

## COMPANION TO WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

# Companion to Women's and Gender Studies

EDITED BY

**NANCY A. NAPLES**

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# Acknowledgments

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# Part I

## Introduction



# 1

## The Changing Field of Women's and Gender Studies

NANCY A. NAPLES

### Part I Introduction

Women's and gender studies is an ever-changing field of academic inquiry that was born out of Women's Movement organizing within and outside of Western colleges and universities in the late 1960s and 1970s. While women's organizing on behalf of the vote and other significant social and economic issues has a long history, the challenge to the androcentric or male/masculine-centric knowledge project of academia is more recent. The story surrounding the development of women's and gender studies is often told through a Western- or Northern-centric lens; but it is incomplete or, even misguided, without acknowledging the diversity of sites outside the West or North that helped shape the field both within and outside of the academy (see e.g. Beoku-Betts 2020; Mikell 1996). This chapter presents an overview of shifts in naming, theoretical approaches, and topics covered in contemporary women's and gender studies. I introduce the *Companion* and highlight some of the key contributions of the authors as they variously discuss the construction of inequality, reproduction of the gender, as well as individual and collective modes of agency and resistance.

### Politics of naming

Women's studies, as an institutionalized academic formation, began with the recognition of women's absence in canonical texts, research strategies, interpretation of findings, and many classrooms. With the support of students and women's movement activists and organizations, women faculty and students in different disciplines created independent studies and courses that were often informally taught on women writers, artists, and philosophers who were little known or appreciated. Since there were few publications available, feminist faculty shared mimeographed essays and other materials that formed the basis of these early courses. In response to student-led organizing, some of these courses were added to the curriculum and became the basis

for women's studies programs. Many programs eventually became departments and developed minors, majors, graduate certificates and, more recently, Masters and PhD degrees (see, for example, Berger and Radeloff 2011).

With the move to institutionalize women's studies in the academy, feminist faculty engaged in often-heated debates about the politics of naming (see, for example, Jackson 2016; LaDuke 2005). As a result of a socially constructed understanding of women and gender, many programs across the US changed their names from women's studies to women's and gender studies, or to gender studies (Scott 1986). A large number of programs and departments also added sexuality studies to capture the intersectional understanding of power, experience, and culture. Feminist faculty in some universities and colleges dropped these constructs altogether, opting for "feminist studies" to center the epistemological approach rather than the object of study, as was the decision made at the University of California, Santa Barbara, when it became a department in 2008.

The dependence on cross-listing courses from different departments and the unpaid labor of feminist faculty continued as a feature of these programs long after their initial development. Drawing on feminist praxis and critiques of androcentric approaches in the traditional disciplines, feminist scholars located in these new units also developed new approaches and courses in feminist theories, feminist methodologies, and feminist pedagogies, which are among the central courses that shaped the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies. In time, interdisciplinary courses solely located within women's studies replaced the reliance on cross-listing.

These new institutional formations provided more organizational stability for curriculum development that hastened the context for important debates, including those over which women's lives were chronicled and how to attend to the diversity of women's lives and contributions in the courses (see, for example, Moallem 2002). The moves to incorporate women of color and to internationalize the curriculum were first addressed by the creation of separate courses that marginalized these foci within the curriculum and often contributed to a reductive approach to both themes (see, for example, Lee 2000; Lugones and Spelman 1983; Mani 1998; McDermott 1998; Moghadam 2001; Moallem 2002).

African American, Latina, Native, Asian American, and other feminist scholars and students contested the totalizing construction of women that centered on white, middle-class women's experiences and marginalized others (see, for example, Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983). Lesbian, bisexual and queer women challenged the presumption of heterosexuality that ran through early feminist work (see, for example, Butler 1994; Weed and Shor 1997). "Third world" feminists or those influenced by postcolonial critiques contested the Western-centric angle of vision within women's studies (Mohanty 1984; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1992; Alexander and Mohanty 1997). Furthermore, as Ashwini Tambe and Millie Thayer (in preparation) note in their edited book, *The Many Destinations of Transnational Feminism*: "Transnational feminism emerged as a critique of imperial modes of practicing feminism, and it was influenced by field-defining scholarship on colonialism, race, and gender/sexuality in the 1990s" (n.p.). Another significant epistemological intervention was offered by indigenous feminists who explain that:

Indigenous gender, sexuality, and feminist studies ... are predicated on the polity of the Indigenous – the unique governance, territory, and culture of Indigenous peoples in

unique and related systems of (non)-human relationships and responsibilities to one another.

[Barker 2017, p. 7; also see Connell 2007; Green 2007; Moreton-Robinson 2002; A. Smith 2005, L.T. Smith 2012].

Queer and trans scholars further challenged the binary approach to gender and sexuality that is still evident in certain approaches to women's and gender studies (Beemyn and Eliason 1996; Currah 2006; Johnson and Henderson 2005; Martínez-San Miguel and Tobias 2016). Feminist scholars working in these new areas who drew on intersectional theories posed significant interventions that fostered the development of new theories, research strategies, and courses that addressed the diversity of people's lives as shaped by race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, citizenship status, colonial status, ability, and national context (see, for example, Berger and Guidroz 2010; Godfrey and Torres 2016; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Hancock 2016; Kolawole 1997; Naples, Mauldin, and Dillaway 2019).

Debates over the subject of inquiry in women's and gender studies surfaced the limited constructions of feminism that centered a White and Euro-centric point of view which had also become dominant in the popular imaginary (see, for example, Motlafi 2015). Critics of this limited construction debated the possibility of reenvisioning, reclaiming feminism or rejecting it outright in favor of more relevant frameworks. Women from non-Western or Southern regions were particularly critical of Western-centric or Northern constructions of feminism. For example, African women from colonial English-speaking countries were drawn to the conceptualization of "womanism" offered by Alice Walker in her 1983 book, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, as a framework to express their political activism as a consequence of, among other things, a mistrust of Western definitions of feminism, especially more radical definitions that focused their activism solely on women's issues and rights (Kolawole 1997). Mary Modupe Kolawole (1997) discusses how Walker's (1983) "definition of womanism addresses the question of racial focus and specificity and makes this concept more valid to African women than the omnibus definition of feminism" (p. 21). Kolawole further emphasizes that: "A common nexus, therefore, runs through the consciousness of African people in foregrounding collectivism and an integrative struggle" (p. 25).

Walker's conceptualization of womanism reflected the activism of "race women" like Ida B. Wells Barnett (1895) and Anna Julia Cooper (1895), who were devoted to the survival, dignity, and flourishing of the entire Black race (see, Brewer 2020). Dorothy Randall Tsuruta (2012) notes that "today, African-centered womanists are of the [similar] inclination of the Black race women and men of the first half of the twentieth century" (p. 7). She quotes Nigerian activist scholar Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1996) who self-defines as an "African womanist": "Naming ourselves meaningfully as we have always done in our cultures historicizes our circumstances and focalizes politics" (p. 16). The histories of race women and womanists are among the many important traditions that contribute to the vibrancy of women's and gender studies and demonstrate Black women's long history of intersectional praxis; namely the recognition of the diversity of women's experiences along the lines of race, class, and sexuality, along with other dimensions of power (see, for example, Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1989). The ethical and critical practice of reflexivity has also led to the

rich diversity and transformation of epistemologies in the field (Adkins 2003; Naples 2013). As Naples (2013) explains: “The process of reflexivity involves deliberation among participants with the express goal of broadening feedback and reflection to include diverse experiences and analyses” (p. 677). This form of praxis breaks down the false divide between academic feminism and activism. As Ashwini Tambe and Millie Thayer (in preparation) discuss, “in many parts of the world, such as Latin America and South Asia, activism and academia are not as separate from one another as they are in the US” and “in some cases, productive tensions between scholars and activists emerge, pushing each side to articulate its thinking” (n.p.).

### Epistemological diversity

For many decades, biological determinist views of gender, sex, and sexuality dominated academic approaches. In 1966, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann published *The Social Construction of Reality* which posited that culture and language played central roles in constructing what counts as reality. The theory of social constructionism spoke to feminist critiques of gender essentialism and the rigid binary of gender roles. The importance of language and culture for constructing hegemonic notions of male and female and masculinity and femininity were also emphasized. A more radical approach to social constructionism was further expressed in philosopher Judith Butler’s theory of performativity that built on J.L. Austin’s (1975[1955]) “speech act” theory. Austin argued that speech is productive and works to bring things into being, rather than served as mere descriptions of a perceived reality. Butler (1990) extended Austin’s approach to include the work of discourse (Foucault 1972) to construct social identities. Butler further argued that gender is performed, rather than an inherent feature of one’s nature. She explains that “what we take to be an ‘internal’ feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts as an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures” (pp. xv–xvi).

New epistemological developments in feminist theory and in the wider academy further invigorated the curriculum, research strategies, and interdisciplinary vision. Feminist scholars productively engaged postcolonial (see Bulbeck 1998; Mohanty 2003; Parashar 2016), postmodern (see McNay 1991; Diamond and Quinby 1992; Martin 1992), poststructural (see, for example, Berg 1991), and queer (see Weed and Schor 1997) theoretical insights while generating new intellectual formations in intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2019) and transnational feminist theories that further invigorated the richness of feminist inquiry (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). (For a more extensive coverage of feminist epistemologies and methodologies, see the *Companion to Feminist Studies* (Naples 2020)).

The narrative about the development of women’s and gender studies emphasizes influential publications such as Mary Beard’s *Woman as Force in History* (1946), Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), and Michele Barrett’s *Women’s Oppression Today* (1980). Key texts cited in the move toward a more inclusive approach to women’s studies include *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga (1981); *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* by bell hooks (1981); *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* edited by Askasha (Gloria T.) Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (1982);

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (1984) "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses"; and Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

The success of institutionalizing women's studies within the academia is further narrated through the reference to first courses taught. For example, the Universities of Kent and Bradford in the UK established Women's and Gender Studies courses in the early 1980s. San Diego State University established its women's studies program in 1970 and female studies was first organized at Cornell in 1971. In 1972, the University of Buffalo sponsored 45 courses. The program grew in stature to become a Department of Women's Studies in 1997. To reflect the move towards internationalization of the mission and curriculum, it was renamed the Department of Global Gender Studies in 2005 but was merged under the Transnational Studies Department in 2009. That year they established an MA and PhD program in Global Gender Studies. In 2019, it again became a separate department, this time incorporating sexuality studies (Global Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Buffalo 2019). All of these accomplishments resulted from the activism of women students and faculty who were engaged, at the time, in diverse women's movement organizing efforts. However, if we broaden our angle of vision outside the US context, we discover that perhaps the first course in women's studies was taught much earlier than chronicled in the US story. For example, Madge Dawson is credited as offering the first course in the 1950s in Australia (Sydney Morning Herald 2003). More importantly, there are a number of other origin stories that can and should be told when envisioned through a transnational lens.

The structure of US academia included the bureaucratic context to respond to the political pressure for incorporation of new interdisciplinary programs such as African American, Asian American and Latino/a studies as well as women's studies programs. However, women's studies was also developing in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America (see, for example, Bonnin 1996; Beoku-Betts 2020; Dahlerup 2015; Dufour et al. 2010; Illo 2005). International conferences were organized as well. The United Nations (UN) sponsored the first UN World Conference on Women was held in Mexico City in 1975 and delegates met again in Copenhagen (1980), in Nairobi (1985), and in Beijing (1995). The UN subsequently held reviews of women's status every five years. Academic feminists organized transnationally to sponsor the First International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women held in Haifa, Israel, in 1981. It has been held every three years since that time in different cities in different countries and sponsored by different universities.<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Safir (2018) spearheaded the first Women's Worlds Congress and points out how significant it was for promoting women's studies in Israel. She notes that following the Congress, the program in sex differences in society at Hebrew University was established in 1982, and the following year, the first women's studies program was established at the University of Haifa.

## **Part II The Diversity of Academic Fields and Institutional Formations**

In the opening chapter in this section (Chapter 2), Clara Montague and Ashwini Tambe retell the story of women's studies to attend to the diversity of origins and investments that have given rise to this important interdisciplinary field. Through case studies on the US, South Korea, and Turkey, they explain that there are at least

three aspects of the US story that caution against using it “as a blueprint for understanding the field in other locations.” These dimensions include: (i) the US emphasis on undergraduate, rather than graduate, education as is the focus in other countries, (ii) feminist engagement with the state, which is underdeveloped in the US when compared to countries like the UK or Australia, and (iii) the “wave metaphor” that conceptualizes changing contours in feminism across historical periods.

The first wave was defined around securing the right to vote (Lemay 2019). The second wave referred to the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s that challenged essentialist binary gender roles and fought for equal rights (Naples 2005). The third wave is either defined paradoxically as more individualistic (when focused on the claims of young middle- and upper-middle-class feminists) or more attentive to the intersecting experiences across race, class, ability, and sexuality when compared to second-wave feminists (Reger 2005). However, the wave metaphor does not attend to the multiplicity of organizing efforts including Black women’s fight for abolition and labor rights during the first wave, radical and socialist feminist claims by White middle-class women in the second wave, and intersectional organizing by African American women and Latina activists during both the first and second waves. Furthermore, the wave metaphor does not bring into view the diverse strategies that women use to organize in different cultural and national contexts across different historical periods, as shaped by the differing role of religion, different state governance structures, among other institutional and cultural practices (Naples 2005).

In Chapter 3, William J. Scarborough and Barbara J. Risman acknowledge their “location in a Western nation and its position within global structures of power and discourse” as they provide an overview of the diverse and historical shifts in gender studies in the US and underscore that in contemporary gender studies, scholars recognize “the mechanisms by which gender is always intersecting with other systems of power, privilege, and oppression.” They refer to the intersectional work of Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), which was generated from the lived experiences, everyday struggles, insights and reflections of Black women (see, also, Combahee River Collective 1977). Patricia Hill Collins called these structural and relational dynamics “a matrix of domination.” Scarborough and Risman explain that Collins’s concept draws: “attention to the social organization of oppression that occurs through structural forces (legal systems), disciplinary means (policing and organized regulation), cultural ideologies (stereotypes proliferated in media about oppressed groups), and interpersonal relationships” (see also Collins and Bilge 2016; Collins 2019).

Crenshaw’s (1989) articulation of intersectionality captured Black feminist praxis and experiences long before she conceptualized the term. Crenshaw defines intersectionality as the “‘multidimensionality’ of individuals’ lived experiences (p. 139) and the systems of oppression shaping them” (quoted in Naples, Mauldin, and Dillaway 2019, p. 9). Naples and coauthors note that: “While this theoretical framework and analytic tool developed out of black feminist scholarship, critical race theory, and legal studies, feminist scholars in a wide range of disciplines and interdisciplinary sites have adopted intersectionality to examine the co-construction of race, gender, and class in shaping individual, collective, and structural conditions” (pp. 9–10). Attention to the value of intersectional approaches and analysis is woven throughout the chapters in this *Companion to Women’s and Gender Studies*.

Scarborough and Risman’s chapter highlights both the development of gender studies as an academic field and the long history of “feminist consciousness” (Lerner

1993) evident in works such as *The Book of the City of Ladies*, written around 1405 by French author, Christine de Pizan and Jane Anger's *Her Protection For Women* (1985 [1589]), which "provided a stinging critique of men's treatment of women and, more specifically, of the misogynist way many male authors portrayed women".

Contemporary feminist scholars also offer insightful analyses of the social construction of masculinity with a recognition that rather than one dominant or "hegemonic" construction, masculinity is multiple (Connell 1995). In Chapter 4, Melanie Lee charts and analyzes multiple masculinities to further demonstrate the complexity of the concept as it is constructed in different contexts, with different epistemologies, and manifests in diverse material practices. She also examines masculinities' transnational, hegemonic manifestations as well as relationships between local and global masculinity patterns, practices, and impacts and argues for inclusive approaches to international conversations about gender inequality in order to move people toward gender equality.

Trans studies further challenge the binary approach to gender that typified early women's and gender studies. In Chapter 5, Cristina Khan and Kolbe Franklin point to the role of biological determinism and medicalization in shaping early approaches to trans studies. Social constructionist approaches destabilized these determinist approaches. Khan and Kolbe conclude by noting the significance of transfeminism for its intersectional attention "to the tripartite of race, class, and gender ... as overlapping and interrelated categories of identity and systems that structure discrimination, power, and relative dis/advantage." Trans movements have widened recognition of transphobia and racism that increase the vulnerability of trans people in social, cultural and political institutions. However, the "medical industrial complex" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1969) and the "gender order" (Connell 1995) continue as powerful forces in shaping trans experiences and structuring gendered possibilities. Eric Eckhart (2016) notes in his article, "A Case for the Demedicalization of Queer Bodies" that "the medicalization of queer bodies not only fails to diminish ... deep-seated biases from sexuality research and clinical practice, but that it also impedes care providers from addressing the healthcare disparities facing queer patients today" (n.p.). Trans activism contributed to changes in medical treatment and state recognition of trans individuals as well as the establishment of a trans antiviolence movement. Despite the growth in visibility and movement success, in some policy arenas, trans everyday lives continue to be shaped by the politics of medicalization.

