, connections to lands and waters are also severed by frontier capitalism.

Settler colonial systems seek to replace Indigenous inhabitants and to extract resources. Those who feel the impacts the most are Indigenous people. Globally, Indigenous people have watched settler societies treat their lands and waters like frontiers to conquer, tame, and exploit. Indigenous relationships with lands suffer, as do other forms of life. The extractive nature—removing the valuable resources—is based on capitalizing on as much of the resources as possible, no matter the cost. Today, Indigenous people have been on the front lines of opposing climate change that has resulted from unsustainable settler practices, including farming, plantations, metal and mineral mining, drilling, fishing, logging, and other practices—which deplete the soil, lead to runoff, and release toxic substances into the air, water, and soil.

Indigenous people have also been on the front lines of resistance. As Leanne Simpson states, "Indigenous peoples have extremely rich anticapitalist practices in our own histories and current realities" (Simpson 2017, 72). The loss of those relationships with lands and waters as well as our ability to live in balance are

not worth the profits gained by settler societies, especially since those who pay the price are Indigenous people.

These issues serve as a guide to understanding the complexities of environmental politics as well as the role of women in them. Understanding that we all have a stake in the future of environmental politics and that some communities have more to lose sooner than others serves as a reminder of the crossroads we are in.

Anti-Indigeneity in Environmental Politics

Once we understand that environmental politics include both how humans interact with the natural world and how policies shape these interactions, the treatment of Indigenous people in environmental politics cannot be overlooked. As outlined throughout this chapter, Indigenous people have traditional and ancestral knowledge about maintaining a relationship with the earth. These relationships are not based on profit margins, exploitation of resources, and control of lands and waters; they are based on teachings that allow Indigenous people to coexist with the natural world and to ensure future generations are able to do the same. These relationships are not in alignment with settler colonial practices.

Environmental laws and policies in place throughout the world have been constructed and decided upon by settler nations; that is, those peoples who have moved into an area already occupied and taken it over for their own occupation and use. The impacts on Indigenous people and future generations have not historically been taken into consideration. Even activism and other movements that work for change to address the climate crisis operate within the settler framework: plans and policies are constructed by those who benefit from the colonization.

Nixon (2015) asserts that "Colonialism and capitalism, which fuel resource extraction and environmental contamination, are an attack on both Indigenous lands and Indigenous peoples' bodies." It is difficult to fully bring concerns about environmental impacts of settler policies into conversations for change because these systems were made to exclude Indigenous voices. As Bacon (2019) emphasizes:

> This eco-social structure relies on forces of both cultivation (programs, policies, and discourses promoting settler expansion) and discipline (organizations which generate and enforce prohibitions on land access and use) which shape eco-social relations in ways that meet settler interests at the expense of Native peoples. (63)

The relations described by Bacon have been constructed primarily by white, cisgender men. Indigenous women's voices, especially, are silenced by eco-social relations owing to the ways in which capitalism has been constructed in settler nations.

Settler Influences on Environmental Politics

Capitalism, Globalization, and Exploitation

In *Ethnicity, Inc.*, John and Jean Comaroff describe how capitalism affects ethnic cultures. They quote a Tswana (a people of southern Africa) elder discussing the impact of economics on the continuation of culture, stating, "If we have nothing of ourselves to sell, does it mean that we *have* no culture?" and further, "If this is so, then who are we?" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 10).

This speaks truth into the ways in which cultures have been affected by capitalism and globalization. The Comaroffs bring in Indigenous voices from Africa and North America to show not only how culture is shaped by colonialism, but also how relationships with natural resources used for cultural materials have changed. For example, they discuss how basket materials (and the stories that go along with them) have changed in some instances to allow for faster production of goods to sell to tourists traveling through Indigenous communities. The relationships and the connections with these materials have been interrupted. As a result, traditional stories are not passed down either.

Relationships with lands and waters are transformed when the top priority is determining what can be extracted. Laungaramsri writes that in Laos, "Rubber plantations and land concessions were identified as the key strategies to transform the economy from its traditional subsistence agriculture[1] base towards a market-oriented one" (Laungaramsri 2012, 468). The profits generated from these plantations do not return to the local people, however, but to the investors. What remains in the local community is the exploitation of labor, where the people suffer from poor working conditions and low pay. The lands and waters are transformed to meet an industrialized use that contaminates them.

Industrial contamination of land in Haiti

The exploitation of lands, waters, and Indigenous labor is heavily influenced and controlled by settler colonial nations, either directly or through foreign investment. J. M. Bacon describes the resulting structures as forms of violence. Bacon writes, "because settler colonialism's fundamental goal is the ongoing appropriation of Indigenous land and resources by and for the benefit of settlers it is an especially important lens for thinking about eco-social relations" (Bacon 2019, 59). In many instances, Indigenous peoples are dispossessed from lands as well as limited from access to sacred sites and cultural materials so that profits can be generated.

These exploitations are justified by settler colonial views of land management (something to be used or consumed) rather than Indigenous land relationships. While it is not possible to discuss the full impacts of capitalism, globalization, and exploitation by settler nations in this chapter, understanding this framework helps us think critically about the ways in which environmental politics have been shaped in recent times.

Innovative Approach to Sustainability: Involve Women

by Shannon Garvin

The United Nations (UN) notes that with the right support and financing, Africa is well positioned to largely skip the polluting stage of electrical production and move straight to renewable solar and wind energy. Large portions of most African countries still do not have power, but solar kits are now enabling women to access cheap power for themselves and their families—and they refer their friends. The Energy2Equal program aims to increase jobs and leadership opportunities for African women in the renewable energy sector.

Recent efforts in Southeast Asia are involving women in efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastic waste. Some women in China, Indonesia, and Vietnam are committing to a "zero-waste lifestyle," and a small Indonesian company combines cement with mulched plastic waste to make "Rebricks." Mercy Barends, a member of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, calls for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to involve women in decision-making, as they are involved at every stage of producing, managing, and recycling plastics. In 2019 the Ocean Conservancy recognized the importance of women's roles in their report *The Role of Gender in Waste Management*.

Further, understanding that women have usually *not* held positions of systemic power in settler nations means that it has been largely cisgender men (predominately white) that have shaped these eco-social relations and the ways in which we experience environmental politics. The United States and other industrialized nations are not exceptions. Rather, they are prime examples.

Settler Colonialism as Present Tense

On a global scale, Indigenous people have been continually pushed and moved to areas undesirable for development. Their labor has been consumed as a resource along with the lands and waters; what can be described as extraction and exploitation. Ewout Frankema and Frans Buelens describe "colonial extraction" as "a net transfer of economically valuable resources from [I]ndigenous to metropolitan societies, and 'colonial exploitation' as the practices and procedures facilitating the extraction of resources without adequate compensation to [I]ndigenous peoples and their natural environment" (Frankema and Buelens 2013, 2).

Resource extraction that pollutes air and water

Their comparison of the Belgian Congo in Africa and the Netherlands Indies (also called the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia) offers a look at the long-term impacts of these colonial actions by Europeans. Colonial encroachment and the use of lands for farming and mining in the twentieth century depleted lands for other uses and posed threats to the local communities culturally and physically, in the forms of genocide, forced labor, and sexual exploitation. They describe the Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies as being "among the most effectively exploited colonies of the modern era" (Frankema and Buelens 2013, 3). But the impacts of settler colonialism are felt in many other parts of the world.

The disruption of women's leadership and management of subsistence economies often subjects women to sex work, sex trafficking, sexual violence, and sexually transmitted diseases (Whitmore 2012) when mostly male groups move in to take control of lands and resources. These rises are conclusively linked to colonial extraction of resources in Brazil, Burma, India, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and many other places in which Indigenous people are subjected to settler colonialism at the hands of industrialized countries.

For example, Australia, Canada, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States own the largest mining interests in Benguet, home of the Ibaloi and Kankan-ey Indigenous people of the Philippines (Whitmore 2012). These countries' mining and removal of gold, copper, and other minerals benefit themselves, and this exploitation leaves lasting environmental and social impacts on the Indigenous people.

Examples of the impacts on Indigenous people around the world are numerous. Logging requires the building of roads, which disrupts the local ecosystem, including wildlife habitat and water quality. The logging itself leaves soil vulnerable to erosion, kills or displaces native wildlife, introduces invasive species, reduces the uptake of carbon dioxide by trees and other plants, and interferes with the natural life cycle of the forests. Similar effects occur with overfishing and large-scale agriculture.

Effects of logging in Australia

Human systems are also affected, from loss of natural resources they depend on for subsistence, to forced removal from their homelands, to vulnerability to diseases brought in by the outsiders who extract the resources, to loss of autonomy and decision-making power over their own lives, to outright physical and sexual violence, and even genocide.

Man Camps

by Charissa V. Jones

"Man camps" are temporary lodgings, generally mobile homes or other modular housing, that pop up near remote areas where valuable resources are being extracted from the earth (such as the Keystone XL Pipeline project) for economic gain. While this setup is beneficial to the extractive organization (such as a corporation) because it requires fewer resources to support their mostly male workforce, it wreaks havoc on the local communities, particularly Indigenous communities.

Man camps drastically increase the population of an area and cause a strain on community infrastructure, such as law enforcement and other resources. The increased male population also brings with it an increase in crime and violence—particularly sexual violence, taking the forms of sexual assault, rape, and sex trafficking—which have negatively affected Indigenous women and girls. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) campaign is one example of an attempt to bring awareness to this issue.

Visit MMIW USA (mmiwusa.org), MMIWG2S (csvanw.org), and Who Is She: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women campaign (whoisshe.ca) for more information.

The end result is the same—Indigenous communities are left with the traumas of settler impacts, compounded by ongoing occupation of their lands. Settler nations work in a network of who controls the resources and who is benefiting. The power imbalances created have direct environmental and societal impacts. Under the guise of "growth" and "advancement," settler nations create ways to absolve themselves of the harm caused to Indigenous people, lands, and waters.

The United States as a Settler Colonial Nation

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) asserts, "The affirmation of democracy requires denial of colonialism, but denying it does not make it go away" (116). This statement reflects the origin story of the United States—that as a settler nation it assumed its own superiority over others—as well as its current-day interactions with Indigenous people on a global scale. At the heart of her statement is a call to recognize that the United States is a settler colonial nation, formed by exploiting Indigenous people and Indigenous lands to create a new society. Indigenous people have been subjected to the traumas of displacement, broken treaties, destruction and pollution of their homelands, diseases and health issues, violent conflicts, and genocide as a result.

The United States did not stop colonial exploitation of lands and peoples within the geopolitical borders of the country. One of the ways it continues its colonial reach is by designating Pacific islands as territories. The Indigenous people of these territories do not have the right to vote on matters that affect them or their lands and waters. Rather, they have been expected to obediently relocate or be gracious hosts to military occupation.

The nuclear bomb testing in the Marshall Islands is one example of the extent of this exploitation. "Between 1946 and 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands" (Atomic Heritage Foundation, n.d.). Although the majority of the tests occurred at Bikini Atoll and Enewetak Atoll, all of the Marshall Islands suffered the effects of nuclear fallout. In the announcement of the forced relocation of the Marshallese people, they were told their island homelands would be used "for the good of mankind," with promise of their return. Long-lasting health impacts, which include cancers and reproductive health issues, affect the Marshallese people to this day. Despite the promise, to "return" now means to face fish and other food sources contaminated with radiation, and to be exposed to radiation at dangerous levels themselves.

Nuclear bomb detonation on a Pacific island

The bombing of the Marshall Islands did not end in 1958. In February 2020, the US Air Force launched an unarmed missile from Vandenberg Air Force Base (California) to Kwajalein Atoll to test the accuracy and reliability of their weapons system. What many people do not know is that Vandenberg Air Force Base is on the lands of the Chumash people, who have largely been deprived of their rights by colonization. Because of this occupation, burial and cultural sites on the base are not accessible to the Chumash people. This militarized occupation of their unceded lands connects the Chumash people to the Marshallese people and their lands by more than the missile launches.

The Western State Legal Foundation stated:

> These tests contaminated both the land and people of the Marshall Islands, and both nuclear testing and continued U.S. military activities have resulted in the forced removal of the local people from their ancestral homes. Like Vandenberg, Kwajalein has become a multi-purpose facility, its radars and other instrumentation supporting a variety of missile defense interceptor launches and other military tests. (Lichterman 2006, 1)

The impacts on lands, waters, and peoples span generations. Like the offshore oil drilling that threatens shorelines and the Channel Islands with little regard to how the Chumash people are affected, Vandenberg completes military tests on Chumash lands. The traumatic 2020 missile test serves as a reminder to both the Marshallese and Chumash people that their lands are occupied by the United States, and that what happens on their lands is decided by colonizers.

Exploitation includes more than the presence of military bases and nuclear testing on Indigenous lands. The Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC) states that despite restricting military assistance in 1977, the United States played a major role in supporting Guatemalan dictators in military training, reputed to include torture and assassination, at the former School of the Americas (GHRC 2013), at Fort Benning, Georgia. Despite knowing these dictators were responsible for genocide of Indigenous people in Guatemala during the 1970s and 1980s, the United States continued to train them, which led to the further militarization of Guatemala.

The massacres and displacement of the Indigenous peoples of Guatemala benefit the United States directly. Indigenous resistance to land and labor exploitation is interrupted by attacks on these peoples. For example, in their "Neoliberalism" fact sheet, the GHRC discuss the violation of worker's rights at US-based company Del Monte Foods' banana plantations (GHRC 2009). Not only are Indigenous people dispossessed of lands in order for the plantations to exist, but they receive minimal pay—for what may be their only source of employment—and experience poor work conditions that have led to death. Indigenous people have died so the United States and other developed countries can have year-round access to bananas.

Additionally, natural resource extraction is part of the colonizing of Guatemala by the United States and other developed nations. As described above, militarization played a major role in clearing land and opening the doors of exploitation in Guatemala. Even while peace accords were negotiated in 1996 to help end armed conflicts, the door was opened further to transnational mining companies (Solano, Moore, and Moore 2020, 7).

For example, Kappes, Cassiday, & Associates (KCA), a US-based metal mining company, faced resistance from Indigenous people referring to themselves as La Puya to cease their operations. The majority of those

leading the efforts of La Puya are women. The concerns of Indigenous communities are significant and related to water scarcity and the health impacts of mining (Solano, Moore, and Moore 2020, 11).

Despite this resistance, however, militarized attacks on peaceful protesters allowed KCA to start operations in 2014 (Moore and Moore 2020). Two years later, KCA was ordered to suspend operations for not consulting properly with Indigenous people. While this was a temporary victory, KCA has taken the Guatemalan government to court, suing them for more than $400 million in an effort to continue their mining operations (Solano, Moore, and Moore 2020, 5).

Equity and Sustainable Fashion

by Ramona Flores

With trends evolving rapidly, many fast fashion companies routinely cut corners to meet financial and production margins, often at the expense of the environment and the workers. Organizations like the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, located in London, conduct research around sustainability and fashion while providing education about sweatshop exploitation and excessive industrial waste.

Organizations like WRAP focus on single-use packaging and waste reduction by working with large companies like Coca-Cola, Google, and Nestlé to work toward systemic change. The push for sustainability in clothing and other lifestyle products has garnered a larger public audience, with celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres promoting different causes and products via social media.

Many companies that sell fast fashion, including Fashion Nova, exploit migrant workers from their United States-based workshops and label their clothes "Made in America." As Forbes explains, this label prompts the buyer to make untrue assumptions about the ethical practices that went into the creation of the garment. Contrary to these assumptions, these fast fashion companies pay an average of $2.77 per hour.

The rise of the menstrual equity movement has led to the creation and manufacturing of a variety of sustainable menstrual products. Such products include the time-tested menstrual cup, underwear made specifically to absorb menstrual blood, and biodegradable pads and tampons. In the larger conversation about environmentalism, incorporating necessary menstrual products is a key part of the shift toward sustainability, especially when nonbiodegradable tampons and pads can exist for hundreds of years after their brief use.

Sustainability not only has to include what is worn externally but also all aspects of life, from menstrual products to food packaging.

This action disregards the requests of the local Indigenous people and their concerns about water and health. It is a clear exertion of systematic power for a US mining company to sue the government of another country. These are just two examples of the role of the United States as a colonial force in Guatemala, and while the United States does offer some relief aid to Guatemala, these efforts do not equate to justice for the Indigenous peoples of Guatemala. Rather, they are a Band-Aid to a deep wound the United States has played a role in causing, which continues today.

These are among the many ways in which the United States benefits from or is directly involved with furthering colonization. Harking back to Dunbar-Ortiz's quote, refusing to acknowledge the United States as a settler colonial nation helps clothe its actions in the guise of democracy, but the reality remains. Settler colonial nations continue to colonize and extract resources in order to gain more systematic power and control. The United States is not separate from this, but rather an example of what colonization looks like, both historically and in the present.

Further Impacts

As a settler colonial nation, the United States enacts laws and policies that will benefit itself above others. Land and labor exploitation have more than immediate impacts, however. For example, the climate crisis is an effect of the ongoing disregard for Indigenous-based knowledge and land practices in an assertion of colonial superiority, the "right" to use lands and labor to its own benefit.

The Marshallese people feel the generational health impacts from radiation exposure. But they still live in the area even though the lands and food are not safe anymore. The peoples' bodies are further contaminated and traumatized, attesting to the effects of war perpetrated by the United States. In Guatemala, the local Indigenous people continue to face violence and external exploitation of their lands. The quantity and quality of water are threatened in order to extract resources, both in mines and on food plantations. In this Guatemala, the peoples' bodies are put on the line for larger profits. In both cases, Indigenous people pay the most immediate price.

But the actions of the United States and other industrialized countries affect all parts of the world. Just as the radiation is not isolated to the Marshall Islands, the effects of actions that increase the carbon load are not isolated to local areas. The impacts are global. The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) lists the United States as one of the top contributors to carbon dioxide emissions, which make up the majority of greenhouse gases (UCS 2020). Further, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finds that in the United States, human activity is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (EPA, n.d.). These emissions are the result of consumerism and capitalism, and the downplaying of the severity of climate change by the US government.

Cristina Mittermeier, Conservation Photographer

by Sarah Baum

Sometimes, life takes us to places we could never expect yet places us right where we need to be. This happened to conservationist photographer Cristina Mittermeier. Trained as a scientist with a degree in biochemical engineering, she expected her life's work to be preserving ocean biodiversity. Instead, her life took a turn down an unexpected path. After working with Conservation International for several years, she took a trip to the Amazon to research an Indigenous region. While there, she took a few photos. When the trip ended, the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences requested materials for an Amazonian art exhibit. When Mittermeier attended the exhibit, she found one of her photographs displayed but credited to her husband. "You know, I felt that little sting of what it feels like to lose your copyright," she says. "And I decided to take it seriously, so I went back to school for photography."

And take it seriously she did, learning her craft and art to become one of the world's most skilled conservation photographers. From behind her lens, she tells the story of the wilderness of the world around us and the places that are disappearing quickly due to climate change and exploitation. And while her photographs capture stunning moments and tell beautiful stories, Mittermeier didn't stop there. She went on to become a translator, copy editor, photo editor, and eventually an editor of more than twenty-four books on conservation issues. Next, she helped found the International League of Conservation Photographers, which raises money for conservation issues. Her roots in marine biology also called her to cofound SeaLegacy. Even with all her efforts, she continues to produce breathtaking photographs of our disappearing wild planet. But it all started with a leap of faith into a new direction. "Whenever I feel a little fear, then I know I'm in the right place," she says. "You often have to step out of your comfort zone, and feel a little uncomfortable to know that you're creating an image that's a different perspective or a new way of seeing things—something that maybe other people haven't looked at yet."

The US government system has been dominated by wealthier, white, older men since the founding of the country. As J. M. Bacon writes, "Since the wealth and power of the United State[s] as a state is grounded in the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands, I consider settler colonialism—though always in connections with other forms of domination—the primary force shaping eco-social relations in this country" (Bacon 2019, 60).

This is reflected in US policy and actions on climate change. Climate change first entered the political conversation in the United States in the 1950s, yet little action has been taken to address it since then, either through federal regulations or involvement on a global scale. Despite former President Bill Clinton sign-

ing the Kyoto Protocol to signify a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the United States has never ratified this international treaty, meaning the United States is not a formal party to it. Further, in 2020, former president Donald Trump formally withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, a next step to the Kyoto Protocol. Although the United States has since rejoined the Paris Agreement under President Biden, the political performances of those in the highest office of the United States reflect to the world its priority of dominating over addressing the climate crisis.

Global emissions have an impact on all life on the planet yet have not been taken seriously by the United States. The United States benefits more from continued exploitation of lands and waters than it does from international policies that limit corporations like Del Monte Foods and KCA. In fact, the majority of lobbying affecting US climate policy is done by corporations, in opposition to pro-climate actions. For example, the major lobbying efforts by corporations in 2009 were against the American Clean Energy Security Act, also known as the Waman-Markey Act. Corporations spent more than $700 million in lobbying to defeat the bill in Congress (Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago 2019). Indigenous communities and other climate justice activists do not have this level of financial resources to spend in lobbying to support climate bills.

The Politics of Race, Gender, and Frontline Resistance

The "Othering" of Indigenous Communities

Indigenous people have always been viewed as "other" to colonizers. That is part of how colonization works: to go to a land and view one's own customs, beliefs, and political systems as superior to the Indigenous ones. This superiority justifies the displacement of Indigenous peoples to make way for settlers and settler systems. This is not a process of the past: colonization is ongoing. The goal is to spread influence, maintain control, and benefit from the lands that are being colonized; as a result, Indigenous people continue to be othered.

This othering also justifies violence toward Indigenous bodies, which become something to be used or consumed. For example, Tara Atluri describes the ways in which some bodies are marked for violence in India "because of their aesthetic difference from the idealized figure of a normatively gendered body imagined to hold a rightful place in a Hindu middle-class family, a microcosm for the nation" (Atluri 2016, 154). While Atluri is discussing the 2012 Delhi gang rape of a dark-skinned woman, these types of "markings" are not limited to this single case or this single country. As Atluri asserts, "the psychic and symbolic associations made between darkness and deviance cannot be separated from colonial discourses" (Atluri 2016, 154). Indigenous bodies, especially darker bodies and women's bodies, are viewed as deserving of

violence and exploitation. It is easy justification to take advantage of something that is not worthy of respect.

Leah Thomas, Intersectional Environmentalist

by Charissa V. Jones

Leah Thomas, a Black female from the United States, coined the term "intersectional environmentalism" to acknowledge how justice, equity, and inclusion are crucial to saving both the planet and its peoples. She created the concept in May 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, a Black man killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota by Derek Chauvin, a white police officer. Her post on Instagram—which had the sentence "Environmentalists for Black Lives Matter" repeating across it—went viral and helped to connect social justice issues to environmental conversations during a time when people were asking where social justice conversations could be conducted.

The intersectional environmentalist collective tackles environmental issues through an intersectional lens, identifying the ways in which "injustices affecting marginalized communities + Mother Earth are interconnected," and working to overcome all types of oppression.

The construction of the "other" also has implications for Indigenous women's leadership. For example, Indian scholar and environmental activist Vandana Shiva has worked for decades on protecting Indigenous-based farming and seed cultivation in India to lower dependence on fossil fuels and industrial agriculture. Her efforts include a lawsuit against Monsanto, the largest seed patentor and supplier of genetically modified seeds in the world.

But the Genetic Literacy Project (GLP), a US nonprofit organization that uses the slogan "Science Not Ideology," uses the guise of "facts" to discredit Shiva's work (GLP, n.d.). The project is heavily funded by US foundations controlled by white men. The project's criticisms of Shiva include the claim that she is "anti-science," describing her as "an anti-globalization, anti-corporate, deep ecology and radical eco-feminist activist" who "promotes land redistribution, [I]ndigenous and peasant farmers rights, organic-only food productions and ayurvedic health practices over conventional medicines" (GLP 2021).

These statements are presented as facts, not as biases in favor of western science and industrial farming practices. They also assert colonial dominance: they know what is best for India regardless if anyone from the Genetic Literacy Project has ever been there or contributed to the well-being of their Indigenous people. In this situation, we see white, cisgender men from a settler colonial nation declare that their voice is superior.

This is not an isolated example. When Indigenous people stand up to corporations, time and again, they are described as backward, behind the times, and/or anti-science. These stereotypes extend to other Indigenous people, and those who perpetuate them do not consider the benefits of following Indigenous land practices. It is not until western science validates Indigenous practices that settler colonial societies consider them valid.

"Saving" the "Global South" as Settler Colonialism

Because colonizers other Indigenous women, there is an assumption that Indigenous women do not know what is needed to face issues in their communities. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) discusses the ways in which "Third World women" are situated:

> In terms of underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and "overpopulation" of particular Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries. Corresponding analyses of "matriarchal" [B]lack women on welfare, "illiterate" Chicana farmworkers, and "docile" Asian domestic workers also abound in the context of the United States. Besides being normed on a white, Western (read: progressive/modern) or non-Western (read: backward/traditional) hierarchy, these analyses freeze Third World women in time, space, and history. (47-48)

Mohanty's description is helpful in understanding the systemic power dynamics that are created when using the United States and other industrialized countries as a standard by which to judge other countries. The roles of women and their sense of self-agency in these countries are also compared to those of women from the United States. This comparison continues to other women from "Third World" countries.

The term *Third World women* is used to signal a universal understanding that these women do not have the same "privileges" constructed by "assumptions about Western women as secular, liberated, and having control over their own lives" (Mohanty 2003, 42). Mohanty also reminds us that without the construction of Third World women, "there would be no (singular and privileged) First World" (Mohanty 2003, 42). It is from this First World privilege that women from Third World countries are viewed as needing saving from their "lesser" conditions.

Like other colonial countries, the United States presents itself as a standard of an ideal nation. "Third World" has been used to describe countries that are not industrialized or do not operate from a capitalistic framework. In more recent times, the term "Global South" has been used in an attempt to shift away from a hierarchal view of countries (and the people from them). The problem is that generalization still occurs and is a construction of others based on the "Global North," which is composed primarily of white-dominated colonial nations. The "poor" conditions of women in the Global South are based on comparisons with the excess accumulation of wealth and consumerism in the Global North.

The experiences of women in the top socioeconomic classes are used to reinforce superiority and to describe experiences in the Global North as less problematic. Often, this is framed as "at least it isn't as bad as in [insert country]." This supposed superiority is a reflection of colonial systems, and pertinent issues may be decided by women from colonial nations. Women from the affected countries are often not involved in decision-making processes.

Women and girls *have* been addressing disparities and injustices in their own lands, however. Often, they are acting on behalf of their own people and understand the connections between their experiences of colonization and impacts on the environment.

A gathering for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls

Frontline Women and Girls of Resistance

Many women and girls have been on the front lines of resistance to continued exploitation and damage to their traditional lands. In a global sense, these stories map out a theme of protection of waters and lands for future generations. The stories highlighted here join the many stories before them, creating a much larger story of resistance to settler colonialism's environmental impacts on Indigenous communities. Readers are encouraged to continue to learn more about these women and girls.

Autumn Peltier is the chief water protector for the Anishinabek Nation in Canada. As a teen, she addressed the United Nations, urging for the protection of clean water for all people (Gallant 2021). Peltier resists the impacts of extractive oil pipeline companies on water safety and advocates for access to clean water for First Nations communities (Indigenous nations in Canada) as well as other Indigenous communities around the world (APTN News 2016). Her work is based in her Anishinabek teachings and understandings of living in balance with the earth, to ensure that future generations also have access to water.

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish climate activist who began what became a global "School Strike for Climate" (Haynes 2019). She advocates at an international level for governments to reduce carbon emissions to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Thunberg is open about having Asperger's syndrome, which initially prompted people in positions of systemic power to question whether she was capable of writing her own speeches—a testament to the power of her words. Like Autumn Peltier, Thunberg addressed the United Nations as a teen. She calls for world leaders to examine the ways in which laws and policies negatively affect the climate, to ensure the existence of future generations.

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner is a Marshallese poet, performer, educator, and environmental justice activist. She brings forth the experiences of frontline Pacific Island communities that are facing the immediate impacts of climate change on their islands. Jetñil-Kijiner centers her work on her Indigenous teachings and relationships with the ocean and islands. She cofounded the organization Jo-Jikum (n.d.) to help Marshallese youth engage with environmental justice work to protect their islands from climate change and to help heal their communities from the effects of nuclear bombing. Jetñil-Kijiner (2018) has also addressed the United Nations, where her poetry conveyed the effects of climate change on the Marshall Islands to the rest of the world.

Wangari Maathai was a Kenyan environmental and political activist who in 1977 started the Green Belt Movement (n.d.), an environmental organization known primarily for helping women in Kenya grow seeds and plant trees as a way to help restore the environment as well as provide food, firewood, and a small income. Maathai has also addressed the United Nations several times and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her efforts in creating sustainable futures.

Berta Cáceres was a Lenca environmental activist and leader for her people in Honduras. Cáceras was a frontline defender and a cofounder of the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (n.d.). She was a leader in resistance to illegal logging, plantations, and the construction of the Agua Zarca Dam on the Gualcarque River. Cáceras's resistance was grounded in her Indigenous teachings about relationships with lands and waters as well as her concern about the negative environmental impacts on her people. She received the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015. In a backlash to her efforts, Cáceras was assassinated in 2016.

In memoriam: Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores

Haunani-Kay Trask was a Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawai'i) poet, educator, and activist who also based her work on her Indigenous teachings. She first became involved with environmental justice in the 1970s, during the resistance to the bomb testing on the island

of Kaho'olawe. Her efforts focused on Hawai'i sovereignty as a way to assert rightful protection of the Hawai'i Islands. As such, she emphasized the environmental impacts of tourism, military presence, and settler exploitation of land. She died on July 3, 2021 (Hofschneider 2021).

Pratima Gurung is an Indigenous, disabled woman from Nepal. As the general secretary of the Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network (2021), she focuses on the intersections of genders, disabilities, and the environment. Her efforts include advocating for culturally appropriate access to supplies, food, and medical needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. She has also worked for relief for climate disasters, access to clean water, and stronger inclusion of Indigenous peoples with disabilities in climate justice work and policies.