### Part III Science, Health, and Psychology

The next section focuses on the gender order and the power of androcentric constructions of science, health, and psychology as they construct and reproduce hegemonic understandings of gender, as well as how feminist scholars have interrupted these constructions. In Chapter 6, Sara P. Diaz presents an overview of feminist science and technology studies [FSTS] and explains that:

Western technoscience figures itself as value-free, apolitical, and objective. However, the historical social homogeneity of scientists and engineers has had an impact not only on the science of sex, gender, and sexuality, but on the substance of technoscientific projects.

In Chapter 7 on “Gender Bias in Research,” Meg Upchurch analyzes how androcentric approaches to science mask presumed “gender neutral” research practice and research designs center men as researchers and as research subjects. As in other male-dominated fields, women who enter and remain in the sciences often face sexual harassment or even sexual assault. Unconscious biases seep through the research process at all stages from hiring and promoting male researchers over women to interpretation of findings and extrapolation to both men and women of research results based on men, as has been most recently demonstrated in the diagnoses of heart attacks (Dougherty 2011).

Women’s reproductive lives have long been a target of medicalization and state regulation. In Chapter 8, Anna Kuxhausen offers a comparative analysis of the history of interventions by the state and other social institutions in women’s sexuality, pregnancy, and birthing that shifted birthing practices from under women’s control in the home and community to church, state, and sanctioned medical officials, who were often located far from the local setting. Kuxhausen points out how racist, nationalist, and classist constructions influenced how these social control practices were carried out and experienced. She compares these shifts as they appear in the US, Europe, and Russia. Commonalities include the development of natalist politics that contribute to “racist and classist efforts to control which women had babies and who was allowed to raise them.” Feminists effectively challenged state control and regulation to expand their reproductive rights but “had to accept compromises with the medical establishment that allowed physicians to retain their control over birth control.” For the most part, socialist countries were more progressive than capitalist countries in legalizing abortion, along with policies to support women’s ability to balance work and family. However, as Kuxhausen reports, it is in democratic countries with “a free press that women from marginalized communities have been able to raise awareness about forced contraception and redefine ‘reproductive justice’ to include the right to raise children in healthy environments.”

Intersectional feminist analysis demonstrates that women from different racial, ethnic, class, and national backgrounds experience different modes of surveillance by the state. Intersectionality is a powerful tool for revealing these processes; however, ableism is often ignored in intersectional analysis while gender as a dimension of power and inequality is often invisible in disability studies (Naples, Mauldin, and Dillaway 2019). In Chapter 9, Linda M. Blum describes the origins of disability studies in the 1970s and 1980s that challenged “the medicalizing of varied forms of bodily difference and impairments as abnormal, deformed, or deficient.” Blum explores the extent to which gender shapes the experience of disability and disability activism. The early movement foregrounded struggles against “the able-bodied, able-minded standard by which liberal democracies deemed adult men and women fit for rights and opportunities” and this focus “has been arguably more central to disability activism and scholarship than deconstructing the gender binary itself.” However, as Blum demonstrates, gender is a core dimension that constructs understanding of different bodies and the distinctions between “normative and non-normative bodies” that shapes cultural, medical, and economic processes.

Women and gender have also been marginalized in much of the early work in the field of psychology. In Chapter 10, Thekla Morgenroth and Avelie Stuart emphasize that, as in other academic fields, gender imbalance was challenged by women’s activism



in the field. Feminist psychologists also encouraged the recognition of the significance of gender in shaping life experiences. Initial work concentrated on the investigation of gender differences and similarities in behaviors, traits, and cognitive abilities through quantitative research designs. Interpretations of findings from these studies tended to essentialize and overemphasize the differences until meta-analyses conducted by feminist scholars demonstrated that “gender differences were either close to zero or small and therefore likely not very meaningful” with the exception of, among others, “sexual behavior and attitudes as well as physical aggression” (Hyde 2005). Morgenroth and Stuart describe the importance of social constructionist and intersectional approaches that draw on diverse quantitative and qualitative research strategies. They discuss the various societal factors that contribute to the creation of gender differences and how they are reproduced “in language and social interaction.” While contemporary psychological approaches challenge the gender binary, they continue to center Western, white, middle-class framing of psychological processes. These processes are shaped by cultural constructions of gender that are foundational to socialization practices and cultural production, which is the focus of the following section.

#### Part IV Culture

In their contribution to the *Companion to Women's and Gender Studies* (Chapter 11), Pamela Bettis and coauthors focus on “Gender Ideology, Socialization, and Culture” in Nigeria, South Korea, and the United States. They demonstrate that “there is not one universal gender ideology or one universal gender socialization process.” However, there are some significant dimensions that can be found in all three contexts including women’s disproportionate poverty rate and the continued dominance of patriarchal social relations. In Chapter 12, Caryn D. Riswold attends to the way in which gender studies scholarship and feminist activism contest the patriarchal traditions of different religions that led some of these institutions to open up religious leadership positions so women could serve as priests and rabbis, among other roles. They also contributed to the revision of “images of and language for the divine, religions’ histories, interpretation and authority of sacred texts, belief and doctrine” and pointed out the varying role of religion in shaping gender relations and religious ideology.

The media is a key institution in the construction and reconstruction of gender. In Chapter 13, Audrey S. Gadzekpo and Marquita S. Smith review different theoretical perspectives on “Gender and Media” with a focus on film, advertising, the news, and online media. They discuss the ways media promote inequalities as well as how activists use media, especially online sites, to challenge these representations. In Chapter 14, Andrew J. Young and Dustin Kidd examine the role of women in producing popular culture including their contributions to television, film, music, and literature; and point out the persistent gendered inequalities that exist in these industries and cultural arenas. Young and Kidd also examine the significance of “the gendered nature of ... the processes by which some cultural objects are celebrated and sacralized above others” that valorize or reward men’s activities and experiences over women’s, and constructions and performance of masculinity over femininity.

The concluding chapter in this section (Chapter 15) focuses on the ways that hegemonic constructions of masculinity, power inequities, and patriarchal practices

contribute to the intertwined social problems of “Gender-Based Violence and Rape Culture.” As in many of the previous chapters, author Brian N. Sweeney emphasizes the importance of an intersectional approach that is “enriched by an awareness of how distinct axes of power and privilege interlock to reproduce broader relations of inequality, oppression, exploitation, dehumanization, and victimization.” Sweeney’s intersectional approach includes attention to homophobic and transphobic violence. He also incorporates attention to women’s and girls’ increased vulnerability during times of crisis, displacement, forced migration, and war. As he notes, feminist analysis of spousal rape, rape as a tool of war, and rape myths influenced social policy and legal changes in many countries. Feminist activism led to inclusion of antiviolence and human rights policies adopted by the United Nations. The following section sheds further light on the global trends in gender inequality and implementation of policies to counteract these trends.

## **Part V Politics, Economics, and the Environment**

In their opening chapter in this section (Chapter 16), Yan Ling Anne Wong and Maria Charles address the persistence of inequality between men and women in the labor market. They consider the individual, structural, and cultural explanations for the continued gender division of labor and inequities in pay and occupational advancement as they interact with race, class, nativity, and other dimensions of social stratification. In Chapter 17, Donna Bobbitt-Zeher discusses the activism and successful passage of gender discrimination policies and analyzes their effectiveness in challenging gender inequality in the workplace, schools, and other social institutions. She also considers related policies established at the United Nations. She reports the finding of the World Bank Group (2015) that:

lower legal gender equality is associated with fewer girls attending secondary school relative to boys, fewer women working or running businesses, and a wider gender wage gap. Where laws do not provide protection from domestic violence, women are likely to have shorter life spans. But where governments support childcare, women are more likely to receive wages. (p. 2).

Unfortunately, there are numerous occupations that remain untouched by these legal protections. Care work is one of these areas of labor that often operates outside of government regulation. When formalized, care work remains underpaid and often includes highly exploitative working conditions.

In Chapter 18, Rosalba Todaro and Irma Arriagada analyze the global care chains that contour women’s international migrant labor and local community hierarchies of care. They note that the term “global care chains” was introduced by Arlie Hochschild (2001) to describe how people in different locations across the world are linked through the “care tasks in the homes of migrants who were hired and the care situation within their own homes and families.” These relations are unequal ones and further trap women in low-paid positions with increased risk for exploitation (Pérez Orozco 2007).

Exploitation is another theme that runs through feminist critiques of androcentric constructions of the environment, which contribute to the treatment of natural resources with little concern for the long-term impact. In Chapter 19, “Gender and

Environmental Studies” Mary Buchanan, Phoebe Godfrey, and Emily Kaufman offer an historical perspective on the concern for human actions that have a negative impact on the environment. They trace the origins of the interdisciplinary field of environmental studies to debates over conservation and preservation of natural spaces in the early twentieth century. Citing ecofeminist Susan Mann (2011), Buchanan, Godfrey, and Kaufman point out that much of the history and even contemporary environmental studies “is heavily weighted toward the dominant social groups – largely White, middle-class American men – with less attention paid to ‘women working on the margins’ both nationally and around the world.”

Buchanan, Godfrey, and Kaufman point out that during the 1970s feminists challenged the male-dominated field of environmental studies and articulated an approach called ecofeminism that “sought to liberate women and nature and to instigate new pathways based on equity and sustainability.” However, despite its theoretical diversity, feminist ecological approaches were often subsumed under one approach that tended to rely on an essentialist view of gender that naturalized women’s affinity for nature and the natural environment, and a failure to acknowledge the diversity of women’s experiences and complex relationships with nature. As the authors note, this was particularly apparent in ecofeminist “emphasis on celebrating the perceived privileged connections between women/indigenous peoples and nature.” Buchanan and coauthors argue for the use of an intersectional lens to break down the false divide between humans and nature believed to exist by some Western cultures. Throughout the chapter, they emphasize the significance of social activism informed by intersectional praxis for placing the environment on the agenda for social policy and collective action. Collective action is more necessary than ever to challenge the social, economic, and political inequalities, including gender, that have fueled global climate change and which must be directly addressed if a sustainable future is to ever be achieved.

## Part VI Social Movements

The final section of this *Companion* offers an overview of gender and social activism and the most significant social movements that have shaped and continue to reshape Women’s and Gender Studies. In Chapter 20, “Gender and Collective Action,” Jennifer E. Cossyleon and Kyle R. Woolley demonstrate how collective action is a gendered and gendering process that shapes motivations for action, strategies, tactics, and movement outcomes. They also point to the importance of studying grassroots movements led by women of color who are often made invisible in academic literature and representations of movement activism. By turning attention to women’s grassroots activism, feminist scholars have transformed what counts as politics. They also emphasize how women’s strategies tend to be more focused on collectivist, across –issue and across-movement or intersectional strategies than those highlighted in the dominant sociological and political science literature on social movements (Naples 1998).

Women’s activism occurs in a variety of sites including in local communities and at the regional and transnational levels of organizing (Naples and Desai 2002). This is further demonstrated in Chapter 21 on “Women’s Movements” by Almudena Cabezas González and Marisa Revilla-Blanco. Cabezas and Revilla-Blanco center women’s social movement activism in non-Western countries. The authors

emphasize the importance of an intersectional analytic framework to reveal the stratified axes of oppression that create hierarchies evident within and across different women's movements. They highlight the significance of a transnational feminist approach that includes attention to "multisituated networks and alliances in contemporary social action" (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Mohanty 2003).

The scholarship on women's movements captures progressive mobilizations as it is distinguished from *right-wing women's movements*. Daniela Mansbach and Alisa Von Hagel focus on the latter in Chapter 22. Right-wing women's movements have a long history and have contributed to White supremacist, nationalist, and patriarchal goals. As Mansbach and Von Hagel point out, Right-wing women's movements have also been criticized by many feminists as acting against the interests of women as well as being shaped by influential men. Here, it is important to note that how one defines women's issues can vary widely. For many conservative women, feminist goals of gender equality, access to abortion, and supporting sexual freedom and sexual diversity pose challenges to traditional gender roles and, they argue, diminish the value of women's essential and valued position in the home. However, some women participating in right-wing mobilizations do see their engagement as feminist activism. For example, this is evident among some women participating in the Pro-Life movement in the US (see for example, <https://www.feministsforlife.org/>). Furthermore, women's motivations for social activism are often similar to those described by women engaged in left-wing or progressive organizing. Many women in both the progressive and conservative ends of the movement view it as an extension of their role of mothers and their desire to protect their communities or families.

Men's movements are also politically diverse mobilizations that include both conservative and radical strands. As Cliff Leek & Markus Gerke explain in Chapter 23, such self-defined movements first arose as a backlash or response to feminist critiques of traditional gender roles and, paradoxically, as an extension of feminist insights about the social construction of gender. The activists in the progressive men's movement agree about the price that men pay for trying to achieve a hegemonic (or dominant) form of masculinity and acknowledge the power imbalance among men based on class, race, and sexuality. Feminist men within this end of the movement recognized how hegemonic masculinity contributes to violence against women and, consequently, created antiviolence groups to support women's organizing in this arena to educate men on the issue. Leek and Gerke explain that on the more conservative end of the continuum "the antifeminist men's rights movement rejects analyses of gendered power dynamics, denies institutional power and privilege of men and instead centers the concept of the male 'gender role' in order to argue that men as a group suffer to the same or even greater degree as women because of their gender, or to frame men as the victims of a gender order that allegedly benefits women."

The challenge to the hegemonic "gender order" (Connell 1995) is the central thread that ties Trans Movements to the feminist critique of the gender binary. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz reviews the diverse trans movements in the Americas, with attention to racial and class diversity of mobilizations, the range of political strategies adopted, and the role of artists and activist scholars. Trans activists have been participating in LBGTQI politics for some time, but have never been fully integrated or central in defining issues and strategies. Contemporary trans movements address a wide range of issues including identity validation, access to housing and health

care, criminalization of trans people, and prevention of violence in prisons. As in other social movements discussed in this section, strategies adopted by trans activists take different forms in different locales.

In Chapter 24, Vidal-Ortiz highlights both the persistence of gender inequality and violence across different time frames and diverse contexts, the significance of local community forms of resistance, and the broader mobilizations found in transnational feminist praxis. In considering trans movements, he opens his chapter with the quote “to put the body on the line,” from Barbara Sutton’s book *Bodies in Crisis*. Sutton (2010) explains that the phrase is drawn from the Argentinian struggles, as she describes:

The unfulfilled promises of electoral democracy, the connections with a past of brutal military dictatorship, the impoverishment of the population, the corruption of politicians and powerful economic groups, and the neoliberal economic model, all came under the critical scrutiny of ordinary people. They voiced discontent in the streets, put their bodies on the line in protest, and actively engaged in embodied practices of care and solidarity in their neighborhoods, communities and social movements. (p. 3)

Sutton applies the phrase specifically to her analysis of cisgender women’s fight against the myriad of violences they experienced in neoliberal Argentina. It also reflects the form of activism found in antiviolence and reproductive justice movements more broadly (see Margaret Campe and Claire Renzetti 2020 on “Gender, Sexuality, and Violence”; Michele Eggers-Barison and Chrystal Hayes 2020 on “Reproductive Justice”).

Insights from feminist praxis are evident in a wide array of local and transnational movements and forums from Occupy to the World Social Forum (Naples 2013) and include “providing models that emphasize ‘decentralized, respectful dialogue and cooperation that helped inform other social movements seeking to bridge national and other differences’” (Smith et al. 2008, pp. 18–19, quoted in Naples 2013, p. 673). Women activists have also been at the forefront of many mobilizations for social justice. For example, in an interview with Georgetown University professor of history, Marcia Chatelain, reporter Asoka Kaavya points out that:

“Black Lives Matter” was created by three black women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, after George Zimmerman’s acquittal for Trayvon Martin’s death. Women have been organizing marches, die-ins, protests, and otherwise leading various responses to police brutality.

(Chatelain and Asoka 2015)

In her response Chatelain emphasizes: “Women across the generations are participating in this movement, but I think we’ve had a wonderful opportunity to see especially young, queer women play a central role”.

## Conclusion

This volume was generated in the context of the #MeToo protests that began in the US and spread to other countries and which has encouraged many students and faculty in academia to speak out personally and collectively against sexual harassment

and sexual violence in colleges and universities. In the US, it has led to successful outing of high-profile male entertainers, politicians, business leaders, and academics who have, for a long time, gotten away with sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and rape (Gessen 2018). In reaction to these developments the largest number of women in history were elected to the House of Representatives in the US. At the same time, there is an erosion of women's reproductive rights. Despite the standing US Supreme Ruling (*Roe v. Wade*) that guarantees women's freedom to choose abortion, access has been drastically reduced in many states. A recent report from the European Union Parliament also documented that women's reproductive and sexual rights were attacked in Italy, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Austria. On the other hand, Irish voters legalized abortion by repealing their restrictive constitutional amendment (De Freytas-Tamur 2018; see also Cafolla 2019).

It is tempting to read the story of women's movement activism through the narrative of progress, from gaining the right to vote to the creation of new laws against discrimination, and the increase in women holding elected offices in many Western or Northern countries as well as the successful institutionalization of women's and gender studies in the academy. However, even within these countries, we are witnessing attacks on the legitimacy of women as leaders in politics and business, their right to employment and promotion in male-dominated fields, women's reproductive rights, and a backlash against key feminist organizations like Planned Parenthood and women's and gender studies.

Despite, or perhaps as a consequence of its many successes, women's and gender studies is contested as a legitimate and necessary institutional formation in contemporary academic politics. It is one of the units that has been under attack in the context of the neoliberal focus on fields that can garner external funding like the sciences. Interdisciplinary fields like women's and gender studies and disciplines within the humanities have been especially vulnerable to budget cuts, hiring freezes, and even elimination in the current era of "austerity" (Naples 2018). For example, Takamitsu Sawa reported that in Japan, "on June 8 [2015], all presidents of national universities received a notice from the education minister telling them to either abolish their undergraduate departments and graduate schools devoted to the humanities and social sciences or shift their curricula to fields with greater utilitarian values" (2018, n.p.).

Right-wing resistance has also escalated in other national contexts. For example, in 2018, Hungary removed gender studies programs from accreditation for master's programs. Reporter Elizabeth Redden (2018) quotes the Hungarian Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen that "gender studies 'has no business [being taught] in universities,' because it is 'an ideology not a science'" (n.p.). The announcement was met with international protests from the European Union and prominent academics from around the world, but was also supported by other academics as reported by the Budapest Bureau of Reuters (2018) which quoted sociologist Balint Botond:

Gender-faithful liberals have already caused irreparable harm in the souls of generations growing up in the past decades. We need to fight them without compromise and achieve a complete victory, otherwise they will end up destroying us. (n.p.)

Jennifer Evans (2019) explains that "the war on gender studies is a pillar in the authoritarian critique of liberalism" (n.p.). She cites Roman Kuhar and David

Paternotte (2017) who argue that “several parts of Europe are facing new waves of resistance to ‘gender theory’” and claims for “marriage equality, reproductive rights, sexual liberalism and anti-discrimination policy generally” (n.p.). Evans also reports that gender studies professors have received “hate mail” following speaking out against gender inequality and she cited the experience of Professor Paula-Irena Villa who chairs sociology and gender studies at the Ludwigs-Maximilian-University of Munich. Other incidents of backlash are evident around the world. For example, Judith Butler was the target of a “mob in Brazil to protest her visit as ‘a threat to the natural order of gender, sexuality and the family’” (Jaschik 2017, n.p.). Evans (2019) reports that a “dynamite-shaped device” thought to be “a bomb was left outside the National Secretariat for Gender Research in Gothenburg, Sweden” (n.p.). Although it was a fake, “the intent to threaten and scare was clear” (ibid).

As Bronwyn Winter, Nancy A. Naples, and Réjane Sénac (2018) note, this is a time of “paradox” where “on the one hand, gender and sexual equality have become a global political frame, yet on the other, they are a contested subject, as the societal and cultural role(s) of women, and the extent and limits of rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) minorities, are being subjected to intense scrutiny.” In addition, attacks against women’s reproductive and immigrant rights and violence against religious and ethnic minorities is escalating in different parts of the world, and at the same time movements for social justice, antiviolence, trans youth, and immigrant rights are growing in visibility.

The stories of women’s and gender studies are stories of reclamation (of voices and lives left out of history), resistance (to sexism and other patterns of inequality and oppression), and reflexivity that contributes to its vitality as a vibrant intellectual site with broad contributions to wider academic goals of inclusion and critical education. However, its success within academia and the critical engagement of feminist faculty in academic affairs also contributes to the paradox of, on the one hand, antifeminist backlash as discussed above and, on the other, postfeminist arguments that women’s and gender studies is no longer necessary as it has been effectively integrated into the relevant disciplines. Of course, neither position acknowledges the power of interdisciplinary feminist analyses for revealing the complexity of the “relations of ruling” that contour “everyday life” (Smith 1990) through diverse institutions, discourses, and everyday interactions. Furthermore, it ignores or discounts the dynamics of activism and social change that can only be effectively explored through an interdisciplinary lens generated through feminist praxis. As we honor the efforts of past generations for providing a foundation for contemporary women’s and gender studies, these intellectual formations remain open to change and reformulation as feminist faculty and students face new challenges and contribute new insights from contemporary praxis.

### Note

- 1 After the first meeting in Israel, Women’s Worlds: International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women has been held in the following countries: the Netherlands (1984), Ireland (1987), New York City (1990), Costa Rica (1993), Australia (1996), Norway (1999), Uganda (2002), Korea (2005), Korea (2005), Spain (2008), Canada (2011), India (2014), and Brazil (2017) (Safir 2018).

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# Part II

Diversity of Academic Fields  
and Institutional Formations

# 2

## Women's Studies

CLARA MONTAGUE AND ASHWINI TAMBE

### Introduction

Women's studies is an interdisciplinary field originally focused on the category "women" but whose scope extends across multiple formations of power. Having this single identity category in its title frequently leads to an underestimation of its range. Women's studies scholars examine the status, roles, and treatment of women, but they also track historical and regional variations in the meanings of womanhood and how these emerge in relation to other categories, such as race, class, nation, sexuality, and ability. Women's studies has historical links to social movements that have sought to expand representation and justice, like many other identity-based knowledge formations (Wiegman 2001b, 2012). The field's relationship to activism varies significantly depending on location, however. Since social movement histories vary across regions, women's studies has followed a range of unique, geographically specific chronologies. In many contexts, women's studies has taken a distinctly academic trajectory, autonomous from movement priorities. States have also played varying roles in supporting or obstructing the development of academic feminism. Given these distinctions, our description of women's studies offers a look at how the field has formed and become institutionalized in differing ways based on historical, political, and cultural context.

Early rationales for setting up women's studies departments emphasized their capacity to serve women's movements from within higher education. The notion of an "academic arm" for a women's movement presumed many mandates: to help people better understand the conditions shaping women's lives, to better those circumstances through policy, and to document emerging social movements. Early in the history of the field, feminist theorists also articulated an intellectual rationale for women's studies: to demystify existing structures of patriarchal knowledge (Boxer 2001). Since men had long dominated academia, feminists argued, the addition of

women's perspectives could fundamentally reorient knowledge itself. Women's studies, then, was not just about having women as objects of analysis; it was also imperative to have women as subjects producing new kinds of knowledge. In the early decades of US academic feminism, this "standpoint theory" became one of the crucial bulwarks supporting the institutional proliferation of women's studies departments. The idea that women-produced knowledge offered unique perspectives that were otherwise unavailable, a view elaborated in the 1980s by North American materialist and socialist feminists such as Nancy Hartsock (1983), Dorothy Smith (1987), and Donna Haraway (1988), gave women's studies a distinct charge. Yet almost simultaneously, a critique of this argument emerged from within the field: the category "woman" was, as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and Judith Butler (1990) argued (from different angles), insufficient to describe the experiences of all women; women's studies had to account for the tremendous variation across race, class, and nation in the experience of womanhood. Indeed, a key feature of women's studies scholarship has been its insistent self-reflexivity, as seen for instance in the work of Chela Sandoval (2000), Clare Hemmings (2011), and Robyn Wiegman (2012).

Our goal here is to describe the formation of women's studies in a way that accounts for variations around the globe. Of course, it is not possible to do so comprehensively in a short chapter, but the features we describe below illustrate some of the significant differences between trajectories across locations. Our conceptual starting point decenters US women's studies, which otherwise plays an outsize role in scholarship about the field. Canonical debates, such as the exchange between Wendy Brown (1997) and Robyn Wiegman (2001a) about the "impossibility" and "possibilities" of women's studies, are typically focused only on the US context. Our transnational focus is not meant to suggest that women's studies in other parts of the world is unconnected to the United States. To the contrary, US women's studies does play an influential role in shaping the curricula, methods, and practices enacted in other locations. This influence relates to a general Anglocentrism in the academy, but it is also the product of US investment in systems of higher education in other countries, particularly those with which it maintains political and military alliances. In this sense, the history of women's studies is inextricable from geopolitics and globalization. While recognizing the significant influence of US women's studies, we see three main ways that the US does not serve as a blueprint for understanding the field in other locations:

1. *Under/graduate emphasis*: US women's studies has been especially strong at the undergraduate level, and the first programs established were geared toward meeting the needs of undergraduate students for education about sexual and reproductive health, interpersonal violence, and understanding social movements (Salper 2011). This trend continues in US women's studies today, but in most other countries, including those featured in the case studies in this chapter, the field is viewed as more appropriate for graduate studies, often as a complement to other professional training. Furthermore, in some countries that used to have significant undergraduate programs such as the UK, undergraduate programs have been cut since 2010. Although women's studies programs in the US have certainly faced budgetary challenges and contractions, the overall profile of degree programs has not shifted as significantly in comparison to other sites.

2. *State feminism*: Feminists engage with government policy at varying levels of intensity depending on context. In some welfare states or social democracies, there is a history of feminists working within bureaucracies (as “femocrats” as they are called in Australia) to generate gender-equitable institutions and policies (Eisenstein, 1989). In some contexts, there are women’s ministries tasked with attending to women’s well-being. State feminism in all such contexts shapes women’s studies education since it provides clear channels of employment for graduates. State feminism in the United States is far less robust than in other parts of the world, such as Australia or South Korea.
3. *Wave metaphor*: The history of US feminism is frequently narrated via the metaphor of waves, with the first wave referring to the struggle for rights to voting and education, the second wave for bodily integrity, and the third wave for attention to identity differences within the category of “woman.” This metaphor is internally unstable, since it does not capture the full complexity of feminist history, as Nancy Hewitt (2010) explains. Exporting it to other contexts is an even more fraught venture – waves do not translate easily across contexts. This is not to say that there are no connected histories or meaningful chronological breaks shared in common. Indeed, we draw on theorists who adopt a transnational mode of thinking about geographic regions in which different spaces are connected by interpenetrating lines of influence rather than marked as different temporal points in a single progress narrative. While waves are referenced in this and other histories of women’s studies, they may or may not be relevant markers in all locations and thus cannot be used as standardized signposts.

It is the case that the United States has played a dominant role in shaping the formation of women’s studies in contexts beyond its borders, and to pretend otherwise would be akin to wishing away its power. However, a transnational account of the field needs to offer rich theorization rather than relying on US-centric metaphors. In this chapter, we seek to both recognize and critique US power by opening with a review of US women’s studies history before turning our attention to two other significant sites of institutionalized women’s studies.

In order to describe women’s studies from a transnational perspective, it is useful to trace the field’s proliferation across a range of locations. Understanding how and why new women’s studies programs are established must take into account the field’s temporal and spatial breadth. Women’s studies is indeed “produced” by the establishment and institutionalization of new programs, but these events must be contextualized as part of globalizing processes that have allowed feminist knowledges to be shared across national contexts. There are several important “global dynamics” influencing the proliferation of women’s studies, according to Wotipka and Ramirez (2008). They argue in particular that international women’s conferences have exerted influence on when new academic programs were established: the UN World Conferences on Women in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing (1975–1995) affected the growth of women’s studies programs in many sites across Latin America, Europe, Africa, and East Asia (p. 89).

In addition to specific events such as conferences, cross-national economic and development policies also had a profound effect on the growth of women’s studies. In Eastern Europe, for example, the introduction of women’s studies had to “wait



until after the fall of Communism,” since communists generally viewed feminism as counterproductive to a focus on class (Wotipka and Ramirez, p. 91). Women’s studies programs emerged in Africa around the same time, but for very different reasons: their development was influenced by the participation of academic feminists from across the continent in the 1985 UN Conference on Women held in Nairobi and acquired a strong “attachment to women in development activities” that persists today (Wotipka and Ramirez, p. 92). While affiliation with development goals was instrumental in securing funding for these fledgling programs, Wotipka and Ramirez find that it was “less conducive to feminist scholarship and women’s studies programs rooted in a critique of male dominated hierarchies” (pp. 92–93). This inflection makes women’s studies programs in the United States quite different from those in other countries that were closely tied to entities outside of higher education, such as development agencies, nonprofit organizations and governmental gender equity programs. In some ways, these connections with the state and civil society seem to have served non-US based women’s studies programs well, ensuring greater resources, visibility, and prestige. In contrast, US women’s studies has managed to foster a critical orientation toward institutional hierarchies and a fine-tuned attention to the politics of knowledge production. We argue therefore that the greatest impact of US women’s studies has been felt in academic settings, including traditional disciplines and other emergent identity-knowledge fields. In particular, women’s studies has proved influential to the broader US academy through theoretical conversations about epistemology and diversity, especially through standpoint theory and intersectional theory, respectively.

### **Case 1: Women’s Studies in the United States**

Beginning with a few scattered courses on the psychology, sociology, history, and literature of women in the late 1960s, more than 100 women’s studies programs were operating in various forms across the United States by 1977. Both regional and national organizations also began to take shape with the founding of the New England Women’s Studies Association (NEWSA) and other regional groups, followed by the National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) in 1977 (Breines 2006, Towns 1987). Peer-reviewed journals such as *Feminist Studies* (founded 1972), and *Signs* (founded 1975) offered an arena for scholars and researchers to publish their work, crystallizing the theoretical core of the field and adding to its legitimacy in the United States. The rise of women’s studies in the US also coincided with the 1972 passage of the Title IX amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required institutions receiving federal funding to offer women equitable educational opportunities for the first time. This legislation is best known for granting female students, faculty, and staff equal access to basic amenities such as athletics and career services, as well as offering protections against discrimination and sexual harassment (National Women’s Law Center 2017). The combination of these factors precipitated broader shifts in higher education that allowed women to take themselves more seriously as subjects and producers of knowledge, which proved instrumental to consolidating women’s studies as a whole (Ginsberg 2009). The most recent official survey of programs conducted in 2007 shows there were more than 650 US

higher education institutions offering degrees or supporting research centers in women's and gender studies; data indicate that institutionalization has since continued, growing to more than 900 programs worldwide (Reynolds et al. 2007; Korenman 2017). Though it remains a relatively young field, the rapid growth in size and visibility of women's studies over the last four decades suggests that, along with other identity knowledge fields, it will play an increasingly influential role in US higher education as well as the broader culture.

US women's studies has been characterized by an insistent self-reflexivity about its purpose, its forms of knowledge, and its role within universities, exemplified by two moments: (i) the critique of the racial politics of women's studies that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the formulation of Black feminist standpoint perspectives and postcolonial critiques, and (ii) the vigorous debates about interdisciplinarity and the purpose of doctoral degrees in the field in the early 2000s. The first moment played a corrective role in offering a critique of how whiteness had been unmarked in feminist theorizing. Black feminist scholars overturned popular tenets: for example, they questioned whether domesticity could always be presumed to be oppressive when one took into account how women of color were coerced for generations to work outside the home; they also called for expanding definitions of the family beyond nuclear structures to include multiple generations and extended kinship (Collins, 1990; Zinn and Dill, 1996). In the second moment, on the cusp of the inception of several new doctoral programs in women's studies in the 2000s, an intense debate was staged in journals and edited volumes between scholars who asked whether feminist energies were better spent subverting and critiquing established disciplines or institutionalizing the field and creating an autochthonous canon for doctoral students (*Feminist Studies* 1998; Brown 1997; Wiegman 2001a). Robyn Wiegman's robust defense of an independent, interdisciplinary field of one's own functioned as an influential salvo in favor of more doctoral programs and greater autonomy.

Over the course of its history as an independent institutional formation, women's studies has contributed new terms to the lexicon of critical social theory. "Intersectionality" and "privilege" are two concepts used in women's studies undergraduate classrooms that have traveled far beyond this setting to shape discourse in the academy and in the culture at large – these two terms can be found in conversations about power and culture in the blogosphere and on social media. The new vocabulary generated by women's studies is an indication of its potential to play a transformative role in popular culture. By and large, though, US women's studies has focused primarily on its role within institutions of higher education, and the concepts and vocabulary it generated have been most useful in scholarly rather than popular conversations.