Inka Saara Arttijeff is a Sámi climate activist from Finland (Narang 2018). She serves as adviser to the president of the Sámi Parliament, bringing Sámi concerns to the United Nations as part of the Indigenous Peoples Delegation. Arttijeff uses her Indigenous teachings and experiences with reindeer to assess the impacts of climate change on her people. Her efforts include intervening against encroachment on winter grazing lands by the logging industry and addressing policies that decide what happen to Sámi people and lands by settler nations (Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden). Along with other Sámi women, she brings a collective voice to help other nations understand the impacts of climate change on Sámi people, culture, and lands.

Tarcila Rivera Zea is a Quechuan activist from Peru who focuses on Indigenous rights in relation to environmental and women's rights. In 1986, Zea founded the organization Chirapaq (n.d.), which now addresses food security and food sovereignty for Indigenous people of the Andes and Amazon. Led by Indigenous women, Chirapaq's work strives to help restore relationships with the environment based on Indigenous teachings and agricultural practices, while also responding to the impacts of climate change.

Tara Houska is a Couchiching First Nations tribal attorney and climate activist from the United States who works toward environmental justice. Houska was a frontline defender during the Standing Rock NoDAPL Movement in North Dakota and the efforts to end Enbridge's Line 3 tar sands pipeline (Stop Fossil Fuels, n.d.). She was the former campaign director for Honor the Earth and served as the adviser on Native American Affairs to US Senator Bernie Sanders. Houska grounds her work in her Couchiching teachings and relationships with lands and waters.

Women at the Forefront of Environmentalism

by Rebecca Lambert

When you think of environmental activists, who comes to mind? You might think of Greta Thunberg, the teenager from Sweden who challenges politicians to seriously consider and craft solutions for the climate crisis. How many other women can you name that are working on environmental issues?

Women have long been a part of the fight for environmental justice, and there are many more to know. Vandana Shiva is an Indian-born scholar, activist, and environmental advocate who is widely known for her activism against GMOs (genetically modified organisms). Shiva also wrote the foundational text *Ecofeminism*, which examines the connection between patriarchal oppression and environmental destruction. West African Isatou Ceesay, from the Gambia, is known as the "Queen of Plastic Recycling." She worked with a group of women from her village, and they began to make purses from the plethora of plastic bags plaguing the village. Her environmental efforts also support the economic empowerment of women, as she is a cofounder of the Women's Initiative Gambia, which works with women in poverty to help them build skills and tools to increase their income.

But these are just a few of the women engaging in innovative environmental work. As part of your continued learning, find out more about other activists such as Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores, Winona LaDuke, Wangari Maathai, and Vanessa Nakate. Learn more about the issues they raise and how you can support their efforts.

Romanticizing Indigenous Women in Eco-Feminism

The women and girls described in this section are doing powerful work. They are from both the Global North and the Global South, yet their work is united with a common goal of environmental justice, sustainability, and climate justice—all necessary to ensure the health of the planet for future generations. Yet the majority of these women and girls are still "othered" through systemic oppression and a focus on the Global North. In some cases, their efforts are considered "accessory" to the eco-feminist movement.

While not all eco-feminists are white, eco-feminist efforts have operated largely from white-dominated leadership and uphold settler systems of control. Nicole Morse and Daniella Orias remind us that "Some ecofeminist scholars are justifiably critiqued for furthering the settler-colonial project of appropriating Indigenous cultures" and that "Ecofeminism is distinct from Indigenous feminisms because of its roots in Western European culture" (Morse and Orias 2020). Morse and Orias argue that eco-feminism is often

treated as an add-on to bring nature into conversations about oppression; Indigenous women involved in environmental politics are often used as an "aesthetic" to eco-feminism without a closer examination of their unique experiences. Lindsay Nixon (2015) argues:

> If eco-feminists truly want to engage with Indigenous feminism to legitimize their own movements, they must first engage with their own positionality and privilege as settlers: a positionality on which the continuation of settler-colonialism and the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples are prefaced. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples don't need savior feminists defining what strategies must be used to address environmental contamination within Indigenous communities. Environmental violence has far reaching consequences including those that can be seen in the reproductive lives of Indigenous peoples. What Indigenous feminists want from eco-feminists is simple: Sit down, be quiet, and listen.

Indigenous women cannot be used as romantic stories to inspire or to remind eco-feminists of ancient earth connections. Their leadership must be understood as central to environmental politics.

Conclusion

Politics of Frontline Resistance

Indigenous women on the front lines represent a threat to white supremacy, the privileged Global North, *and* cis-heteropatriarchal systems of domination. Indigenous women on the front lines are viewed as a direct threat to the entire system. In the face of resistance, women are silenced figuratively by the media and literally through death, as evidenced by the murder of Berta Cáceras.

Frontline resistance asks for systemic change. It asks for policies to center the needs of earth and all life, not profit margins. It asks for laws to be upheld to protect the interests of the people rather than be used as a tool of colonial control. Frontline resistance is gendered, it is raced, and it looks beyond the privileges of the elite. Frontline resistance happens in homes, on farms, in the streets, in the mountains, on islands, on tribal lands, in between extractive machines and sacred sites, at the United Nations, on the steps of government buildings, and on the floors of senate buildings. Frontline resistance does not separate the personal and the political. Too much is at stake to separate the two, and Indigenous women are on the front lines around the world.

Where Do We Go from Here?

By this point, two things should be clear: (1) environmental politics have been largely controlled by settler colonial nations, and (2) major change must happen. The question then becomes, "Where do we go from here?" There are many thoughts around what it would mean to return lands to Indigenous peoples. There is also much hesitation of what this would mean for settler nations.

The piece missing from these conversations is that return of lands also means return to traditional land and water practices and relationships. Those relationships are the most important piece, not control in a settler sense. It is hard for many to imagine what a return to traditional relationships can look like, but it is possible. A key component is understanding that these relationship cannot be taken apart and reshaped to conform to settler systems. They need to be led by Indigenous people with the concerns of Indigenous people at the heart of decision-making.

Where Environmental Education, Activism, and Policies Succeed

by Shannon Garvin

In 1948, Costa Rica disbanded its military in favor of investing in its people. As it invested in education, health care, human rights, and other culturally stabilizing efforts, it created growth. After World War II, the World Bank and big businesses teamed up to mine resources and grow cattle (cheap beef) for export to US fast food chains. Unfortunately, this also meant massive loans and deforestation to small and developing nations.

After two decades of pillaging its tropical rain forests (85 percent was forested until the 1940s), the educated Costa Ricans revolted against international exploitation and in the late 1960s passed aggressive measures to proactively protect and reclaim the natural beauty of their land. Costa Rica offered grants and cash incentives to grow native crops and reforest.

Costa Rica is now the only country to regrow most of its rain forests (from 21 percent in 1990 to 52 percent in 2005), and it is home to 5 percent of all global biodiversity. Costa Rican scientists have preserved much of the nation (over 25 percent is nature preserves), and it is a gathering place for eco-tourists and scientists alike.

Because Costa Rica implemented life-sustaining policies and invested in education decades before any other nations, it is out of sync with most of the current economic and environmental goals of the global community. Eco-taxes pay farmers on the value of their land for the future. From 2000 to 2005, Indigenous farm ownership increased by 100 percent, and female ownership grew from 200 to 1,600 farms.

Costa Rica boasts the lowest poverty rates of Central and South America, but economic growth has also slowed in the past decade. It begs the questions: When has a country arrived at appropriate and life-sustaining intersectional policies? Is it reasonable that gross domestic product must always grow? In a "First World / Third World" mentality, what about Costa Rica?

Today, as conservatives and progressives posture inside the country and under international categories and pressure, arguing whether its policies were "worth it," we hope Costa Rica can continue its bold pil-

grimage toward sustainable and symbiotic living between humans and nature, and figure out the "next steps" as an example for other nations to follow.

The alternative is to continue down a path that has led to major climate disruptions and environmental catastrophe. The decisions being made today are not sustainable for the health of the planet or for the life that exists on it, including human life. Those on the front line are doing incredible work to help their communities thrive as best they can in the current conditions.

They also show the rest of the world what is possible. By breaking away from a settler colonial lens, we can learn from these frontline women and girls about leadership, hope, and direction for positive change. As Santee poet and activist John Trudell reminds us in his Thanksgiving speech:

> We are foolish if we believe that we will destroy the world. Man has the ability to destroy all the people's ability to live on the earth, but we do not have the power to destroy the earth. The earth will heal itself. The earth will purify itself of us. If it takes a billion years to get rid of the radiation, the earth will do it, because the earth has that kind of a time. We do not. (Third Eye 2017)

At another crossroad of decision-making about the future of environmental politics, we must remember these words and what is at stake with the choices we make. These choices go beyond the individual and must include systematic change. Despite the ways settler colonial systems have influenced us, we have the power to create change. Women have a voice and the ability to create changes to environmental politics in ways that can improve the situations of peoples around the world.

Learning Activities

1. Whitebear argues that the United States was—and continues to be—a settler colonial nation. How does she support her argument? Contemporary conversations about US settler colonialism often focus on the past, rather than the present. How does Whitebear change the conversation when she foregrounds present-day examples?
2. Explain the term *Third World women*. Why is it problematic? How does transnational feminism provide the theories and concepts to problematize terms and concepts like Third World women?
3. As Whitebear notes, "women and girls have been on the front lines of resistance to continued exploitation and damage to their traditional lands." Whitebear provides examples of women and girls such as Autumn Peltier, Greta Thunberg, Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, Wangari Maathai, Berta Cáceres, Haunani-Kay Trask, Pratima Gurung, Inka Saara Arttijeff, Tarcila Rivera Zea, and Tara Houska. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these women/girls and conduct some online research on her. What do you learn about your individual? How is she on the front lines? What actions is she taking? What are the responses of her detractors?
4. Whitebear concludes the chapter by asking, "Where do we go from here?" How does she answer that question? Using the terms and concepts you've learned in this chapter, what other ideas can you add?
5. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: environmental politics, settler colonialism, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), frontier capitalism, anti-indigeneity, colonial extraction/colonial exploitation, Third World women.

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Notes

1. Subsistence agriculture is that type of farming in which families or communities produce foods and other goods needed primarily for their own survival, perhaps with a small surplus to trade, rather than primarily for profit. Most pre- and nonindustrial farmers worldwide were/are subsistence farmers.

WOMEN AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

Carrie N. Baker and Marcela Rodrigues-Sherley

In March 1964, two major events happened in the life of a 16-year-old Brazilian girl from Belo Horizonte: her country experienced a coup d'état that would lead to a twenty-one-year military dictatorship. She also started high school. Central State High School was no regular high school; it was the biggest hub for student activism in the country and the place where Dilma Rousseff would start her lifelong fight for democracy.

Rousseff joined the underground, guerrilla activism that challenged the military dictatorship. During a time when freedom of speech was nonexistent and organizing of any kind was prohibited, leftist activists defied these restrictions by organizing secret meetings, circulating clandestine bulletins, and taking over local radio stations to spread their message. Many activists caught challenging military rule were jailed, tortured, and assassinated.

Dilma Rousseff

In 1970 the military arrested Rousseff for "subversion," then jailed and tortured her for three years. Prison guards interrogated Rousseff intensely for hours, trying to force her to reveal the names of other activists. They beat her with wooden paddles and wet ropes, and subjected her to electrical shocks. They used a slavery-era method of torture called *pau de arara* ("parrot's perch" in English), where political prisoners were hung from an iron bar by their legs and arms, often while naked and combined with electrical shocks. While more than four hundred of Rousseff's comrades "disappeared," likely assassinated, she survived the dictatorship.

After being released from jail, she moved to Porto Alegre, where she married and had her only daughter. She studied economics at university and started participating in the country's re-democratization process postdictatorship. She became the first woman to be head of Porto Alegre's Department of Finance and the first woman to be head of Rio Grande do Sul's Department of Mines and Energy. Rousseff introduced the first proposal of clean and sustainable energy to the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Later on, under President

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, she became Brazil's Minister of Mines and Energy, creating the Luz Para Todos ("light for all") Program, which brought electricity to more than 11 million people living in rural areas of Brazil. After her success, she was named Lula's chief of staff.

In 2010, she succeeded Lula and became Brazil's first woman president. Her main political goal was to reduce poverty and unemployment. In 2014, she was reelected. But in 2016 she was removed from office through a coup masked as an impeachment. The rightwing opposition accused her of corruption, but to this day she affirms that she has never committed any crime and has not broken the law or constitution. Since then, Brazil has been taken over by rightwing politicians whose leadership has rolled back years of left-leaning policies under Lula and Rousseff.

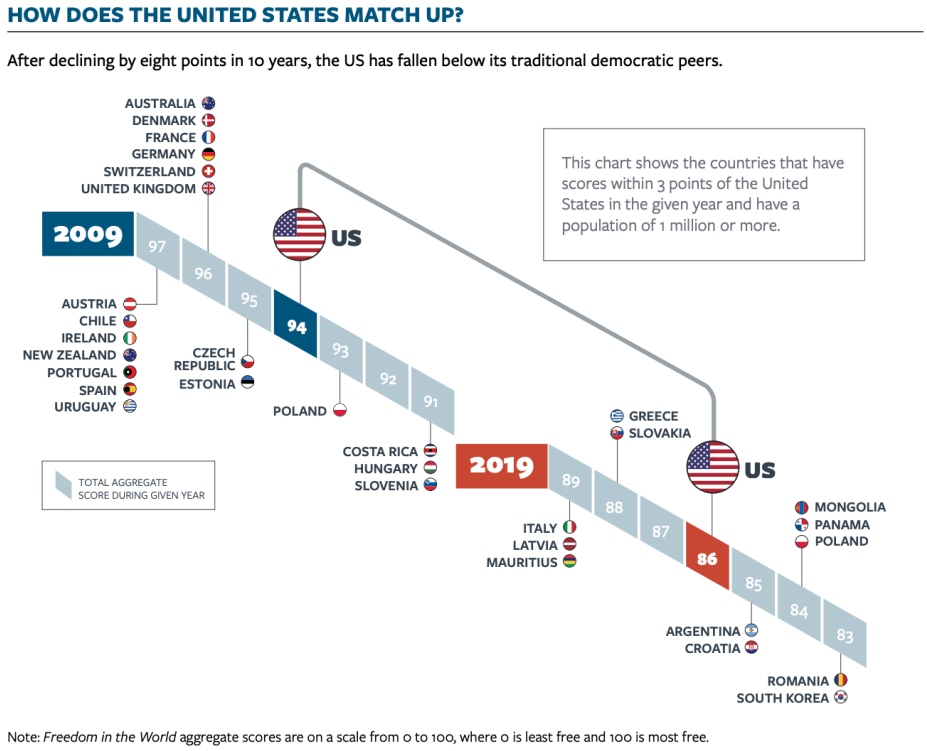
From armed struggle to the presidency, and from political prisoner to president, Rousseff has spent her entire life fighting for justice and continues to advocate for the protection of democracy. Dilma Rousseff fought from both outside of government and from within it to advance democracy and social justice in her country. As a woman, she broke barriers, but she also experienced gender biases that contributed ultimately to toppling her from power. Rousseff's story illustrates many of the ideas we will discuss in this chapter—how women have fought for democracy and struggled to gain political rights, how they still experience misogyny and sexual double standards, and how they are finding creative ways to tackle the challenges women regularly face in politics.

Politics are the activities associated with the governance of a country or an organization, especially the debate or conflict among individuals, interest groups, or parties having or hoping to achieve power and leadership. People in power shape the distribution of resources in society, often favoring themselves and people like them. Powerful people often resist opening the doors to people traditionally excluded from power, fearing that to admit more people means they will lose power.

Political systems are the formal state institutions that make up governments, levy taxes, pass laws, and decide how to allocate resources. The state adopts laws to encourage some behaviors and prohibit others, and enforces these laws through police and militaries. The state is central to shaping major social institutions like the family, workplace, health care, and educational system.

A *democracy* is a political system that ensures basic civil rights, valid elections, and an independent media. Most countries today are democracies, but they exist along a spectrum from fully free to partly free. The independent watchdog organization Freedom House releases an annual *Freedom in the World* report, which tracks the political and social conditions citizens face in countries and territories across the world. They calculate a score for each country by considering various factors and then assigning a number out of 100, ranking each country "free," "partly free," or "not free." Whereas democratization increased during and right after the Cold War, we are now seeing the rollback of democratic values and equal voting rights across the world. Between 2005 and 2018, the share of "not free" countries rose from 23 to 25 percent,

while the share of "free" countries declined from 46 to 42 percent. The United States is considered "free" with a score of 86, but it ranks behind fifty-one of the eight-seven "free" countries that scored up to 100 (Repucci 2020).



The United States' ranking among free countries dropped between 2009 and 2019. Source: Rapucci (2020, 8)

Some countries are not democracies—they do not have elections and are run by a single ruler called a *monarch* (e.g., Brunei and Qatar). Other countries have elections, but voters have little or no real choice (e.g., Russia). An *oligarchy* is a form of government in which the ruling power belongs to a few people, a *plutocracy* is a government controlled by the wealthy, and an *autocracy* is a government in which one person has all the power.

Men have traditionally dominated politics and governments in many countries and have limited women's access to political power. As democracies formed, men often blocked women from voting and barred them from holding public office, while at the same time subjecting them to the laws over which women had no say. Male dominance was justified with ideologies that associated women with the "private" feminized sphere of home and family, with men associated with the "public" masculinized world of politics and business. Men are often seen as strong leaders, whereas women are portrayed as weak, domestic, uninterested in politics, and/or unfit for leadership. Women of color, low-income women, transgender women, and young women are even more strongly sidelined. People in power have used these stories to justify women's exclusion from political power and create barriers to women's access to political leadership, especially for

women of color. As women have sought a larger role in political institutions, they have had to challenge these old stories and tell new ones about women's capacity for leadership and their right to fully participate in the governance of society.

Oh, Susanna!

by Laureal Williams

In 1887, 27-year-old Susanna Madora "Dora" Salter was living with her husband and her four young children in the town of Argonia, Kansas. Earlier that year, Kansas was one of the first states to grant women the right to vote in certain local elections, including the town of Argonia.

As a member of an established Quaker family, Dora was a member of the local temperance (anti-alcohol) league. With the recently granted right to vote, the league members made enforcement of prohibition a prime issue of the upcoming city election. They selected a ticket of male candidates whom they considered to be worthy of the town's offices.

A group of local townsmen resented the intrusion into local politics of women and the temperance league. They decided to teach the league a lesson by drawing up a nearly identical slate of candidates, substituting Dora's name as the mayoral candidate. They assumed that only women would vote for the slate; they thought if Dora got just the twenty female votes, the league would be exposed as marginal and idiotic and therefore unlikely to involve itself in future politics.

Because candidates did not have to file before election day, the slate was registered as a surprise, and ballots were printed with Dora's name on them. On the morning of the election, officials were shocked to see her name on the ballot and sent a delegation to ask if she would accept the office if elected. She agreed to do so. Dora's husband was angered when he discovered Dora's name on the ballot. He was even more perturbed when he found that his wife had consented to serve if elected. But she was undeterred.

The "lesson" backfired, and the townspeople of Argonia voted for Dora in such numbers that she received a two-thirds majority, making her the first woman mayor in the United States. When the results were known, Dora's husband quickly adjusted to being the husband of the mayor.

Dora's one-year term as mayor was largely uneventful, although it was recognized nationally and internationally with both praise and ridicule. During that year of service, Mayor Salter gave birth to her fifth child.

In the fall of 1887, Dora was invited to speak at the Kansas Women's Equal Suffrage Association's convention. Appearing on the platform with the mayor were Susan B. Anthony, Rachael Foster Avery, the

Rev. Anna Shaw, and Henry Blackwell, husband of Lucy Stone. When Susan B. Anthony met Dora, she exclaimed, "Why, you look just like any other woman, don't you?"

Dora never pursued another political office and soon after moved with her family to Oklahoma. She lived to the age of 101, having been witness to a multitude of changes in the American political scene.

Despite these exclusions, women have always participated in and influenced political systems in both formal or informal ways, both from within those systems and from the outside. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, women waged campaigns across the globe for the right to vote and run for political office. After years of fighting for their rights, women can now vote and run for political office in most countries, but they are still significantly underrepresented in legislatures worldwide.

In addition to participation in formal political systems, women have participated in informal politics through organizing their communities and participating in social movements. Even before women won the right to vote in many countries, they formed organizations, raised money, spoke out on issues of importance to them, and had significant influence on public opinion and policy. For centuries, women have organized both within nations and transnationally to improve their lives and communities. For example, in the mid-twentieth century, women participated in and sometimes led anticolonial movements to free people in the Global South from European domination. Like Dilma Rousseff, women have led uprisings to free their countries from the grips of dictators. In the early twentieth-first century, women played a critical role in the Arab Spring, a series of antigovernment protests against autocratic rulers that spread across much of the Arab world. These are just a few of many examples of how women have led social and political change.

This chapter explores women's participation in formal political systems and informal politics. The first part of the chapter focuses on formal political systems in democracies, including citizenship and voting, running for and winning political office, obstacles to representation, and strategies women have used to overcome these obstacles. This first part then addresses how women rule once they achieve political power. Do female presidents behave differently than male presidents? What about legislators? What is the impact of women in elective office on political outcomes? How has women's participation in political systems influenced those systems? The second part of the chapter will explore how women outside of positions of formal political power have acted to influence established power systems, fight for their rights, and create social change.

Part I. Women in State Politics

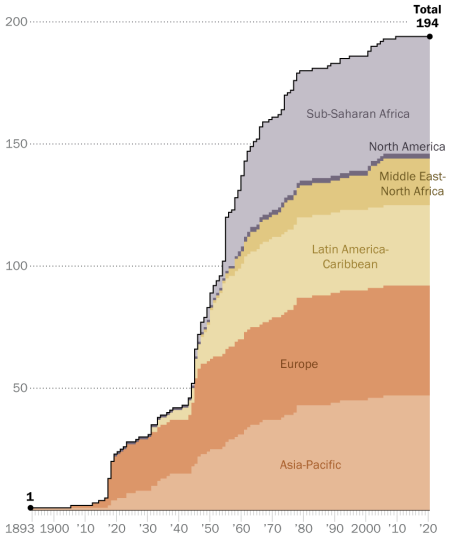
Being a citizen of a particular country is a membership status that legally recognizes an individual as a national of such country. Citizenship is usually granted by birth or by descent line (e.g., those born in the United States or those born abroad to US citizen parents), though many countries allow people to become citizens through a naturalization process. Citizenship comes with a range of duties and rights. Some duties include paying taxes and following the law, while some rights include freedom of speech and political participation.

Historically, citizenship has been denied on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, and religion. In the United States, the Naturalization Act of 1790 defined a citizen as a "free white person of good character," which excluded those of African, Asian, Latin American, and Native ancestry. Today, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion are not explicit determinants of one's eligibility to citizenship; however, gendered and racist ideologies that disfavor women and people of color permeate the naturalization process. For example, men are more likely to be primary visa holders based on employment, while women are more likely to be admitted as dependent spouses. Some countries still have explicit exclusions in citizenship law. India's Citizenship Amendment Bill, passed by the Indian Parliament in 2019, allows immigrants from certain countries to apply for Indian citizenship but excludes Muslims.

The right to vote is a central right of citizenship. As democracies formed across the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, governments limited voting rights, often to male property owners. Movements to expand voting rights developed in many countries, including women's suffrage movements, to fight for the right to vote. New Zealand was the first country to enfranchise women in 1893. The United States adopted the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1920. Not until 2005 could women in Kuwait vote.

Europe, Asia-Pacific regions were front-runners in women's suffrage

Number of nations allowing women the right to vote in national elections, by year



Note: Women in Afghanistan had the right to vote beginning in 1929, but this right was taken away several times before being restored in 2004. Saudi Arabia and Brunei do not hold national elections, and Hong Kong and Macau do not participate in China's elections. Women vote in local elections in all four areas.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of government publications, historical documents from organizations like the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and various news reports to determine women's enfranchisement history in 198 countries and self-administering territories.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When women won the right to vote by geographic region. Source: Schaeffer (2020)

Even after formal barriers based on sex were removed, however, women still faced many other barriers based on their race, ethnicity, citizenship, language, and incarceration status. In South Africa, white women won the right to vote in 1930, but Black South African women could not vote until 1994, in the first general election after the fall of the apartheid system. In the United States, despite passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, Native American women did not gain citizenship until the Snyder Act in 1924 and then had to fight for the vote state by state. Federal policy barred immigrants of Asian descent from US citizenship and voting until 1952. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and violence blocked many African American women from voting until Congress passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965. But in 2013, in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the US Supreme Court struck down Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires certain states and local governments with histories of race discrimination to obtain federal preclearance before implementing any changes to their voting laws or practices. As a result, voter suppression in communities of color—including voter registration restrictions, voter intimidation, and strict voter identification laws—has increased significantly in recent years. Republicans in some states have purged African Americans from the voting rolls, closed polling locations in Black communities, and filed lawsuits to block counting votes.

The erosion of voting rights is not unique to the United States. For example, during Israel's general elections in 2019, rightwing Likud activists installed hidden cameras in polling stations in Arab communities in order to intimidate Arab citizens and prevent them from voting (Azoulay and Alon 2019). In Pakistan the lack of gender-segregated polling stations prevent women from voting owing to social and cultural norms that dictate the way men and women are allowed to interact in public. Women who vote are nonetheless often harassed and chastised, which has resulted in Pakistan having one of the lowest rates of women's voting turnout worldwide (Solijonov 2016).

Voting systems can also influence women's participation in elections. Most voting systems are voluntary, but some are compulsory, requiring all citizens to vote. Canada and Spain, for instance, are among the 172 countries in the world that have *voluntary voting* laws. In these countries, people are not required to vote and participate in electoral processes. As a result, those who vote may not be a representative sample of the country's population. Meanwhile, Australia and Peru are among the 27 countries that enforce compulsory voting, also known as mandatory voting. *Compulsory voting* is a duty with which all citizens must comply, otherwise they may suffer penalties such as paying a fine or being denied access to public services. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), most countries in Latin America have compulsory voting (IDEA, n.d.).

Women in countries that enforce compulsory voting are more likely to vote, receive and seek information about elections, and participate in campaigns than women in countries where voting is voluntary (Córdova and Rangel 2017). When the law requires all citizens to participate in electoral politics, information about elections becomes more accessible to all, including those whose ability to participate in the electoral process has been historically denied. Thus the gender gap in voter participation and overall engagement in electoral politics is narrower in countries that enforce compulsory voting versus countries that hold voluntary voting laws.

Women voting in a village in India

Compulsory voting has similar effects on other historically disadvantaged populations. The gaps between young and elderly as well as between low- and high-income people are also narrower in countries that have compulsory voting laws than in countries with voluntary voting (Fowler 2013). But those who oppose compulsory voting argue that the higher turnout does not translate into a more representative vote because of vote-buying and electoral fraud (Kouba and Mysicka 2019).

Women's *voting rates* have increased in many countries across the world over the past several decades. In India, for example, the number of women voting has increased significantly compared to men. Female voters for the first time outnumbered male voters in several states in India in the 2014 national elections (Kamra 2019). In the United States, women now comprise the majority of voters, casting close to *10 million* more votes than men in the 2016 elections. That year, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), 73.7 million women voted, whereas only 63.8 million men voted (CAWP 2019). Women also vote at higher rates than men: 63 percent of women who were eligible to vote cast their ballots in the 2016 election, whereas 59 percent of men did, reports the Pew Research Center. These differential gendered voting rates persist across racial groups (Igielnik 2020).

But in other areas of the world, women's rates of voting lag behind men's. Research on women's voting participation in several sub-Saharan Africa countries, for example, shows that women were only about two-thirds as likely to vote as men, with the gender gap in voting varying widely across countries and time (Amoateng, Heaton, and Kalule-Sabiti 2014). Factors that discourage women from voting include household responsibilities, lack of education, lack of documentation, and health conditions like pregnancy. Women also experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment, which affect their abilities to afford transportation to registration and voting centers (ACE Electoral College Network 2013). The United Nations (UN) reports that women experience violence throughout the electoral process, including at home and during civic engagement activities, where they may be punished for expressing their political choices or intimidated into voting against their convictions, including through family voting (UN Women 2020).

In many countries, women on average vote differently from men—a phenomenon scholars describe as a *gender gap*, defined as the difference between the percentages of women and men who support a given candidate. In democracies across the world, as women gained the right to vote, they tended historically to vote more conservatively than men, which political scientists have attributed to greater religiosity, but today that trend is reversed. In recent decades, women have increasingly shifted leftward politically in postindustrial societies. Explanations for this shift include the increasing divorce rate, women's increasing participation in the paid labor force, the persistent gender wage gap, and the fact that women are much more likely than men to be single parents caring for children. The resulting vulnerabilities make women more likely than men to depend on and value government-funded social programs supported by left-leaning political parties. Women are also more likely than men to work in government jobs as social workers and teachers, which explains their greater support for government social programs.

The gender gap is particularly evident in attitudes toward certain public policy issues. For example, women are more likely than men to prefer an active role for the government in providing a social safety net for those in need, including food assistance, health insurance, and welfare (Political Parity, n.d.). Women are also more likely than men to support regulations to protect the environment and laws that protect

gay men and lesbians from discrimination. In contrast, women are less likely than men to support military interventions and gun rights (Lizotte 2020). Political scientist Jennifer M. Piscopo explains, "Ideas about appropriate gender roles mean that women and men have different lived experiences, which shape women's awareness of problems and their preferences for solving them. For instance, women are more likely than men to perform caretaking roles—like raising children—and both historically and today they are more likely than men to want stronger healthcare, housing, education, childcare and anti-poverty programs. These differences shape the 'women's vote'" (Piscopo 2020b).

In the United States, gendered party affiliation and attitudes on political issues first emerged in the early 1980s, when the country took a neoliberal turn with the election of Ronald Reagan (Carroll and Fox 2018). These gender gaps have grown steadily since then. Today, women are more likely than men to be Democratic than Republican, especially women of color (Igielnik 2020). Since first emerging in the 1980s, the gender gap in presidential voting has ranged from 4 percent in 1992 to a high of 11 percent in 2016 (CAWP, n.d.). In 2020, 57 percent of women voted for Biden, but only 45 percent of men did; 42 percent of women voted for Trump, but 53 percent of men supported him. Women voted differently based on race: 55 percent of white women voted for Trump, whereas 30 percent of Latinas and Asian American women did, and only 9 percent of Black women supported Trump. Younger women were significantly more likely to vote for Biden than older women overall (Hall and Gal 2020; Yam 2020).