Although US women's studies has a distinctly insular bent in relation to civil society and the state, its geographic vision has been outwardly focused. Globalization has been a central topic in US women's studies, particularly in formulating critiques of neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Landmark women's studies texts, such *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981), *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* (Morgan 1984), and *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Mohanty et al. 1991) have examined feminism across spatial and geopolitical boundaries as both a method of analysis and a mechanism for inciting

coalitions among women to enact broader social transformation. In many texts, academic feminists based in the United States have often prioritized research that decenters US and Eurocentric theories of patriarchy, arguing for the necessity of both locally situated and comparative transnational knowledge formations. The contemporary significance of these debates can be observed, for example, in the range of US-based, English-language women's studies periodicals currently in circulation that focus on issues beyond the United States, including *Feminist Studies* (1972), *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* (1975), *Women's Studies International Forum* (1978), *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* (2000), *Journal of International Women's Studies* (2000), and *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies* (2004).<sup>1</sup> Though a global outlook has always been central to the project of US academic feminism, it remains a politically and intellectually fraught concern as a result of the power differentials wrought by factors such as race, credentials, and nationality. In the past two decades, US women's studies scholars have grown increasingly sensitive to these power differentials and have articulated approaches such as transnational feminism in order to confront and examine these problems.

## Case 2: Women's Studies in Turkey

There are many countries besides the United States with rich histories of women's studies. Turkey stands out as an example of a vibrant academic feminist culture that initially emerged in concert with state support but that has since developed a more complex relationship to its government. Currently, academic feminists in Turkey are dealing with growing authoritarianism and reactionary politics in ways that might also prove instructive for other locations, including the United States. Taken as a whole, this case study intends to convey the particularities of women's studies' history in Turkey while also illustrating how the field operates across geopolitical borders.

Narratives about the history of both Turkish feminism and women's studies tend to begin with the founding of the Turkish republic under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923. The first wave of the Turkish feminist movement proceeded in tandem with the institutionalization of a broad agenda that included the extension of many political rights to women for the first time. Specifically, Turkish women gained a greater degree of access to public life through suffrage as well as participation in education, civic organizations, and professional employment, particularly for upper-class women in western, urban centers (Diner and Toktaş 2010). However, Şirin Tekeli (1992) notes that relying on the early Turkish republic for political and cultural change came at a cost, specifically, "the creation of the myth that Turkish women had full equal rights with men, that they acquired these rights before women in many other European nations and that consequently there was no more need for women's organisations" (p. 140). While politically expedient, metanarratives about Turkish feminism and women's studies that locate their origins with Atatürk also obscure troubling facets of the Kemalist agenda, including differences among women related to religion, region, class, ethnicity, and sexuality as well as persistent gender disparities and cultural issues such as domestic violence.

The waves model that has been popular in narrativizing US feminism has also been deployed by scholars writing about Turkey, but the metaphor maps differently onto this national context. Renewed public protest, especially around issues sexual and domestic violence, rose to the forefront during the second wave of Turkish feminism in the 1970s and 1980s, following similar efforts on behalf of cultural reform and bodily autonomy in the US and Europe.<sup>2</sup> The political context and precipitating events inspiring this renewal of women's activism in Turkey, however, were distinct from the social movement histories and cultural shifts taking place elsewhere. Specifically, Diner and Toktaş cite the 1980 military coup, after which mainstream political activity became significantly circumscribed, as a major factor delinking Turkish feminism from the state. Feminists took a leading role in political and civil society activism during this period, especially around issues such as pressuring the Turkish government to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; Grünell and Voeten 1997).<sup>3</sup> It was in this climate that Turkish feminism began to institutionalize in locations distinct from traditional state structures – including the country's rapidly expanding system of higher education.

After the 1980 coup, thousands of Turkish scholars lost their jobs or quit in protest and many became involved with the feminist movement (Grünell and Voeten 1997). The contraction of government-sanctioned support for women, and intolerance for political dissent generally, proved particularly damaging for feminists both within and outside academia. Certainly, these events constituted a major setback for the institutionalization of women's studies and social movement agendas in Turkey on a number of fronts. However, this shift away from Kemalist politics also opened up new avenues for critique and social change that are less reliant on state support. Given the mercurial nature of government and civil society commitments to women's best interests, a diversely grounded basis for feminist coalition and movement-building remains imperative.

In order to understand how women's studies survives and thrives despite ebbs in state support, it is useful to track processes of institutionalization through degree programs, research centers, and other areas of the academy. In the wake of the political tumult in the early 1980s, Turkey experienced a significant expansion of organizations focused on women in the nonprofit sector, including libraries, professional organizations, and domestic violence shelters.<sup>4</sup> As these institutions began to play a greater role, concurrent projects developed to enact feminism within the higher education sector as well – six Turkish universities had opened research centers and/or academic programs in women's studies by the year 2000. Alongside the second wave of Turkish feminist activism, such endeavors contributed a body of data and scholarly literature focused specifically on Turkish women, which feminist scholars used to support the development of courses focused on women in philosophy, sociology, economics, and political science (Arat 1996). While this transition has shifted Turkish feminism away from dependence on the state, it also made feminism more vulnerable to the dangers of “NGO-ization” and piecemeal “project feminism” (Diner and Toktaş 2010).

The Women's Research and Education Center, established at the University of Istanbul in 1989, constituted the first formal institutionalization of women's studies in Turkey (Wotipka and Ramirez 2008). An interdisciplinary graduate

program in women's studies and the Association for Women's Studies followed over the next few years, supported in part by a commitment to programmatic expansion, interdisciplinary, and multi-institutional scholarship across the Turkish higher education sector. The University of Istanbul's faculty, students, and staff were highly involved with the tide of feminist activism occurring locally and nationally in the early 1990s, which led the program to become more focused on teaching feminist theory with an eye towards addressing women's issues within Turkey, specifically (Arat 1996). The graduate program in gender and women's studies at Middle East Technical University (METU) in the Turkish capital of Ankara was another important node in the development of Turkish women's studies. Gamze Ege (2002) describes METU's significance in mainstreaming feminist teaching and research, training feminist professionals and civil servants, heightening public awareness around gender issues, and fostering local, regional, and global collaborations (p.150). Implementing women's studies programs at these major universities has contributed to the institutionalization of feminist perspectives throughout Turkey, but also more broadly across Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Ege also highlights that this degree of impact was made possible in part by the credibility of a "second generation of women social scientists" who had been educated abroad and observed the course women's studies had taken in the West (pp. 147, 149).<sup>5</sup> These scholars introduced key terms such as "gender" and "patriarchy" into Turkish feminist discourse and the legitimacy of their grounding in traditional disciplines allowed for a proliferation of new, innovative work in women's studies upon their return.

A useful history of women's studies in Turkey can also be traced through the example of Deniz Kandiyoti, Emerita Professor in Development Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. Kandiyoti may be described as one of Ege's "second generation" scholars whose work has had a tremendous impact in Turkish women's studies and feminist scholarship, particularly through her discussions about patriarchy. In her formulation, women have struck "bargains" with patriarchal orders that allowed them some measure of power in exchange for sacrificing other kinds of freedom. This vision of women as agential subjects, as well enforcers of patriarchal systems, significantly refined the understanding of this term (Kandiyoti 1988). Kandiyoti now argues for an expansive vision of academic feminism: "we can no longer pursue the woman-centered 'check-list' approach which has gained considerable currency in women's studies in Turkey" (2010, p.307). Rather than "add women and stir," Kandiyoti envisions a women's studies agenda that not only describes unequal gender relations but also investigates how institutions such as the military and labor market replicate and reinscribe patriarchy. In a recent commentary following the opening of Koç University's Gender Studies Center in 2010, Kandiyoti also argues for documenting histories of women's studies in conversation with global trends and commonalities. For example, she traces a common progression in women's studies around the globe from identifying patriarchal assumptions in the traditional disciplines to the construction of "grand theories accounting for the subordination of women" and, more recently, to the post-colonial and poststructuralist critiques that have been accompanied by problematizing "women" and turning towards "gender." At the same time, Kandiyoti also argues for regionally and nationally specific narratives of women's studies. With respect to the Middle East, she traces the field's emergence to debates over secularism,

modernity, and nationalism, followed by a fluctuating focus on Islam and development paradigms (pp.167–169).

The emergence of women's studies in Turkey, therefore, occurred in relation to both national and transnational agendas. Kandiyoti expresses many of the concerns about "entanglements" between feminism and the state raised in this case study, arguing that contemporary Turkish women's studies cannot rely on a sympathetic government, especially given that the recent dominance of neoconservative, authoritarian politics, which she sees as, "a moment of masculinist restoration, a move that could have broad populist appeal among strata that do not subscribe to the heterosociality of public spaces, much less to the equality of women within them" (2010, p.175). This point seems particularly prescient given the recent swell of populist right-wing nationalisms around the globe. Though the scale of these developments has been deeply alarming to feminists, Kandiyoti's insights gained from years of observing Turkish politics might also prove instructive for those of us encountering similar developments in our own backyards. Though the importance of local histories and contexts cannot be overstated, viewing women's studies from a transnational perspective that also draws on our points of commonality and shared struggle will certainly prove instrumental in the coming years. However, Kandiyoti reminds us that the field of women's studies will only be able to do so "when it is capable of writing its own critical history with honesty and vigor" (p.175).

Though the political landscape in Turkey has changed significantly since the 1980s, Kandiyoti's lessons have remained strikingly relevant under the dominant AKP Party led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Since assuming power in 2003, this administration has been defined by its push for rapid economic development, but also its authoritarianism and reactionary policies toward women, ethnic minorities, and civil society. For example, in 2011 the "Ministry for Women and Family" became the "Ministry of Family and Social Policies," and Erdoğan frequently draws on nationalist rhetoric about motherhood to argue against gender equality, abortion rights, and feminism (Hurriyet Daily News 2014). In 2016, Erdoğan's government responded to an attempted coup by clamping down on the higher education system in Turkey and transferring authority from faculty and deans directly to Turkey's president via the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Although these developments have been extremely disturbing, they have not escaped the attention of an international community of feminist scholars. Several associations including the US National Women's Studies Association (2016) have offered letters in support of Turkish academics. Our present moment, defined both in Turkey and worldwide by a rise in right-wing, nationalist authoritarianism, may prove pivotal in shaping a more independent, agile, and regionally interconnected feminist movement.

### **Case 3: South Korea**

As one of the few countries in Asia that developed women's studies programs in the 1970s, South Korea is a useful site to examine. There is, interestingly, significantly more work published in English by South Korean academic feminists and documentation about the history of Korean women's studies than exists for other non-Anglophone nations. Furthermore, women's studies research from and on South

Korea has been particularly robust with respect to issues of (anti)militarism, state feminisms, labor, and kinship. Given the United States' involvement in the country's founding since the Korean War (1950–1953), followed by decades of relatively close diplomatic, cultural, and economic relations that continue today, it is also useful for US scholars to understand this linked context.

Sociologist Hyoung Cho identifies the precipitating moment for women's studies in South Korea: a series of workshops that took place at Ewha Womans University in Seoul in 1975.<sup>6</sup> Most of the themes Cho notes as central to early women's studies debates in South Korea were similar to those taking place in the United States, but she also cites the "specificity of Korean women's studies" as a foundational concern of academic feminists who asked at the field's inception: "what are the specific features of women's situation in Korea? Are Korean women unique? If so, what makes them unique? How does one relate the unique with the universal?" (1995, p. 54).<sup>7</sup> By comparison, the fact that US women's studies felt less compelled to identify its own national specificities early on speaks to the privileged, hegemonic position of US scholars.

Pilwa Chang (1996), a professor of women's studies at Ewha Womans University, describes two ways that women's studies has proved particularly influential in South Korea: producing leaders in the women's movement and challenging deeply ingrained assumptions about the politics and subjectivity of knowledge production and dissemination. Chang also notes that the credibility, critical impact, and potential for social transformation of women's studies in South Korean society has been undermined by its association with the United States. Perhaps the most significant political effects of South Korean women's studies can be observed in how feminism has been institutionalized by the government as well as universities. Chan S. Suh, Eun Sil Oh, and Yoon S. Choi (2011) present a hopeful take on the institutionalization of feminism in South Korea, defining it as "the creation of a self-sustaining process"... "which influence[d] the decision-making of political organizations such as the government and the National Assembly" (p. 157). They argue that its success has been demonstrated by increases in the percentage of female lawmakers, new legislation focused on women's issues, and organizational changes in government, such as establishing the Ministry of Gender Equity in 2001 (p. 157). Though these progressive changes remain vulnerable to a shifting economic landscape and the varied political ideologies of each new administration, Suh, Oh, and Choi make a compelling case for how academic feminism has contributed to meaningful improvements in the lives of South Korean women at the national level, describing how women's studies alumnae from Ewha Womans University and other early programs have "facilitated coordination between women's movement activists and institutional/non-institutional female actors such as former Ministers of Gender Equality" (p. 153). In this view, the formalization of women's studies at the university level led directly to the institutionalization of feminism on a national scale, and thus the advancement of an agenda that includes greater political representation for women as well as serious legislative engagement with issues such as sex work, labor, and family policies.

However, the positive interpretation of governmental institutionalization advanced by Suh, Oh, and Choi has been far from universal among women's studies scholars working on South Korea. Seung-kyung Kim (2013), for example, offers a

more critical perspective on women's studies governmental institutionalization. Focusing on the decade between 1997 and 2008 during which the government was particularly receptive to feminist interests, civil society activism, and participatory democracy, Kim explores how institutionalization led both to compromises, demobilization, and deradicalization as well as genuine political progress for South Korean feminists. The significant gains made during this decade have been undermined by a prevalent feeling among feminist activists that their movement had been coopted by the government and subordinated to its broader political agendas, raising concerns that institutionalizing the women's movement has made it dependent on the government and thus less able to offer necessary critiques of public policy. Navigating the relationships between feminist activism, academic women's studies, government, and higher education institutions remains an unsettled debate.

As Eun-Shil Kim notes, the past 30 years have constituted a profound epistemic shift for feminist scholarship (2010). Whereas women's studies in South Korea began as part of the country's development and modernization agendas, its growth and influence have raised new questions about the universality and particularity of Korean women's experiences. Envisioning "Asia" as a regional framework more capable of resisting hegemonic Western feminist knowledge systems than "Korea," Kim advocates for collaborative, cross-cultural research resistant to profit-oriented, neoliberal models of internationalization. As globalizing processes have led women to become less identifiable based solely on the nation-state, feminist academics will need new ways of envisioning and describing our political investments, social movements, and knowledge formations. Regional affiliations and transnational identifications are becoming increasingly central to women's lived experiences, and thus warrant further attention in narratives about women's studies history and discussions about its future trajectory. To this end, US scholars need to actively resist universalizing their particular national and institutional realities as well as their ideologies, methods, and politics.

## Conclusion

What can this brief foray into the institutional contexts of women's studies in three different locations tell us? It is clear that women's studies takes distinct trajectories based on how states are oriented towards feminist ideas. While it is sometimes strategically useful to gain state support, these examples should also warn us that aligning with state interests has not always been to the benefit of feminist politics. In both Turkey and South Korea, we see that state support facilitated the growth of women's studies in different ways, but that it also created risks and a sometimes-dangerous dependence. When political winds blow in more authoritarian or reactionary directions, state-supported women's institutions are especially vulnerable to disintegration, as we see in the case of Turkey. In the case of South Korea, we see that cooptation has blunted the edge of feminist critique, and to some extent, the maturation of women's studies as an independent field. In the United States, by contrast, the precarity of women's studies has produced a constant need to justify its existence but also a robust articulation of the value of its autonomy from other disciplines and the formation of its own canon.



Examining these different national sites also reveals how the disciplinary orientation of women's studies varies by location. In the United States, women's studies remains significantly rooted in the humanities and frequently articulates critical perspectives on the politics of knowledge production and state feminism. In Turkey and South Korea, state feminism has led to more policy-oriented scholarship and a heavier leaning on social sciences; the scholarship also has distinct imperatives related to supporting development and national foreign policy agendas. Viewing the history of women's studies through a transnational lens also illustrates how the chronologies and metanarratives often relied upon in the United States, such as the waves metaphor, are necessarily partial and incomplete. There is no ideal blueprint for women's studies that can be transposed across different contexts. However, we hope this chapter illustrates some new vantage points gained from learning about the similarities and differences between women's studies in three different locations.

In sum, by expanding our field of vision beyond the United States, we see examples of how the institutionalization of women's studies has had a tangible effect on everyday women's lives. In South Korea, since the field was established in the 1970s, it has exerted influence on the formation of state-supported institutions, affected labor and childcare policies, and created movement leaders. In Turkey, women's studies programs established in the 1980s contributed influential elaborations of concepts such as bargaining with patriarchy as well as a language for critiquing state feminism, nationalism, and militarism. Within the United States, concepts such as intersectionality, privilege, and homonormativity, all devised by scholars teaching undergraduate women's studies students, have gained mainstream cachet that can be observed online as well as in social movement agendas.

As women's studies has gained administrative and organizational independence in all these settings, scholars have been relieved of constantly having to justify their research interests to unsympathetic colleagues or expend their energies explaining their work only to unfamiliar audiences. Under conditions of institutional autonomy, women's studies scholars have been able to practice a robust self-reflexivity, articulate new concepts useful to their own specific contexts, and promote transnational knowledge for and about women.

### Notes

- 1 These journals, listed here by date of first publication, are among the most prominent to identify themselves as specifically focused on global women's studies scholarship. However, even academic feminist publications with more general missions have emphasized these themes, often by publishing special transnational or regionally focused issues. There are also a number of prominent journals with regionally specific purviews, including the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, and the *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*.
- 2 Diner and Toktaş note that, as was also true for the first wave, women-led reforms in the mid- to late-twentieth century followed similar changes in the US and Western Europe by 10–15 years. The parallel deployment of this metaphor offset by a decade implies a meaningful connection among women's movements worldwide, but it would be a problematic oversimplification to deduce that Turkish feminism followed in the footsteps of women's activism originating in the West. A truly transnational perspective, by contrast, must note

- instances of deviation from models developed to describe the United States as well as points of convergence.
- 3 CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. It was adopted by the Turkish government in 1985 prior to the UN Conference on Women in Nairobi following an extensive petition campaign and political lobbying from Turkish feminists (Grünell and Voeten 1997).
  - 4 Feminist publishers were influential in translating landmark feminist works into Turkish for the first time, which had a significant effect on the development of women's studies and also has implications for the character of transnational feminist knowledge production. It is worthwhile to note that this and most other early graduate programs were conducted in English. More recently, some programs have begun to offer bilingual course options, with the ability to write theses in Turkish.
  - 5 Indeed, reviewing departmental information for METU and other women's studies programs in Turkey indicates that the social sciences continue to make up the bulk of faculty members' training and affiliations. This trend should not, however, be taken to overshadow the influence of the humanities, particularly literature and philosophy. For example, *Women's Memory: The Problem of Sources* (Ture and Birsen 2011) provides a compelling snapshot of contemporary work by Turkish academic feminists in archival and library studies, digital humanities, visual, literary, and textual analysis, oral history, and film studies. Not only is this group of contributors interdisciplinary when taken together, but also within individual chapters – many authors based or trained in the social sciences draw heavily on texts and methods traditionally associated with the humanities. Thus, while the emphasis on sociology in Turkish women's studies is undoubtedly significant and distinctive in comparison to the US and other sites, the very nature of feminist scholarship may make the disciplinary emphases of particular sites more complex than they initially appear.
  - 6 Ewha Womans University is the accurate spelling of this institution's name. Though no longer conventional, using "womans" without an apostrophe was an accepted possessive plural at the time of the institution's founding by American Methodist Episcopal missionary Mary F. Scranton in 1886 – another important link between South Korea and the United States. The institution continues to use this name in its English-language materials, with contemporary faculty and students expressing a sense that "Ewha Womans University" better conveys a sense of women's individuality. The University's name in Korean is 이화여자대학교.
  - 7 Interestingly, Cho cites a particular concern about whether to identify the field as "women's studies in Korea" or "Korean women's studies." Like the "naming debates" in US women's studies, this controversy demonstrates the politics of naming as new academic disciplines develop.

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# 3

## Gender Studies

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### Gender Studies in Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that examines gender inequality, women's lived experience, sexuality, masculinity, and the interaction of gendered social processes with race, class, and other systems of inequality. Scholars of gender studies specialize in a range of fields including anthropology, literature, history, geography, political science, and sociology. While the field of gender studies encompasses multiple points of inquiry, each takes a critical approach to examine inequality between women and men. Literary scholars, for example, analyze depictions of women and men in popular books and media to determine how these cultural representations convey meanings of differential value, power, and expectations (Cixous, Cohen, and Cohen 1976; Felson and Slatkin 2004; Ferguson 2004). Professors of history in the field of gender studies often interrogate archival data and texts to uncover the role of women in major historical events and highlight how gender inequality manifests in the retelling of historical narratives (Coontz 2011; Kamensky 2013). Many political scientists explore the barriers to women's representation in elected office (Lawless 2015), while psychologists examine processes involved in identity formation with special attention to how these differ between women and men (Bem 1993).

Gender studies emerged from the field of women's studies, which started during the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Many women scholars writing during that time were deeply involved in women's rights activism. Concerned with the absence of women's perspectives in the dominant academic canons, these scholars revised foundational texts in order to underscore the central role of gender inequality in social formations and epistemologies. These interventions were made possible by centering the perspectives and lived experience of women, from which gender inequality was much more apparent as a system of domination. Emerging from women's studies, gender studies expanded the focus to also examine masculinity and

the social relations/structures between women and men. While slightly different in emphasis, both women's and gender studies start with an understanding that gender inequality shapes the lives and perspectives of all individuals in society.

In this chapter, we provide a historical review of gender studies and give an overview of contemporary developments. We begin by highlighting the precursors of gender studies. While women and gender studies emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, critical literature examining gender inequality from the perspective of women has existed in one form or another for several centuries. These works not only aided in the development of gender studies, but were also central to historical events such as women's suffrage, abolition, and the second-wave feminist movement. Next, we describe the establishment of women's and gender studies as an academic field in the 1960s and 1970s. From its origins, gender and women's studies were deeply connected with the second-wave feminist movement, embodying many of the movement's values through adopting feminist perspectives in research that interrogated inequality between women and men. Since the emergence of gender studies, multiple and complex frameworks for understanding gender inequality have been developed across the social sciences. In the second half of this chapter, we provide two examples of such theories from the field of sociology by reviewing structuralist and interactionist frameworks for understanding gender inequality. In the final section of this chapter, we review contemporary developments in gender studies by highlighting how intersectionality, queer theory, the cultural turn, and multidimensional understandings of gender have advanced our ability to understand gender inequality.

As gender scholars residing in the US, our perspective has been shaped by our location in a Western nation and its position within global structures of power and discourse. As a result of our standpoint, as well as legacies of colonialism which make knowledge originating from Western nations more readily accessible (Bulbeck 1998; Hountondji 1997), much of our review focuses on gender scholarship developed in the US. While this scholarship originated from a location of global dominance, it is authored mostly by individuals occupying positions of relative disadvantage within nation-level systems of race and gender. Readers from other countries may find some insight to be applicable to their context, while other aspects to be less relevant. We hope that future scholars build on our work to create a more inclusive and dynamic field of gender studies.

### **Precursors to Gender Studies**

While powerful women have existed throughout history, it is not until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that we begin to observe early forms of women's literature that critiqued gender inequality. Writing in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Christine de Pizan was among the first women authors to offer a perspective on gender. Her work was popular among French aristocratic women who sought advice on how to navigate elite life romance. While de Pizan's work certainly described women as noble and virtuous, she also argued for a greater value to be placed on women's roles in society. In *The Book of the City of Ladies* (2000 [1405]), she envisioned a society where women were respected by men in society. While de

Pizan's writing on gender is far less radical than that which we consider to be mainstream feminist theory today, her work on women's issues was revolutionary in the fifteenth century. In fact, she became quite famous for a dispute with Jean de Meun, a male author who portrayed women as cunning and deceitful. By opposing de Meun, de Pizan was among the earliest women writers to challenge ideas around gender produced by men that served their own interests (Bordo 2015).

A more direct link to modern feminism can be made with Jane Anger's work published during the sixteenth century. One of the first women English writers to publish outside of religious texts, Anger's most well-known book, *Her Protection For Women* (1985 [1589]) provided a stinging critique of men's treatment of women and, more specifically, of the misogynist way many male authors portrayed women. A few brief lines from the beginning of *Her Protection for Women* illustrate Anger's direct engagement with rampant sexism:

Fie on the falshoode of men, whose minds goe off a madding, and whose tongues cannot so soone bee wagging, but straight they fal a railing. Was there ever any so abused, so slaundered, so railed upon, or so wickedly handeled undeservedly, as are we women?

Anger's work constitutes one of the first published and widely read feminist critiques of society. Her prose challenged dominant understandings of gender that legitimated men's power over women. Furthermore, her polemic writing style echoed the injustice women faced in sixteenth-century England, where they had few rights and dealt with constant mistreatment by men.

De Pizan and Anger paved the way for other women writers. Jane Austen's work offered narrative critiques of wealthy British society and the norms of required marriage popular when she published during the early nineteenth century. Austen's book *Pride and Prejudice* (2016 [1813]) continues to be widely read today. In France, Harriet Martineau, one of the first female sociologists, published widely read critiques of French society. In an essay about marriage, Martineau wrote that "The traveler everywhere finds women treated as the inferior party in a compact in which both parties have an equal interest" (1985 [1838]).

As early as the nineteenth century, literature on gender was starting to become contested terrain. Women writers like Jane Anger offered compelling critiques of male dominance, while religious doctrine and government decree continued to control women's bodies and justify men's power. This state of contradiction helped catalyze major women's movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that focused on abolition and suffrage in the US. Not only did these movements achieve major political change, but they also expanded social understandings of gender during that time.

### **Gender Scholarship During the Antislavery and Women's Suffrage Movements**

While marriage, family, and individual virtue were the major concerns of many women writers during the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries, the abolitionist movement to end slavery was one of the earliest political issues that brought women

together for collective action. White women abolitionists, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton, leveraged common stereotypes about women's virtue to rally against the immorality of slavery. While these women activists were pivotal in the antislavery movement, the fight against slavery did not necessarily challenge dominant gender expectations. During the nineteenth century, women were seen as noble and virtuous, but also as physically fragile. Yet, these expectations only applied to white upper-class women, while black and lower-class women performed strenuous physical labor. Black women drew from personal experience as slaves and workers to highlight the hypocrisy in these gender norms. One of the most famous arguments making this point comes from Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman":

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Truth showed how cultural understandings of women as domestic, weak, and dependent had no substance, since these notions of womanhood were not universally applied to all women. Truth also illustrated how race and gender intersect to shape the disadvantage experienced by black women. The paternalistic relationship between elite white men and white women was vastly different than the violent relationship between black women slaves and their elite white male slave owners. While both black and white women experienced gender inequality, the form of oppression was distinct due to intersecting systems of racial domination.

Sojourner Truth was one of several black women former slaves who noted the gendered aspects of slavery and the racialized aspects of gender in the United States. Other prominent black women scholars born under slavery include Anna Julia Cooper, who wrote extensively about black women's gender oppression from black men and racial discrimination from white women (1892). Soon after slavery ended, Ida B. Wells-Barnett's research on lynching illustrated how stereotypes about black men's sexuality were key to claims of rape made by white lynch mobs (1991 [1892, 1895]). These black women scholars highlighted the way systems of inequality are interrelated. Yet, as black women who were subject to both race and gender oppression, their work was neglected for decades after it was published. Only recently have contemporary scholars begun to revisit these classic texts as early examples of black feminist writing and intersectional gender theory (Robinson 2018).

It is illustrative of the interweaving between gender and race inequality that the women's rights movement in the United States started after Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Stanton attended an antislavery conference in Britain (Spain 2016). These two women pushed for an antislavery agenda that also included women's rights and suffrage. Yet, their petition was overwhelmingly rejected by male leaders of the organization. This failed attempt to integrate women's issues only invigorated Mott and Stanton. Upon their return to the US, they organized a women's rights convention at



Seneca Falls, New York. This meeting at Seneca Falls is commonly referred to as the start of first-wave feminism and the American women's suffrage movement. Although, many have debated whether feminism can be accurately described with "waves", (Crossley 2017; Reger 2012), here, we use the term heuristically to refer to feminist organizing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "first-wave" feminism, and the feminist social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as "second-wave" feminism.

The women's suffrage movement happened during a major cultural and economic transformation in the US. Not only was the country expanding its borders westward, but industrialization provided new jobs in factories that were originally occupied by women. Industrialization helped foster new ideas about gender that challenged women's dependency on men and their confinement to the home (McCammon et al. 2001). In *Women and Economics* (1998 [1898]), for example, Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued that women's economic dependence on men in marriage was key to their oppression. According to Gilman, only through financial self-reliance can women be truly free. Following Gilman, Emma Goldman would go so far as to compare marriage to prostitution, where women exchange their personal freedom for economic security (see Schulman 1998). These new perspectives on gender were part of early feminist organizing which culminated in the demand for women's suffrage. Women protesting for voting rights literally took them out of their homes and into the streets, a liberatory act that itself challenged gender norms at the time. As economic transformations provided women opportunities in the labor force, social movements and cultural changes altered existing expectations for women. Combined, these factors helped contribute to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment providing women's suffrage in 1920 (McCammon et al. 2001).

The women's suffrage movement significantly altered dominant understandings of gender. No longer were women seen as unfit to vote. In the years between World War I and II, we saw the flapper era, where many young women rejected strict norms for proper womanhood by smoking, drinking, and sometimes even playing recreational sports. During this time there was also a big increase in higher education for women. Yet, rigid gender boundaries continued to persist and were reinforced after World War II when women were asked to give up their jobs to the returning vets so that, by mid-century, women's place was once again in the home. Furthermore, first-wave feminism was primarily a white women's movement. Some leaders of the movement leveraged class and racial privilege to claim legitimacy for themselves by distancing their cause from black and lower-class women (Adams 2014). Therefore, while first-wave feminism advanced women's rights, it did not attack race and class inequality.

By the twentieth century, cultural understandings of gender were contested terrain. While law and policy still treated women as subordinate to men, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements posed serious challenges to ideologies of gender inequality. Literature emerging from first-wave feminism helped to problematize women's economic dependence on men and challenged women's confinement to home and family. Work from black women scholars (Cooper 1892; Wells-Barnett 1991 [1895]) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shed light on the contradictions in gender ideals which were not universally applied to poor and non-white women. Literature written by these scholars illustrated how gender inequality

is not experienced similarly by all women, but interacts with other systems of domination to pattern oppression differently for women of various race groups. Despite the intersectional insight of these early works, they were not widely recognized. Instead, academic discourse on gender continued to promote theories that legitimated inequality.

## The Development of Gender Studies in the Social Sciences

Perhaps as a result of first-wave feminism bringing into question women's role in society, social theorists began to devote more attention to gender. Several of the men who are often referred to as the founding scholars of social theory wrote about gender during the time that women in the US were organizing for the abolition of slavery and for the right to vote. Frederick Engels (1978 [1884]) argued that the institution of marriage was a critical component of capitalism that contributed to women's subordination. Monogamous relations required by marriage ensured that private property would be controlled by men through patrilineal systems of inheritance. As a result, capital transferred within wealthy families for generations and remained out of women's control, making them dependent on men. Engels argued that women's oppression resulted from patrilineal inheritance, a by-product of capitalism. He was an early male theorist who problematized women's subordination.

A more cultural approach to theorizing about women's role and the family came from the French Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969 [1949]). Like Engels, Lévi-Strauss saw patrilineal kinship systems as a major factor in women's oppression. Yet, Lévi-Strauss emphasized the cultural elements that help reproduce women's disadvantage. Taboos against incest, for example, lead to an exchange of women (not men) between families ensuring that women have no claim to their birth-family's property and must, instead, be connected with another family. These cultural mores result in the creation of alliances and social bonds among male family heads.

While Engels and Lévi-Strauss focused on the economic and cultural elements that shape the structure of families, Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud focused on how relationships between parents and their children influence the development of heterosexual feminine women and masculine men. According to Freud, children are not born with masculine/feminine personalities or with sexual desires directed toward the opposite sex (2000 [1910]; 1990 [1933]). Instead, children are born with sexual energy, the direction of which is shaped by parents' influence. Because mothers do primary childcare, they are children's first love objects. When sons realize their mothers love their fathers, they first hate their father, and then fear them. To move beyond fear, they come to idolize them – a phase called the oedipal complex which results in men's masculine personalities as they model the emotionally absent father. For young girls, according to Freud, a feeling of remorse develops when they realize their lack of a penis negates any chance of sexual love from their mother. As a result, their libidinal love is directed toward a father figure in the development of heterosexuality. In hindsight, the depth of sexism in this theory that idolizes male genitalia is apparent.

The theories about gender that developed in Europe during the early twentieth century marked a divergence from previous conceptions of gender that emphasized

essential differences between women and men. Engels, Lévi-Strauss, and Freud did not view gender inequality as a natural human outcome. Instead, these early theorists examined how economic, cultural, and social-psychological factors create the conditions for gender difference. Despite diverging from previous literature, these European social theorists were not primarily concerned with gender inequality. Freud and Lévi-Strauss offered theories for gender differentiation and kinship, but did not directly consider women's subordination in the systems they studied. Engels was more concerned with inequality than most scholars of gender at the time, but viewed women's disadvantage as a substructural effect of capitalism rather than a system of inequality in itself.