More women than men voted for Joe Biden for president in 2020

Challenges to Voting Access in the United States

by Karly Michon

The US elections of 2020 had some of the highest voter turnout and lowest voter fraud in recent history. In response, 2021 began with many states introducing and passing harmful and restrictive voting laws. In most cases these restrictions affect mail-in and early voting, which were the two biggest factors in the record 2020 voter turnout. Some of the most restrictive proposals were made in Georgia. Suggested measures include allowing people to challenge others about their voting qualifications and requiring more identification documents for mail-in voting. These types of laws are especially harmful to people that struggle to obtain identification, including the poor, elderly, and people of color.

Ideas for activism:

- Find an American Civil Liberties Union event near you, and bring a friend.
- Stay up to date on local voting policies in your area. Write letters, call, or email your representatives to make your voice heard on upcoming bills or important votes.
- Share knowledge and facts on voting issues to raise awareness and organize protests to harmful or restrictive voting laws.
- Volunteer for local candidates that support equal voting rights.
- Organize an informational event for your local community to educate people on local voting laws, upcoming legislation, and voting procedures to help people know their rights and be informed voters.

Vote!

Research has revealed similar patterns in other areas of the world. Whereas European women tended to vote more for conservative parties in the 1970s, in most countries they are now more likely to support left-leaning parties. As in the United States, the driving force behind the emergence of a modern gender gap in Europe is increased levels of female labor participation (Giger 2009). Research shows that these patterns also hold true for Latin America. But there is no evidence that economic development provides an impetus for more equal levels of participation. Instead, the most important contextual factors are civil liberties and women's presence among the visible political elite (Desposato and Norrander 2009). In African countries, women's participation in the labor force—an indicator of economic empowerment—narrows the gender gap in the prioritization of infrastructure investment and access to clean water, while social vul-

nerability widens the gap on prioritizing infrastructure investment (Gottlieb, Grossman, and Robinson 2016).

In addition to voting, women engage in other forms of electoral activity, such as making financial contributions to campaigns, writing letters to elected representatives, engaging in campaign work, and joining political organizations. In many countries, women have formed their own organizations to pressure governments to protect women's rights and increase sex equality, such as the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, formed in 1949 (Hsiung, Jaschok, and Milwertz 2001), and the All India Democratic Women's Association, established in 1981 (Armstrong 2015). In Japan, women mobilized traditional gender ideologies to create the Seikatsu Club and organize as "housewives" to influence the political process (Hunter 1993). Political participation can vary according to race and class, however. In the United States, for example, white and Asian American women are much more likely to contact government officials or give money to political campaigns than Black and Latina women, although Black women attend rallies at similar levels as white and Asian women. These differences in political participation may result from different levels of education and income as well as different likelihoods of being contacted by a political party (Brown 2014; Evans 2016; Misra 2020).

Keeping Up on What the Government Is Doing

by Shannon Garvin

Political involvement often ebbs and wanes over the course of a lifetime. A few people are passionate and always involved, while many just move through life either believing in or fearing their own government.

Because we see a wide breadth of government forms across the world and globalization has made government access appear closer than ever before, more people are involved in activism, volunteering, and even running for office. The Arab Spring movement rolled across nations, the Women's March inspired hundreds of global marches, and Black Lives Matter launched renewed focus on the rights of all people globally.

Whatever course you take, it is always good to know your responsibilities and privileges as a citizen, your legal rights, and the responsibilities that each government office expects of the person doing its work. Access to the Internet has made it easier to stay abreast of current government work. From large official sites with access to information to smaller one-person websites, a variety of online sources abound. As always, *research information so you know* if you are reading facts or merely opinions. Find out if writers are experts or wannabes. Freedom is precious. We all have a voice, and we can all be involved.

Research has shown, however, that women have less participation in these activities as well as political interest and knowledge. Political participation takes access to resources, information, skills, and time. Scholars attribute these gender differences in political participation to traditional gender norms and socialization as well as women's lower levels of resources (Kittilson 2016).[1] For example, women give less money on average to political campaigns than men in part because of the gender wage gap and wealth gap: women earn less than men on average and have less wealth than men. Women also have less leisure time than men because women disproportionately do unpaid labor in the home, especially caring for children. These patterns hold true across the world (Desposoto and Norrander 2009; Isaksson, Kotsadam, and Nerman 2014). Nevertheless, as women make progress in gaining equality, their political participation is increasing.

Women Running for and Winning Political Office

In most areas of the world, women have made slow but steady progress in winning elections to public office as heads of state, members of legislatures, and judges at the national, state, and local levels of government. UN Women (2020) maintains a map that tracks the number of women in ministerial positions and parliaments by country worldwide.

While women have ruled as *hereditary monarchs* since ancient times, the world's first democratically elected female prime minister was Sirivamo Bandaranaike, who was elected by the parliament of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, in 1960. The first woman to serve as president of a country was Isabel Martínez de Perón of Argentina, who as vice president succeeded her husband to the presidency in 1974 after his death. The first woman elected by popular vote as president of a country was Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland, who won the 1980 presidential election. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first president of an African nation in 2006. In 2014, Latin America set a record for having four female presidents at the same time—Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina, Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica, and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil (see Box 1). The United States has never had a woman president.

Women Prime Ministers of Bangladesh

by Shaina Khan

For much of the time since Bangladesh achieved independence, a woman has been prime minister (PM). Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have each taken multiple turns at leadership. Khaleda Zia entered politics in 1981 after her husband, then-president Zia ur-Rahman, was assassinated. In 1991, she became Bangladesh's first woman PM. Her first term was marked by a cyclone, whose aftermath hampered her plans for the country's economic development. Years later, she served a second term. Between her two terms, Sheikh Hasina served her first stint as PM. She is the daughter of Bangladesh's first president and "Father of the Nation" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She holds the record for longest-serving PM of Bangladesh.

In her decade or more in power, each politician has found herself in trouble. In 2018, Khaleda Zia was convicted of embezzling from orphanage trusts while she was PM (she claims the charges were fabricated by opposing parties). Sheikh Hasina was criticized for her handling of violence against journalists and political activists in Bangladesh, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people, atheists, promoters of secular government, and opponents of her political party. In 2018, Bangladesh passed the Digital Security Act, which has been widely denounced for giving the government too much power to arrest dissenters. In 2020, at least a dozen Bangladeshis were arrested under this act for their social media posts. One of them, writer Mushtaq Ahmed, died in prison in February 2021.

Four Latin American Women Presidents

Latin America set a record in 2014 for having four female presidents at the same time—in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Costa Rica. **Michelle Bachelet** was the first woman to be elected president of Chile, first from 2006 to 2010 and then from 2014 to 2018. Bachelet survived detention and torture under the Augusto Pinochet regime but was later nominated minister of health under President Ricardo Lagos and first ran for president with the Sociality Party of Chile in 2005. **Cristina Fernández de Kirchner** was the first democratically elected female president of Argentina, serving two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2015, succeeding her husband Néstor Kirchner. **Laura Chinchilla** was the first woman elected president of Costa Rica. As part of the Partido Liberácion Nacional (National Liberation Party), she was

elected vice president of Costa Rica from 2006 to 2008 and then president of Costa Rica from 2010 to 2014. **Dilma Rousseff,** whose story began this chapter, was the first female president of Brazil, serving from 2011 to 2016.

As of November 2019, seventy-nine countries have had female *heads of state* (meaning ceremonial leaders of a country such as Queen Elizabeth in the United Kingdom), whereas 29 out of 194 countries across the world have had female *heads of government* (people who run a nation's government). In some cases, mainly in presidential systems (like in the United States), there is only one leader who is both the ceremonial leader and the head of the government.

The number of women in legislatures has increased in recent decades, but female representation varies widely across countries of the world and is stubbornly resistant to increases in many places. Rwanda was the first country to achieve gender parity in their national parliament, which today is 61.3 percent women. In the United States, however, women are only 23.7 percent of congressmembers, according to the Center for American Women and Politics. While in 2018 women ran for public office and won in record numbers, the United States still lags eighty-two other countries across the world in women's political representation in national legislatures. Things are not much better in state legislatures, where women hold only 29.2 percent of seats. US women still face high barriers to winning public office, including fundraising, discrimination, stereotyping, and harassment. Transgender women have recently made progress in winning public office in the United States. For example, in 2017, Danica Roem became the first openly transgender woman to win and hold a seat in a US state legislature (see Profile 1). In 2020, Sarah McBride from Delaware became the first transgender woman to win a seat in the US Senate.

Profile: Danica Roem

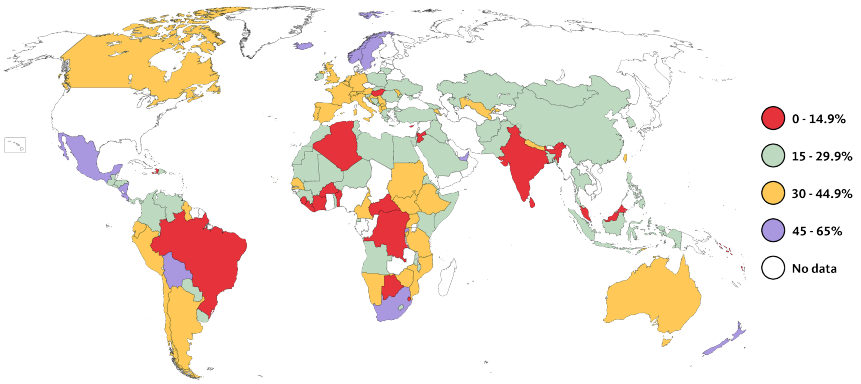
Born in Manassas, Virginia, Danica Roem started her career as a journalist after receiving a bachelor's degree in journalism from St. Bonaventure University. She worked professionally as a lead reporter of the *Gainesville Times* and news editor of the *Montgomery County Sentinel* for more than ten years before running for public office.

In 2017, as part of the Democratic Party, Roem defeated thirteen-term incumbent Republican Robert Marshall and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, representing District 13. Robert Marshall,

a well-known Republican with anti-LGBTQI+ views, had introduced HB 1612 (the Physical Privacy Act) earlier that year. The bill, also known as a "bathroom bill," would force those in Virginia to use the restroom that matches their sex assigned at birth, rather than their gender identity. During the campaign, Marshall referred to Roem using masculine pronouns and refused to debate her, yet she won the race and made history as the first transgender woman elected to and seated in a US state legislature.

As a delegate, Roem has been recognized for her work in infrastructure and public transportation in Virginia's District 13. Two successful bills she has cosponsored include HB 1049, which prohibits housing, employment, banking, insurance, and public accommodation discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, and HB 5052, which recognizes Juneteenth as a legal holiday. She also voted in favor of the successful ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, making Virginia the thirty-eighth and final state required to ratify the ERA.

Across the world, the average share of women in national legislatures is currently 25.1 percent, a slow increase from 11.3 percent in 1995. The percentage of women in national legislatures varies significantly by region. As of October 2020, the average share of women in national legislatures were: Americas, 32 percent; Europe, 30.1 percent; sub-Saharan African, 24.7 percent; Asia, 20.4 percent; Pacific, 19.7 percent; and Middle East and North Africa, 16.5 percent. In Nordic countries, women comprise more than 40 percent of national parliaments (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2020). Globally, as of February 2019, there are twenty-seven nations where women account for less than 10 percent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including three chambers with no women at all. Women make up half or more of national legislatures in just three countries: Bolivia, Cuba, and Rwanda (Atske, Geiger, and Scheller 2019; UN Women 2021). And women's representation is not an inevitable march forward. In countries of the former Soviet Union, women's representation actually decreased after the end of the Cold War, dropping from 27 percent in 1985 to 8.4 percent in 1995 (Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2007). Women still have a long way to go to win equal representation in national legislatures across the world.



Women representatives in national legislatures in 2021. Data for single or lower house. Countries indicated as having legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats might also have political party quotas. *Source*: current data at idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas

More than half of Rwanda's legislators are women

Women's representation on courts has also increased in recent decades, although it still lags far behind men's representation. In the United States, women's representation in law school classes reached 50 percent in the 1990s, but women still make up only about one-quarter of federal court judges and one-third of state court judges. Among all sitting federal judges, only ninety-two—or 6.7 percent—are women of color. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was the first woman to serve on the US Supreme Court, appointed in 1980 (National Association of Women Judges, n.d.; Root 2019). While state judges are often elected by popular vote, federal judges are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Women's exclusion from the networks that influence judicial appointments (sometimes called "old boys' clubs") as well as their formal and informal selection processes are significant factors in women's underrepresenta-

tion on the federal bench. Globally, women account for about a quarter of all judges, varying significantly by region. In central and Eastern Europe and central Asia, women are about half of the judiciary, but in South Asia, women comprise less than 10 percent of judges (UN Women 2011, 60). The International Association of Women Judges formed in 1991 to promote and empower women judges.

Obstacles to Achieving Representation in Government

Women face many obstacles to achieving equal representation in governments across the world. Traditionally in many cultures, political leadership has been associated with men and traits considered masculine, such as aggression, competitiveness, dominance, and decisiveness. According to scholar Miguel Carreras, "There's a stereotype that women are 'soft' and might not be able to deal with a security crisis or a war, for example. But if they're 'too aggressive' or try to show too much 'masculinity,' they might be accused of not being 'nice' or 'feminine' enough. It's a difficult line for women to walk when it comes to satisfying people; whichever direction they take, they're likely to run into problems" (Carlin, Carreras, and Love 2020). This Catch-22 makes it difficult for women to successfully run for public office. Furthermore, gender bias intersects with other systems of inequality and privilege, including racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism, to create even higher barriers for women in politics. Ethnic minority women, for example, face greater prejudices than either white women or ethnic minority men because of the intersections of gender and race biases (Mügge and Erzeel 2016). These cultural attitudes influence people's perceptions of potential candidates and their voting behavior.

Gender-biased attitudes limit women's access to the education, time, and resources important to successfully running for political office. Girls often have less access to literacy and education than boys, and girls' political aspirations are often discouraged. Gender stereotypes and expectations that women should be responsible for family and households often make it difficult for women to run for and hold political office. Women also have less access than men to financial resources that they need to run for political office. This is especially true for marginalized women.

Women are often excluded or marginalized from social networks required for winning political office. *Political parties* are the major pathway to elected office across the world, but they are often dominated by men, and women struggle to gain access and win the support of political parties. Women have had some success running as independents, however, particularly in the Middle East. In countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Oman, where there is an absence of political parties or where existing parties are unwilling to back women, some women have successfully run for national office as independents (Shalaby 2020; Welborne 2020).

Electoral systems can affect women's success in winning public office. Plurality or majority voting systems put women at a disadvantage for winning public office, whereas proportional representation systems cre-

ate more opportunities for women. A *plurality-majority voting system* is where each voter is allowed to vote for only one candidate, and the candidate who wins the most votes—either a majority or a plurality—is elected. A *proportional representation system* is where voters select parties instead of individual candidates, and seats are distributed to each party in proportion to the number of votes the party receives. New Zealand's *mixed-member proportional system* (MMP) has been particularly successful in diversifying representation. The MMP system gives each citizen two votes, one for a party and one for a candidate. The party vote determines how many seats in parliament each party gets. The candidate vote selects who represents the electorate in each district. Every candidate who wins an election receives a seat in parliament, and the remaining seats are distributed based on the party votes and filled from the party candidate lists (New Zealand Electoral Commission, n.d.; Terrell 2020). Research shows that proportional representation systems result in an 8 percent greater number of women being elected to office, because parties want to put forward a diversified slate of candidates to reach a wider range of voters (Lijphart 1999; Norris 2004). The electoral college system for electing US presidents is neither a majority voting system nor a proportional representation system but a vestige of the country's history of slavery (Kelkar 2016).

In addition to political and electoral systems, *gender-biased media coverage* can have a significant impact on women's success in running for political office. A free press is essential to democracy because most people receive political information through the media—newspapers, broadcast television, magazines, and online platforms. The media significantly influences public perceptions and attitudes of political candidates. Media portrayals of women running for political office can have a major impact on the likelihood they will be elected. Although the media claims objectivity, most media platforms express gender bias in their language and overall portrayals of women running for office. For example, the media often focuses on women's families and domestic lives but not on men's (see Box 2). Furthermore, the media gives less airtime for female candidates to discuss their political goals and allows more interruptions of female candidates by opponents and moderators. Women often do not have the financial resources to counter these biases through paid advertising (Van der Pas and Aaldering 2020).

Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris

Two women who have been in the spotlight in American politics and constantly suffer from gendered media coverage are Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris. In 2016, Clinton became the first woman nominated for president by a major party in the history of the United States. Before that, she served in the US Senate for two terms and was secretary of state. Harris was the first Black woman district attorney of San

Francisco, the first Black woman attorney general of California, was elected to the US Senate in 2017, and the first Black woman to be elected vice president of the United States.

Both women have been often questioned on their appearance and personal lives by the press and the public. Clinton becoming a grandmother, for instance, was enough reason for the media to question her ability to be president. CBS News published the headline "Hillary Clinton: Grandmother-in-Chief?" and *Times* published the headline "The Pros and Cons of 'President Grandma.'" No one has ever questioned Donald Trump's grandfather status as a sign of unfitness for office. Trump himself publicly said of Clinton, "I just don't think she has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look." Trump also attacked Harris, calling her "totally unlikeable" and a "monster." Harris experiences not only sexism but also racism. From mispronouncing her name to questioning her Americanness, commentators have othered her, treating her as less than human. Aware of the sexist media, Clinton once joked that all she needed to get front-page news coverage was to change her hair.

Gender bias in the media affects the visual portrayals of women. For instance, when Brianna Wu ran for Congress to represent the eighth district of Massachusetts in 2018, she went on Twitter to call out the sexism in the *Boston Globe*'s coverage of her race. She wrote, "Angry. @BostonGlobe published a guide to the election. They choose pictures of my opponents wearing suits. They pick one of me from Gamergate where I'm wearing a t-shirt and have bright anime hair. I literally did a photo shoot with them wearing a dress and heels a week ago." The *Boston Globe* portrayed Wu as less professional and less of a leader than her male counterparts.

Brianna Wu's tweet calling out the Boston Globe for sexism

Female politicians are also sometimes sexualized by the media. For example, the United Kingdom's *Mail Online* published an article titled "Weapons of Mass Distraction: German Chancellor Angela Merkel Shows Off Plunging Neckline" after Merkel attended an opera gala with a dress that showed her cleavage. This headline sexualized Merkel, potentially undermining perceptions of her fitness for political leadership. These gender-biased portrayals are amplified on social media, where anyone with an Internet connection can express their sexist views.

The starkest deterrents to women's engagement in electoral politics are violence and harassment (Krook 2020, 2021; Piscopo 2020a). In the United States, domestic extremists plotted to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer in October 2020, and then on January 6, 2021, violent mobs invaded the US Capitol building, hunting for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (among others), invading her office, and

threatening her (Rosenberg 2021). Research indicates that gender-based violence prevents many women from running for office and from carrying out their duties once elected (UN Women 2020, 23). According to scholar Mona Lena Krook,

> Violence against women in politics takes many forms: physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and semiotic. Examples of physical violence include the assassination of Brazilian politician Marielle Franco in 2018 and the arrest and ongoing torture of women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia (see Profile 2). Online abuse is a common form of psychological violence, involving threats and trolling to force women to leave or reduce their social media engagement. Online attacks often disproportionately target younger women and women of color, like Diane Abbott, the first Black woman elected to the British parliament. (Krook 2020)

Men also target women in public office for verbal abuse and harassment (see Box 3). Research on violence against women in politics in India, Nepal, and Pakistan found that men use violence to "reinforce traditional social and political structures" by targeting women who challenge patriarchal political norms (UN Women Centre for Social Research 2014).

A Voice Both Clear and Strong

by Sarah Baum

Ida B. Wells was born July 16, 1862, into slavery during the Civil War in Mississippi. She and her family were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, and her parents raised her to value education. At the age of 16, she lost her parents and her youngest brother to the 1878 Yellow Fever outbreak, leaving her to care for her remaining siblings. She moved the family to Memphis and took a job as an educator to support them. At the same time, she founded a newspaper and focused her personal journalism on Southern racial segregation and the inequality that went with it.

When she published a pamphlet speaking out against lynching, a white mob stormed her office and burned her press down. Because of ongoing threats, she was forced to move to Chicago, where she spoke out against the Columbian Exposition for its depiction of African Americans.

Ms. Wells was easily the most famous woman of color in America during her day, speaking out against racial injustice as well as for women's rights. She became a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and traveled extensively both nationally and internationally to shine light on the conditions of women and people of color in America. Her voice rang out true and strong whether in the spoken word or through her writings. Never silenced and always on the side of what was right, Ida B. Wells continued her lifetime of activism until her death in 1931 at the age of 68, but her words and her voice live on eternally.

Profile: The Assassination of Marielle Franco in Brazil

Marielle Franco was an Afro-Brazilian woman elected to the City Council of Rio de Janeiro in January 2017. Franco was a Black woman from one of the poorest slums in Brazil who was married to another woman and whose campaign was all about human rights and demilitarization of Rio's police. Her election was a threat to those who supported the status quo in Brazil. On March 14, 2018, Franco was brutally assassinated. The investigation of her assassination was incredibly mishandled, and up to this day, there are no conclusive answers as to who assassinated her or why. Her death sparked an outcry in Brazil and the world, and led to more Black Brazilian women running for political office. In addition, in 2020, Franco's widow, Mônica Benício, successfully ran for a City Council seat, ensuring that the legacy Franco created lives on.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Response to Ted Yoho's Abuse

Congressman Ted Yoho (R-Florida) accosted and verbally assaulted Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-New York) in broad daylight on the steps of the US Capitol, calling her a "fucking bitch." Several people witnessed the exchange, including a reporter from *The Hill*, Congressman Roger Williams (R-Texas), who accompanied Yoho, and an adviser who accompanied Ocasio-Cortez. Yoho also called Ocasio-Cortez "disgusting" and "out of [her] freaking mind," referring to Ocasio-Cortez's recent statements about the spike in crime rates in New York City being connected to financial instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few days later, Yoho addressed his behavior on the House floor. Instead of acknowledging the disrespectful and aggressive nature of his speech toward Ocasio-Cortez, Yoho denied name-calling the Congresswoman. He blamed the press for attributing words to him that he had never spoken. Yoho was not even able to say Ocasio-Cortez's name. He only addressed her as his "colleague from New York." He invoked the all-too-familiar and classic "I-have-a-wife-and-daughter" trope, often used by men when accused of disrespecting or abusing women, as if having women in their lives excuses them for hurting other women. He then ended his speech by saying, "I cannot apologize for my passion," showing us once again that men are able to assault women, call it passion, and get away with it.

Later that week, also on the floor of the House of Representatives, Ocasio-Cortez addressed Yoho's behavior and responded to his non-apology. She stated that she is familiar with this type of language, as

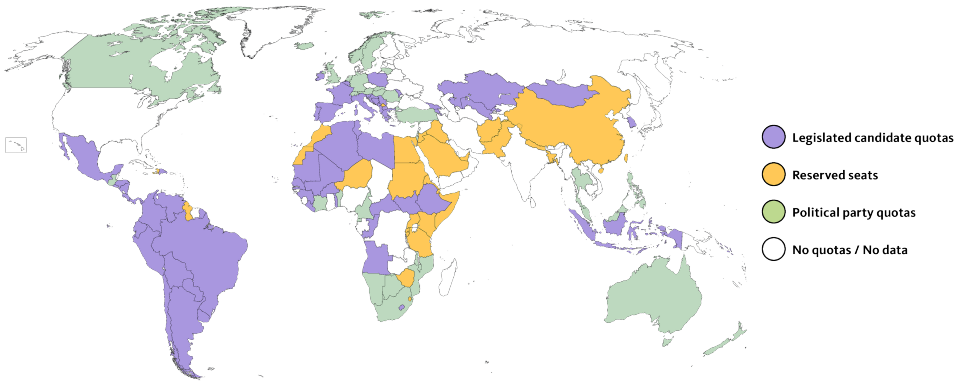
are women everywhere. She brought up the "I-have-a-daughter" trope in order to tear it apart. She made it clear that having wives and daughters does not excuse men from sexist attitudes and behavior.

Women continue to face many barriers to winning public office, including inadequate political support from their parties, a lack of financial resources, gender stereotyping, gender-based violence, and patriarchal structures across societies. In response, women are developing a range of strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Strategies to Increase Women's Representation in Politics

Many governments and nongovernmental organizations are working to identify women interested in running for office, providing training and support networks for women candidates, and creating projects that focus on ending sexism in politics. Some seek to create systems to ensure that women are equally represented in party leadership positions and committees. One strategy that has successfully increased women's representation in political office in many countries across the world is the implementation of quota systems.

Quota systems attempt to ensure that women fill a predetermined number of legislative seats. There are different types of quotas: reserved seats, party quotas, and legislative quotas. A *reserved seats quota system* is where a percentage of the political positions is reserved for women, usually 20 to 30 percent. *Party quotas* are party-specific policies to increase the number of women candidates. Lastly, *legislative quotas* mean that the government requires parties to nominate a certain percentage of women. From 1995 to 2005 alone, 55 countries adopted gender quotas, and today 130 countries have at least some kind of quota in their electoral processes. As a result, the number of women elected in these countries has increased dramatically (Maillé 2020).



Countries with gender quotas in 2021. Data for single or lower house. *Source*: current data at idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas

Quota systems do not always produce equal representation of men and women in political office, however. In countries with gender quotas the average share of women in public office is 26.3 percent, significantly lower than the 50 percent that people would expect in an egalitarian society (IDEA, n.d.). One reason is that in some countries, quotas are voluntary and up to political parties to enforce. Research in Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan showed that quotas brought only slow and uneven progress and that their success was dependent on the degree of party system institutionalization, electoral competitiveness, legal enforcement, and social-cultural attitudes toward women (Tan 2016). In addition, efforts to incorporate women into political systems often do not account for the diversity among women. Gender quotas tend to incorporate only women from the majority group unless they explicitly address race, ethnicity, or other marginalized identities. IDEA maintains a Gender Quotas Database with information about quota systems across the world and strategies for implementing them.

In addition to quota systems, there are nonprofit organizations and support networks that aim to increase the number of women who are in public office. In the United States, the Women's Campaign Fund, founded in 1974, is a bipartisan organization that strives to elect women of all political ideologies and ethnicities. Emerge America recruits, trains, and connects Democratic women to networks and resources that will best prepare them to run for political office. Emily's List raises money to support pro-choice female candidates. (The name is an acronym for "Early Money Is Like Yeast"; i.e., it makes the dough rise). The Victory Institute promotes political candidates who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+). The National Women's Political Caucus, founded in 1971, helps elect progressive, pro-choice women to office. She Should Run, founded in 2011, has inspired more than 15,000 women to run for office since the 2016 election and has also launched an initiative called #250Kby2030, which strives to get 250,000 women to run for office by 2030. The organization Represent Women advocates for a fairer and more representative electoral system in the United States.

UN Women supports women's political participation and leadership in many countries around the world. They provide training for women political candidates to help build their capacities, and they offer voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. UN Women also backs gender equality advocates in calling on political parties, governments, and others to do their part in empowering women. For example, in Kenya's 2013 elections, UN Women provided training to nearly nine hundred female candidates in all forty-seven counties and ran a Campaign for Women in Leadership to encourage voters to vote for women. As a result, the number of women legislators rose above 20 percent, more than double compared to the previous elections (UN Women 2013). These numbers continued to rise in the 2017 elections (National Democracy Institute 2018).

In Timor-Leste, UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) supported an active women's parliamentary caucus, civil society groups, and the national gender unit to promote women candidates. As a result, the country achieved 38 percent women legislators in 2012, exceeding the one-third quota mandated by law and achieving the highest proportion of female legislators in Asia (UN Women 2013). In 2018, two leading Timor-Leste women's organizations—CAUCUS and Movimentu Feto Foin Sae (MOFFE)—jointly organized an initiative called "Promoting Participation of Women in Political Parties," which raised women's participation in the elections as voters, poll workers, and candidates. UNDP organized a live television debate program, "Talks on Women Politics" (UNDP 2018).

In response to the many obstacles women continue to face in running for public office, governments and nongovernmental organizations have adopted a number of strategies, including quota systems and programs to recruit, train, and support female candidates, financially and otherwise. These efforts are making a difference, helping to increase the number of women in public office. The next section addresses the question of what happens when they get there.

Women and Political Power

What difference do women in leadership make? Are women leaders different from male leaders? Do they support different policies? Some evidence shows that women do lead differently than men. For example, in one study of the European Parliament, male and female legislators expressed similar concern for the environment, yet women were significantly more likely to support environmental legislation than men—even after controlling for political ideology and nationality (Ramstetter and Habersack 2020). A different study suggests that in countries and at times where women make up a larger proportion of the legislature, social spending is greater, including spending on cash benefits to families and social services aimed at families (Bolzendahl 2011). On female presidents, a study by the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the World Economic Forum found that in 2020, countries led by women—like New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern and Germany's Angela Merkel—had "systematically and significantly better" COVID-19 outcomes because of their proactive and coordinated policy responses, such as locking down earlier, result-

ing in half as many deaths on average as those led by men (Garikipati and Kambhampati 2020). But are women more likely to advocate for gender equality?

There are two forms of political representation: *descriptive representation* and *substantive representation*. Descriptive representation refers to the numbers of women who are elected to political offices worldwide (relative to the number of women in the entire population), while substantive representation refers to the impact women make once they hold political positions. Political scientists conduct research on whether there is a link between descriptive and substantive representation, whether one leads to the other, and whether having more women in office results in laws and policies that increase gender equality. The results are mixed.

Some evidence shows that women leaders do lead to increased gender equality. For example, one study showed that female mayors in Brazil did not increase women's numerical representation in the municipal executive bureaucracy, but they did contribute to the creation of bureaucracies with fewer gender inequalities, including increasing the average wages of women bureaucrats and decreasing the gender wage gap in the bureaucracy (Funk, Silva, and Escobar-Lemmon 2019). Research in the United States has revealed that working mothers in Congress are more likely to introduce legislation that address issues specific to parents and children (Bryant and Hellwege 2018). Another recent study, however, found that more women in parliaments did not relate to the body's responsiveness to women's policy preferences. The study, which compared twenty-one European countries, found that women's policy preferences tend to be more accurately represented in parliaments than those of men, but that this correlation was driven not by the share of female office-holders, but rather by levels of women's voter turnout. In other words, who votes is more important than the number of women who hold office (Dingler, Kroeber, and Fortin-Rittberger 2019). Another important factor to keep in mind is that women often do not represent the interests of all women, but instead represent the interests of women who share similar backgrounds and experiences (McCall and Orloff 2017).

Some evidence suggests that the political context influences how women lead. In her recent research on Latin America, scholar Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer found that formal and informal institutions, which are gendered, in combination with Latin America's recent crises of democracy, advantage men and disadvantage women, influencing not only the number of women elected to office, but also what they do once there, how much power they have, and how their presence and actions influence democracy and society more broadly (Schwindt-Bayer 2018, 2). A study of Yemen found that women leaders who challenge the patriarchal structure are professionally and personally punished, which leads them to side with policies that sustain the status quo (Al-Sakkaf 2020).

Research on presidents in Latin America and Asia found that gender stereotypes play a big role in determining public approval of elected officials. Corruption has virtually no effect on male presidents' approval ratings but has a significant and substantial negative effect on public support for female presidents. Women are often considered "morally superior" to men, and thus more honest and trustworthy, so they tend to pay a higher price in public support when they're tied to claims of political corruption. A prime example is the case of Dilma Rousseff, whose story began this chapter. She lost the presidency after her opposition accused her (without evidence) of corrupt behaviors that were common to her male predecessors but had never unseated them.

As judges, women bring important experiences and perspective to their decision-making roles. Scholars have studied whether female judges perform differently than male judges. One area of research focuses on productivity. Research on gender differences in the judiciary in the United States has shown that female judges perform better than male judges. Judicial performance was rated based on the number of published opinions, the number of citations to their opinions, and open disagreements (dissents) with those from the same political party background (a measure of judicial independence). In the study, women produced more opinions, had greater numbers of citations, and were more independent than men (Choi et al. 2011). Research in Brazil, however, does not show differences in the judicial productivity of males and females (Traguetto and Gomes 2019).

Another area of research is whether female judges rule differently than men, particularly whether they are more feminist. Research in the United States has found that female judges are more likely to favor plaintiffs in sex discrimination cases than male judges (Peresie 2005; Boyd, Epstein, and Martin 2010). Research on judges in China shows that female judges are more likely than male judges to employ mediation as a preferred dispute resolution method to facilitate reconciliation between the parties and to seek civil compensation for victims (Wei 2020). A study in Egypt found that female judges may help make the structure of judicial work more inclusive and less confrontational, depending on the institutional context. Female judges were less hierarchical than male judges, but they did not display more sympathy toward women in divorce cases (Lindbekk 2017). Research on the European Court of Human Rights has shown that female

judges are overall more likely to find violations, regardless of the gender of applicants. This is especially true of cases involving physical integrity rights violations, such as torture (Voeten 2020).

Increasing the number of women in political office is a step toward gender equality but must be paired with structural changes within governments and the active participation of women's rights activists and nongovernmental organizations. Research suggests that the best ways to achieve gender equality are through gender mainstreaming and institutionalization. *Gender mainstreaming* is when governments consider how every policy has underlying gendered assumptions and then address women's interests directly in laws and public policies (Walby 2005). Institutionalization is when governments create women's ministries or policy agencies to ensure that gender is incorporated into government programs and planning. Women's movements are also a critical component of advancing women's rights because they can provide information to government officials and legislators and pressure them to consider women's issues. When women's rights advocates communicate with government agencies, policy proposals are significantly more effective at addressing the issues faced by women, reports scholar S. Laurel Weldon. Activists can reframe issues, raise new ones, and offer alternatives to existing bureaucratic ways of thinking and doing (Weldon 2002). Weldon argues that strong, autonomous women's movements "magnif[y] women's voice inside government" (Weldon 2002, 1162).

The Gender Equality Paradox

While women have gained some formal political power and made significant legislative gains over the past fifty years, advances in gender equality have been slow and have in some cases stalled or rolled backward. In the United States, for example, despite Congress passing the Equal Pay Act in 1963, a significant wage gap between men and women persists. Rates of violence against women persist at high levels around the world, and women's sexual and reproductive rights are contracting in many countries.

These rollbacks on women's rights have been fueled by rightwing populist movements that have eliminated many of the hard-won rights that women have gained in recent history. Around the world, rightwing forces have mobilized people in opposition to sexual and reproductive rights using the vague concept of "gender ideology." The phrase was developed in the Vatican in the mid-1990s and popularized in Dale O'Leary's 1997 book *The Gender Agenda*. The book argued that substituting the word "sex" with "gender" was part of a global feminist and LGBTQI+ scheme to dissolve the family and remake society. The right has used the concept of "gender ideology" in many countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Ireland, and Poland, to eliminate ministries that protect women (Vaggione 2020).

While women have gained more political power and won passage of legislation to protect their rights over the past fifty years, gender inequality persists. Scholar Janet Johnson (2018) explains this paradox by arguing that as women have gained entrance into formal politics, real political power has shifted to informal

networks and institutions: "economic liberalization has strengthened elites outside of formal structures and constituted corrupted, informal rules and institutions." These elite networks of men control both formal and informal institutions, ingraining gender bias and limiting women's power. She describes a "bait and switch," where women appear to have power as policy makers but then are boxed in with little real power to make progressive social change. For example, women's ministries are created or offices to combat violence against women established, but then they receive little budget or actual power to enforce the law. Or gender equality initiatives are nested in old, patriarchal institutions that engage in active resistance or passive neglect.

Another way women's political power is undermined is the increasing erosion of democracies in the last decade. Just as women are gaining real political power, rightwing movements have emerged across the world, such as in Brazil, Hungary, the Philippines, Poland, and the United States. Rightwing autocratic leaders such as Bolsonaro and Trump, upon coming into power, have prioritized taking away the rights of women and LGBTQI+ people. They have eroded the power of women's votes as well as their ability to participate in political systems worldwide, hampering their ability to address ongoing discrimination and disadvantages they suffer.

In the next section, we examine how women exercise political power outside of formal systems of government. Around the world, women are leading grassroots social movements to expose systems of inequality and privilege, resist the rightwing rollback of their rights, and collectively build a future where all people are cared for and valued.

Part II. Beyond Electoral Politics: Women in Civil Society

While participating in formal party politics and elections, women have also played a significant role in creating political and social change through community-based activism, national social movements, and transnational feminist organizing (Basu 2010). From signing a petition to joining a flash mob, from buying fair-trade coffee to blocking the construction of an oil pipeline with their bodies, women have sought to influence their communities, nations, and the world. In February 2017, for example, women organized mass protests all over the world against the election of Donald Trump.

March on Washington, 2017

Women have worked for women's rights and social welfare, but they have also organized to combat racism and colonialism, participated in unions and labor movements, peace activism, and environmental groups, and worked on many other issues. Through community organizing, women have created nongovernmental organizations, built social movements, and formed transnational alliances to create social change. Their strategies and tactics have been varied, from lobbying and litigating to supporting public education and using the creative arts to make social change.

Fannie Barrier Williams: An Intersectional Advocate

by Shannon Garvin

Fannie Barrier Williams was an outspoken advocate of civil rights at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. As an African American woman, she understood the need to work for racial equity *and* women's rights: systemic racism, segregation, and lynchings were still commonplace, and women had not yet gained the right to vote.

In the 1890s, she was active in the Chicago women's club movement, a network of women's clubs devoted to social action. She helped to found the National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women—which later merged into the National Association of Colored Women (NACW)—along with other prominent African America women such as Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells. Later, she was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP). In 1893, she delivered an address titled "The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women of the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation—May 18, 1893" to the *World's Congress of Representative Women at the Chicago Columbian Exposition*. In 1895, she represented Illinois at the Colored Woman's Congress in Atlanta.

Although she faced racism from white women's rights groups, she worked with the National American Women Suffrage Association and became friends with Susan B. Anthony, delivering her eulogy at that organization's 1907 convention. In addition to her extensive political work, she helped create the Provident Hospital and subsequent homes and safe shelters for underserved communities and people of color in Chicago.

Feminism has a long history with "multiple starting points all over the globe," says historian Mary Hawkesworth (2006, 32). Even before women won the right to vote, they created, led, and participated in myriad movements seeking social reform on a wide range of issues, including education, working conditions, pure food, and maternal health. In the nineteenth century, women participated in and led movements to abolish slavery in many countries. In the early twentieth century, Ida B. Wells led a movement against lynching in the United States. In 1915, during World War I, women from warring and neutral nations gathered at The Hague in the Netherlands to discuss how to end the war and ensure permanent peace across the world, forming the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In the twentieth century, women played key roles in independence movements in Latin America and Africa. For example, in 1960, three sisters—Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa Mirabal—were outspoken political activists and leaders of the resistance against the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. Their assassination in November 1960 led to the acceleration of the Dominican independence movement and the end of the Trujillo dictatorship. To honor the Mirabal sisters, the November 25th was named International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In 1994, Dominican American author Julia Alvarez published *In the Time of the Butterflies*, a fictionalized narrative of the Mirabal sisters, which was later turned into a movie. More recently, Puerto Rican Dominican actress Michelle Rodriguez co-produced and starred in a 2010 movie *Trópico de Sangre*, about the Mirabal sisters.

The Women's Democratic Front

by Qamar Ahmed

Pakistan's Women's Democratic Front (WDF), an "independent socialist-feminist resistance movement," was founded on International Working Women's Day, March 8, 2018. WDF is committed to the formation of an urban and rural working-class women's movement engaged in struggle to end patriarchy, its interlocking socioeconomic structures, and all forms of gendered oppression, violence, and discrimination. It struggles for gender equality, the restoration of peace, the formation of a people's democracy, and the creation of a classless society.

WDF understands the oppression and exploitation of women as concretely tied to the oppression and exploitation of the Pakistani peoples as a whole, and they assert that these oppressions on the basis of gender, class, and nationality emerge from capitalism, feudalism, imperialism, and religious extremism. They struggle in solidarity with movements of workers, farmers, students, oppressed nations, and marginalized peoples.

The WDF emphasizes socialist feminism, which they describe as a Marxist viewpoint that understands capitalism and patriarchy as profoundly connected and foundational to women's oppression and exploitation. This kind of feminism challenges the gendered division of labor and is concerned with the material and social conditions of women's lives. WDF works to abolish all economic, governmental, societal, and patriarchal structures that are based on the subjugation of women and the exploitation of their labor. "The history of women is a history of class struggle," they write. WDF frequently hosts public study circles, lectures, and conversations.

In Argentina, beginning in 1977, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo protested against the "disappearance" of their children by the Argentine military. The women wore white headscarves and marched in front of the presidential palace carrying pictures of their kidnapped children. These protests grew over time, drawing international attention to human rights abuses in Argentina. Disappearances were also happening in Brazil in the 1970s, including at the time Dilma Rousseff was arrested. She was lucky to survive.

Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Women across the world are also working to protect Indigenous land rights and end child marriage. In Kenya, women of the Rendille community in Marsabit County banded together to protect their lands when investors came in and claimed it as their own. The Rendille people, with women's voices at the center, took the developer to court with the hopes of protecting their communal lands. In India, Women's Peer Groups across five rural states are working to end child marriage in their communities. They are organizing people to pledge that they won't have their daughters married underage, and they are leading rallies in their villages to spread awareness about the negative impacts of child marriage (UN Women 2019).

Women have organized not only at the state and local level, but transnationally as well. For more than two centuries, women have organized transnational feminist networks by working on a wide range of issues, including poverty, racism, equal access to education and employment, fair wages, labor conditions, economic injustice, imperialism, migration, health, reproductive justice, violence against women and girls, war and peace, land rights, environmental justice, and more (Hawkesworth 2006, 29-30). From the beginning, transnational women's movements often reproduced global relations of dominance, perpetuating "the image of women of European origin in the lead offering a hand to their more oppressed sisters" (Rupp 1996, 10). Women from colonized or formerly colonized countries, however, challenged imperialism in international women's organizations, paving the way for a more equal global women's movement.

Since World War II, many women have organized transnationally within the framework of the United Nations. In 1946, women's organizations and groups successfully lobbied the UN for the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women, a policy-making body to promote gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. In 1979 the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and in 1993 the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Late twentieth-century transnational feminist organizing was anchored in four UN world conferences for women—in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995. The conferences were attended by representatives of nations as well as activists from nongovernmental organizations. The Beijing conference had seventeen thousand government representatives and thirty thousand activists, and produced a comprehensive plan to achieve global legal equality, known as the Beijing Platform for Action (UN Women 1995). There have also been several other UN conferences on specific issues, such as reproductive health and violence against women. The 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo produced a Programme of Action that was the first international agreement recognizing the right to sexual and reproductive health (UN ICPD 2014 [1994]). In 2015, the UN held the Ending Violence against Women conference in Istanbul, Turkey (UN Women, n.d.). Conflicts in priorities created tensions at the UN conferences, with women of the Global North focused on legal equality and sexual autonomy, while women from the Global South focused more on imperialism as an obstacle to women's advancement and on issues such as access to clean water and control of land (Joachim 2013, 471).

Women have also been at the forefront of cultural work to change people's hearts and minds, such as raising awareness about social issues and leading community care and mutual aid efforts. An example is the 1960s Black Power movement. Although well-known for young Black men wearing berets and leather jackets, the Black Panthers Party created community programs led by Black women, including the Free Breakfast for School Children Program, the Liberation Schools, and the People's Free Medical Centers. The Panther women in the free breakfast program cooked and served daily breakfast for schoolchildren. The program expanded to multiple cities around the country and served more than twenty thousand children weekly. Inspired by the Black Panthers, children of Puerto Rican immigrants founded the Young Lords, which created similar community programs, including free breakfast, clothing donations, health services, political education, and street clean-ups when the garbage services were lacking in Spanish Harlem.

Another example of community care occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, during the AIDS/HIV epidemic. Women all across the United States and the world led community care initiatives to care for people dying from AIDS. They brought them food, cleaned their houses, and did work that others refused to do for fear of the disease. Women have always cared about their communities when those in power ignored them.

In the 2000s, women's activism surged across the world, challenging war, domestic violence, exclusion from education, and more. In 2003, Liberian women formed a peace movement that was able to end a fourteen-year civil war. As a strategy, they conducted sex strikes as a means to pressure men to actively challenge the war. It worked. In 2006, women from the badlands of central India started a collective movement to stop sexual and domestic violence by intervening in the abuse and demanding husbands to acknowledge their behavior. Their efforts have been successful. Known as the Gulabi Gang, they still act as a commu-

nity resource for girls and women experiencing violence. In 2009 in Pakistan, 11-year-old Malala Yousafzai stood up to the Taliban by writing a series of blogs about how she was denied access to education and advocating for education for all girls. The Taliban tried to assassinate her. She survived a wound to her head and neck. In 2014, she received the Nobel Prize, becoming the youngest person ever to receive this honor, and in 2020, she graduated from Oxford University with a degree in philosophy, politics, and economics.

Nawal El Saadawi

by Juliet Schulman-Hall

Nawal El Saadawi, an internationally recognized feminist writer and doctor, died on March 21, 2021, at the age of 89. Born in Kafr Tahlah, Egypt, El Saadawi started her feminism at the age of 10 when she ate raw eggplant to blacken her teeth to ward off suitors for an arranged marriage. El Saadawi's resistance continued throughout her life, making her one of the most famous feminist activists for women's rights in the Arab world.

El Saadawi stated that she was constantly "dissatisfied with her surroundings." As a doctor, she witnessed the oppression of rural women in her community. She advocated against female genital mutilation, a practice that she experienced at the age of six. As a writer, she used words as an "act of rebellion against injustice" and a "weapon with which to fight the system."

Her resistance knew no bounds—fighting even against the government. In 1981, El Saadawi challenged Anwar Sadat's regime by protesting its lack of democracy and freedom. This led to her two-month imprisonment. In the same year, El Saadawi founded the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA), which focused on women's active participation in all spheres of society—socially, politically, culturally, and economically.

Despite imprisonment, death threats, and hate, El Saadawi continued to fight against injustice. In 2005, she ran for president of Egypt against Hosni Mubarak but later decided to boycott the election. In 2009, she established the Egyptian chapter of the Global Solidarity for Secular Society, which worked toward removing Islam as a state religion. Nawal El Saadawi's legacy and work is emblematic of a radical feminist voice for social, political, and religious change.

Women have since harnessed the power of the Internet and social media to create social change. In 2011, thousands of Arab women used Twitter, YouTube, and blogs to organize protests against oppressive regimes across the Middle East. Called the "Arab Spring" uprisings, women from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen led antigovernment and pro-democracy demonstrations that resulted in the fall of many gov-

ernments. As mobile phones become accessible to many worldwide, regular people began sharing information about events as they occurred on platforms with a global reach, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Now, hashtags, memes, videos, online petitions, and much more are a central tool for women's activism.

Women have started many social movements through hashtags, such as #MeToo, #SayHerName, and #FamiliesBelongTogether. The most influential movement for racial justice in the twenty-first century came from a hashtag created by three Black women organizers who started the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. When Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors created the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer George Zimmerman, they did not anticipate how the hashtag would change activism in the twenty-first century. Now, more than forty BLM chapters worldwide fight locally to end police brutality and state violence against Black people.

The founders of the Black Lives Matter movement

At the local, national, and transnational levels, women have made a significant impact on the world. Women have come together to raise awareness about issues they care about, organize local protests and direct actions, create community resources and mutual aid networks, and increase social justice a day at a time. Women have influenced governments from the outside but also met the needs of their communities directly.

Conclusion

Over the past one hundred years, women across the world have greatly increased their representation and power within political systems. Women have fought for and won the right to vote and to run for political office. In many parts of the world, they are now serving as heads of government, legislators, and judges as well as in other official roles. In these positions, many have worked to strengthen gender equality and social justice. But women have also sought influence and power outside formal political systems, through grassroots social movements and by working in their communities. While patriarchal forces have resisted and co-opted these efforts, and there is still a long way to go to achieve equality, women have made real progress both inside and outside of the system.

Learning Activities

1. US politicians often describe the United States as the greatest democracy in the world. But Baker and Rodrigues-Sherley cite Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2020 report, which argues that that the United States is currently "an unsteady beacon of freedom" (7). Read pp. 7-9 of the report, which discusses the United States. How does Freedom House support the argument that the United States is "an unsteady beacon of freedom"? What does Freedom House's argument have to do with transnational feminism?
2. What is the voting gender gap? How does it manifest?
3. What obstacles do women face to achieving representation in government? What are possible strategies for overcoming those obstacles?
4. Baker and Rodrigues-Sherley discuss politicians such as Dilma Rousseff (Brazil), Danica Roem (United States), Marielle Franco (Brazil), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (United States), Michelle Bachelet (Chile), Cristina Fernández de Kirchne (Argentina), Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica), and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia). Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these politicians and do some online research. What was your subject's path to politics? What office(s) does she hold / has she held? What values does she espouse? How do supporters and critics respond to her?
5. Baker and Rodrigues-Sherley discuss US organizations that encourage women to enter the electoral process, such as Women's Campaign Fund, Emerge America, Emily's List, the Victory Institute, National Women's Political Caucus, She Should Run, and Represent Women. Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these organizations and do some online research about it. How does your chosen organization support women's participation in the electoral process?
6. How do women participate in civil society beyond the electoral process? Provide at least three examples from the chapter. What do you learn about women's ability to effect social change from outside of the electoral system?
7. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: politics, political systems, democracy, monarchy, hereditary monarch, oligarchy, plutocracy, autocracy, compulsory voting, voluntary voting, voting gender gap, heads of state, heads of government, voting systems, voting rates, political parties, electoral systems, plurality-majority voting system, proportional representation system, mixed-member proportional system, gender-biased media coverage, descriptive representation, sub-

stantive representation, gender equality paradox, quota systems, reserved seat quotas, party quotas, legislative quotas.

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Image Attributions

Notes

1. Economic context and the welfare state, as well as political context, influence women's political participation. Women's political participation is greater in economically developed nations with a welfare state as well as in nations with inclusive electoral institutions and rules that produce more proportional electoral outcomes. These systems incentivize political parties to reach out to a variety of social groups.

WOMEN, WAR, AND PEACE

Amanda Milburn

War is a violent and destructive force. The historiography of war has traditionally focused on its military aspects and has therefore concerned itself predominantly with men. Such an approach masks both the gendered nature of warfare and its wide-ranging impact. This chapter explores the ways in which war and militarization affect women around the world. It will examine the patriarchal systems built and perpetuated during and after conflict and consider the extent to which women are able to exhibit agency within the confines of these systems. It concludes with a discussion of women's participation in peace and justice movements.

Gendering War

Men and women experience war differently. Even so, the study of conflict has historically ignored gender as a category of analysis, and even when gender is acknowledged, patriarchal discourse often remains. The pervasive assumption that domestic life is the realm of women and public life the purview of men belies the complex lived experiences of women. Feminist scholarship shows us a far more nuanced situation. The impact of war on women is not binary. War has disproportionately negative effects on women, especially those who exist within multiple categories of oppression. Militaries are masculine institutions and perpetuate patriarchal power relationships. Nevertheless, women do engage in the process of war-making. Conflict can redefine gender roles in a way that can offer opportunities to women, though these are frequently short-term rather than lasting changes. Postwar reconstruction often sees a resurgence of patriarchal systems and regimes.

The Dahomey Women Warriors of West Africa

by Andi Boyer

Although fighting in war has been reserved as a male role through much of history in western culture, in the 1700s and 1800s women in the Republic of Benin in West Africa (then called the Kingdom of Dahomey) were a formidable army. At that time called Mino ("our mothers"), they are currently referred

to as the "Dahomey Amazons." The Dahomey Amazon Army was composed of single women who voluntarily (by enrolling) and involuntarily (taken from among slaves or forced to enroll by male family members) became members of the militia. These warrioresses earned praises both from within their ranks as well as from their enemies. A French Foreign Legionnaire named Bern lauded them as "warrioresses . . . fight with extreme valor, always ahead of the other troops. They are outstandingly brave. . . well trained for combat and very disciplined."

In their own culture, they were highly celebrated and given lavish goods such as tobacco, alcohol, and slaves, but they were also required to remain single and without children, or any part in a family life. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Dahomey Amazons grew from six hundred warriors to more than six thousand (between 30 and 40 percent of the army) before the French government defeated them in the nineteenth century. The Dahomey Amazons were known as Huntresses, riflewomen, reapers, archers, and, later, gunners. The Dahomey Amazons lived by the motto "If soldiers go to war, they should conquer or die."

Women's Participation in War

Women actively participate in war in multiple complex and competing roles. Camp followers, civilians who travel with the military, provide informal yet essential services necessary for armies to function. The presence of women camp followers has been recorded from the Middle Ages onward, and their importance during the American Revolution (1765-83) has been particularly well documented, with war records indicating one woman camp follower for every fifteen revolutionary soldiers (Hawkesworth 2009, 557). These women, often wives and daughters of enlisted men, fulfilled the needs of the military by feeding, clothing, cleaning, and nursing as required. Women civilians supported the war effort in other ways. The homespun movement encouraged them to use locally grown materials to make cloth for themselves and for revolutionary troops. This domestic work was a political statement of patriotism and ensured the success of the resistance against the Townshend Acts via boycott of British goods. Women raised vast sums for the Continental Army and contributed to morale by writing poetry and prose praising the aims of the revolutionaries. During World War I (1914-18), women's support of militaries was formalized, and they served as auxiliaries in an official capacity, providing medical care to wounded soldiers among other responsibilities. Women became visible workers "at home" on all sides of the conflict. They filled roles vacated by men and took up work for the war effort in munitions factories in droves. In the United States, African American women were able to shift from domestic employment to work in offices and factories for the first time. During World War II (1939-45), women played an even larger role, reprising paid

employment, supporting government rationing schemes, and working with the underground resistance in enemy-occupied territories in China, France, and Poland.

Black "Rosie the Riveters"

by Sophie Brodish

When reflecting on World War II, much of the acknowledgment goes to individuals who served in the US armed forces. Around 1 million Black men and women served in the military during the war, representing the largest minority participation in the war effort. Yet today, the contributions of nearly half a million Black civilian counterparts are sidelined, despite their crucial role in the war efforts.

These Black civilians who filled domestic war-related roles within factories, shipyards, and along railroads were known as "Black Rosies." The term stems from the iconic Rosie the Riveter image, a white female worker dressed in blue coveralls and a red bandanna with the phrase "We Can Do It" underneath her bicep. The image still stands as a symbol for the millions of female laborers working on the US home front, but it erases the true diversity of the work force of the time.

The chance to assist in the war effort provided potential for economic empowerment for Black women, whose opportunities were often restricted to sharecropping and other domestic work, often with little prospect of progress. But the arrival of Black men and women to the war industries was not without pushback by their white counterparts. In 1941 the Fair Employment Practice Committee was created by President Roosevelt, banning discrimination when hiring for government contracts. Despite the order, the conditions for Black women and men remained abysmal, with much of their daily work involving verbal insult or actual injury. No provisions were made for the roughly 700,000 Black families that relocated to cities to fulfill these jobs.

With the conclusion of the war in 1945, the advances made in Black men and women's employment halted. Many of the plants across the country shut down, and the Black female welders, machinists, mechanics, and riveters were left without work. Nevertheless, the experiences of these "Black Rosies" laid the groundwork for civil rights activism in the following years.

Women civilians also participate in war by using gendered language and coding to encourage men to fight. British government propaganda in World War I appealed to British women to ensure their men enlisted. Women presented white feathers to symbolize cowardice to men not in uniform, a form of public humiliation that drew upon masculine ideologies for effectiveness. Since 1978, women in Afghanistan have played a pivotal role in encouraging their brothers, husbands, and sons to fight, first against the Soviet invaders and then against the Afghan government. A former mujahideen commander reported that mothers not only encouraged their sons to join the jihad, but also actively financed their expenses (Ahmadi and Lakhani 2016, 5). In her now-viral video, Asmaa Mahfouz sparked the protests that led to the January 2011 uprising in Egypt by calling on men and referencing their masculinity:

World War I recruitment poster: Women of Britain say GO, 1914

> If you think yourself a man, come with me on 25 January. Whoever says women shouldn't go to protests because they will get beaten, let him have some honor and manhood and come with me on 25 January.

Women's influence over men in wartime does not always take the form of encouragement. Cynthia Enloe interviewed a group of nongovernmental organization (NGO) staffers in 2015 and asked if they would receive family support if they enlisted in the military. She reports men from Mozambique and Malawi responding almost in unison, "my mother would never allow my brother to become a soldier" and "my mother does not think becoming a soldier is a respectable career choice for a young man" (Enloe 2015, 8).

While women predominantly participate in war as civilians, they also serve in most twenty-first-century militaries. Militaries have historically been predominantly male organizations. They provide an arena for men to gain access to leadership both within and outside of the institution, thereby perpetuating patriarchal systems. The eponymous hero in *Hamilton: An American Musical* illustrates this phenomenon. Hamilton's desire to lead a battalion is intrinsically tied up with his desire to "fly above [his] station after the war," an aspiration he later achieves (Miranda et al. 2015). Currently, women's level of inclusion in militaries varies but is generally far lower than that of men. They account for 30 percent of the Eritrean military; 15 percent of the US military, though with a larger proportion of women of color; 6 percent of the Japanese military; and 4 percent of the Polish military. While both men and women have mandatory service in the Israeli Defence Force, only 4 percent of women serve in combat positions, a trend echoed throughout the world. Feminist scholars cite the inherent patriarchal nature of militarization and war as the main explanatory factor here. Boys are socialized in a way that girls are not, and their experience of

combative games, competitive sport, and homosocial relationships molds them as potential soldiers from early childhood. The trope of men as warriors and protectors and women as those in need of protection is powerful. In this respect, Cynthia Cockburn argues, "war can seem the fulfilment of gendered destinies" (Cockburn 2013, 439).

Woman soldier in the Israel Defense Forces

The perception of women as in need of protection has been used to mobilize the military and garner public support for war. The post-9/11 "war on terror" (2001 to present) drew heavily on this narrative. First Lady Laura Bush gave the weekly radio address, normally delivered by President Bush, on November 17, 2001, to outline the "horror" of the Taliban Regime. Her core message, that the "fight against terrorism [was] also a fight for the rights and dignity of women," justified war on moral, gendered grounds (Yaqoob 2008, 150). The *Report on the Taliban's War against Women* was released by the US Department of State on the same day. Like Bush's speech, the report is emotive and uses protectionist language and imagery to justify American intervention in Afghanistan:

> The day was much like any other. For the young Afghan mother, the only difference was that her child was feverish and had been for some time and needed to see a doctor. But simple tasks in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan today are not that easy.
>
> The mother was alone and the doctor was across town. She had no male relative to escort her. To ask another man to do so would be to risk severe punishment. To go on her own meant that she would risk flogging.
>
> Because she loved her child, she had no choice. Donning the tent-like burqa as Taliban law required, she set out, cradling her child in her arms. She shouldn't have.

As they approached the market, she was spotted by a teenage Taliban guard who tried to stop her. Intent on saving her child, the mother ignored him, hoping that he would ignore her. He didn't. Instead he raised his weapon and shot her repeatedly. Both mother and child fell to the ground. They survived because bystanders in the market intervened to save them. The young Taliban guard was unrepentant—fully supported by the regime. The woman should not have been out alone.

This mother was just another casualty in the Taliban war on Afghanistan's women, a war that began 5 years ago when the Taliban seized control of Kabul.

The Triumph of *For Sama*

by Ramona Flores

In Waad al-Kateab's 2019 documentary *For Sama*, the director recounts and films her life for five years during the Syrian uprising, framed as a letter to her daughter. The film focuses on not only the immediate danger that al-Kateab faces, but also the radical hope that she has for Sama's future beyond the conflict.

Brutal in its honesty, the film shows children torn from their loved ones, bloody and scared, as al-Kateab documents the volunteer hospital's desperate attempts to help the people of Aleppo. In a poetic maneuver through the gore and violence of war, al-Kateab captures the gravity of motherhood, love, and partnership in the nest of turmoil. By framing the documentary as a letter that recounts the early years of her daughter's life, al-Kateab captures both the suffering and the hope of people living on the ground in a battlefield, a story that is rarely told from the perspective of a woman, let alone a new mother.