In the US, theories about gender during the early twentieth century were also breaking social scientific ground, although not with feminist intent or consequence. The structural functionalist school of sociological theory (Parsons 1951) was less interested in determining why women were disadvantaged compared to men than in examining the functions of family arrangements in modern societies. The structural functionalist approach focused on how different social institutions co-exist in a stable society. According to Parsons (1951) and others (Parsons and Bales 1955; Zelditch 1955), the family functions properly when men and women have differentiated roles. Women's "expressive" role allowed them to focus on taking care of the emotional tenor of the home, while men's "instrumental role" directed their focus toward paid labor as an effective means to provide economically for the family. By justifying families based on women's dependence on men as useful for social stability, structural functionalism viewed gender inequality as a necessary part of a "stable" society.

Unfortunately for the structural functionalists, gender and racial inequality proved to be quite unstable social terrain. Both the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the second wave of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s shattered the presumption that a stable society could be maintained while women and racial minorities were oppressed. The second wave of feminism also inspired the development of an academic field specifically about gender that critically analyzed inequality. Women theorists writing during this time rejected functionalist explanations of gender and emphasized mechanisms contributing to women's oppression. They also critiqued classical European social theories that failed to adequately theorize the barriers women face.

## The Feminist Turn in Gender Literature

After a state of abeyance following the end of the first wave of feminism in 1920 (Crossley and Nelson 2018), resistance to gender inequality began again around the middle of the twentieth century, hallmarked by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (2015 [1949]). Drawing on the history of women's oppression, de Beauvoir argues that women have been socially defined as men's "other", a sidekick to men whose history has always been centered and whose interests have been forefront:

In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite unlike that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.

*The Second Sex* was read widely among both scholars and the public more broadly. De Beauvoir used classical and contemporary social theories, such as Lévi-Strauss's work on culture, Marx's theories on capitalism, and Hegel's philosophies on dominance, to analyze women's oppression in Europe and the US. At the same time, however, de Beauvoir went beyond previous work in her argument that these theories overlooked the structuring aspects of gender that have historically disadvantaged women relative to men. Gender, the social structure that positions women as inferior, has organized human societies far longer than capitalism or modern forms of government. Therefore, women's subordination cannot be explained as a product of other social systems – it is a social process in and of itself. This perspective was groundbreaking because it questioned the very existence of women's unequal position rather than taking it as essential or an epiphenomenal outcome of other social institutions.

*The Second Sex* helped catalyze a new genre of feminist literature that critically analyzed gender inequality. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, reflects the early moment of second-wave feminism in the United States. In this seminal book, Friedan exposed the sacrifices women make when they leave paid employment to become economically dependent housewives. Observing other upper middle-class white college educated women of her generation, Friedan found that most were lonely and depressed, feeling undervalued and unfulfilled in their domestic roles. Her work posed a serious challenge to the cultural glorification of traditional nuclear families. Indeed, it resonated deeply among book-buying American women, selling over one million copies in 1964 (Coontz 2011).

While Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* resonated strongly with middle-class women and helped catalyze NOW (National Organization for Women), which pushed for government reform addressing the concerns of this group, other feminist groups that had their roots in the civil rights and student protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s took a different approach that emphasized inclusion and the diverse experiences of women (Freeman 1995). Groups referred to as radical, socialist, or lesbian feminists argued that nothing short of social transformation would solve gender inequality. They critiqued organizations like NOW for working within government structures, arguing that reform would only benefit white heterosexual middle/upper-class women. Black feminists also felt that issues relating to racial inequality were neglected by mainstream feminism and formed their own communities to voice their perspective and organize around issues relating to the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality (Combahee River Collective 2003 [1977]; Tate 1983). Indeed, the second-wave feminist movement was much more dynamic than how it is often depicted. White middle/upper-class heterosexual women yielded considerable influence in the movement, but the organizing of women of color, lesbian, and young women was tremendously influential in the discourse around gender (Freeman 1995).

The literature produced during the second-wave feminist movement was part of a broader cultural shift taking place during the late 1960s and 1970s as women organized politically to challenge gender inequality in multiple aspects of society. Betty Friedan's book inspired housewives throughout the US to challenge social expectations that confined them to the home, while work by Audre Lorde, Maya Angelou, and other black and/or lesbian feminists targeted the challenges facing working class

women of color and sexual minorities. Women also organized around reproductive rights. Not only did birth control pills for women become widely available in the late 1960s, but the Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe vs. Wade* protected women's right to have an abortion. Other major advances were made in politics and work. NOW lobbied the government to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and push the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) to regulate workplace discrimination. Despite the ERA falling short of full ratification, feminist reform efforts were successful in promoting a political climate that forced workplaces to take gender discrimination seriously. As a result, occupational segregation decreased dramatically during the 1970s (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). The feminist movement also helped make major change in the realm of education. Prior to the Education Amendment of 1972, colleges and universities could legally bar women from admission. Yet, the passing of this amendment helped remove barriers to women's education. Women took full advantage. In 1960, 65% of college degrees were awarded to men. By 1982, women achieved parity with men in college degree attainment, and today there are more women than men enrolled in college (Buchmann, DiPrete, and McDaniel 2008; Snyder and Dillow 2010). Indeed, many of women's rights that we take for granted today were made possible because of the second-wave feminist movement.

### **Academic Feminism is Born**

At the same historical moment as women's activism was changing the world, it also began to transform the academy. Feminists entered the academy and began to explicitly construct an academic field that focused on women's experience of inequality. An early home for feminist inquiry was in the humanities (Pilcher and Whelehan 2016), where women writers and philosophers had long been engaged in critical scholarship. During the feminist movement, humanities disciplines allowed a focused challenge to gender inequality. For example, Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970) exposed androcentrism in the English literary canon to build a broader argument about patriarchy as a structure of social relations that systematically disadvantages women. In anthropology, Rubin (1975) applied feminist critiques to canonical social theorists such as Freud, Marx, and Lévi-Strauss by arguing that these previous approaches ignored the lived experience of women and, therefore, neglected the centrality of the sex/gender system in the organization of the economy, kinships systems, and cultural norms. Sociologists Lopata and Thorne (1978) critiqued the conceptualization of women's status within sex role theory, because roles imply a functionalist complementarity, and gender differences are formed and exaggerated to create inequality (see Lorber, 1994 for further elaboration on this argument).

The proliferation of scholarship by women academics focusing on gender inequality during the second-wave feminist movement was crystallized in the institutionalization of women's studies in universities across the US. In these departments, scholars from various disciplines such as literary studies, anthropology, sociology, and history held appointments with a primary focus on scholarly inquiry into women's lived experience and the processes that contribute to women's marginalization. Through grounding theory in women's lived experience, women's studies provided

an epistemological critique that contemporary forms of knowledge and social theory were patriarchal – based on men’s privileged perspective that neglected structures of power which disadvantaged women (Irigaray 1974; Millet 1970; Smith 1987). Leveraging womanhood as a valuable starting point for social inquiry, scholars of women’s studies highlighted the centrality of gendered power and male dominance in common understandings of the world (Firestone 1970; Smith 1987).

From its origins, the field of women’s studies was infused with the interventionist values of the feminist movement (Pulkkinen 2015). Faculty in these departments not only produced works confronting androcentrism in social theory, but they also challenged the structure of college curriculums and classroom dynamics. It was common for professors in women’s studies courses to encourage personal reflection, discuss contemporary issues, and connect classroom lessons with activism within and beyond university campuses (Boxer 1982). Central to these novel pursuits in women’s studies was the goal of addressing the oppression of women. There was significant debate within women’s studies, however, about the best way to advance this goal. Internal contention between Marxist and cultural feminists, as well as a substantial antipathy towards the institutionalization of women’s studies into universities, which were seen as male-dominated institutions, characterized much of the conflict within this field during its early years (Boxer 1982). Perhaps one of the more consequential debates, however, was whether the study of women’s experience should broaden to include consideration for the social processes that affect men. Expanding the focus to include men’s experiences seemed to some to be a reversion to the androcentrism that early women’s studies texts resoundingly critiqued (see debates in de Groot and Maynard 1993). Yet, others argued that inquiry into women’s oppression could not be fully undertaken without examining the systems which foster masculine, privileged men.

Evident in the (re)renaming of many university women’s studies departments to “Women’s and Gender Studies” or just “Gender Studies”, the debate over whether women’s studies should be expanded to include inquiry into men’s issues was resolved through the rise of gender studies as a field focused on the inquiry of gender as a system of inequality that affects all individuals in society (Pulkkinen 2015). Coincident with this shift was the growth of masculinities studies as an area focused on the social expectations around manhood and how these meanings reproduce power relations (Connell 1995). The study of masculinities continues to be a major focus in the field of gender studies today, where scholars examine performances of masculinity (Kimmel 2008; Pascoe 2007), hierarchies between men (Connell 1995), shifting forms of masculinity over time (Anderson 2010), and the ideologies of masculinity as they relate to broader patterns of gender inequality (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Further developments in the field of gender studies are discussed later in this chapter, and include the advancement of queer theory to conceptualize gender boundaries and the experience of transgender individuals, intersectionality as a paradigm for understanding how gender relates to other systems of stratification, a cultural turn that focuses on the ideological components of gender, and multidimensional understandings of gender as a dynamic social system.

Investigating and challenging gender inequality remains foundational to gender studies just as it did (and still does) in women’s studies. Also like women’s studies, gender studies is interdisciplinary – encompassing a wide array of fields in the social sciences and humanities. The fundamental characteristic of gender studies

that distinguishes it from women's studies, however, is the emphasis of gender as a system implicating the personalities, relationships, and social positions of both women and men. It is important to note that gender studies did not, by any means, replace the field of women's studies (see Chapter 2, this volume). In fact, these two areas heavily overlap, as each field greatly informs the other in scholarship that interrogates and challenges structures of inequality.

### **Gender Studies and Gender Theory**

Jumping off from the foundational work of feminist academics in women's studies departments, gender scholars began analyzing inequality and social relations between women and men from the early 1970s through today. In the field of psychology, researchers questioned the presumption that masculinity and femininity were opposite and that such personality traits were necessarily correlated with being male or female (Bem 1979, 1993). Chodorow, while trained as a sociologist, brought a feminist lens to psychoanalytic thought. In her classic book *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), she argued that structural arrangements in families reproduce gender inequality by creating feminine women and masculine men. While remaining within a psychoanalytic framework, Chodorow critiqued the Freudian (1910, 1933) proposition that women had less developed superegos because of psychological patterns developed during early childhood. Chodorow argued that common household forms where mothers are stay-at-home caregivers and fathers are workers in the public sphere create the structure for raising feminine girls and masculine boys. Through arrangements where mothers are the primary caregiver, daughters learn to be nurturant while sons embody the masculine characteristics they observe among fathers. These patterned family forms then reproduce gender inequality as children age and have their own families with similar structures. Chodorow's works were transformational in the academic study of gender by emphasizing the way gender difference and inequality are reproduced because of our family structure. This theory focused on how social structure became internalized by early childhood to create feminine women and masculine men who then reproduced gender inequality themselves.

As the field developed, sociologists entered the debate and suggested that gender was not merely the result of internalized personality traits but more directly the result of social context. Two sociological perspectives originating shortly after the feminist movement helped solidify the study of gender. One approach, which we label as the "structuralist" theories of gender, focused on how structural arrangements produced gender inequality. The other approach, "doing gender" focused on the way inequality is reproduced through patterns of interpersonal interaction.

#### **Structuralist gender theory**

Structuralist theories on gender that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s argued that gender inequality was produced through structural arrangements of society rather than psychological gender differences. Kanter (1993 [1977]) was foundational in developing this theoretical approach to gender. Kanter's structuralist framework

developed from her study of American workplaces – a site where women were paid less and found in positions of less power and authority than men (particularly in the 1970s when this research was being done). Her research revealed that the organization of the workplace, rather than any preexisting differences between women and men, was the primary reason for women's disadvantaged position. Women were often employed in positions that were heavily scrutinized by managers, offered little personal discretion, and provided no opportunity to network or receive mentorship from higher-ups. Men employees, in contrast, were often employed in positions that had more discretion and exposure to managers, providing them a fast-track to promotion and leadership. As a result of these differences in the structural positions of women and men in the corporation, women were perceived as less ambitious and less capable workers than men.

Kathleen Gerson took the same structuralist explanations for gender inequality to explain women's role in families. In her classic book *Hard Choices: How Women Decide About Work, Career and Motherhood* (1986), Gerson studied baby boom heterosexual women as they made choices between domesticity and commitment to paid work. Based on interview data, she found that the structural conditions of women's lives, including marital stability and whether or not they had success in the labor force, were a far better predictor of their work/family balance than internalized beliefs about gender, or feminine personality traits. In a quantitative test of Gerson's findings, Risman, Atkinson, and Blackwelder (1999) tested the strength of individual socialized preferences and structural explanations for married women's labor force participation. Using longitudinal data that spanned two decades, their findings also suggested that family structure, working in "good" jobs, and identifying paid work as a career were the strongest predictors of women's employment hours. Attitudes during adolescence did have a weak but statistically significant effect on baby boom women's employment. Both quantitative and qualitative research suggested that social context, rather than internalized gendered selves, matter for gender inequality.

Following in the structuralist tradition, Epstein's metareview of the research on gender in *Deceptive Distinctions* (1988) suggested that nearly all of the differences between women and men could be explained by their contrasting social roles and expectations. Like Kanter, Epstein argued that if women and men had the same structural positions, they would not only have equal opportunities and rewards, but also have similar behaviors and personalities. The structuralist approach to gender inequality was extremely valuable in showing how gender inequality is produced by social processes and arrangements that exist outside the individual. Yet, subsequent research testing purely structuralist explanations for gender inequality failed to confirm that when women and men occupy the same organizational positions, resources and opportunities would then be divided equally (Zimmer 1988). In fact, Williams (1992) found that when men were tokens in female-dominated fields like nursing and teaching, instead of being disadvantaged like the women observed by Kanter, they were fast-tracked into leadership positions. More recent research has shown that this male privilege applies only to white men, while men of color in female-dominated positions face racial microaggressions that prevent upward mobility (Wingfield 2009). In empirical tests of structural theories in the family, Risman (1986) found that single fathers did not become as nurturant as we would expect given their equivalent caregiving duties to single, or even married, mothers. In other



words, when the structural arrangements of families shift so that men became primary caregivers, they came to embrace their role as custodial fathers but did not assume the identical characteristics observed among mothers. These studies collectively show that while organizational or familial structures may constitute one contributing factor to gender inequality, there are certainly other processes involved in men's advantage (Budig 2002).

### Doing gender

The "doing gender" approach, developed in the same time frame, provided a different understanding by conceptualizing gender as a performance that takes place in interpersonal interaction. West and Zimmerman's foundational article *Doing Gender*, published in 1987, argued that gender is something that individuals "do" in their daily habits, behaviors, and interactions. According to West and Zimmerman, individuals hold each other accountable to cultural standards during interpersonal interaction. These standards prescribe different, culturally appropriate, behavior for women and men. Men are expected to hold doors open, and women are expected to walk through these doors and offer gratitude, for example. As individual actors, we are usually aware of these standards and act in accordance with them. If we are unaware of the cultural standards, or if we decide to break the rules associated with these expectations, those we interact with will usually hold us accountable either by scolding us or by making up an excuse so that the interpretation of our behavior does not pose a challenge to broader structures of accountability. A male football player surely appreciates the friendship he has with his guy teammates, and perhaps he expresses this feeling through pats on the back and high-fives. But if he were to express his feelings in the same way that he might with his significant other, by telling them directly that he loves them, his teammates would surely laugh at him, perhaps even ask why he's acting like a "sissy". By following scripts of behavior for how a man should act in certain circumstances, our hypothetical football player reproduces gendered patterns of behavior – he "does gender" and is rewarded in doing so through bonds with his teammates. This approach to understanding gender inequality has been used to investigate the way gender is performed in a wide array of social domains, such as work (Martin 2003, Alfrey and Twine 2017), romantic relationships (Currier 2013), and education (Garcia 2009). Across social domains, these studies find that women and men are held accountable to different standards that almost always disadvantage women. At the same time, however, the norms by which we are held accountable change over time. There is encouraging evidence that men are no longer held to such stringent standards of toughness (Anderson 2010) and that we are becoming increasingly accepting of individuals who intentionally challenge gender norms (Meadow 2012; Risman 2018).