Throughout the film, al-Kateab reveals what has to be done when your own government is the enemy, from education and emergency medical services to body recovery and burial. There is no revolution handbook, and this revolution was in the hands, hearts, and minds of the young people who stayed in East Aleppo to help the innocent civilians caught in the mousetrap of war.

In chronicling her life, al-Kateab creates a beautiful tapestry of the human experience. Life, death, her own marriage in a single room, the birth of her daughter in their makeshift hospital, the unbearable weight of loss. Through it all, al-Kateab emphasizes hope. Her own words sum it up perfectly, "the sound of our songs was louder than the bombs falling outside."

Janine Rich explored Eastern discourses surrounding Muslim women in the context of the war on terror and concluded that the fascination with the burqa, or veil, showed a "racist yet highly sexualised fascination with the 'exotic Orient'" (Rich 2014). Women from the Middle East have historically been constructed as passive victims without agency, and this simplistic rhetoric was used to legitimize the war on

terror. Here, Rich argues, the western feminist belief that Muslim women are oppressed was used as justification for violence.

In recent years, militaries have turned their attention to gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is not simply an attempt to increase the number of women enlistees, but to effectively include consideration of gender on policies and procedures at all levels. It is fair to say that the former aim is easier and has been more successfully achieved than the latter, and women's participation has increased over the past decades. Bans on women in combat roles are gradually being lifted: Germany and New Zealand lifted theirs in 2001, Australia and the United States in 2013, and the United Kingdom in 2016. The increase in women's participation in militaries is not a solely western phenomenon. In 2016, around 35 percent of the Kurdish forces engaged in the fight against ISIS were women (Fitriani and Matthews 2016, 17). They were especially feared by the enemy, as legend says that if a fighter is killed by a woman, the route to heaven is barred. While women in developing countries are increasingly able to engage in armed combat, their experiences are markedly different to their western counterparts, and they do not have access to the same leadership and career opportunities (Prescott 2016, 201). The participation of western women is not without issue, either. The expanded inclusion of women seen in militaries worldwide has not been driven by a desire to promote gender equality, but rather because the execution of operational necessities in modern warfare, especially as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, are more effective when women are included (Egnell 2016, 74).

The British Army (n.d.) recruitment website for women emphasizes equal pay and promotion by merit, yet in 2018 women made up 11 percent of the workforce but 23 percent of formal complaints, almost half of which focused on bullying, harassment, and discrimination (BBC News 2019). A 2014 survey of all active-duty women in the US Army found that more than a quarter had experienced sexual harassment or gender discrimination during the previous year (Szayna et al. 2015, 38). Women on the front line make men uneasy precisely because militaries are designed around the patriarchal rhetoric that stresses the need for the protection of women. This belief is unfounded within the context of armed combat: a psychological research study following women deployed to Iraq in 2004 found that they were more resilient and less likely to develop posttraumatic stress disorder than their male counterparts (Munsey 2008, 32). Some militaries have attempted to address issues of gender discrimination within the ranks. A study looking at mixed rooms in the Norwegian Army, a feature of the Scandinavian military system for twenty-five years, found that more exposure and interaction between men and women fosters increased mutual understanding and decreased sexualization (Ellingsen, Lilleaas, and Kimmel 2016, 151-64). Thus far, this policy has not been replicated on a larger scale.

Countries That Allow Women in Combat

by Janet Lockhart

Women and girls in all countries have been affected, and even died, during conflicts, as civilians, as guerillas, or as military noncombatants. Many countries have included women in their military forces for centuries, commonly as nurses, administrative personnel, doctors, engineers, cooks, equipment transporters, and other roles.

Today, some countries still do not allow women in the military. Others allow women to enlist in the armed forces, but not in combat positions. Some permit women in combat roles, but with restrictions. A growing number of countries allow women to fulfill any role including combat roles, in their militaries: infantry (foot soldiers), fighter pilots, operators of artillery or other weapons systems, search and rescue teams, special operations, and armored units such as tanks and other equipment.

At present, countries that allow women in combat roles of some kind include Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Botswana, Canada, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Korea, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In general, however, the percentage of women in these roles is low.

Of course, even if they can serve in all military roles, gender equality and fair treatment for women in the armed forces are not guaranteed. And even when female soldiers are accepted and appreciated, they can still be subject to scrutiny of their beauty.

In many countries, arguments against women in combat are fierce and ongoing. Reasons to exclude women include their physical or mental fitness for combat, the fact that they may become pregnant or already have children (forgetting that men are also parents?), and the "cohesion" of units that include women. Importantly, countries that have research supporting the benefits of including women in combat roles include Denmark, Romania, Sweden, and even the United States.

Australia's first woman prime minister, Julia Gillard, said, "I have a view that men and women are equal. A few years ago I heard [defense chief general] Peter Cosgrove say that men and women should have an equal right to fight and die for their country. I think he is right about that."

Women who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) are doubly impacted by the need for mainstreaming. Most western, industrialized nations allow openly gay service members, though for many nations this is a relatively new policy. International law has played an important part: a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in 1999, for example, led the UK military to revise their ban on LGBTQI+ inclusion. In the United States, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was a policy in place from 1994 to 2011. This meant that gay and lesbian service members could not be asked to disclose their sexual orientation but could be discharged if they revealed it. The policy was repealed in 2011. While service members no longer have to hide their sexual orientation, prejudice persists: the code of conduct for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forbids discrimination, but they do not have the means to ensure compliance (Polchar et al. 2014, 69). In addition, only twenty countries allow transgender personnel to serve openly in their militaries. The United States allowed transgender individuals to serve openly between 2016 to 2019, albeit in limited circumstances. The reversal of this policy was announced in 2017 by President Trump via a series of tweets, reading in their entirety:

> After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail. Thank you. (@realDonaldTrump, July 26, 2017)

A number of British military commanders, along with the UK Ministry of Defence, responded to state their pride in British transgender personnel and to emphasize their important contributions (BBC News 2017). Despite both international and internal censure, Department of Defence Instruction 1300.28 came into force on April 2, 2019. President Biden reversed the ban via executive order on January 25, 2021, stating his belief that "gender identity should not be a bar to military service, and that America's strength is found it its diversity" (White House 2021).

Individuals protesting the transgender military ban in the United States

The Homomonument: Remembering the Experiences of LGBTQI+ People

by Janet Lockhart

It may not be common knowledge that homosexual people were persecuted during the Holocaust along with other groups, but many lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) people were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered during the Nazi regime. Starting shortly after the end of World War II, COC Nederland, the longest-operating gay rights organization, began to advocate for a monument recognizing the experiences of LGBTQI+ people.

Finally, in 1979, the Homomonument was commissioned. Designed by Karin Daan, a resident of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, it was unveiled to the public in 1987. The Homomonument incorporates three pink triangles—the symbol gay men were forced to wear in Nazi concentration camps, now repurposed as a symbol of LGBTQI+ pride—pointing toward other important sites in Amsterdam, such as the home of Anne Frank. On May 4, the Netherlands' Annual Remembrance Day, people lay wreaths to commemorate the victims of persecution.

> The Homomonument's meaning now extends to include all people who were or are persecuted, oppressed, or silenced because of their sexual identities. Monuments with similar meanings have been placed in several cities, including Berlin and San Francisco. History must not repeat itself.

Historically, feminist scholars have fallen into two camps when it comes to views on women in the military. "Right to fight" feminists argue that women should be allowed to serve and that blocking their participation in combat perpetuates the view of women as inferior. Others argue that the military is masculinist and violent, and that encouraging women to participate legitimizes a patriarchal institution. This reflects a wider feminist issue: Is it better to challenge the patriarchy from within male-dominated institutions and systems, or remake them from scratch? Claire Duncanson and Rachel Woodward add an interesting dimension to this argument (Duncanson and Woodward 2016, 3-21). Gender mainstreaming, they argue, combines both approaches, drawing on "sameness" to show why women should be allowed to join the military but also "difference" by demonstrating a new way of soldiering: collaborative, communicative and constructive.

Gendered Effects of War

Women who avoid active participation in conflict cannot avoid its effects. The traditional, ungendered assumption that war affects all people equally does not take into account the realities of twenty-first-century warfare. Research suggests that 90 to 95 percent of casualties in the First World War were soldiers (Kvarving and Grimes 2016, 9). Modern methods of warfare have reversed this trend, and now civilians, predominantly women, account for the vast majority of fatalities. Their experiences during war are heavily gendered. Unequal power relationships mean women suffer more when it comes to economic deprivation, the disruption of education, and sexual violence. This is especially the case for those who are simultaneously members of other minority groups. Women are also more likely to be negatively affected by post-conflict situations: they, along with the children they are responsible for, comprise 80 percent of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide.

War exacerbates existing inequalities within society, and societies that are less equal are more likely to go to war. This interplay has a material impact on women. Asa Ekvall compared data on gender equality, taken from the World Values Survey and the Global Gender Gap Index, with data on conflict taken from the Uppsala Conflict Database and the Global Peace Index (Kvarving and Grimes 2016, 13). She found strong correlations between lack of political and socioeconomic gender equality and armed conflict. Women in war-torn societies are more likely to live in poverty to begin with. The negative financial consequences of war therefore have a larger impact. In agricultural societies, displacement severs women from their home and means of production simultaneously. Women who remained at home before war suffer when the "traditional" male breadwinner is absent. Those who attempt to find work in these circumstances must grapple with scarce employment opportunities, incompatibility with familial responsibilities, and exposure to the risk of physical danger outside of the home. Economic deprivation can have horrifying consequences: in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Cambodia, women have been forced to sell one of their children to ensure the others' survival (Brittain 2002, 3). Despite these difficulties, war has also offered women new opportunities in the workforce. An anonymous Syrian woman interviewed as part of a humanitarian research project into women, work, and war explained, "Women [in Syria] now know they can do anything—but they learned this lesson the hardest way possible" (Buecher and Aniyamuzaala 2016, 30).

Vietnamese mother and her children fleeing Qui Nhon, 1965

Girls have fewer educational opportunities globally, and this trend is compounded in wartime. Societal upheaval caused by conflict disrupts schooling for all children. Extremist factions, including the Taliban and ISIS, have banned female education. Interestingly, other factions have encouraged education for girls: a woman FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) commander told a peace process advisor that she joined the guerilla group at age 13 in order to learn to read (Bouvier 2016, 15). But this story is an exception to the general rule. Even when schools are able to remain open, girls are less likely to attend. It may be too dangerous or difficult to travel. Economic deprivation means families do not have the funds to send their daughters to school or need them to leave education in order to take up paid employment and contribute to the family purse. Girls may also choose or be forced into early marriage for economic reasons, also necessitating them to abandon education. During the first four years of the ongoing civil war in Yemen (2015 to present), forced and early marriage tripled, and 25 percent of households are currently headed by women under age 18 (International Rescue Committee 2019). Similar patterns can be seen in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria. Lack of access to education obviously affects women on an individual level, but it also has implications for society at large, both during war and afterward. Sustainable population growth is more likely when girls are educated, as they go on to have fewer children. The World Bank

maintains that education is "a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability" (World Bank 2020).

March against FARC in Colombia

Sexual violence against women has been used as a systematic tool of warfare for millennia. Estimates of sexual assault in twentieth-century wars around the world are sobering: between 20,000 and 80,000 Chinese women were raped in the six-week Nanjing Massacre in 1937; 200,000 Bangladeshi women during the nine-month Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971; 500,000 Rwandan women, predominantly from the Tutsi ethnic group, over a hundred days of Rwandan Genocide in 1994; 10,000-50,000 Bosniak women in the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995. These are just a handful of examples. A report published by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance in 2007 lists sexual violence associated with conflict in fifty-one countries in the preceding twenty years (Cockburn 2013, 440). Feminist scholars have highlighted the ways in which mass sexual assault has been designed to "send a message" to the men of the opposing force, reducing women to possessions to be defiled (Enloe 1984, 5). Sexual assault in warfare can be an example of intersectional oppression. During the Genocide of Yazidi people, perpetrated by ISIS from 2014 to 2017, thousands of women were sold into sexual slavery, a form of strategic ethnic cleansing. The rescue of Yazidi women continues in 2021. LGBTQI+ women have been subject to targeted homophobic and transphobic rape during conflict, notably in the ongoing Colombian (1964 to present) and Syrian (2011 to present) civil wars. Women with disabilities are more likely to suffer human rights violations during and after war, compounded by the fact women are at higher risk of becoming disabled during armed conflict (Ortoleva 2017, 12).

The use of sexual assault as a military tactic can be linked to the strength of patriarchal ideologies in peacetime society. If male family members are expected to protect women from sexual assault, their absence during wartime is palpable. The failure of the state to prevent discrimination of and violence against women sends a message that women's lives matter less, and systematic sexual violence can be attributed to this viewpoint (Jefferson 2004, 2). Even the Geneva Convention, the core of international humanitarian law, is patriarchal in scope. The treaty for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War states that women "shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault." Coercion against women is here viewed through a protectionist lens. While the Geneva Convention outlawed rape in 1949, sexual assault as a war crime, rather than as a side effect of war, has only been fully acknowledged as such in the past twenty years. Victoria Brittain argues the reason is that during the Bosnian war the women raped were white and European, and therefore attracted mass media attention and censure in the West (Brittain 2002, 6). The United Nations (UN)

Security Council adopted Resolution 1820, condemning the use of sexual violence as a tool of war, only in 2008, far later than one might expect.

Sexual violence against women does not stop the moment the war is over. Women are in danger of assault as refugees and internally displaced persons. Organizations whose job it is to help sometimes contribute to this problem. The presence of UN soldiers in refugee camps, for example, increases the presence of prostitutes, often under age 18. These women and girls lack agency, and this transactional sex is in fact another form of sexual assault. Refugees are unlikely to have access to contraception, meaning that for some women there is an increased risk of pregnancy and the stress it entails. The experience of assault has a long-lasting impact. Studies have shown that up to 29 percent of survivors of sexual violence in eastern DRC were stigmatized and rejected by their families and communities (Albutt et al. 2017, 211-27). Women living in societies that are being rebuilt after conflict are also not immune to sexual violence. Jocelyn Kelly et al. plotted incidences of conflict-related fatalities during Liberia's civil war (1999-2003) against incidences of intimate partner violence (IPV) disclosed in the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey to demonstrate that women who lived in a district that experienced four to five cumulative years of conflict were almost 90 percent more likely to experience IPV than those living in a district with no history of conflict (Kelly et al. 2018, 1-11). Rebecca Horn et al. (2014) interviewed women in postwar Liberia and Sierra Leone to determine their perceptions on the link between conflict and IPV. Women cited the existing patriarchal structures of their communities, including financial dependence and traditional gender relations, as well as the normalization of male violence as a response to frustration during war. More positively, some interviewees believed that opportunities for women to become economically active postconflict simultaneously decreased IPV, both by reducing pressure and associated frustration on male breadwinners and by offering women the means to escape violent relationships.

Women's experiences during conflict and afterward can differ depending on their age and life stage. An example of this phenomenon in action can be seen in the Sahrawi Refugee camps. The camps are composed of those who fled the Western Sahara War (1975-91) and their descendants, and the camps have been internationally commended as ideal spaces for women. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees claimed in 2004 that "Saharan society is primarily matriarchal and women are totally empowered" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, 91-108). Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh investigated these claims, interviewing more than a hundred refugees and fifty aid providers and Sahrawi solidarity activists. She found that while women play a key role in all aspects of life in the camps, their sphere of influence is dependent on age, tribal background, education, and marital status. Women may be (hyper)visible throughout the camps and have access to a wide variety of services and facilities, but there are few spaces for girls outside of their tents despite corresponding public areas for boys and young men. Unmarried women and girls, especially elder daughters, are instead expected to help their mothers with household tasks and care of younger siblings.

We must avoid simplistically dividing women into active participants in war and victims of war. Unequal power relationships affect all women, and it is possible to be simultaneously both a victim and an aggressor. Chris Coulter explores this in the context of the Sierra Leone civil war (1991-2002) (Coulter 2008, 54-73). During the war, 10 to 30 percent of all fighters were women and girls. These fighters were viewed by the rest of the population as monstrous and cold-blooded, even though the vast majority were abducted by rebels and subject to sexual assault if they hesitated when ordered to kill. The trope of women as peaceful does not exist in rural Sierra Leonean traditional culture, and so women fighters were shocking precisely because they demonstrated their true wild and dangerous nature, not because they transgressed gender norms. Coulter argues that the brutality of these fighters toward civilians can be interpreted as a form of redirected revenge perpetuating the cycle of violence, and that while they were not solely victims, they too had little in the way of agency.

First female staff officer on the African continent, Brigadier General Kestoria Olufemi Kabia of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

War as a Mechanism of Social Transformation

War has long been conceptualized as a pivotal moment in the lives of women, eventually improving their lives. Joan W. Scott outlined variations of the "watershed theme" applied to World War I and World War II (Scott 1984, 2-6). Historians and feminist theorists have argued that during wartime women demonstrated their abilities and received jobs in return, women's "good behavior" was rewarded with the right to vote, and women's natural antipathy to war gave them the opportunity to assert themselves in peacemaking organizations. These, Scott argues, are simplistic approaches to a complex topic. It is true that women achieve access to traditionally male spaces during conflict. Women's employment in Britain increased by

50 percent during World War I. Up to 6 million women in the United States joined the workforce between 1942 and 1945. Women contributed to the war effort, working in the new munitions factories and filling a wide variety of jobs left open by men who joined the military. Waterloo Bridge in London, finished at the end of World War II, is colloquially known as the "Ladies' Bridge," as many of the construction workers who built it were women. Whether the gains women make in wartime continue after the conflict is over is another question. Extremist, highly patriarchal factions often fill the gaps left after war. Even in democratic societies, men who cannot work have their gender identity threatened and want to renegotiate. After World War II the number of British women working quickly returned to prewar levels. In the United States the average age of women at marriage and the average age at which they had their first child dropped significantly. This trend also occurred throughout Europe and Asia, and "baby boomers" are still the largest generational cohort in many countries. Media from the 1950s reflects the role of women as wives and mothers, and women in the workplace are nearly invisible. Resurgent patriarchy in action can also be found after more contemporary conflicts. Reconstruction itself can be heavily gendered. In postwar Iraq, humanitarian aid was distributed by mosques, and according to Zainab Salbioff, this meant that women were required to dress in specific ways to gain access to food (Salbioff, Moody, and Mantilla 2003, 9). In the former Yugoslavia, women were urged to leave the workforce and return home to boost the population by having more children (Cockburn 2013, 437-38). Algerian freedom fighters and Colombian guerillas were heartbroken to be effectively told to "get back in the kitchen" (Brittain 2002, 7).

Women workers in action at the Pictou shipyard, Nova Scotia, 1943

Despite customary attempts to reinstate unequal power relationships with women, there are some examples of women retaining gains made during conflict. Victoria Brittain suggests women who spend wartime in exile are more likely to hold on to power after the war: after the twenty-four-year exile of East Timorese independence activists during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1975-99) and the thirty-year exile of the African National Congress during South African apartheid (1960-90), women returned to 30 percent of political seats in both cases (Brittain 2002, 7). Similarly, women in the Kurdish diaspora have been able to actively participate in reconstruction efforts in their new homes (Mojab and Gorman 2007, 58-85). Universal suffrage followed World War I in much of Europe, though we must not make the mistake of ignoring decades of work by women's suffrage movements before and after the conflict. Women have also been involved in peacemaking and rebuilding nations after war.

Women and Peacemaking

War and militarization are inherently patriarchal and perpetuate gender inequality. Women have aimed to rectify this as peace activists during and after conflict. This does not mean, however, that women are inherently peaceful or that peace is intrinsically feminine. Brounéus (2014, 125-51) demonstrates this in her exploration of the women and peace hypothesis in the context of postconflict Rwanda. She analyzed data from a survey of 1,200 Rwandans conducted in 2006, twelve years after the 1994 genocide in which 800,000 people were murdered. Her findings showed women were significantly more negative than men in their attitudes toward trust, coexistence, and the *gacaca*, community justice courts. The women surveyed reported experience of more traumatic events than men, as well as higher levels of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She concluded that as more women are left to survive the atrocities of war, they may carry a heavier burden of war trauma and that the women and peace hypothesis does not hold in the wake of war. Ascribing peacefulness as a feminine characteristic is in itself patriarchal and can lead to dangerous assumptions about women's ability to participate in the public sphere. Nevertheless, the inclusion of women in peacemaking and reconstruction efforts is important, especially as research suggests sustainable peace is more likely when women are involved (Principe 2017, 1).

Woman speaking before *gacaca* court in Rwamagana district

Women Peace Activists

Women in Western Europe mobilized existing feminist groups during World War I, as they believed full participation of women was necessary to achieve lasting peace. In February 1915, a small conference of Women's Suffrage Associations from Belgium, Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands agreed to arrange and finance an International Congress of Women. The congress took place in April 1915 in The Hague.

Traveling across war-torn Europe was no mean feat, and the women also had to cope with the censure of the press. British newspapers referred to the attendees as "blundering," "babblers," and "Pro-Hun Peacettes" (Kay, n.d., 2). Even so, 1,136 women attended, representing twelve countries impacted by World War I. The Congress endorsed two principles: that "international disputes should be solved by pacific means" and that "the parliamentary franchise should be extended to women" (Addams, Balch, and Hamilton 1915). They passed twenty resolutions in furtherance of these aims, including proposing the establishment of a Society of Nations and International Court of Justice. Two years later, an all-female peace delegation presented their resolutions to President Woodrow Wilson. His fourteen-point plan echoed many of their proposals. The congress became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), still active today. In 2020 they are focusing attention on structural racism, joining Black Lives Matter activists to advocate defunding and demilitarizing police forces in the United States. The League of Nations, suggested by the congress, was formed in January 1920, and this organization was later succeeded by the UN.

Dorothy Detzer of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom questions speaker, 1945

Women have continued their work as peace activists in the contemporary era. The Women in Black protest group, founded by Israeli women in 1988, describes itself as a "world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence." The group is explicitly feminist and believes that male violence against women and war are inherently interlinked. The movement has spawned vigils and nonviolent direct action as a form of war protest in many countries and in many different guises. Women in Black have protested the systematic inequalities of racial

capitalism in postapartheid South Africa, personal and public violence against women in Bangalore, and the Serbian regime's violence against women in Belgrade, to name but three examples. During wartime it is difficult for women to participate in action toward peace because they are most likely to be oppressed. In some cases, though, women have successfully used their ascribed gender role to achieve their aims. In Kenya, Sisters without Borders formed in 2014. Among other activities, Sisters without Borders focuses on ensuring that husbands, brothers, and sons do not join Al-Shabaab, an extremist militant group. The Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace cleverly mobilized their womanhood to achieve peace. Married women threatened to withhold sex until the conflict was over. In 2003 a group of two hundred women surrounded the peace talks and blocked anyone from leaving. To avoid being arrested, they threatened to strip naked, an act feared by the men involved who believed it would curse them. The peace talks were successful, and Liberia went on to elect one of the leaders their first female head of state (Principe 2017, 7).

Out of 106 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, 17 have been women, a higher percentage than any other Nobel Prize. Two presidents of WILPF, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, won the prize in 1931 and 1946, respectively. Betty Williams and Mairead Maguire, joint winners in 1976, cofounded a mass movement focused on ending the Troubles in Northern Ireland and marched with more than ten thousand Catholic and Protestant women to call for peace. Wangarĩ Muta Maathai won in 2004 for her contribution to "sustainable development, democracy, and peace." She was both the first African woman and the first environmentalist to win the prize, and in her Nobel lecture she commended the committee for linking the critical issues of environment and democracy. In 2011 the prize was jointly awarded to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkol Karman "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work," the former two for their actions during and after the Liberian peace talks. Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel laureate, won in 2014 for her struggle against the suppression of children and young people, and for the right of all children to an education.

Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the most recent woman winner and the first Iraqi and Yazidi to be awarded a Nobel Prize, won in 2018 for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Nadia was captured by ISIS in August 2014 and held as a slave until she escaped three months later. She has since worked with the UN Security Council to draw their attention to human trafficking and set up Nadia's Initiative, a nonprofit organization focused on helping victims of sexual violence and to rebuild the Yazidi homeland. While these individual women have been recognized for their efforts to bring about peace, many more go unrecognized or have been unable to participate in the process at all.

Stronger Than Hate

by Sarah Baum

Try to imagine yourself living in a corner of the world that refuses to educate half the population. Now imagine yourself being part of that half and being denied the right to learn simply because you were born the wrong gender. Malala Yousafzai lived that life. Born in 1997 in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, she hungered for knowledge and education from an early age. But when the Taliban took control of her home region, she found herself being denied this basic human right, along with things like attending dances and watching television. It was 2007, and Malala was only 10 years old, but she became an outspoken advocate for the right of women and girls to be educated.

While she was sharing her voice, by the end of 2008, the Taliban destroyed more than four hundred schools. This didn't stop her. She appeared on television shows and wrote a blog about life under Taliban rule for the BBC, all while continuing to defy their dictates not to go to school. On October 9, 2012, while she was riding a bus home from school, two Taliban men stopped the bus and asked for her by name. They shot at her three times, hitting her in the head and leaving her for dead. Malala was only 15 years old; her crime, in their eyes, was the desire to learn.

Malala didn't die of her wounds, and miraculously she sustained little lasting physical harm and no brain damage. These men filled with hate who tried to steal her life and her knowledge failed at both attempts. Her assault could have silenced her, but instead it only spurred her to become more outspoken, more of an advocate. She continues to work tirelessly to see that all people, no matter their gender, have the same access to a quality education—all while attending school herself. At 17, just two years after her assault, she became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2020, she graduated from Oxford University. Malala remains a young woman who not even a Taliban bullet could stop from advocating education for all.

Women and UN Security Council Resolution 1325

On October 31, 2001, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (known as UNSCR 1325). The resolution aims to reverse the exclusion of women in the resolution of conflict by acknowledging women as critical actors to achieve peace at all levels, recognizing the importance of the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations. The declaration and plan of action outline a series of practical measures to achieve gender mainstreaming, including a target of 50 percent women leaders in

peace support operations, a gender affairs unit to be a standard component of all missions, and for women to be an integral part of all negotiating teams. UNSCR 1325 has had a positive impact on the participation of women in peacekeeping: between 1957 and 1989, only 20 women served as UN peacekeepers, increasing to 5,284 by January 2020, 6.4 percent of UN military and police personnel (Baldwin and Taylor 2020, 2). In the thirty-one major peace processes conducted worldwide between 1992 and 2011, however, women comprised only 9 percent of negotiators, 4 percent of signatories, 3.7 percent of witnesses, and 2.4 percent of chief negotiators (Kuehnast and Robertson 2016). The UN looks unlikely to meet its own targets, and independent experts have called for more work to ensure the goals of UNSCR 1325 are met (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002).

Nadia Murad Basee Taha speaks before the UN Security Council

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Twenty Years Later in Israel and Palestine

by Lauren Grant

October 2020 marked the twentieth anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace, and security. Besides recognizing the devastating and disproportional impact of conflict on women and girls, the resolution urges states to increase women's participation in conflict management and resolution, stressing "the importance of women's involvement in peace and security issues to achieve long lasting stability." While the landmark resolution serves as "a beacon in

the dual struggle against militarism and patriarchy," women's rights activists across the world have questioned its effectiveness twenty years later.

In the Middle East, women were calling for the "greater involvement of women in the quest for an equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum" long before the resolution's 2001 adoption, advocating for transformation of gender relations, an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, advancement of Palestinian self-determination, and meaningful reconciliation. Despite the perceived win for joint Israeli-Palestinian women's peace efforts, many claim the resolution has failed to create the transformational outcomes on which women's lives and freedoms in these territories depend.

Reasons for the failures are manifold: Dissatisfaction arising from Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories. "Negative political and socioeconomic impacts" on Palestinian women that impede the resolution's progress and subject them to further violence and marginalization. Patriarchal, sociocultural, and political norms in both Israel and Palestine that hinder women's participation in peace and security discussions. "Cleavages between women along social, ethnic, religious and economic lines" (Kevorkian 2010) often mean that even where women's involvement has increased, it has been limited to privileged, middle-class women, without including a diversity of lived experiences and perspectives, contrary to the resolution's binding obligations. Most hearty attempts to mainstream gender into the sociopolitical landscape have been limited to academic circles and nongovernmental organizations.

While a significant number of peacekeeping initiatives have been led by women in Israel and Palestine, "the voices of women are still silenced or dominated by those of their male counterparts," and impediments to implementation of UNSCR 1325 over the past two decades have actually allowed gender inequality to grow. Women's rights activists call for more intersectional ways of enacting the resolution, in which grassroots voices are placed at the center of solutions for peace, and the needs of all women are accurately reflected at the negotiating table.

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Feminist scholars have criticized UNSCR 1325 for perpetuating the very gender norms that contribute to women's inequality and likelihood to be negatively affected by war (True 2009, 41-50). Women are represented as needing protection from men, and other facets that make them more vulnerable during war are not considered. This protectionist narrative can influence the experience of women peacekeepers, whose mission leaders may not allow them full involvement in peacekeeping missions on the basis of their gender and perceived need for protection (Baldwin and Taylor 2020, 1). Diversity in womanhood is also not con-

sidered, and so women are often viewed as a homogenous group rather than as individuals with different needs. There is, however, some evidence of progress over the past decade. In 2014, Miriam Colonel-Ferrier was the first woman to act as chief negotiator and sign a final peace accord with a rebel group, ending the forty-year conflict between the Filipino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. During the Colombian peace process in 2016, one-third of delegates were women, and a gender subcommission was included in a peace process for the first time. The inclusion of women from diverse racial and economic backgrounds broadened the agenda. The final peace treaty contained provisions seeking gender equality, including plans to address socioeconomic issues and LGBTQI+ discrimination (Cóbar, Bjertén-Günther, and Jung 2018, 14). These two recent examples show how peace processes can be improved if women actively participate.

UN Malaysian women peacekeepers, 2012

Conclusion

We must examine war using gender as a category of analysis to understand its true cost. War and militarization perpetuate patriarchal systems, and women suffer more from socioeconomic changes, displacement, and violence during and after conflict. Those who actively participate in war are subject to an inequitable distribution of power despite ongoing attempts to implement gender mainstreaming. While war can sometimes disrupt existing unequal gender structures, these are often re-made. Women have historically been excluded from reconstruction efforts on a mass scale, even though their inclusion makes sustained peace more likely. In recent years, women peace activists have made great strides in this arena, but further work to consolidate these opportunities and improve the lives of women is vital.

Learning Activities

1. Milburn argues that it is crucial to use gender as a category of analysis when discussing war and militarization. How does she support her argument?
2. In what ways do women participate in war, according to Milburn?
3. In what ways has protecting women been used to justify the US war on terror?
4. What is gender mainstreaming in the military? How does it affect women and LGBTQI+ members of the military?
5. What are the gendered effects of war, according to Milburn?
6. Milburn discusses several peace activist groups, such as Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (US), Women in Black (Israel), and Sisters without Borders (Kenya). Working alone, with a partner, or in a small group, choose one of these organizations and conduct online research on it. What are the specific aims of the organization? How do activists work to support those aims? What do you learn about peace activism from your research?
7. Add the following key term to your glossary: gender mainstreaming.

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RELIGION IN WOMEN'S LIVES WORLDWIDE

Shannon Garvin

At a glance, the condition of women in religion across the globe often appears bleak. Religious systems foster and promote the power and voices of men at the expense of the women who make up the majority of adherents. Long-standing traditions and cultural or familial ties often make it difficult, if not impossible, for women to speak or to act on their own behalf. No major religion has ever allowed women to remain agents of their own spiritual destiny—each has eventually shuttered women out of its leadership and practices, leaving them subservient to men within official structures of the faith. Yet women do make up the majority of practitioners in every religion.

That leads us to ask why women continue to participate in religions that sideline or subordinate them. Are women simply passive recipients of religious teachings that relegate them to submission? Do they simply accept their oppression? Why don't they leave?

Some do. We also know that many push back against the constraints of beliefs and practices that relegate them to second class status. Some do so by staying within their religious tradition and working for change. Others seek different religious traditions that offer a more egalitarian vision and empower them to live and work as people of faith.

There are no simple solutions when it comes to women and religion, but there are a lot of stories we can hear and a lot of hard questions to ask of ourselves and others. There are patterns, there are leaders, there are sacred texts and ancient stories, there is faith beyond ourselves, and there is hope in despair. Women are resilient and strong. They have carved lives out of deserts of despair and rocks of indifference. The voice and practice of one woman can change an entire generation. The global community in which we live now has given women unprecedented access to the stories of other women across their differences. This allows us to learn from women of faith and to come alongside women all around the world. All of us can support the work of women to continue to generate wholeness and well-being from within each religion and culture. In this chapter we will learn how to support women and men as they regenerate their own religious systems and structures from within their cultures and experiences, supported by their own ancient texts and stories, to create space for each person to actively and freely engage their own religion in their own particular cultural context.

American, BIPOC, Buddhist: Interview with Claudia Nuñez

by Janet Lockhart

JL: *What brought you to Buddhism?*

CN: Growing up in the Dominican Republic, I saw a mix of traditions, such as West African spiritual/nature practices incorporated into the dominant Catholicism. My parents were Christian *and* meditated daily.

Later, I explored, reading the Qur'an, and visiting Christian temples—Buddhism made sense to me. Its "philosophy" aspect allows any spiritual affiliation. I appreciate its focus on being part of the world and spiritual at the same time.

JL: *Do you face any challenges as a female BIPOC Buddhist?*

CN: Some of the challenges are the same as in any spiritual practice. I may be the only person of color in a sangha/temple; I may feel "other."

However, that would not get in the way of my immersion in Buddhist practice. The point is to let go of *all* your identities, to figure out your own true nature so labels don't define you.

JL: *What do you want people to know about Buddhism?*

CN: The media is over-focused on the principle of mindfulness. It goes hand in hand with compassion, loving kindness, and sympathetic joy [Sanskrit: *mudita*, feeling delight at another person's well-being].

JL: *How does Buddhism enact transnational activism?*

CN: Buddhism emphasizes interdependence. The concept of the "global sangha" (a community without borders) reflects the tendency for transnational activism. "Engaged Buddhism" supports the struggles of others, including women, the Indigenous peoples of Washington state, the people of Tibet . . .

It is easier to engage in activism when your actions in the moment align with your true values. To be an activist, it is important to "sit and listen," to see the "other" within yourself.

A Little History

When new religions are founded or ancient religions begin massive transitions, women are always at the forefront of the work—they are teaching, organizing classes and groups, meeting community needs, and speaking on behalf of themselves and others. Jesus was surrounded by women, and a woman announced

his resurrection to the men. Mohammed's wives were his primary counselors as military advisors, businesswomen, and educators.

As religions spread, they require organization to preserve a sense of cohesion. While women remain the primary participants of religion, history and theology record them as eventually losing power and voice as men controlled the institutionalization of religions. Why does this happen? Because for most of history, women have been unable to control their own fertility, being primarily responsible for child-rearing and maintenance of the home. With their time and energy invested there, they have been prevented from leading in public. Women who hoped to avoid a life of marriage and childbearing often chose single life as a nun to remain focused on their spiritual work. Yet even these women found themselves under male authority as men built religions as patriarchal institutions.

God Said What?

by Sarah Baum

One of the most fundamental human rights is the ability to decide if and when to reproduce. This was easier said than done for most of human history, but with the twentieth century came effective and safe means of birth control. With these methods, women and men now could plan when, or when not, to have a child, but the issue didn't stay so clear-cut. Right next to the fundamental right to start a family (or not) is freedom of religion, and these two subjects butt up against each other in an interaction that is highly personal for believers.

The Catholic Church has long forbidden any means of birth control except the "rhythm method," holding that sexual intercourse is intended for procreation only. Protestants have been allowed access to birth control since 1930 (although it may or may not be encouraged), because there is nothing in scripture forbidding it. In Islam, some birth control is allowed because the Qur'an expresses that children need to be provided for, which can only be accomplished if the parents are ready to start a family. In Hinduism and Buddhism, there is no prohibition on the use of birth control. In Judaism, certain types of birth control are allowed.

These are just some broad beliefs, as all religions have various sects that are more or less conservative. Most interesting of all is how things are changing. The benefits of family planning are so great that there is a growing demand for changes in doctrine. As the methods and means of birth control advance and evolve, so do most religious views on the subject. Will we see a time when religion won't regulate this vital area of human life? Who can say?

Here we see another noticeable pattern in history. Either women slowly capitulate to men, or men slowly exert power over women. Religions themselves attempt to explain this universally repeated, historical phenomenon. The Bible speaks of the Fall, where the man Adam and woman Eve sinned by craving more knowledge than was beyond their abilities, knowledge that was for the divine and outside the nature of humans. Then God outlined the consequences—one of them being that women would crave men, and men would crave ruling over women. (Note: the Bible describes this as an outcome, not a punishment, as many people believe and teach.) Early Islamic writings record the words and actions of Muhammad and his wives, but after his death, his male followers continued to write interpretations of the original Qur'an and Hadith without including the wisdom or voices of his widows. These male writers eventually reinterpreted the role of women in Islam as nothing more than domestic servants and teachers of children. The early Vedas record women gurus, and the numerous Hindu gods are all "reimaginations" of the female goddess, but Hindu women are barred from many temples while they are menstruating.

Hindu women offering water of the Ganges River to the Sun God

Ancient texts record that men across cultures from Asia to Africa commonly feared the power of women's fertility—comparing it with the power of the earth to bring life and death. So men, fearful of what they could not do themselves, sought to control the creative power of the cosmos by controlling the women who possessed it. In an agrarian culture, where people cannot eat if they cannot grow their own food and babies come from women's bodies like crops come from the ground, it was easy to correlate evidence of this cosmic power to create life and even death with women, and to fear it.

In modern times, we still see how religions attempt to control women's sexuality and reproduction—from opposition to contraception and abortion to purity balls to laws that discriminate against queer and trans women. We see women who themselves accept and advocate for this control, believing it is the will of the

Divine. We also see women who resist and work within religious traditions to bring about change and create transformation toward equitable and life-affirming faith and practice.

In the rest of this chapter, we will draw from a wide variety of academic fields of knowledge to compare, learn, and develop compassion and understanding as we work to understand the relationship between people and religion and move into the future together. First, we'll discuss women in religion generally, and then we'll look at some of the ways women experience and participate in religion in homogenous communities, in refugee and immigrant communities, and in multireligious communities.

What Is Religion?

The ancient Greeks explored knowledge and used definitions to separate the process of knowing (philosophy) with what we know (the world) and how we choose to interact with the world and our knowledge (religion). For cultures that were influenced by the Greeks, religion is a way of understanding the world we live in and what happens beyond what we see. These beliefs consciously and unconsciously affect how we interpret events, how we live our lives today, and how we plan for the future. We see the influence of Greek thought in Christianity as it evolved in its first few centuries and later in Islamic jurisprudence. In other cultures, outside Greek influence, religion, and philosophy remain melded together as a whole, and the world is understood holistically. In these cultures, religion is not primarily about belief but about all of existence experienced as a unified whole.

The Diverse Divine

by Ramona Flores

Throughout history, mythology about the divine has included lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+) figures, either as gods themselves or as protectors of queer people. Stories of deities' origin and significance often play loosely with the gender binary, one example being the Hindu deity Vaikuntha Kamalaja, the androgynous form of the Hindu god Vishnu and his partner Lakshmi; another is the Greek Hermaphroditus. Ometeotl, an Aztec god of duality, was a self-created deity that presented as both male and female and contained every multitude of the world.

Classical Greek mythology included a number of gay, bisexual, lesbian, and intersex entities (Achilles, Apollo, Artemis, Bacchus/Dionysus, Callisto, Pan, Neptune, Zeus). Further presence of queer supreme beings can be found in Chinese mythology, with Tu Er Shen, the rabbit god, serving as the patron saint of homosexual love.

There are also many deities that serve as patrons of queer people. Xōchipilli, an Aztec god of art, games, and dance, also serves as the patron saint of homosexuals, and Tlazolteotl, the goddess of filth, purification, and illicit sex, was served by priestesses who cared for those who sought her blessings or cleansing, all of whom were said to be lesbians or transgender women.

In Chinese folklore, there is a story of an isolated island populated entirely by women, not unlike the legend of the Isle of Lemnos in Hellenic legend, where all relationships are between women, and reproduction is facilitated by the blowing of the wind when the island's inhabitants sleep on the beach.

These legends share similarities despite being geographically and culturally distant, with the connecting thread being a place where queerness is the norm.

Queerness is not a new invention or new revelation. It is tied deeply to humanity's origin stories and creation myths.

Religion is also about people's relationship to the sacred and the ways they make meaning of existence. For many people around the world, religion is one of the most significant means by which they understand and interact with the world around them and think about the world beyond what they can see. Religion not only provides a framework for understanding the world and events, but it also influences our decision-making as we live in that world. Religion offers explanations of significant and traumatic events. In most cultures, it also offers definitions of a being ("god") or multiple beings (pantheon) that interact with humans beyond the world we can see and touch. Religion is not just mystical; it is also practical. It grounds us to the earth where we live as well as the heavens beyond our reach. Women have always been at the forefront of creating a localized, life-giving system of religious practices that balance theological beliefs about the universe and cosmic spirits/deities with the everyday responsibilities of food and shelter in such a way that it nurtures both home and community and is adaptable over a life span as needs and responsibilities change. By the gendered necessity of caring for children, home, and neighbors, women have figured out how to practice religion that integrates these concerns. We can see evidence of this integration in home altars, care of local religious sites, and practices of hospitality and healing.

Women at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

Belief systems can be categorized as religions because they share commonalities in form and function. They define existence as well as practices. They attach meanings to locations and experiences. They explain the seen as well as the unseen. They call people to live outside of themselves in the larger community of humanity as well as in their local environment. Religions also define the parts and experiences of existence. They practice exclusion, as they name who is "in" and who is "out" by determining who does and does not share similar interpretations of reality. Originally, when religions were embedded in their local communities, religion, race, and environment were commonly all understood together as a localized whole—a group's understanding of their identity and existence. Later, as ethnic groups or individuals were displaced or traveled into different areas with different belief systems, religious definitions became part of "oppositional identity"—how we tell ourselves apart from "others."

Women's Religious Leadership

Over time, women became excluded from leadership and lost both voice and identity in their own religions even though they practiced and taught it in the home. Few religions gave women any alternative to marriage and childbirth. Women who desired their own spiritual agency had to give up home and family relationships to live under the authority of a man. Nuns and monks were common to Buddhism, but Buddha, compelled by his own lascivious youth, feared women's sexuality and confined the privileges of nuns within boundaries strictly controlled by local monks. Similarly, Catholic nuns were subservient to priests because only men could accurately reflect and authentically contain the image and work of God on earth. While women served as leaders in early Christianity, their leadership was limited and obscured as the

church became institutionalized. Women emerged again as public leaders in some of the dissenting traditions following the Reformation—among Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists, for example. Still, women's leadership among Protestant churches remained contentious, even as some women were ordained as ministers starting in the nineteenth century. Even today, the Catholic Church and many Protestant churches continue to exclude women from leadership. Only Daoism offered women free passage into religious service and retained their voice as primarily influencers. Nuns could rise to "Celestial Immortality," as sexual energy was valued as the basis for transformation, and the female cosmic force of yin was superior to the yang (Despeaux and Kohn 2003, 167 and 250). Daoist nuns were also free to create monastic communities; they could marry, and children were an assumed part of monastic life.

Women Clergy: Broadening Their Faith Communities

by Andi Boyer

Finding your "self" in modern Christian religions may prove challenging as a woman. Christianity has historically been practiced as a patriarchal religion, with different rules of acceptable behavior and expectations for male and female practitioners. Most biblical teachings portray women in a role that is subordinate to men, though the Catholic faith does grant sainthood to women recognized for "great deeds or meritorious conduct," which could be as varied as giving birth to a male saint or losing their lives in defense of their faith, as well as for their contributions to the Catholic church and their communities.

Recently, however, there seems to be a shift happening in some religious cultures. In formal western religions, women are beginning to be recognized in customarily patriarchal roles such as clergy. Although women have often provided a consistency of practice that holds a congregation together week after week, as they become part of the clergy, the diversity within their congregations expands and becomes inclusive of more races and identities.

Women as clergy seem to influence the expression of faith as well. Women are bringing into the ministry a perspective of becoming more focused on the actions of *living* their faith, compared to identifying one's merit by learning and remembering a set of rules, as seems to be a governing practice of a religious patriarchy. This inclusiveness provides an opportunity for people to take their god "out of the box" and define the divine in a way that is meaningful within their own lives while continuing to participate in a common community.

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Theology and Religious Texts

Religions are not monolithic even when they appear so at first glance. Their theology (beliefs) and practices are not static or identical over time and space. They vary from culture to culture. Despite concrete anchoring points in history, most religions today show creative varieties across cultures and history. For example, evangelical Christianity in the United States, with its emphasis on converting people and influencing politics, differs greatly from the ancient Christianity of Iraq or Palestine, where families live alongside their neighbors without the pressure to convert them or determine whether they can access health care or have an abortion. Likewise, Buddhism across Southeast Asia holds firmly to beliefs and practices that require women to return in their next life as men and excludes them from education and access to Nirvana in their female bodies. But Buddhism in the United States and Europe embraces and affirms not only women and men, but also those who are transgender or gender nonbinary. Within Islam today, the issue of veiling is a multilayered and complex practice that reflects interpretations of ancient texts as well as modern cultural contexts. In some places, veiling, which is not required by the Qur'an, is required by the civil and/or religious law for women. In other places, wearing a veil is banned by the government for being too religious. In none of these places are the women themselves allowed to choose how their dress does or does not reflect their religious beliefs. Historically, women rarely wore veils. But over the past few decades, an upsurgence in conservative Muslim influence (Wahhabism) and the ensuing inter-Islamic and anti-western violence forced women to veil and judged the purity of a local culture primarily on the appearance and subjection of its women. In other places, where women want to make their faith visible, some moderate Muslim women are choosing to wear hijab to make a public statement that is layered with political and religious sentiments. The current conversations about laws, modesty, stereotypes, personhood, and faith are an excellent example of the twists, turns, complications, and symbolisms of religion, culture, and gendered practices in the everyday lived experience of women.

Veiled women attend a mosque in the western Sahara

While official beliefs and practices of most religions have mostly been developed by men, women have also shaped religions from their unique perspectives and experiences. For example, rich traditions across the majority of Indigenous religious around the world honor women as keepers of sacred sites and relics as well as healers in their communities. Many groups also honor girls and boys as they come of age, with boys acknowledged for strength or prowess and girls for their ability to create and bring forth life. In Tamil Nadu, India, Manjal Neerattu Vizha (a turmeric bathing ceremony) is a celebration of a girl's onset of menstruation. While most Hindu ceremonies are led by men, this one is conducted mostly by women. It begins with ritual seclusion, where the girl is cared for by other girls and women and engages in ritual bathing, and ends with a public function in which people give the girls gifts, including silk sarees.

In Judaism, feminist thinkers have challenged traditional beliefs about women. Some have modified old practices. For example, some feminists have created Passover seders (ritual ceremonies) that center women. So instead of setting out a cup for the prophet Elijah, feminists set a cup for Miriam, the sister of Moses, who often becomes the primary character in the telling of the Passover story.

Scholars today are using the breadth of culturally specific experiences to reformulate theology and practices for today's cultures in which people of all genders experience spiritual agency. Contextual theologies recognize individual and group experiences as the starting place for constructing theologies. Kwok Pui-lan, for example, a displaced Christian postcolonial feminist Chinese theologian, notes that the Bible is "highly diverse and pluralistic," showing both the "indelible marks of imperialistic theology" and the challenges to the "dominant power" that have "liberating possibilities" (Kwok 2005, 8). Islamic scholars from

Southeast Asia to Africa are using the Qur'an to challenge the "cult of virginity" theology, which assumes that through marriage, men are to own a trophy wife to carry on their male line rather than create a life partnership of mutual respect. They also write against the subjugation of women under Sha'ria laws that highlight the difference between the Qur'an (written by Mohammed) and the early Hadith (interpretations written by Mohammed's friends and students) from the later Hadith interpretations that devalue women (interpretations written by men promoting their own cultural beliefs centuries after Mohammed died).

When we look at ancient texts from the Qur'an, to the Torah, to the Bible, to the Vedas, we must remind ourselves that the "winners write history" and theology. Those who are in the room shape the decisions that will be implemented outside the room and taught as "fact" even if they are little more than culturally influenced interpretations. Today, we have the privilege and the challenge to read between the lines of ancient texts and stories and interpretations and to notice what human voices and experiences are missing as well as those which are included. Then we can evaluate how the interpretation is incomplete and invite in those voices we need to complete the whole of our religious beliefs. This work is best done from inside each faith community. We do justice by asking hard questions of our own religion and supporting honest questions asked by adherents of other religions.

Impacts of Colonization

More than any other outside force, colonization has affected religious beliefs and practices around the world, and religious beliefs have often propelled and maintained colonization. From the ancient Persians to the Romans, to the Chinese, to the European powers, active colonization of land for the financial benefit of an outside dynasty has intentionally used religion to further its self-serving interests. From displacing peoples from their land to forcing them to change their names and stripping them of civil and religious power, Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam have often become transnational in service to civil masters. As African postcolonial feminist biblical scholar Musa Dube notes, colonizers of Africa took land and resources for "God, gold, and glory." She also notes a fourth "g"—gender, arguing that practices and impacts of colonization had specific detrimental consequences for African women. European colonizers used the Bible to justify the taking of land and control of people they considered to be innately inferior. In Africa, as in North America, colonizers assumed the inferiority of Indigenous religions and sought to impose Christianity on Indigenous people through evangelization that was often accompanied by violence. Through these generations of colonization, the religious traditions of both colonizers and colonized interacted and shaped one another, usually to the benefit of the colonizer.

Havasupai People representative Diana Sue Uqualla blesses an amphitheater at Grand Canyon National Park

Scholars today are wrestling with the arduous task of untangling (as much as possible) the effects of colonization of people (both oppressed and oppressors) and are seeking creative ways to integrate transnational faiths with ancient Indigenous stories and practices. This is not an easy process, as evidenced in the United States and Canada in debates over land. For example, scientists recently won approval to build a new telescope on a volcano on the Big Island of Hawai'i, over the opposition of Indigenous Hawai'ians, who consider Mauna Kea to be sacred. Similarly, Indigenous activists have fought a decade-long battle against the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would cross their lands and could threaten their water. (One of the first acts by President Joe Biden was to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline project.) In Guatemala, Indigenous Mayan human rights defenders draw strength from traditional Mayan ceremonies by engaging in struggles over land and water rights, ending violence against women, and seeking justice for the genocide during the thirty-six-year internal armed conflict in the latter part of the twentieth century. The Chinese government represses religion in Tibet because it sees Tibetan Buddhism and its reverence for its leader, the Dalai Lama, as threats to its control. China is also trying forcibly to assimilate its Uighur Muslim minority in what the US State Department calls "genocide."

In contrast, postcolonial theologians are uncovering colonial entanglements in belief and practice and are imagining new ways of doing religion that do not perpetuate colonization. Each religion must navigate these tensions between theology and practice, history and current events, freedom and gendered teachings, and must do so within the larger field of global, multireligious conversations and applications.

Women practice their faith in many contexts around the world, and these contexts shape the practice of faith, even as the practice of faith shapes these contexts. In the next sections, we'll look at religious expe-

riences and issues for women in their local historical communities that are characterized by a dominant religion practiced by most of the population, women in diasporic communities where they are refugees or immigrants, and women in multireligious or pluralistic societies.

Women in Their Local Communities

Many women around the world still live and practice Indigenous religions in their own communities, where that religious faith is dominant. These women live on the same land as their ancestors, within a place where it is easy to consider their own experience as normal, and it may be hard to delineate between culture, religion, race, and ethnicity. On the one hand, this means women may feel supported by a community of like-minded people; on the other, it may mean women's possibilities are limited by religious beliefs and practices that seem natural and inevitable because they are unchallenged.

Yoruba festival of Zangbeto (guardians of the night) in Benin

The African traditional religions (ATRs) practiced in sub-Saharan Africa inform all aspects of life from birth to death. Within these traditions, to be human is to be in community and to participate in the community's rituals, ceremonies, and festivals. At the same time, women are mostly excluded from religious leadership, although there are rare exceptions, like the Shona and the Chewa of Malawi.

Legacies of Colonialism

Indigenous communities and religions are often shaped by legacies of colonialism that are particularly devastating for women, as well as for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+). Before the colonization of North American, for example, many Indigenous communities welcomed and revered Two-Spirit people. Contact with Christianity, however, disrupted Two-Spirit sta-

tus in many Indigenous communities as missionaries taught traditional western gender roles and sexual mores.

In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, transnational colonial religions have had many adverse impacts on women. For example, women in Ecuador possess the fewest rights in South America. A woman there gives up her property and money when she is married under Catholic law. If her husband dies, the inheritance goes to male relatives who can choose to support her or not (Wilson 2013, 8). From North America to South America today, the lines between religion and politics are so blurred that many political campaign promises are made to incorporate conservative Evangelical or Catholic beliefs into law. In his inauguration speech on January 1, 2019, President Bolsonaro of Brazil said, "We will unite people, value the family, respect religions and our Judeo-Christian tradition, combat gender ideology and rescue our values." His ministers of education and family have followed his lead and reinforced gender stereotypes, including "appropriate" colors of clothing for boys and girls and removal of discussions of gender from classrooms (Faiola 2019). In Southeast Asia, 20 percent of the population lives or works in another country for financial gain or education or because of a natural disaster. The global economy has led to massive migrations, and national citizenship is often subservient to local ethnic group and religious membership. As a result, migrants are easy targets of gendered policies and religious persecution, such as women and children without citizenship or rights, persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, and a ban in Singapore on foreign workers worshipping at local temples, mosques, and churches.

Women's Religious Resistance

Despite colonial impositions and patriarchal religious interpretations, women remain at the forefront of grassroots discussions around the world, supported by the United Nations (UN), nongovernmental organizations, religious organizations, and diasporic populations. In Malaysia, women came together in the 1990s because "they were observing such a disparity between lived realities and their ideas of what they thought represented justice and equality" (Ali 2019, 71). They recognized the necessity of "grappling with the trajectory of Islamic discourses critically with regard to gender in order to challenge how they get manifested in real lives either by culture or by policy." They decided that "the context of people's lives takes precedence over text." In an "exegesis of praxis" within an Islamic faith historically based in jurisprudence, "Can there be justice if Muslim women do not experience justice?" (Ali 2019, 72).

Across the world, in western Africa, Methodist Mercy Oduyoye, who lives in the colonized country of Ghana but came from the ruling line of an ancient matrilineal tribe, noticed how the male theologians around her talked about polygamy. "I found that the men were talking for women all the time, and I thought, well, it's about time they heard the women's voices in the first person" (Oredein 2016, 160). She notes that a fellow male theologian said to her, "This is a good thing you have started, because a bird with

one wing does not fly." She has prioritized the voices of women not only to tackle issues such as polygamy and HIV/AIDS that disproportionally affect women, but also to challenge patriarchal notions of masculinity. She has also encouraged her religious community to ask, "What does it mean to be a man?" so men could change their behavior. To do this well, she has engaged the critical necessity of cultivating interreligious relationships (Oredein 2016, 161).

In the 1990s, Buddhist Theravada nuns were ordained in Sri Lanka for the first time anywhere in Southeast Asia in a millennium, even though they are still not officially recognized by the local governments or the ruling monks (Paudel and Dong 2017, 13-14). The Sakyadhita Conferences address topics like abuse, power, and sexuality in Buddhism while affirming that enlightenment is contingent upon the mind, which is genderless, and not on the physical body (Langenberg 2018, 11). Women have greater access than before to online support, international groups, and scholarly theological and historic writings. We see the results of this in the religious and social changes women are bringing to health care, education, and access to their own religious rites and sites.

Buddhist nuns in Myanmar

Reimagining Religions

There are both positive and negative effects for a religion embedded in its own historical community. On the positive side, sorting through the effects of colonization, growth, and reimagining that comes from within a particular religion and culture avoids another layer of colonial damage. Scholars today note how unpacking the effects of colonialism ironically also continues the legacy of damage to ancient cultures and religions. In short, you cannot undo the past; you can only struggle to move into the future with integrity. In Ghana, Mercy Oduyoye, leading the Circle of Concerned Theologians, notes, "We are awake

to our responsibility as creative beings made in the image of God" (Oduyoye 2001b, 99). "We need new myths, new metaphors, new language" (between men and women) to "become a source of healing for the unhealthy relations foisted upon us by patriarchy and androcentricism" (Oduyoye 2001a, 44). In India, women inspired by the #MeToo campaign online have begun demanding access to their own temples and publicly questioning the religious hypersexualization of women, which has led to cultural bans on discussing the common human experience of menstruation and has normalized a gang rape culture of girls and women alike. In places like Botswana, new models of enculturated faiths are emerging, like Vashti Christianity as a model for preventing HIV infection and promoting patriarchal resistance (Kebaneilwe 2011). Queen Vashti, who in the Bible refused to be paraded as a sex object in front of the king's friends, is seen as a hero for women and a model for resisting marital violence and HIV.

Gender Violence and Intolerance

On the negative side, gender violence and religious intolerance remain deep seated in many places. For example, across sub-Saharan Africa, many Muslims practice female genital cutting (FGC) even though Islam does not call for it. In some places, even outsiders who live in these areas feel pressured to participate in FGC as a rite of passage. One journalist tells how she would not allow her daughter to be circumcised while they lived in Africa even though her daughter begged and said "all of her friends were" as a sign of their womanhood. Sikh women, in their native Punjab, as the minority religion in a Muslim majority culture, now fear leaving their homes or exercising leadership in their religious community. Because of culturally accepted norms, they now experience intimate partner violence at the same rate as their Muslim neighbors, even though their faith is one of equality in theology and practice. Sikh women can now only freely and safely practice their faith in diaspora communities.

Because religion and culture are deeply mixed and reinforcing, change can be slow and difficult. Religions around the world continue to exert enormous pressure on vulnerable populations that perpetuate oppression of women, children, and Indigenous tribal populations in the name of civil leadership and stability. Even when nations commit to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was ratified by the UN General Assembly in 1948, or to other human rights treaties, they may still apply for religious waivers to subject the international charters to local religious laws that nullify the protection of women, minorities, children, and LGBTQI+ populations as human rights are subsumed to religious practices.

Women in Diaspora

Women who live in diasporic communities, either as refugees or immigrants, encounter different advantages and challenges to living out their religion than women in their local communities. A diaspora community is any place where people of similar ethnicity and language live together that is not their original

home. Diaspora communities retain their culture (religion, rituals, food, etc.) in a new location. Women can live in a diasporic community on the same continent as their ancestors (in a refugee camp), or they can live across the world (as an immigrant). Those who live close often assume their diaspora to be temporary and hold hope of normalizing their life and returning "home" eventually. Wars, local violence, natural disasters, and/or economic need commonly create refugees across Africa and Asia, where identity is found in local tribes and communities rather than in colonially created national identities. Long-distance travel and formal immigration to another country can create a permanent diaspora for an individual or family, but the vast majority of refugees plan to return home as soon as possible. "What remains consistent through various kinds of diasporic migration . . . is an ongoing identification with a communal identity based on a culture of origin." Marie Griffith notes that diaspora includes imagined communities, cultural hybridity, and "timeless connections to a monolithic and primordial continent" (Griffith and Savage 2006, xii). That is, immigrants and refugees hold a dual relationship both with their "original homes" and culture on the continent where their people have always lived and the "communities where they now live," whether they are close to their place of origin or around the world (Marshall and Corman 2016, 2).