The "doing gender" theory has been incredibly influential in the field of sociology. It remains one of the most widely cited articles; according to Google Scholar, in 2017 it had been cited over 10,000 times since its publication. In addition to West and Zimmerman's foundational article, scholars outside the field of sociology have also developed theories about gender as being constituted by behaviors, habits, and actions. Butler's (1990, 2004) theory of performativity has been particularly influential. According to this approach, gender is not a personal characteristic, but rather

something that is constantly performed. In defining gender, Butler states, “there need not be a doer behind the deed, but that the doer is invariably constructed in and through the deed” (1990, p. 195). With this approach, Butler challenges the stability of gender as an individual identity and pushes forward a conception of gender as something that is constantly being reproduced through human action and behavior. Like West and Zimmerman’s approach, Butler’s theory of performativity sheds light on the taken-for-granted everyday behaviors that reinforce, and ultimately reconstruct, gender distinctions and inequalities.

Yet, the “doing gender” and performativity approaches have their limitations. By focusing only on interaction, researchers often interpret any behavior being done by men as “doing masculinity” and any behavior performed by women as “doing femininity” instead of contextually situating gender performances to determine if women and men are actively challenging gender norms and “undoing” gender. As a result, research has discovered a seemingly endless array of masculinities and femininities, while finding few examples of how gender is “undone”. In other words, the strength of the “doing gender” approach is its ability to focus on the nuanced and subtle ways that gender is reproduced in interactional exchanges, but it is limited in its ability to conceptualize change.

### **Intersectional Developments**

Feminist scholarship produced during the second wave transformed the way gender was conceptualized by focusing on inequality rather than functional difference. Yet, the theoretical advances made during this time were often based on a universalized notion of women’s experience that neglected the way inequality is structured differently across race, class, and sexuality. While diverse feminist voices have always been active, it was ultimately the professional class and academic scholars, mostly white, educated, middle/upper-class heterosexual women, that were the most influential in public discourse in the twentieth century due to their relative privilege compared to other women (Freeman 1995). Sometimes their own privilege narrowed their view of what reforms were needed. For example, the framing of reproductive rights as access to contraception and abortion was important to all heterosexual women, but neglected poor, black, Latina, immigrant, and incarcerated women’s experiences with sterilization (Roberts 1997; Stern 2015). The push to “get women out of the home and into work” also ignored the experience of working class women and women of color who had always worked outside the home because their spouses’ wages were too low to support an entire family and because these groups of women have historically been employed in low-wage work. Literature produced by black feminists during the second-wave feminist movement highlighted how black women’s interests were marginalized in the reformist branch of the feminist movement on the grounds that solidarity of all women was more important than sensitivity to the unique experiences of inequality across diverse groups of women (see Tate 1983). In the civil rights movement, black women were often relegated to support roles, resulting in an agenda that ignored the way racial oppression works differently for black women. To organize around their own interests which encompassed both race and gender inequality, black women often started their own organizations of black feminists (see, for example, the Black Women’s Health Imperative, <http://www.bwhi.org/>). The dual marginalization of black women

from both mainstream feminist and civil rights movements highlights the failure of each to see the interconnections of race and gender inequality.

The experience of women of color in the second-wave feminist movement provided a starting point for the development of gender studies that accounted for the diversity of women's experiences. The Combahee River Collective, an organization of black feminist scholars who met regularly through the 1970s and early 1980s, helped spread black feminist perspectives through several publications and statements that focused on the way multiple structures of inequality based on class, race, gender, and sexuality affect the lived experience of black women in the US. Their most well-known publication, the Combahee River Collective Statement (1977), is often cited as one of the founding texts on intersectionality, arguing that systems of inequality are interlocking and require theoretical frameworks to account for multiple modes of oppression, rather than a sole conceptual focus on either gender or racial inequality:

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking.

(Combahee River Collective 1977)

The approach to gender studies promoted by the Combahee River Collective called for an "integrated analysis" that focused on multiple modes of "interlocking" inequality. This was quite a different framework than what was taken by most gender scholarship during the second wave, which focused primarily on gender as a primary institution of inequality and neglected the interweaving of other systems of inequality. Davis (1983) challenged any notion of a "universal category of woman" by highlighting the power divisions among women within the movement. Anzaldúa (1987) called for feminists to pay greater attention to the way identities simultaneously straddle multiple boundaries of gender, race, sexuality, and place in order to view interrelated systems of domination. Poetry and creative writing based on the personal experience of Latinas and black women also helped develop a perspective on gender that considered women's diverse experiences of inequality taking place both within and outside of the feminist movement (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981).

Kimberlé Crenshaw's 1989 article in the University of *Chicago Legal Forum* was particularly influential. By centering the experiences of black women, Crenshaw illustrated how neither feminist theory nor race theory were adequate to describe the discrimination experienced by black women. Instead, black women's experience of discrimination is best characterized by the *intersection* of race and gender inequality rather than the additive product of gender and race:

Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated. Thus, for feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experiences and concerns of Black women, the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating "women's experience" or "the Black experience" into concrete policy demands must be rethought and recast."

(1989, p. 140)

Crenshaw observed that the failure of gender studies to account for the intersections of oppression experienced by black women caused them to be unprotected by antidiscrimination law, which treated women and blacks as “classes to be protected,” but not the specific social category of black women. Therefore, discrimination experienced by black women had to be substantiated by discrimination directed toward *all women* or *all blacks*, otherwise there was no basis for legal claims. By developing a theory of intersectionality to account for the fact that black women experience discrimination that white women and black men do not, Crenshaw not only pushed for greater legal protections to vulnerable groups, but developed gender studies by creating a framework of intersectionality that provided for the diverse experiences of women located at different positions of racial privilege and oppression.

The introduction of intersectional gender theory by Crenshaw in the field of legal studies was soon developed into a broader social theory of inequality by Patricia Hill Collins (2000 [1990]). Like Crenshaw, Collins’s theoretical advances were based on the lived experiences of black women, whose perspectives were informed by direct engagement with systems of race, class, and gender inequality in their daily lives. Collins argued that the public/private split, which was a touchstone of second-wave feminist literature, did not apply to the history of black women’s oppression. Unlike white middle/upper-class women who were at the center of second-wave feminism, black women had always worked, either as field hands during slavery, domestic servants in the postbellum years, or as clerical staff in the growing service economy of the late twentieth century. As white women left the home and obtained decent paying jobs during the feminist movement, the working conditions for black women barely improved (Browne and Misra 2003; Dwyer 2013). Black women’s unique experience of oppression is also characterized by widespread stereotypes that applied specifically to black women. Images in media that portrayed black women as dependent “welfare mothers” or hypersexualized “jezebels” were modes of domination that did not extend to white women or black men, but were the unique product of interrelated systems of racial and gender inequality. Starting from the perspective of black women to recognize interlocking systems of oppression, Collins developed a theory of the matrix of domination which described the interrelation of power structures. Race, class, gender, and sexuality constitute different axes of domination that interrelate within a complicated matrix that varies across social contexts. By focusing on a matrix of domination, Collins drew attention to the social organization of oppression that occurs through structural forces (legal systems), disciplinary means (policing and organized regulation), cultural ideologies (stereotypes proliferated in media about oppressed groups), and interpersonal relationships. This approach builds on gender scholarship generated during the second wave by provided a framework to conceptualize how gender interrelates with multiple systems of inequality across various levels of society.

With the concept of intersectionality, Crenshaw and Collins created a feminist challenge to gender studies. Intersectional theorizing in more recent history has further developed our ability to understand gender inequality by conceptualizing multiple systems of inequality by describing various methodological and epistemological approaches to intersectionality (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013). Focusing on how a single group of individuals simultaneously experiences multiple forms of oppression may help shed light on the complex interrelation of power systems, while

analyses that compare multiple groups and focus on interdependent social institutions that foster patterns of inequality can help illustrate the co-constitutive nature of different forms of power and domination (Choo and Ferree 2010; McCall 2005). Internationally, feminist scholars have invoked intersectional theory to push gender researcher to consider nation and global position as deeply influential axes of power and domination (Lewis 2002; McFadden 2001; Mohanty 1991). These developments help expand gender studies to be more inclusive of issues outside Western nations and explore the role of (post)coloniality (Lugones 2007), trade-agreements (Juhn, Ujhelyi, and Villegas-Sanchez 2014), and immigration regulations (Banerjee 2012; Parreñas 2015) in gender relations among the majority world.

Just as the scholarship in gender studies generated during the second-wave feminist movement was developed from the perspective of women's direct experience with gender inequality, the basis for intersectional developments in gender studies was the lived experience of women of color. Today, intersectional approaches to gender inequality have moved from margin to center as intersectional frameworks are commonly used in gender research.

### Queer Theory and the Categorical Challenge

Around the same time that Collins and Crenshaw were developing ideas about intersectionality, scholars like Butler (1990) and Ingraham (1994) were critiquing mainstream gender studies literature for its limited attention towards sexuality. Like black feminists, these scholars were troubled by second-wave gender scholarship's presumption of the universal woman subject, this time as heterosexual. Ingraham and Butler observed a common assumption in second-wave gender literature that framed women and men as complementary heterosexual opposites:

At the present, the dominant notion of sex in feminist sociology depends upon a heterosexual assumption that the only possible configuration of sex is male or female as "opposite sexes" which like other aspects of the physical world (e.g. magnetic fields), are naturally attracted to each other.

(Ingraham 1994, p. 215)

By starting at the point of sexual difference, gender studies reinforces concepts that women and men are heterosexually compatible – an epistemological assumption Ingraham called *the heterosexual imaginary*. According to Ingraham, the structure of heterosexuality was the root of men's power, rather than the structure of gender. Ingraham argued that, by leaving the structure of heterosexuality unexamined, a great deal of literature on gender was part of the ideological complex that help maintain men's domination in society.

Inquiry into the role of sexuality in gender inequality inspired a discursive turn in gender studies that focused on the role of categories in systems of oppression. Butler's *Gender Trouble*, one of the founding texts of queer theory, unearthed normative assumptions in feminist literature that limited its ability to interrogate gender inequality. For example, Butler argued that the common use of the sex/gender distinction in feminist theory to differentiate the biological differences between males

and females (sex) with the socially constructed personalities and behaviors of men and women (gender) helped reinforce overarching ideologies of heterosexuality that frame women and men as complementary sexual beings. By framing sex as an immutable natural characteristic, the sex/gender distinction reinforces norms of physical complementarity between males and female and, therefore, is part of broader ideological structures of heterosexuality – what Butler called *the heterosexual matrix*.

Butler's critique of sexual distinctions in feminist theory was part of her broader theoretical agenda to challenge practices involved in the production of categories. By showing how physical differences between women and men were as much a product of social amplification as they were biological artifacts, Butler argued that gender has no fundamental foundation, but instead is constituted by a collection of ongoing cultural performances and words that perpetually inscribe gender difference. This anticategorical approach to gender inspired a thread of inquiry known as queer theory which focused on the way gender and sexuality were constructed through the meanings culturally attached to behaviors, presentations of self, and normative descriptions (Valocchi 2005). Queer theory critiqued gender scholarship for relying uncritically on sex categories that were actually discursive elements of a society characterized by gender inequality and heterosexual domination. By focusing on the construction of difference, rather than starting from differentiated gender categories, queer theory engaged more heavily with the ideological components of inequality.

Queer theory has been extremely influential in promoting a focus in gender scholarship on the way individuals navigate, create, and/or challenge social boundaries of difference. Pascoe's (2007) research on gender relations in high school shows how young men's gender identity is defined largely by the degree to which they can prove their heterosexuality through talk of sexual conquest or the objectification of women. Failure to perform heterosexuality results in a loss of young men's gender identity, as peers call one another "fag" to challenge the heterosexuality of one another and, therefore, claims to manhood. Other work has examined the complicated identity work of individuals who share memberships in multiple social groups demarcated by boundaries of race, gender, and class (Moore 2011; Pfeffer 2014). Not only do individuals behave and dress in different ways that mark membership in certain groups, but they also negotiate identity in real time as they are recognized by others in ways that are unintended (Pfeffer 2014; Schilt and Westbrook 2009; Westbrook and Schilt 2013).

Queer theory's impact on the social sciences has been profound and continues to shape contemporary developments. The growing field of trans studies, for example, builds on the long history of queer theory by examining the performance of gender and the construction of categorical identities (Butler 1990; Garfinkel 1967; Risman 1982). Drawing on the lived experience of transgender individuals to examine the cultural conditions which provide opportunities and challenges for one's identity, trans studies scholars have built directly on the foundation of queer theory to provide insight on the social construction of gender and its changing dynamics (Vidal-Ortiz 2008, see Chapter 24 in this volume).

Queer theory has enriched feminist analyses of gender by focusing on the way categories are constructed and investigating the interplay of sexuality and gender in processes of inequality. Its influence is increasingly important in contemporary gender issues. Growing public visibility of the rights of trans and gender-nonconforming

individuals across the globe has drawn into question the stability of gender binaries. Lessons from queer theory have provided a great deal of insight into these discussions. Recent work by Brubaker (2016) has examined the cultural conditions around public claims to both trans gender and trans racial identities. Barbara Risman's research on millennials (2018) shows firsthand how some youth today are challenging the gender binary. Not only do these youths generate new cultural expressions of gender nonconformity through dress and physical appearance, but they are also generating a new discourse on gender through their participation in activist groups and contributions to online dialogues. Gender change is happening, and queer theory has provided an excellent analytical framework for making sense of shifting gender landscapes.

### **Cultural Logics and Status Expectations**

Intersectional and queer theory critiques of gender research prompted feminist scholars to reexamine gender studies to focus on the production of meaning and intersecting systems of domination. In the 1990s and early 2000s, new gender theories emerged to do just that. These theories fall into two groups: cultural logics and status expectations theory. First, theories of *cultural logics* focused on the cultural processes that convey meanings onto actions, behaviors, and organizational structures (Acker 1990, 1992, 2006; Hays 1996). The second group of theories to emerge during the 1990s and early 2000s focused on the subconscious processes taking place beyond our immediate recognition. We label this perspective the *status expectations* framework (Ridgeway 2011).

#### **Cultural logics**

Instead of taking for granted standard practices and organizational structures, gender scholars of the 1990s and early 2000s started to pay attention to the meanings behind these assumed practices. Unlike previous scholars of the 1970s and 1980s who viewed organizational structures as gender neutral arrangements that needed only to be altered in order for women to be provided equal treatment as men, Acker argued that the organizational structures themselves were created in ways that benefited men and disadvantaged women and racial minorities (1990, 2006). Acker used the term "gendered organizations" (1990) to highlight the way workplaces are designed around gendered assumptions. Any type of job that requires employees to be at the office 40 hours a week assumes that the worker is a man who has a wife at home taking care of the domestic responsibilities. In the US, employers are not even required to provide workers with paid parental leave after the birth of a child. By not providing adequate parental leave policies, firms send clear messages about the type of person they envision as their employee – someone with no caregiving responsibilities who can devote enormous amounts of time to their work. In the context of American family life, where women take on a disproportionate share of childcare, workplaces are organized as an environment where only men with minimal family responsibilities can succeed. Acker later extended her theory of gendered organizations to the concept of "inequality regimes" which describes the way race, gender,

and sexuality collectively shape the design of organizations and the interactions of workers in ways that privilege white men and disadvantage women, sexual minorities, and men of color (2006).

The cultural meanings attached to family have also been studied as important contributors to women's disadvantage. In *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (1998), Hays highlighted the cultural expectations mothers face to devote immense amounts of time, energy, and money into the rearing of their children. These cultural expectations of intensive motherhood, promoted in popular parenting books and throughout mass media, have developed at the same time that women's presence in the workforce has expanded dramatically. As a result, employed mothers are wedged between stressful careers and demanding family needs, forcing a choice between exhaustion and quitting their jobs (Blair-Loy 2005; Hochschild 1989, 2001).

Developments in gender studies in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on the cultural processes involved in the conveying of meanings onto behaviors, the way categories are constructed, and the tactics individuals use to construct their identity. These studies view culture as a "tool kit" of habits and skills that people draw from to develop "strategies of action" given their social context (Swidler 1986). By integrating an intersectional perspective into their work, scholars also shed light on how individuals' cultural repertoire is shaped by multiple systems of inequality and their position within a diverse array of social institutions.

### Status expectations

The other major gender framework that elaborated gender meanings focused on cognitive framing and grew from the status expectations school of social psychology that emphasized the subconscious processes taking place during interpersonal interaction that perpetuate bias in ways beyond our immediate recognition. Feminist scholars such as Ridgeway (2011) and Fiske (Fiske and Stevens 1993) have found that gender stereotypes and cognitive bias around women's and men's abilities disadvantage women when they are evaluated against criteria that are more readily associated with masculinity than femininity. This is particularly salient in the labor force. Not only are masculine-typed qualities valorized in the workplace, but even when women perform equally as well as men on activities that are stereotypically masculine, such as leadership and decision-making, they are evaluated less favorably than their male colleagues (Ridgeway 2011; Correll, Bernard, and Paik 2007). Even worse, women face a double bind in workplaces that valorize masculine forms of leadership. Not only are people unlikely to recognize a woman as a leader, but when women employees do exhibit leadership traits, commonly stereotyped as masculine, they are more likely to be seen as pushy by their colleagues (Heilman 2001). This body of research finds that gender acts as a primary frame for human interaction, not only shaping the way we consciously behave with one another, but also framing the criteria we use to make evaluations and observations of others.