New Ways of Practicing Faith

Because a woman in diaspora is a woman "out of time and place," a space of dissonance and growth is created within her where she can work out new ways of living, worship, and passing on her faith to her children. Identity formation and retention, recognition of religious traditionalism, and adaptation and innovation all commonly occur in this new context (Behloul 2016; Rüland, Lübke, and Baumann 2019, 69). Women are at the practical theological forefront in diaspora settings, working through creative ways to practice their religion with internal integrity and transmitting valued traditions and beliefs to their children. In diaspora, women come to experience for themselves, firsthand, the separation between culture and religion. In some instances, this may mean women have greater agency and ability to create new understandings and practices of their faith. Other women may face greater constraints because of pressure to maintain the faith of home amid another culture. Women in particular may be considered responsible for producing the future for a people. In Orthodox Jewish communities formed after the Holocaust, for example, women experience great pressure to produce new generations to preserve the future for Orthodox Jews.

Negotiating faith in new settings

Many women also begin to write more in diaspora. Separation from home drives inner reflection and finds expression in novels and poetry as well as theological work. "Contemporary Muslim women writers from migrant backgrounds often write about the intersections of gender, religion, and violence inflicted by religion in particularly complex and illuminating ways" (Friedman 2018, 202). It is easier to see how "women's accounts of their religious experiences may demonstrate multiple shifting claims to power that are sometimes built on and sometimes defiant of their understandings of womanhood" (Griffith and Savage 2006, xv). In diaspora, people tend to gather by religion as well as by language and race. In the United States, this often creates a "Little Italy" or "Chinatown" where people are comfortable among those who look, act, and believe in similar ways. Such groups are emotionally and relationally necessary to first-generation refugees and immigrants because of the emotional burdens of transition, language barriers, and cultural misunderstandings. Second- and third-generation immigrants and refugees are more or fully integrated into the local community, having shared educational experiences and being skilled in language and cultural differences. While integration benefits the children of diasporic communities, it also causes relational challenges with close-knit family and community over religious differences in theology and practice and cultural ideas of individuality and choice.

Challenges of Integration

Women in diaspora not only encounter people of other religions, but they also meet people who practice the same religion in difference ways. They make alliances within the sphere of religion across ethnic and national boundaries in ways that were unimaginable back "home" (Behloul 2016, 66). While unique forms of coming together are possible under a broader understanding of transnational religion, women also face challenges of language and cultural misunderstanding.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, where the Canadian ideal of equality in diversity is actively pursued from civil land planning to education, researchers have observed that recent Afghan refugees have had to remain "other" in order to receive the help they need and to find a place to "belong." This means that Afghan refugees need special assistance to learn a new language or job skills, or to navigate new stores and schools, but as they do this, they must present themselves as genuinely Afghan. They need to remain "immigrant" at the same time they are trying to integrate into a new society. This is an unexpected result of intentional diasporic places in pluralistic cultures. Immigrants and refugees work hard but do need help, as local economies are generally far more expensive than the ones from which they came, and it takes time to become financially stable in a new job or career. In Canada, "There must be the multiplicity of cultural identities in order to sustain the contemporary Canadian multicultural identity" (O'Bryan 2014, iv), but how can refugees also become "Canadian" while still being Afghan or any other former nationality? Time solves this problem for the ensuing generations, but immigrants right now face a pressing question: "How do I integrate into Canadian society and still create financial stability for my family?" This Canadian dias-

poric experience is different than the United States, where immigrants are less welcomed and more pressured by "bootstrap theology" to "prove themselves" economically worthy of becoming an American.

Supporting Others

For an immigrant woman in diaspora, practicing her religion may look different from how her children practice their religion. She may cling more to the "old ways" because her sense of self has been disrupted as she has moved into a new place and culture. She may also be at the forefront of creating new ways to pass on beliefs and practices that once were traditional in the old country. In Britain, for example, *satsand* and *bala vihars* (devotional and educational groups) have sprung up to keep the descendants of Indian immigrants connected to their culture of origin (Lourenço 2011, 40). Scholars have also noted that women in diaspora raise and give more money back to their home country than into their local religious centers. In fact, women in diaspora raise more money for disaster relief than anyone else in the world. Women may also find they eventually have the space to reflect on their faith and the ways in which it was practiced in their home country that may be incongruent with their religion's original writings and beliefs—in short, how cultural traditions highjacked authentic religious practices over time. Women may find space to imagine new ways of living and worshipping with greater equality, especially where their human rights are protected by the civil government rather than subsumed under local religious practices. Many women also create ways to support and encourage other women back home. The Kaur Collective in Canada began as a way for Sikh women, free to worship and lead in British Columbia, to remind their fellow Sikh women in the Punjab and around the world that they have the freedom to be themselves, look like themselves, and practice and lead their faith for themselves in their communities as well as in their homes—that oppression and gender violence are cultural experiences, not a part of their Sikh history, theology, or practices.

Dissonance, Adaptation, and Creativity

Often, when women have been displaced by violence, famine, or a natural disaster, they find their way into UN refugee camps, where they meet aid workers and encounter people who may hold different values, especially about women. For many women, this experience can create dissonance and disruptions as religious beliefs come into contact with the discourse of human and women's rights. For some women, these encounters underline agency and self-determination and mark the beginning of a journey into personal exploration. Women may also take these new ideas back into their local communities or their new communities in ways that shape the practice of religion there.

Women in diaspora also come to make creative and localized forms of religious syncretism. They draw from their own religious tradition as well as the traditions of their new places of residence and blend them into meaningful religious beliefs and practices for themselves. For example, "Mostly Tamil-speaking

Hindus in Guyana, Trinidad, and Suriname worship Mother Kali. In Trinidad, a syncretistic worship of Mother Kali sees her as the Catholic Virgin Mary. This Catholic *La Divina Pastora*, meaning 'The Divine Shepherdess' was adapted as a dark-skinned Virgin Mary and is worshipped on Good Friday. She is credited for traveling with the Indian people across the ocean to their new home" (Naidu 2007, 15).

Diasporic living creates both positive and negative religious and personal experiences for women as they encounter new communities, beliefs, and practices. It can provide distance, space, and opportunities for women to reflect on what they believe and why. It may allow creative and personalized adaptation of religion to real life instead of forcing life experiences to conform to religious beliefs. It may allow women to speak hope and ideas (theology and practices) back into the communities of origin in hopes of restoring original beliefs lost over time, patriarchal control, and culture (Kaur Collective). It may allow creative improvisation and compromise that attain a sense of purpose and make peace over reality within lives with little to no control (Griffith and Savage 2006, xvi). It may give those who take note of "lived religion" a variety of examples of how people of the same faith tradition in various places create and navigate space—dominant theological themes can lose power, and dormant ones can spring back to life. It may reveal "new and old oppressions" but also "opportunities to defy them" through citizenship in a new space (Lourenço 2011, 40).

Pushback and Backlash

For all people, change often creates fear—fear of the unknown—and this fear without thoughtful direction can create religious backlash and a felt need to dig in one's heels to preserve religious "purity." Women themselves may struggle with the new people and beliefs they encounter and may hold even more tightly to the beliefs and practices they brought with them. The emotional energy (fear and anger) in these situations often plays out as gender violence against the most vulnerable—women, children, minoritized and Indigenous people, and LGBTQI+ people. When women do begin to question traditional beliefs or practices, they may also encounter resistance from more conservative members of their communities of origin who may claim religious beliefs are necessary to preserve culture or tradition. Often, however, this pushback is really about control and power over women. Women may face labels of "faithlessness" or "rebellious" from men when they encounter opportunities in their own communities that challenge traditional beliefs and practices, such as in Afghanistan or Iraq, as women work outside the home or seek safety in domestic violence shelters supported by the UN or NGOs.

Church-Sanctioned Domestic Violence in Russia

by Janet Lockhart

In 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law making it no longer a crime for a man to beat his wife, child, or elder parent. Instead, a perpetrator might have to pay a fine if the survivor of his abuse pressed charges (providing her own evidence, since police no longer have to investigate). Both houses of the Russian Parliament passed the bill by wide margins. Protests and debates about it were stifled.

Astonishingly, the Orthodox Church in Russia supported this move, saying, among other things, that the state should not interfere in family matters, and that protecting women against domestic violence is a western phenomenon that they call "gender ideology," which flies in the face of Russian culture and so should be rejected.

The church denies there is a problem, saying domestic violence is not an issue because the church supports the traditional structure of the family, with men in charge, women subordinate, and parent-child relationships based on "authority and power." It urges women to forgive their abusers, emphasizes keeping families together in spite of harm to individuals within them, and even opposes programs to prevent violence in the first place.

Russian activists are working to reduce the impact of domestic violence by supporting survivors, advocating for changes in the law, including the introduction of restraining orders, and using social media to bring awareness to the problem. In the meantime, Russian women—some estimate as many as fourteen thousand per year—die at the hands of their own husbands, sons, and fathers.

The experience of diaspora can create both opportunities to reflect on and reshape faith, or it may feel threatening and overwhelming and lead to a retreat into even more tightly held convictions about beliefs and practices. Practicing one's faith in a diasporic community can provide a sense of familiarity and comfort in new and challenging circumstances. As immigrants and refugees encounter diverse people and faiths and people who practice the same faith in different ways, they may begin to think differently about gender in particular, recognizing and perhaps challenging cultural practices and adapting beliefs and rituals to fit with new experiences and communities.

Women in Pluralistic Communities

Pluralistic societies are those in which different types of people with different beliefs coexist. People who advocate for pluralism believe that living and working together across differences is a good thing that

strengthens societies. Some religions embrace pluralism, recognizing that diverse beliefs reveal the varied experiences that contribute to larger social understandings and benefits. Many religions, however, struggle with pluralism. Convinced that their religion is the only true religion, practitioners may hold negative beliefs about people of other faiths or refuse to cooperate with them. They may proselytize or even try to impose their convictions on others through influence in public processes. Typically, in pluralistic societies, governments try to protect the religious rights of all people, even when one religion dominates, although, as we will see, these efforts are not always successful.

Druids or neo-pagans may struggle for religious recognition

Human Rights and Religious Rights

It is easy for us to assume that women in pluralistic communities experience freedom to live out their religious beliefs without interference according to their own wishes, but as we are seeing with the worldwide and highly politicized debate over the veiling of Muslim women, this is not necessarily the case. In France, for example, women are not allowed to wear a hijab or other religious marking in school or public buildings in an effort to preserve France's secularity. In Turkey, which has maintained a civic rather than religious core despite its overwhelming Muslim population, the wearing of headscarves was banned in civil service jobs and in government offices until 2013. In Quebec, Canada, the hijab has been banned for civil leaders such as teachers and judges, but the French-speaking province is being pressured by the pluralistic priorities of those who want full religious freedom for citizens to dress as they see fit.

In many secular governments, laws and policies are guided by a human rights framework, which recognizes the freedoms and conditions inherent to all people as a result of their humanity. In a pluralistic or multireligious community, these human rights precede (come before) religious rights and may clash with religions

when religious practices conflict with secular laws. So, for example, female genital cutting on a girl under the age of 18 is illegal in the United States even if it is a traditional religious practice within a family or local religious community. We also see this when gay couples are denied service because of a business owner's religious beliefs. Then the courts must affirm the functioning order of human and religious rights.

Even in secular communities, religion often has a significant influence in political and social life. The dominant religion in a community in particular may shape women's experiences. Often, these dominant religions have played a considerable role in colonizing Indigenous communities and imposing gendered roles on women and men. In the United States, for example, Christianity is the dominant religion, and even though the Constitution forbids the government from establishing, favoring, or prohibiting religion, many laws and policies have been shaped by Christian belief. To a great extent, laws that limit abortion access reflect conservative Christian viewpoints about when human life begins. Laws that allow businesses to deny service to LGBTQI+ people result from beliefs about the sinfulness of diverse sexualities. In India, Hindu nationalists have begun to challenge the nation's secularism and have targeted Muslims for discrimination and violence. In Myanmar, majority Buddhists have participated in genocidal violence against the Rohingya Muslim minority.

Learning Activity: Treatment of LGBTQI+ People across Lutheran Majority Countries in Europe

by Karly Michon

Lutheranism is the largest religion in northern and Western European countries such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. But there is variety within and between these countries in their attitudes toward and treatment of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+), on issues such as same-sex marriage, adoption of children, serving as clergy, and expressions of sexuality.

Take time to research Lutheranism in a few of these countries, and note the church's stance and policies on the LGBTQI+ community.

- How do they interpret the Bible and other religious texts and speak about LGBTQI+ people?
- Are LGBTQI+ people allowed to have church weddings in these countries?
- Are LGBTQI+ people able to serve as clergy? Are there any restrictions on their service?
- Are LGBTQI+ church members able to be "out" about their sexuality in the church community?

Do you think the various branches of Lutheranism are supportive of the LGBTQI+ community, based on your findings?

Are there any correlations between acceptance of LGBTQI+ people in Lutheranism and governmental policies for that country?

Take notes on the information you find, and share it with classmates or friends to raise awareness of the issues facing the religious LGBTQI+ community on a global scale.

Find some ways to get involved with your local LGBTQI+ community.

Religious fundamentalism roots itself in an imagined past in which a purer form of faith was practiced and ruled social and political life. Fundamentalism, no matter the religion, advocates for strict adherence to rigid interpretations of sacred texts and belief in fixed traditional beliefs. In the present, fundamentalism can fuel oppression when it dominates in a society or conflict when fundamentalists are a minority and feel threatened by changes brought about by modernity or plurality. Religious fundamentalism requires the suppression of women, and in pluralistic communities that profess women's equality, women's oppression often plays out in religious life and in the home.

Pluralism and Syncretism

Religions can be flexible, and practitioners can adapt beliefs and traditions as they come into contact with diverse people, customs, and faiths. "Majority and minority cultures also change as they adapt to each other" (Friedman 2018, 206), and in pluralistic societies, diverse religions interact with and influence one another. At times, syncretistic forms of religion are begun, such as Vodou in Haiti and Santería in Cuba. Syncretism is an attempt to take the best of more than one religion and combine them, generally, in a way that adapts Indigenous beliefs with an influential and imported transnational religion such as Christianity or Islam. Both Vodou and Santería combine traditional West African religions, which were practiced by many enslaved people, with Catholicism. In both Vodou and Santería, women are honored and can serve as priests.

A *santera* (priestess of Santería) in Cuba

People in pluralistic communities today are reimagining ways in which ancient religions can coexist and create meaning alongside each other in today's globalized world—where people are agents of their own spiritual destiny and support each other across religious beliefs for the sake of all people in all communities. For example, women on the border of Pakistan (Muslim) and India (Hindu) work hard in their communities to support and care for each other and their families, believing common humanity is more important than the religious threats of the governments that seek to divide people. In openly pluralistic societies like the United States, religious leaders in cities from Los Angeles, California, to Birmingham, Alabama, come together to engage public issues from housing to racial justice. Religious and civil leaders find common ground in kindness, compassion, mercy, and hope as the foundation of all faiths to work together across religions and denominations to address issues of the common good for all people.

Pluralistic communities offer distinct religious opportunities and challenges as diverse people coexist in geographic proximity. In many places, these relationships are complicated by legacies of colonialism. As both Muslim and Christian postcolonial theologians note, people who belong to dominant and colonizing groups and people who belong to oppressed and colonized groups both have distinct work to do to bring about reconciliation and justice. Pluralistic communities offer women opportunities to reflect on their religious beliefs and practices in conversation with other beliefs and practices in a mutual process of sharing and shaping religion.

Women Speaking and Writing around the World

Women also have opportunities to encounter different people and belief systems around the world with expanded access to global platforms such as international conferences, distance educational opportunities, and online religious academic circles and theological groups. Women writers from many religious traditions publish both in traditional print formats and online, making their writings much more widely available. For many women writers, however, publishing online also brings a level of danger, from trolling to threats and instances of violence. Some women are protected or defended by their academic or religious community; most are not. For example, Susan Shaw of Oregon State University wrote a piece on white Christians and climate change in 2020 that was picked up by Breitbart News and quickly went viral. Almost instantly, her email and phones were trolled, and she was harassed and threatened. Her university stood by her and encouraged her to write about her experiences in a follow-up article. Others, such as Buddhist nuns Tenzin Dadon and Thubten Chodron in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, live and teach outside their mainstream faith. Dadon and Chodron must remain "freelance nuns," unattached to a monastery, because nuns, as women, are still not accepted as fully ordained leaders. The male leaders will not openly support them, and they do not want to take vows of obedience to a male monk. Both women hold degrees in higher education, teach, write, and share their experiences trying to live faithful to Buddhism even when their gender is not accepted as fully capable of pursuing Nirvana. Conservative Muslims across the world still denounce African American Muslim scholar Amina Wadud for leading prayer in a mosque in New York in 2005, simply because she was a woman. Amnesty International continues to monitor the danger women face in multiple social media platforms, whether they are civil or religious leaders or even which country they live and work within. A globalized world offers both greater protection and greater threats for women who speak and write openly online.

Creating and sustaining healthy, peaceful, multireligious societies is difficult. As we have seen in the immigration crisis in Europe, particularly as people have fled civil war in Syria, when diverse religious traditions come into close contact, even in a secular society, conflict is likely. As the European Union (EU) has opened its border to millions of refugees, secularized societies such as France and Germany find some communities are open and welcoming, while in others there is an increase in violence against refugees of other faiths or violence against residents by refugees with different cultural and religious assumptions. In the fall of 2020, French teacher Samuel Paty was killed by an immigrant who was offended that the teacher had shown a cartoon depicting the prophet Muhammad in a class on free speech. Many French citizens believe the ban on images of Muhammad is not acceptable in a secular society, but many Muslims hold this as a foundational belief. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel accepted more than the quota of refugees to set an example for other EU nations. She suffered political backlash and lost political support for her position. In many places in Europe, integration has proven difficult, as many Muslim immigrants live in ethnic enclaves. Islamist extremism among some immigrants and among some native Europeans (post 9/11) con-

tinue to widen the gap between these communities, which desperately need to find common ground in their humanity.

Women Theologians

In response to increasing globalization and global awareness, women theologians around the world are seeking new ways to learn from each other and work together in interdependence to effect social change that affirms the personhood of all people. In Africa, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) Women's Commission gathers women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and seeks to explore theologies that are relevant to their own cultural contexts. Mercy Amba Oduyoye became the first woman president of the EATWOT in 1997 and founded the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, which continues to engage pressing issues, such as polygamy and AIDS in African communities, and to share those issues from women's perspectives instead of listening to men tell them what they think and feel and believe. Biblical critic Musa Dube of Botswana writes extensively on AIDS, postcolonialism, translation, and gender issues in religion. Melba Padilla Maggay is a Filipina anthropologist who founded the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture. Sikh Valarie Kaur recently took a year of sabbatical retreat to think and write on what it means for all of us to come together across religions to view each other with respect and to work together for the common welfare of all people. Now she is speaking on how to transition America to a truly multiracial democracy so that a sustainable cultural future can become a reality. Muslim professor and Los Angeles resident Najeeba Syeed joined fellow Southeast Asian scholars from a number of faiths to compile a reader edited by Hong Kong native and postcolonial scholar Kwok Pui-lan. In this text, students can read and learn from diverse Asian and Asian American religions.

Women across religions are busy on Zoom and email, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting one another personally and professionally and redefining what it means to work together with an attitude of learning and respect, and with a focus on implementing theologies in communities where all people benefit because leaders and followers of all faiths respect one another and work together. For now, full implementation of respectful and flourishing pluralism remains a pipe dream in many cities and towns, but we have excellent examples lighting the way forward.

Gods, Goddesses, and Reimaginations

by Shannon Garvin

Images of deities have long caused both inspiration and confusion among humans. Whether they are in word or sculpted form, images of a deity both reflect and then reinforce and teach cultural stereotypes. There is much discussion now even among traditional and transnational religious scholars on the benefits of more gender-diverse symbols and the limitations of our inherited and traditional religious imagery.

For instance, Christianity prohibits physical forms to represent God, yet the male writers of the Scriptures had no problem reflecting their own male life experience in their descriptions of their ungendered God. As a result, generations of Christians struggle to view God as anything more than male, and the "maleness" of the ungendered Christian God has diminished the understanding of God into patriarchy and power. In Islam, while Mohammed himself did not seem to have held particular gender bias and was married to several strong and powerful women, the men who followed him were concerned with interpreting his writings in a manner that coalesced their expanding power base (militarily and economically) at the expense of women and foreigners.

Religions may be about the divine, but they are held and shaped by humans and communicated through verbal and visual symbols. It is impossible for humans not to leave their own mark with their prejudices, lusts, and fears. Today, as women find larger spaces and voices, it is not surprising that they also want larger, less gendered—or multi-gendered—symbols of deities. They want religious convictions and deities that are life-giving—for the good of all people. This idea is both threatening and liberating in and out of religious circles. These are necessary conversations and reflective reimaginations if we are going to continue to grow as a whole human community.

Conclusion

As citizens of a multireligious planet, we all face the daunting task of living and working together to create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world. Feminist theologian Letty Russell reminds us that "there is a great deal of painful oppression in the stories of women, which has to be dealt with if we are going to reconstruct theologies in partnership with one another" (Russell 1988, 16). We can learn a great deal from one another if we listen actively and with an open heart and commit to creating change together. "Solidarity has a dimension of being with the other in spite of distance, time, and physical presence" (Russell 1988, 136). This is why feminist theologians across religions remind us that we all have the ability to live

out core, foundational beliefs that are shared across the world religions: kindness, courage, love, hospitality, and hope. While religions can play a role in maintaining systems of oppression, these core values also offer the possibility of religious participation as resistance. Especially for women and LGBTQI+ people, across their differences, religion is complex terrain, and our study of it reminds us of both the difficulties and possibilities of the work of justice.

Learning Activities

1. What is religion and why is it important, according to Garvin?
2. What is the historical relationship between religion and colonization? How do legacies of colonization continue to affect the lives of Indigenous peoples?
3. What are the potential challenges and benefits of practicing religion in diaspora?
4. How does religion influence political and social life in secular communities?
5. How can religions play a role in maintaining systems of oppression, according to Gavin? How can they play a role in resistance against systems of oppressions? Provide at least three examples of oppression and three examples of resistance from the chapter.
6. Working in a small group, add these key terms to your glossary: diaspora, contextual theology, pluralism, fundamentalism, syncretism.

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WOMEN'S ACTIVISM WORLDWIDE

Khatera Afghan and Folah Fletcher

When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid. Your silence will not protect you.

—Audre Lorde (1977)

In the late 1960s and 1970s, feminist "consciousness-raising efforts" called women's attention to the historical exclusion of their experiences and voices from public arenas. As a result, women began to question the production of social and material knowledge that centered on the perspectives and interests of men (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007). In societies classified by gender, race, class, and sexuality, knowledge claimed by historically marginalized people, such as women, becomes silent or "subjugated knowledge" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007).

According to feminist historian Elsa Barkley Brown, social movements and identities are not distinct from each other, as we sometimes assume in contemporary culture. She argues that we need to consider queer social movements and identities as being related to help understand how privilege and inequality are connected, and how social movements have traditionally linked the stories of people of color and feminists fighting for justice (Brown 1992, 297).

Feminists and historians have split the history of the movement in the United States into three "waves": The first wave relates specifically to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women's liberation movement, which was concerned primarily with the right of women to vote (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005). The second wave refers to the women's liberation movement of the 1960s, which advocated for women's legal and social rights. The third wave refers to a continuation of second-wave feminism, starting in the 1990s, and including a backlash to the second wave's perceived inadequacies (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005, 49).

Civil rights march for intersecting social justice issues

The use of the terms *first wave*, *second wave*, and *third wave* to describe feminist resistance is controversial, as it implies each wave of activism prioritized different concerns. The waves were not mutually exclusive or completely distinct. Rather, they influence each other not only in the sense that earlier feminist activism has in many ways made contemporary feminist work possible, but also that contemporary fem-

inist activism affects the way we think about past activism (Davis 2002, 73-78). A focus only on famous leaders and events can obscure the many people and activities engaged in daily resistance and community organization.

Further, the "wave" metaphor is problematic because it focuses primarily on the activities of US women who were mostly white, heterosexual, and middle class. It does not acknowledge the resistance efforts of Indigenous women before, during, and after the colonization of the continent by Europeans; of Black women and other people of color in the United States; of women who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or intersex plus (LGBTQI+); nor women in most of the rest of the world. Concentrating on the most "mainstream" figures, political events, and social movements advances only one unique lens of history. Transnational activism demonstrates a reframing toward global solidarity while centering the lived experiences of women and their priorities.

Feminists have continued to challenge patriarchy by questioning exploitation, harassment, violence, and objectification in the various areas of their lives: work, home, family, and public environments. While some resistance to oppression arises in subtle or individual ways, for feminist-identified women, collective resistance is also a powerful way to question current power structures. Women and their allies often build major feminist movements that collectively question the systemic roots of oppression (Brown 1992). Yang (2016) affirms that the waves of social feminist movements have generated only partial changes in systematic oppression against women and girls globally. Nevertheless, feminist social movements have implemented several significant changes in laws, social norms, and definitions of gender roles (Yang 2016, 13).

The Pussyhat

by Charissa V. Jones

The Pussyhat is a bright-pink knitted cap with cat ears that came to symbolize the Women's March in Washington, DC, on January 21, 2017, the day after Donald Trump was inaugurated. Cofounders Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman wanted the hats to be a symbol that reclaimed the derogatory term "pussy" after Trump's infamous *Access Hollywood* remark that women should let him "grab them by the pussy." Suh and Zweiman chose pink, traditionally associated with femininity, because they wanted to visibly stand up for women's rights. The pattern was available for free online; craft stores couldn't keep the color in stock as women around the country created knitting circles to make the hats.

While the hats did unite some people of all genders around women's issues, for others, the sea of pink also brought up the lack of intersectionality within feminist movements, becoming synonymous with white feminists, trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs), and sex worker-exclusionary radical feminists (SWERFs). These narratives were destructive: Not everyone who doesn't identify as a man has a pussy. Not every pussy is pink. When marginalized communities challenged the white, cisgender narratives of the Pussyhat and the March, supporters called them divisive. But Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) don't owe anyone thanks for acting as allies. They continue to bring to light how being a non-male person is affected by racism, sexism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, ableism, and other social justice issues.

Protesters wearing pussyhats

Transnational Feminist Activism

Transnational feminism emerged as a response to the First World versus Third World split; that is, the recognition that women's experiences, priorities, and concerns are different in different parts of the world. This first came forward during the United Nations' (UN) Decade for Women (1975-85) World Conferences: Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995. It was after the Beijing conference that the term *transnational feminism* and its political agenda for global justice came to be fully realized and widely embraced (Desai 2005). Transnational feminism pursues social justice by developing alliances that challenge gender, racial, and cultural essentialist binaries (e.g., the idea that all women—and also all men—have one basic, unchangeable nature) (Grewal and Kaplan 1994).

As an anti-domination, anti-oppression activist movement, transnational feminism promotes a focus on the interlocking systems of oppression (racism, classism, etc.) and the ways they shape gender relations worldwide (Mohanty 2003; McLaren 2017). By challenging the historically rooted essentialist ways of thinking that erase differences and diversity among women, transnational feminism acknowledges and bravely embraces these differences (Mohanty 1988; Grewal and Kaplan 1994). Transnational feminism converts differences into alliances that promote conversations to help heal the First World-Third World split (Mohanty 2003; McLaren 2017) and to produce meaningful changes for women globally. Engaging with the nuanced realities of the world, transnational feminists create cross-border activism with a focus on understanding the differences in women's experiences worldwide (Mohanty 2003; Moghadam 2005; McLaren 2017).

The construction of transnational coalitions and of broader ways of thinking about knowledge recognizes women do not have the same pain or needs and acknowledges our varied pasts and historical conditions (Mohanty 2003). We try to focus our activism toward social justice that is inclusive and attainable (hooks 2015). Because it values the contributions differences make to solidarity, transnational feminism promotes reflective alliances among diverse women who have chosen to work and fight together for their common interests (Mohanty 2003).

Women with Disabilities Advocating for Inclusion

by Shannon Garvin

Human Rights Watch estimates that about 300 million women around the world have mental or physical disabilities. In poorer nations, women comprise 75 percent of the population with disabilities. In 2006, 164 nations signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Globally, the United Nations estimates that less than 5 percent of disabled persons have access to education. Disabled women are half as likely to find employment as men.

Local support of disabled persons can be challenging because of overlapping issues of gender, race, socioeconomics, available resources, education, attitudes toward disabilities, and the specific disability affecting a person. But women with disabilities and their allies are increasingly advocating for equity and inclusion for themselves in all aspects of life.

In east Africa, the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) works with women who are Deaf or Blind, or who have autism or an intellectual disability, to provide vital services such as skills training, work opportunities, and integration into the local community. In Kenya, ThisAbility collaborates with other organizations to increase visibility and inclusion for women and girls with disabilities in everything from access to health care, to representation in websites and other media, to participation in sports.

Across Oceania, the Pacific Disability Forum advocates for all people with disabilities by seeking to ensure governments honor the provisions of the CRPD. Vanuatu's Volley4Change and Papua New Guinea's Gymbad offer sports programs designed to include people with disabilities, especially women and girls. Women with Disabilities Australia advocates for "women, girls, feminine identifying and nonbinary people living with disabilities" through leadership trainings, information on an accessible website, and advocacy with governments.

Under the umbrella of transnational feminism, activists and advocates mobilize transnational feminist networks (TAFs) to work toward resisting repressive norms and institutions worldwide. TAFs promote:

1. "feminism against neoliberalism," by contesting global economic systems and policies that promote economic privatization and free-market practices that lead to greater gender inequalities;
2. "feminism against imperialism and war," by opposing imperialism, global clashes, and gendered war practices;
3. "feminism against fundamentalism," by challenging the repercussions of religious practices that deny gender equality and women's rights; and
4. "feminist humanitarianism," by addressing women's basic needs and strategic interests worldwide. (Lee and Shaw 2011)

To achieve their goals, transnational feminists call for cross-border solidarity, where solidarity is a mutual and accountable relationship that bonds different people across their common interests (Lee and Shaw 2011). We live in a transnational time where everything from ideas, to capital, to fear, to violence flows across state boundaries. This fluidity shapes women's experiences internationally (Naples 2009). Addressing transnational issues, especially gender inequalities, requires a dialogue that recognizes and respects, rather than silences or ignores, differences (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Mohanty 2003; hooks 2015).

Transnational solidarity requires women to build effective, inclusive, and politically strategic bonds, understanding that only discussions of women's differing ideologies lead to honest cross-national communications (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). Building these bonds depends on the extent of our willingness to acknowledge and bravely confront rather than fear our differences (and move beyond pretending to be united) to overcome our biases, competitiveness, fears, and hostilities (hooks 2015).

Building transnational solidarity based on particulars/differences has emerged from active struggle (rather than common oppression). It is in this context that we will build on commitment, effort, and acknowledgment that women can have a common goal: social justice (Mohanty 2003; hooks 2015).

In sum, although women worldwide commonly experience gendered oppression, their issues and circumstances differ within and across cultures (Afshar 1998), which makes them more diverse than similar in their experiences, needs, and interests. Promoting social justice through a transnational alliance requires us to move beyond our assumptions of an "enforced commonality of oppression" (Mohanty 2003, 7), including by leveraging the various forms of feminist activism to dismantle the universalized, homogenous category of "woman" (Mohanty 2003). To avoid creating new categories that are not only abstract but exclusive, transnational feminism has to be open and receptive to self-reflection—knowing that this reflectiveness is important for the social transformation we are committed to promoting (Grewal and Kaplan 1994).

A New Era of Global Transnational Activism

Transnational feminist activists promote social and gender justice by actively renegotiating gender power relations; building cross-national coalitions; engaging in and influencing international policies, laws, and organizations on women's rights issues; lobbying governments to support and promote social and gender equalities; and supporting women's protest movements and cyber-activism (Desai 2005; Moghadam 2005).

For example, transnational African feminist activists have strengthened their ties with women worldwide by engaging in cyber-activism in the form of blogging, which they use to speak up, share their experiences, seek opportunities for alliance, and promote gender equality (Nouraie-Simone 2005). According to one blogger, "the presence of women bloggers is in itself a positive step towards addressing issues of gender equality" (Somolu 2007). Living in a technologically connected, globalized, and constantly changing world, where things happen with the click of a mouse, these women use cyberspace to break their silence, develop collective resistance, share their experiences, participate in public spaces, explore (and enjoy) their changing identities, and ultimately seek social transformation (Nouraie-Simone 2005).

Likewise, Muslim women's activism is manifested in their revolutionary presence on the Internet. Muslim women's activist engagement in social media not only shaped the "Arab Spring" (a series of pro-democratic, anti-authoritarian protests in the Middle East and North Africa in the early 2010s), but also shifted the Middle East political landscape (Radsch 2012). In addition to fighting from beyond their computer screens, most of these women combined their cyber-activism with offline activism, resulting in broader media coverage and their participation in the uprisings (Nouraie-Simone 2005). As one of the activists said, "cyber-activism is not just working behind the screen, it is also smelling the tear gas and facing the security forces' live ammunition" (Radsch 2012, 19). Arab cyber-activism exemplifies Muslim women's agency and emerging voices for social transformation, their feminist maneuvering from within oppression, and their active participation in transnational activism.

Arab youth advocating for gender equality

Like Arab women, the young female generation of Iran uses the Internet as a liberatory tool to resist subjugation and to actively participate in ongoing transnational movements. Iranian women rely on weblogs to freely speak their minds while challenging historical gendered politics in their society. As an empowering substitute to the current politically manipulated and male-dominated physical public sphere, Iranian women use cyberspace to explore and enjoy new territories of liberation, uncensored self-expression, and nonbinary identities (Nouraie-Simone 2005). The Internet not only provides women with access to the outside world; it also helps them to become voices of change that are hard to silence (Somolu 2007). The cyber-activists' blogs illustrate Iranian women's self-advocacy, resistance in the face of social injustice, participation in feminist discourse, and commitment to social change. One of the web activists raises her voice and shares her feelings and frustrations:

> I have not been born as subordinate sex, or as biologically inferior. I have been brought up as one with the allocation of roles and expectations. I am a product of cultural biases of a patriarchal order that talks about an inherently womanly nature so that when a girl climbs trees or jumps up and down, she is warned or bullied—told that a girl is not supposed to jump from heights—to safeguard a little piece of skin (hymen) as proof of her honor. At 16, I wanted to become a guerrilla fighter, instead, I became a woman warrior fighting with my pen—a powerful instrument that cannot be silenced. (Nouraie-Simone 2005, 64-65)

In addition to their cyber-activism, Muslim women have revolutionized the digital galaxy. They have begun to reclaim a space in the digital world by pursuing a career shift from "off-camera" to "on-camera." From the authors' points of view, Muslim women's digital activism is evident in the growing number of Muslim women students who have chosen to pursue careers in electronic media, journalism, and cinema.

According to a 19-year-old student of media studies in Dubai, "I noticed that there are few women in the field of journalism, and since I have that kind of personality, I decided to pursue it" (Ismail and Ali 2008).

As a voice of change, Egyptians mobilize digital space to change Arabs' traditional gender perceptions, understanding of social norms, and power relations (Mernissi 2004). As such, some Egyptian television hosts have used digital space to facilitate conversations about topics that are not generally discussed in public in the Muslim world. For example, in 2017, the Egyptian TV presenter Doaa Salah, on the Al-Nahar network, asked viewers if they had considered premarital sex and suggested that women could temporarily get married to have children. Although Salah's statements were not well received by some people, especially the authorities who later sentenced her to three years in prison, Salah broke a traditional patriarchal taboo in Egypt (BBC News 2017) and provided an example of resistance to other women.

Loujan al-Hathloul

by Miranda Findlay

On February 11, 2021, Saudi Arabian women's rights activist Loujan al-Hathloul was released from prison. Al-Hathoul is known for challenging the ban on women driving and the male guardianship laws that require women to receive the consent of a male relative on decisions related to issues such as education. Under the strict gender segregation of Wahhabism, the form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia, the idea of a woman behind the wheel was seen as sacrilegious. Saudi Arabia continued to ban women from driving until 2018, even though demonstrations against the ban had occurred previously; for example, in November 1990, forty-seven Saudi women had driven their cars in protest in Riyadh.

Al-Hathloul has been arrested several times, most recently on May 15, 2018, for her involvement in the women's rights campaign. In June 2018, even after Saudi Arabian women were granted the right to drive, al-Hathloul remained under arrest. In 2021, she was finally released by the Saudi Arabian government in response to the Biden administration's criticisms of the country's human rights violations. Al-Hathloul was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 and 2020, and she was awarded the 2020 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize in April 2021.

Breaking Silence

Third World feminist scholars and activists seek to produce new knowledge, "decolonializing" discourse that ignores Third World women's Indigenous feminist history and resistance. In an effort to cure the First World-Third World split, Third World scholars call for the reconstruction of feminist essentialist thought.

They also warn against falling into the trap of anti-western sentiment that may divert focus from the struggle and feed into the production of inaccurate, homogenous knowledge (Said 1978; Mohanty 1988, 2003; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Abu-Lughod 2001). It is crucial to understand how the colonial power system functions in the global context in general and in the Third World in particular, and to challenge it.

In her meticulous analysis "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," Chandra Mohanty criticizes western essentialist feminist discourse, which defines Third World women as a monolithic and "universal" group with identical visions, goals, needs, and interests. The author states that such binary discourse creates a "paternalistic attitude towards women in the third world" (Mohanty 1988, 378). It also conceptualizes Third World women as passive and victimized objects devoid of agency and the ability to speak for themselves, needing to be saved and represented by western women (Mohanty 1988).

Like Mohanty, Uma Narayan challenges ethnocentric feminist attitudes to Third World cultures and traditions. The author criticizes the "missionary framework" of western feminists, in which Third World women are presented as the victims of their own cultures, who need to be rescued by First World women. Ignoring the fact that cultural traditions arise and develop in historical contexts, dominant parts of the West continue to perceive and treat Third World traditions as changeless, "perennially in place," making Third World nations "places with no history" (Narayan 1997, 48-49). In her critiques, the author also calls for the deconstruction of the term "Westernization" and its perceived meaning. For Narayan the term is widely used as a "strategy of dismissal," where Third World feminists who fight against patriarchal norms are viewed as westernized and "traitors to their communities" (Narayan 1997, 31).

Like non-Muslim feminists, Muslim women in the Third World, particularly feminist warriors, promote social transformation by developing actions from "within subordination." As a force for change, Muslim women have been an active part of cross-national feminist movements, which have enabled them to break through their cultural, national, and regional boundaries (Nouraie-Simone 2005). In their quest for social transformation, Muslim women (whether associated with Islamic or secular feminisms) have responded to oppression that denies Muslim women a voice, agency, and intellectual and political maturity.[1] Islamic feminists in the West use their religion to seek social transformation by actively engaging in contemporary feminist discourses about Muslim women.

Feminist Activism in Okinawa: Invoking Unai

by Risako Sakai

Okinawan women historically played important cultural roles such as priestesses (*nūru*) and spiritual guides (e.g., *kaminchu*) who communicated with ancestors and nature gods. But the invasion and colonization by Japan brought heteropatriarchy and paternalism, dividing Indigenous men and women, and reducing women's roles. Today, tourism and US military presence portray Okinawa as a feminized figure of paradise and Okinawan women as sexualized and infantilized.

Even activism in Okinawa has frequently embraced patriarchy, focusing on issues such as militarization over "women's issues" (Tanji 2006, 2007). Today, Indigenous feminism invokes Unai (うない), an Indigenous Okinawan female god, to protect activists (Tanji 2006; Katsukata-Inafuku 2016). Okinawa: Women Act Against Military Violence (OWAAMV) applies the concept of Unai, stressing women's and Indigenous Okinawans' empowerment while networking transnationally with other feminist movements in militarized settings (Ginoza 2015).

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Faith-centered Muslim feminists (whether western or west-based) are deeply engaged in contemporary feminist discourse. Through their scholarship and activism, Muslim feminists have not only traced the roots of women and gender in Islam, but they have also taken the initiative to reread and reinterpret the Qur'an. Islamic feminists dismiss the traditional interpretations of the Islamic texts, arguing that they are produced to serve both pre- and post-Islamic tribal traditions that are not supportive of women's

rights (Hamdan 2009). Muslim scholars like Leila Ahmed and Fatima Mernissi provide a new perspective on contemporary feminist debate about women in Islam by tracing the roots of women's exploration of Islamic texts within historical and social contexts. Islamic feminists such as Asma Barlas and Amina Wadud offer a more liberatory interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith (prophets' sayings). For example, Wadud critically examines the gender notions of the Qur'an to address the sexist and bigoted image of Islam that has been produced by the traditional interpretation of Islamic texts (Haraway 1989; Majid 1998; Wadud 2006). The reinterpretation of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective can create gender reform in the Muslim world, but only if such perspective is not secondary or supplementary to male social privilege or traditional ways of understanding knowledge (Wadud 2006).

Whether through a theoretical historicization or interpretative tradition, Muslim feminists have not only challenged the Orientalist and fundamentalist views of Muslim women, but they have also significantly contributed to contemporary feminist discourses and movements by developing a new form of political scholarship, feminism in Islam (Badran 2009). Like Islamic feminists, Muslim women have been proactively engaged in seeking social change from within subjugation through various and multiple means (Hamdan 2009).

The Black feminist movement emerged from the formation of the Black liberation movement and the women's movement. The objective of the Black feminist movement was to establish ideas that could effectively resolve the interconnections of race, gender, and class. Many feminists affirm that Black women often faced prejudice in the feminist movement during the 1960s (Springer 2002). The Black feminist movement was founded in response to the discrimination and racism facing Black women in their campaigns, and it aimed to educate Black men and white women about the influence of racism on the lives of Black women (Smith 1985, 4-7).

What Is "Woke Culture"?

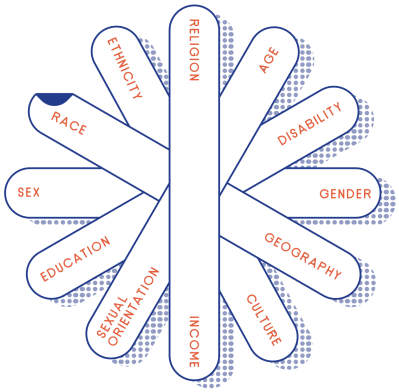
by Rebecca Lambert

What does it mean to be "woke"? The term has recently gained popularity, but where did it originate, and what does it really mean? As expressions gain mainstream popularity, their deep political roots are often erased from narrative and even co-opted and used in ways that do not relate to their original intent. The term *woke* has a long history based in African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Author William Melvin Kelley used the term in his 1962 essay in the *New York Times* titled "If You're Woke You Dig It," which talked about the co-optation of AAVE by white people.

Since then, the term has appeared in numerous outlets, from songs (such as "Master-Teacher," recorded by Erykah Badu) to social movements. The term arose in Black culture and identifies a way of being in the world, a way of staying aware of the struggles and systems of oppression that the Black community has faced and continues to challenge. As woke became more mainstream, it started to be used more broadly, leading to an idea of a "woke culture," a society that keeps the important political issues at the forefront of the public consciousness. As terms are rediscovered and incorporated into mainstream conversations, it is important to remember the cultural basis of language and speak accordingly.

The most noteworthy definitions of the Black feminist movement are Alice Walker's description and the collective statement of Combahee River Collective. Alice Walker coined the term *womanist* and explained, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (Walker 2005, xii). The Combahee River Collective statement of 1974 was more politically focused and claimed that Black women's liberation would mean equality for all people, as it would birth the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. The development of integrated study and practice based on the intersections of the major structures of oppression is their unique mission (Combahee River Collective 2014).

Kimberlé Crenshaw, a popular feminist law professor, termed the theory *intersectionality* when presenting identity politics (Crenshaw 1991, 43). According to Barbara Smith, the Black feminist movement since its emergence has focused on reproductive rights, discriminatory use of sterilization, fair access to abortion, health care, child abuse, rights of the disabled, women's abuse, rape, sexual abuse, battering, welfare rights, lesbian and homosexual rights, aging, police brutality, labor organizing, the battle against imperialism, organizing antiracists, nuclear disarmament, and global warming (Smith 1985, 12).



Overlapping identities + social movements = intersectionality

Black feminism claims an inextricable connection between sexism, class inequality, racism, and all other forms of oppression (Davis 2011). Hence feminist theory now includes an analysis of how race, class, sexuality, and gender influence women's lives (Smith 1985, 13).

Historically, in analyses of the contributions of African revolutionaries, the narrative has had a gender-specific focus, showcasing male personalities such as Nelson Mandela and a host of other African social movement activists, which has led to the marginalization of women in social and political conceptual

frameworks. Therefore the role of revolutionary African women in social movements for women's liberation, especially in countering mainstream narratives, must be discussed. African women played significant roles as revolutionaries before colonialism, after colonialism, and after independence. Lady Oyinkan Morenike Abayomi, for example, founded the Women's Party in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1944 to campaign for women's rights. Displeased with hyper-taxation without political representation, Lady Abayomi and the leaders of the party were crucial in campaigning for more educational and economic opportunities for women (Oyewumi 2004).

A rising percentage of women is coming together across Africa and making their voices heard, mobilizing across causes such as democracy, equality, reproductive health rights, and violence against women and girls. African feminists, scholars, and activists have made significant strides in their fight for equal political rights in their diverse countries, and women have been at the forefront of attempts to foster peace and reconciliation in other parts of Africa, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. As most of these campaigns have been influenced by transnational feminism and transnational alliances, the contemporary global battle for women's rights and liberation is increasingly being driven by female activists in Africa.

In 1951, activists Mabel Dove Danquah and Hannah Benka-Coker were pivotal in leading ten thousand people in a demonstration against rising food prices in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In 1954, Dove became the first woman to be elected to the legislature in West Africa. In the decades to follow, many women's movements continued, as women across the African continent played crucial roles in twenty-first-century political and social movements.

In 1992, for example, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) of Cameroon of elderly women played a key role in catalyzing peace after the onslaught of post-electoral violence. Dr. Noerine Kaleeba founded the AIDS Support Organization Uganda (known as TASO Uganda) in 1997, which was the premier organization in Uganda to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In her quest to break down perceptions that define science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research on the African continent as inferior, Nigerian scientist Tolu Oni is developing the Research Initiative for Cities Health and Equity (RICHE), an interdisciplinary research program that will tackle urban health disparities to find creative solutions and address complex public health issues.

While women activists such as Wangari Maathai, Winnie Mandela, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Albertina Sisulu are internationally renowned in their own right, and while scholars have done excellent work on the activism of African women, further work needs to be done to highlight the important contributions of African women to the building of social movements (Swift 2017). African women's activism is not limited to carrying placards in street protests. Female activists, scholars, and feminists have begun to engage public and private institutions, using digital media sources to challenge systemic oppression and other forms of violence against women and girls.

Promoting African women's rights

In Nigeria, deep-rooted sociocultural and colonial problems have continued to dominate the views of society on who a woman is and her sense of being. Women's rights are still a big issue facing Nigeria. Oyewumi affirms that African culture is replete with language that enables the community to diminish the humanity of women. She believes that African culture has a long history of discrimination and injustice toward women, as there has not been equity in opportunity, dignity, and power between men and women. She further states that various aspects of African culture prevent women from attaining equal status with men, such as limited access to education, rape culture, child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment at work, and all instances when a woman is restricted because of her gender, whether she is explicitly discriminated against under the law or simply unfairly treated or looked down upon (Oyewumi 1997).

The system of patriarchy, violence against women, the feminization of poverty and migration, globalization and the capitalist market system, and the practices of consumerism and commodification are still major issues for Nigerian feminists and activists. The general notion in Nigeria that women are inferior to men was recently reinforced when President Muhammadu Buhari, at a press conference in Germany, said the role of his wife, who is the First Lady of the Republic of Nigeria, did not extend beyond the kitchen and "the other room" (BBC News 2016). It was an unfortunate gaffe, especially given that women in Nigeria have made their mark in the political, educational, and economic fields. Nigerian women are thus subjected to various inequalities that have often led to women's marginalization in politics, decision-making, and policy-making. An excerpt from *We Should All Be Feminists* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie further affirms most Africans' perception about feminism:

> Why the word "feminist"? Why not just say you are a believer in human rights, or something like that? Because that would be dishonest. Feminism is, of course, part of human rights in general—but to choose to use the vague expression human rights is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women. That the problem was not about being human, but

> specifically about being a female human. For centuries, the world divided human beings into two groups and then proceeded to exclude and oppress one group. (Adichie 2014)

Two recent international cases have generated much hashtag activism: the #BringBackOurGirls in 2014 and the #EndSARS 2020 movements. Both movements were led by Aisha Yusuf, a Nigerian social and political activist who came to prominence for her role in speaking up for the 276 Chibok schoolgirls abducted by terrorists in 2014. She was also the co-convener of the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, which tirelessly held protests demanding the girls' rescue. Although the hashtag started primarily to advocate for release of the girls, the emerging digital advocacy platform has also been used to challenge normative discourses on women and girl-children and violence within Nigeria. The movement was thus noted to be at the forefront of advocating social reform for women and girls by developing a counter-discourse that aims to foster gender equality and social justice for women and girls (Akpojivi 2020).

#EndSARS was not just a protest of police brutality (in the form of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, or SARS) but also, as Motolani Alake stated in Nigeria's Pulse News, "a tone of rebellion, a note of valid belligerence, and a chant of unification in the Nigerian struggle against police brutality and terrible governance" (Warnes 2020). The #EndSARS movement was the tipping point after years of ongoing social trauma caused by inadequate health care systems and educational institutions, systemic corruption, nepotism, electoral fraud, poverty, and more. As an engaged feminist scholar, born and bred in Nigeria, I opined that the complaints about SARS are not new. Nigerian citizens have been speaking out online since 2017 and raising awareness about police brutality, with no successful attempts by activists to hold the government accountable.

The catalyst for the recent nationwide protests came in early October 2020, when reports surfaced in social media that police had attacked and killed a young man and driven off in his luxury vehicle. The movement to end police brutality was led by a couple of female activists and other young social media influencers, with initial demands for the notorious SARS police unit to be defunded and disbanded.

Demonstrators at an End SARS protest

The protest has since morphed into a campaign for police reform and an end to bad governance in the oil-rich country. *Soro Soke*, meaning "speak up" in the Yoruba language of the region, was one of the common chants used during the protests. The significance of the chosen language was to be able to communicate and associate with the general masses and victims of institutionalized oppression. According to BBC News, Nigeria's #EndSARS movement was much like the protests of police brutality in the United States by the Black Lives Matter movement. Nigerians in diaspora (those living in other countries) and other allies globally have stood in solidarity with the movement, which has attracted massive global support, shining a global spotlight on the #EndSARS hashtag (Khalid 2020).

Women played a leading role in powering the marches, and nearly $400,000 was raised by a large feminist coalition to fund the widespread marches that sprang up around the country and other countries where Nigerians reside. Several took to social media as a tool to engage bad governance in Nigeria. DJ Switch, an asylee in Canada, one of the young feminists present, played a significant role in leading the march and livestreaming the protests on her Instagram profile. On Black Tuesday, October 20, 2020, young protesters who sat and sang the national anthem were barricaded on either side of the Lekki toll gate in Lagos State, Nigeria, and were brutally massacred by Nigerian security forces (Busari 2020). DJ Switch was livestreaming the protests on her Instagram page when the shooting happened. She told CNN:

> I'm heartbroken. There was no warning. We just heard gunshots and the soldiers came in guns blazing. It's the worst thing I have seen in my life. They were just shooting like we were goats and chickens. (Busari 2020)

Despite the brutal massacre used to shut down the #EndSARS movement, feminists, activists, and Nigerian youths have continued to use all forms of media to challenge the patriarchal system of governance and

build digital spaces for voices, interactions, and advocacy for social change. For the sake of those who died, leading to the protests and during the protests, the labor of our heroes' past shall not be in vain. "The struggle must continue," says DJ Switch. This challenge of systematic oppression by brave feminists and activists in Nigeria and elsewhere resulted in the disbanding of the SARS unit and led to the creation of judicial commissions by many jurisdictions around the country to investigate complaints against police officers. In addition, this social change movement has been instrumental in forming a strong coalition among several organizations fighting systemic oppression in Nigeria and across borders.

Feminist Organizing in Kazakhstan

by Shannon Garvin

In the wake of international criticism by human rights organizations on how peaceful protestors are attacked by police to disperse the crowds, feminists in Kazakhstan are finding their voice and experiencing a reprieve. On March 8, 2021, a Women's Day march was observed by officials but allowed to proceed unhindered. About five hundred people attended, walking through the historic city of Almaty and listening to speakers address not only human rights issues that affect women but also those that address the needs of the handicapped and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex plus (LGBTQI+) communities. Domestic violence and disparity in access to economic resources have long plagued the vulnerable populations of the former Soviet Republic.

Veronica Fonova is a web designer who recently became a feminist activist and organized the country's first official feminist rally. Organizers hoped to highlight chronic and systemic issues of discrimination and violence. The United Nations supports the work of local activists like Fonova and recently highlighted her work on its 25 Women—Generation Equality news page. Perspectives on the role of women and the level of patriarchy acceptable in a home and village vary greatly from the urban centers to the rural mountainous areas. Kazakhstan is a country in immense transition, as it has moved from an isolated Soviet Republic to an oil-rich nation selling its resources to the world in only twenty-five years. Veronica Fonova wants the future to be as rich and safe for its women and vulnerable people as it is for its men.

Listening to Our Activist Selves

The emergence of information and communication technologies, including the Internet, cell phones, and to some degree, radio and television, has facilitated the flow of information and created more regular and sustained communication between activists around the world (Moghadam 2012). These factors led to the potential of activists worldwide to transcend borders and to establish new platforms for discourse and

mobilization across differences. Women have long organized across borders: several contemporary international women's groups evolved from the middle to late nineteenth century in the form of suffragist, abolitionist, and anti-colonial movements (Moghadam 2015, 53-54). Globalization has created unprecedented opportunities for women and other oppressed groups to mobilize. Some scholars have argued that feminist and women's advocacy groups were among the first to form transnational networks and have been some of the most effective (Desai 2007).

Transnational feminism is an approach to solving the limitations of global sisterhood by addressing differences between women's struggles (Mohanty 2003). Transnational feminism is specifically committed to an intersectional approach to scholarship and activism, which includes critically addressing the ways in which connections between gender, race, class, sexuality, physical and mental capacity, and nationality are formed through locations and identities. Mohanty argues that transnational feminists focus on the struggle to form strategic coalitions (Mohanty 2003, 17-42).

Uniting to mobilize

The UN world conferences for women have been repeatedly highlighted by scholars as crucial to transnational feminist organizing. The conferences created a shared forum for women of various races, cultures, classes, and occupations from around the world to meet face-to-face, both formally and informally (Moghadam 2012, 417-20). These conferences were mostly renowned for fostering debates and dialogue between activists who challenged western women's supremacy in framing the international women's agenda. Scholars refer to the early conferences as contentious in nature (Linabary and Hamel 2015). Moghadam (2015) considered the 1985 Nairobi conference a turning point in these debates, when participants started making alliances and finding consensus on several key issues of concern. Young feminist

activists are moving away from old mass media narratives of cultural and sexuality/gender politics and toward creating their own alternative narratives (Keller 2012). Harris, Wyn, and Younes (2010) argue that to date there has been insufficient feminist attention to women's high take-up of web 2.0 technologies. Evidently, young activists share their experiences on digital platforms globally, build new ideas, and engage locally and globally to challenge everyday sexism, systemic oppression, and violence against women within and outside their geographical areas (Harris, Wyn, and Younes 2010).

It is important to engage and encourage the emergence and proliferation of transnational feminist networks, which provide fertile ground for activists across borders to create formal and informal networks around issues of interest. Furthermore, it is important that transnational feminist organizations, which exist at the intersections of various systems, actively discuss issues of privilege and exclusion while building new transnational alliances to create a better future for feminist activism globally (Hawkesworth 2018).

Conclusion

Transnational feminism pursues social justice by encouraging cross-border solidarity, decolonizing knowledge, honoring difference and diversity, and promoting equity transformations. Change commences with a process of self-assessment and criticism, in which differences are used to form an effective alliance around a common vision (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994; Mohanty 2003; McLaren 2017). As a decolonizing process of knowledge-building, transnational feminism brings together First World and Third World feminists for politically informed coalitions, wider acceptance, critical self-consciousness, greater impact, continued sustainability, and meaningful change for women worldwide.

Recognizing that there are differences among women's varied visions, needs, priorities, interests, experiences, and historical contexts, transnational feminism challenges essentialist binaries such as North-South, First-Third, East-West, and male-female (Mohanty 2003; Lee and Shaw, 2011; hooks 2015). Creating and building on transnational activist coalitions, transnational feminists engage in renegotiating gender power relations; building cross-national alliances; and supporting women's protests, movements, and cyber-activism to influence international laws and policies that affect women's rights and status worldwide.

Women Who Rankle

by Janet Lockhart

In Stacy Schiff's review of *In Praise of Difficult Women,* she says the author, Karen Karbo, describes the ways a woman can rankle others: "She can be independent, exacting, impatient, persistent, opinionated, angry, unaccommodating, ambitious, restless, confident, brilliant, articulate, or just plain visible." (To rankle means to annoy, irritate, or cause resentment.)

Six women respond to this description:

Laureal: You can be yourself instead of who someone else wants or expects you to be. You "rankle" if you don't meet the expectations others impose on you. Fuck that! That's on them.

Andi: Oh! These words don't just describe women but also the girls that they were! My parents worked very hard to raise an independent woman and were extremely pissed off (though also proud) by their success. To truly rankle, the woman simply has to be comfortable being themselves. I have compared sharing my world as similar to learning to water ski. Initially, the boat is way too fast. A person must hold on for dear life and hope that the driver knows how to navigate the waters; but if they hang in there, eventually it becomes fun. Although, some people just don't like the waters.

Niki: The quote's not wrong: women are perceived as difficult if they do any of those things. I don't agree with it! I'm irritated that women are perceived that way, because they shouldn't be. You take a woman who voices her opinion, she's a bitch; but you take a man who has the same opinion, he's listened to.

Shoshana: Being a "difficult" woman is often imbued with racialized connotations. Black, Jewish, Latina, and Indigenous women who speak out about injustice within institutions must navigate cultural stereotypes that intersect with their gender about being angry and uncooperative.

Dawn: These qualities were systematically driven out during my childhood—I've spent my adult life trying to embrace them without guilt.

Olivia: I love seeing women unapologetically acting as men traditionally would and claiming words such as "ambitious" and "unaccommodating." Sometimes just their existence can cause others to be uncertain how to handle them. There's something so beautiful about a woman that takes up space in an environment that doesn't want her to.

Are you a woman who rankles? How do you feel about it? If you choose, how can you rankle *more*?

In the growing transnational and globalized world, and in the face of ongoing global gender injustice, transnational feminists skillfully use the Internet to build upon their resistance and foster their individual and collective quest for social transformation. Thus doing, these feminists translate their silence into a cyber-activist language for social change. Audre Lorde highlights the importance of speaking up as indispensable for social transformation. According to Lorde (1977), it is our silence, not our differences, that "immobilizes us."

It is noteworthy that while feminists, activists, and other women have been tirelessly fighting for gender justice, rates of violence against women and girls are persisting or increasing globally. Feminists and women worldwide have been fighting multiple, concurrent battles—at the household, community, country, and transnational levels—experiencing backlash as they make gains toward gender justice, confirming the need for transnational feminism and activism more than ever.

Learning Activities

1. Why is the "waves" model of feminist history problematic?
2. What is transnational feminist activism? What strategies do transnational feminists use to create solidarity and enact change across borders?
3. Review Afghan and Fletcher's discussion of the #EndSARS protest of police brutality in Nigeria. Then take a few minutes to review #EndSARS online. What do you learn about #EndSARS from these sources? What can we learn about #EndSARS and the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States by considering them in relationship to one another? What can we learn about these movements by examining them through a transnational feminist lens?
4. Take some time to review the UN Women website. In what way does the organization UN Women participate in transnational feminist activism?
5. Define *transnational feminism* in your own words. Compare your answer to the answer to question 1 in chapter 1 in this volume.
6. Working in a group, add these key terms to your glossary: feminist consciousness raising, cyberactivism.

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Notes

1. Secular and Islamic feminisms are two different schools of thought. While secular feminism centers on promoting gender equality in both private and public arenas, Islamic feminism seeks social change through using religion, especially by reinterpreting the Qur'an, to demand gender equality. Despite their different approaches, both schools together constitute "feminism in Islam" (see Badran 2009).

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