Recent research not only confirms that interpersonal interaction is framed by gender, but it also reveals that gender frames are racialized (Chavez and Wingfield 2018). Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz (2013) for example, have built upon Ridgeway's original theory of gender as a diffuse status characteristic (2011) to develop intersectional prototypicality theory. According to this theory, gender expectations are based



on racialized standards whereby white masculinity and femininity are perceived as the norm while blacks are seen as over masculinized and Asians as over feminized. By extending Ridgeway's original theory through an intersectional lens, Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz have formulated a gender theory that is able to identify social practices that simultaneously contribute to gender and race inequality.

### **The Current State of Gender Theory: Multidimensional Frameworks**

Scholarship on gender has come a long way. In the social sciences, we've moved from a focus on explaining functional gender difference to an explicit emphasis on gender as a system of inequality. We've developed several approaches to studying gender inequality, each with a different emphasis that sheds light on dynamic processes. We've also benefited tremendously from intersectional and queer theory critiques that brought to light the way racial and sexual inequality are implicated in gender. In light of these multiple perspectives on gender, one of the greatest challenges for researchers today is how to make sense of the encyclopedic knowledge we have on gender.

While gender scholarship has often debated the power of internalization versus social context (England 2016) others have long focused on trying to integrate different ideas about gender inequality into multidisciplinary frameworks (Connell 1987; Lorber 1994; Martin 2004; Rubin 1975). For example, an early gender theorist, Gayle Rubin (1975) synthesized European social theories to argue for a sex/gender system that accounted for systems of personality development, kinship, and economic structures. Connell (1987) proposed a multitiered approach to gender inequality that conceptualized gender regimes (local structures of gender within organizations or groups) clustered within gender orders (society-wide institutions and norms) that operate through structures of power, labor, and cathexis. Lorber (1994) conducted a massive review of research on gender through the early 1990s to conceptualize gender as an institution characterized by ongoing processes, stratification, and structures. Each of these previous multidimensional theories catalogued the enormous literature on gender inequality and synthesized it into a cohesive framework. A more recent integrative theory conceptualizing gender as a social structure (Risman 2004, Risman and Davis, 2013; Risman, 2017, 2018) provides a framework for synthesizing contemporary perspectives on gender. This theory disavows a "warfare" model of inquiry that necessarily tests theories against one another with the aim to disqualify one, but instead, views diverse frameworks through a perspective of "both/and" (Collins 1998). Within this framework, gender inequality is maintained through cultural and material processes taking place at the individual, interactional, and macro dimensions of society. Each of the gender theories discussed above can be categorized as focusing on individual, interactional, or macro levels of analysis. And each theory can also be categorized as focusing on either the material or cultural processes at the specified level of analysis. This framework makes no particular claims about any level of analysis, or cultural or material processes, as primary in the reproduction of gender inequality. Instead, the dimensions are interconnected through ongoing social practices and recursive. Changes in individuals' attitudes at the individual dimension, for example, can reverberate and affect the way they

interact with others (interactional dimension) and the type of social policy that receives public support (macro dimension). The gender structure (Risman, 2017, 2018) is complex and recursive; change at any level of analysis – in cultural beliefs or material reality – reverberates dynamically throughout the system. This multidimensional approach advances our understanding of gender inequality by synthesizing the expansive body of research on gender into a cohesive framework that allows us to make sense of the way dynamic social processes coexist and interrelate.

### **Conclusion: Gender Studies and Gender Change**

In this chapter, we've described the historical trajectory of gender studies and the conceptual developments that have led to its current state. To close, we provide our perspective on one critical question: How does gender studies help us make sense of the current state of gender inequality? As we write this chapter (in the year 2017), there are many reasons to be concerned. Across the globe, women have poorer health, worse economic outcomes, and lower educational opportunities, and are less represented in public office compared to men (World Economic Forum 2017). At the same time, however, there are signs of progress and great promise for change. In 2017, people in nations throughout the world participated in social movements and activism to promote gender equality. In the US, millions of Americans participated in the Women's March on Washington to protest the new presidential administration's opposition to policies that support women. Using the social media hashtag #Metoo, women throughout the globe shared stories of sexual harassment, exposing how widespread the problem is and prompting new regulations to address it. Following protests by women workers in Iceland, the national government passed a new law requiring employers to prove that women and men workers are paid equally. Sexual politics are also being contested on new ground, with many countries such as Australia, Canada, Germany, and India responding to demands for greater inclusivity by adding additional gender identity options on official documents and identification materials like passports and drivers' licenses. These recent shifts illustrate how women's activism can stimulate change that improves women's lives and reduces inequality.

Current shifts in the political landscape make gender studies all the more important. We are in a political moment where worldviews are being contested. Gender studies is necessary to continue to analyze how gender is constructed, and to identify when and how inequality increases or decreases. In this political moment, we cannot predict the direction of change. Multidimensional understandings of gender help us make sense of the relationship between shifts in how people identify and conceptualize gender at the individual level while also highlighting how gender is embedded in social expectations, institutions, and ideologies. Intersectional writing has benefited gender studies by analyzing the mechanisms by which gender is always intersecting with other systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Queer theory is particularly valuable for understanding the fluidity in gender and sexual identities. Just as it has in the past, gender studies will continue to develop through theoretical debate and research evidence. Now as much as ever before, we need gender studies to understand how inequality is socially constructed so that we can create political movements and social policies toward a more just feminist world.

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# 4

## Masculinities Studies

MELANIE LEE

### Introduction

Pervasive male domination and masculine entitlement beg a series of questions that demand fair and reasonable answers. How is masculinity defined, recognized, and practiced? What consequences result from male domination? How is masculine entitlement socially actualized, and what enables it to persist? Scholars have long recognized that “masculinity is structured through contradiction: the more it asserts itself, the more it calls itself into question” (Segal 1990, p. 123). This chapter applies social constructivist, feminist perspective to discuss shifting understanding of masculinity in gender studies research from a fixed, singular definition shaped by patriarchal constructions to evolving, expansive definitions that recognize multiple masculinities defined by context-dependent, culturally conditioned behaviors. I first outline the formation of men’s and masculinities studies, define the plurality of approaches used to engage and understand the field, and synthesize early and recent work from gender studies experts that informs masculinities studies scholarship. I next offer a schema of 12 masculinities by type, discuss five selected categories, and then review masculinities’ transnational impacts. I conclude that masculinities’ patriarchal patterns create dysfunctional social practices whose systemic effects prevent people from evolving, progressing, and realizing their potential.

Modern, interdisciplinary study of men and masculinities originated with the men’s liberation movement of the 1970s, following women’s liberation, second-wave feminism, and women’s and gender studies formation in the 1960s. Men’s liberationists confronted the “paradox” of masculinity’s concurrent privileges and risks (Messner 1998, p. 255). “Internally contradictory” gender politics split men’s liberationists into antifeminist and profeminist groups (Messner 2016, p. 16). Antifeminist men’s rights groups defend male dominance as “natural” social order that occurs across “virtually every known society” (Kimmel 2011, p. 2), while profeminist men’s

groups dispute men's position as the "implicit center of most political discourse, social organization, and intellectual inquiry" (Miller 2017 [2005], p. 114). Masculinities studies developed further in the 1980s and 1990s, responding to mythopoetic, neoconservative men's rights movements. Mythopoetics constructed a version of masculinity that combined select Jungian archetypes with idealized literary-poetic, mythic masculine characters, and they blamed civil rights and feminist progress for men's perceived emasculation and loss of power. These men's rights movements sought to restore men's eroding "institutional privileges," or social entitlement (Messner 2000, p. 5). Both antifeminist and profeminist men's groups concern themselves with masculinities; however, their purposes and perspectives differ.

Antifeminist men's groups enact androcentric perspectives focused exclusively on men's experiences and needs. Androcentrism sustains patriarchy, a "system of domination" where men control women and some men (older men; fathers, in the classic definition of the term) control "other men" (Kimmel 2003, p. 417). Patriarchy reproduces gender stereotypes, from private, familial structure to virtually every public social institution – academic, corporate, civic, religious – where men enjoy privileged rank because they are male. In late twentieth- to early twenty-first-century America, antifeminists organized into men's rights groups such as the National Coalition for Free Men/the National Coalition for Men, the Coalition of Divorce Reform, the Men's Rights Association, Men's Rights, Inc., and Men Achieving Liberation and Equality (Kimmel 2013 [2017], p. 105). In Europe, the UK Men's Rights Movement was founded. In twenty-first-century India, the Save Indian Family Foundation was launched. Increased internet access and web presence through sites such as A Voice for Men, the Father's Rights Foundation, and Men Going Their Own Way facilitate the organization of neoconservative men's rights groups.

On the other hand, profeminist men also organized into groups. These include the American Men's Studies Association, Men's Studies Task Group, and the National Organization for Men Against Sexism. Profeminist men's rights progressivists established academic programs, such as The Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at Stony Brook University in 2013, that offer graduate degrees in masculinities and partner with international groups such as Global Action on Men's Health, MenEngage, Promundo, and Sonke Gender Justice to study men, men's and boys' issues, and masculinities. These partnerships consider men's contributions and impacts locally, nationally, and worldwide through proliferating interdisciplinary research – anthropological, biological, economic, historical, linguistic, political, rhetorical, and sociological. Profeminists engage "a language of gender relations and power" (Messner 1998, p. 255) to examine men as subjects of social science, question male domination, and claim that *masculinity is socially constructed*.

To claim something is socially constructed means that the process by which it, or "any body of 'knowledge' comes to be established as 'reality'" is social (Berger and Luckman 1966, p. 15). Ongoing, variable processes of "social relativity" create and maintain specific kinds of realities through human interaction, relations, and repetition. These processes and the realities they create change with different contexts and cultures (Berger and Luckman 1966, p. 15). Berger and Luckman note for example that "what is 'real' to a Tibetan monk may not be 'real' to an American businessman" (1966, p. 15). It follows that what one person, group, or society considers masculine in a given place and time may not be considered masculine to another. Acknowledging

how socially constructed realities vary across different cultures discourages ethnocentrism, a sense of one's own cultural superiority.

The notion of gender's social construction can be traced to anthropologist Margaret Mead's research at the start of the twentieth century (Kimmel and Messner 2013; Mann and Patterson, 2016; Pascoe and Bridges, 2016; and others). Mead saw "such wide variability among gender role prescriptions – and such marked differences from our own" in her 1935 study, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, that she rejected "any universality" of fixed gender roles (Kimmel and Messner 2013, p. xiii). Her work challenged ethnocentric gender assumptions, including the notion that every culture recognizes masculinity and femininity through "certain inherent properties" (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, p. 7). More recently, masculinities studies expert Raewyn Connell points out that while the concept of gender appears in all societies, a fixed concept of masculinity does not (2018, p. 5). Gender's relevance "in every interactional situation" makes it an omnirelevant part of social reciprocity, what we *do*, rather than what we *have* (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 526; Connell 2005; Butler 1990). Theorist Judith Butler describes gender as "stylized repetition of acts" (1988, p. 519), conventional patterns of behavior associated with men and women. She notes these patterns' dependence upon "social temporality" (1988, p. 520); that is to say, our gendered behavior patterns change with different times and places.

In addition to being socially constructed, gender is kairotic, performative, and relational. To say gender is kairotic means that gender expression hinges on proper moments or opportune times of action: as these moments and opportunities for expression change, so do our gendered behaviors. To say gender is performative means that masculinity, femininity, and all combinations of their characteristics consist of variable, everyday, repeated acts that respond and adapt to social contexts and expectations (Butler 1993; Lorber 1994; Kimmel and Messner 2013; Connell 2018; and others). To say gender is relational means that gender categories form in relation to one another: masculinity coheres in contrast with "some model (whether real or imaginary) of femininity" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 848). Connell considers gender relations a major system for structuring "all documented societies" (as cited in Pascoe and Bridges 2016, p. 13). Gender orders social practice in public and private interactions worldwide, and its research has increased so much in the past three decades that gender joins class and race as "one of three central mechanisms by which power and resources are distributed" (Kimmel and Messner 2013, p. x). Gender is both a product of social structures and institutions and a process of producing social structures and institutions.

Men's and masculinities studies are part of gender studies' larger discourse and in conversation with women's studies, from whose 1960s formation examinations of masculinity began in the 1970s. The next section presents frameworks for engaging men's and masculinities studies. Methods of early gender research advanced androcentric, ethnocentric perspectives that equated gender with biology and focused on differences between masculinity and femininity. These methods reinforced a concept of gender – and therefore masculinity – as fixed, natural, and physiologically determined, and they generated polarizing, problematic theories that perpetuated and supported gender stereotypes. Recent methods build upon early methods but detach gender from biology to recognize patterns of masculinities' variable, social constructions and to

study situationally specific, shifting definitions of masculinity. How might we study a subject as pervasive as men, and a concept as elusive as masculinity?

### **Frameworks for Men's and Masculinities Studies**

Binary categorization, a framework that collapses gender “into two exclusive opposites” (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 522), polarized, fixed counterparts, followed from the nineteenth-century doctrine of separate spheres (Kimmel 2011, p. 16; Mann and Patterson 2016, pp. 218, 546), a principle that divided men's public, civic activity and women private, domestic realms. In the 1950s, American scholar Talcott Parsons applied binary categorization in his assertion that functionalism, a view of society as “a system of interdependent parts” whose cooperation enabled functionality (Aulette and Wittner 2015, pp. 62–63), engaged “sex roles” to achieve stability. Parsons's work, which recognized differences between masculine and feminine roles but did not consider them “unequal,” represents “the first attempt at a social theory of masculinity” (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, pp. 7–8). However, sex-role theory's reliance on binary categorization, or gender binarism, functionalized a heteronormative family system that limits sexual attraction to the opposite sex, reproduces male dominance, and casts feminine men and masculine women as deviant. The sex-role model also omitted “relationships of power” (Kimmel and Messner 2013, p. xv), essential gender formation elements that reproduce binary, masculine-feminine roles. Understanding power's function in gender construction is crucial; Connell reminds us that gender relations are power relations. Sex-role binarism naturalizes men's domination and women's subordination, obscures gender inequality and power differences, and stigmatizes people who do not identify as strictly male or female.

Binary sex-role language also justifies biological determinism and biological essentialism. Biological determinism embraces anatomy as destiny and explains gender inequalities as “natural” outcomes of physical differences (Kimmel 2011, p. 2). Similarly, biological essentialism equates gender with sex, ascribing “certain qualities, traits, or behaviors to all members of a group” (Mann and Patterson 2016, p. 546). Biological determinism and essentialism apply binary categorization that conflates physical sex with gender and considers masculinity fixed and stable, a mythic standard against which people are judged. This empowers and idealizes masculinity while disempowering and problematizing femininity (Chodorow 1978; Kimmel and Messner 2013).

Before Parsons's 1950's work, and through parts of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, gender binarism informed three general models – anthropological, biological, and sociological – that governed social science inquiry into gender and viewed masculinity as a single, stable concept (Kimmel and Messner 2013). Anthropological models considered cross-cultural differences in characteristics and recognized traits “associated with being a man” (Kimmel and Messner 2013, p. xii). Biological models applied essentialism to explain differences between men's and women's psychological temperament and social conduct (Chodorow 1978). Sociological models stressed sex-role theory to explain differences in boys' and girls' socialization (Kimmel and Messner 2013). These early models proved ineffective to explain gender. Anthropologically speaking, no single, consistent, cross-cultural concept of masculinity exists. Biology

shapes some physical boundaries but cannot dictate conduct or temperament that social imperatives mold from “biological inheritances” (Kimmel and Messner 2013, p. xiii). And biology anchors sex roles, whereas gender’s kaleidoscopic patterns of socially constructed practice detach from biology. Binarism imposes a heteronormative pattern that glorifies masculinity and demonizes people who do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes.

In the 1970s and 1980s, gender studies research began producing frameworks that questioned binarism. These frameworks critique sex-role theory and the concept of masculinity as the singular human benchmark, exposing a gap in perspective that binarism and its corollary, totalizing notion of masculinity, create. In 1974, sociologists and men’s studies scholars Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner first published *Men’s Lives*, an edited collection that explored reformulations of the traditional male role. Psychologist Sandra Bem’s “Bem Sex-Role Inventory” (BSRI, 1974) extended Parsons’s earlier work in androgynous directions to measure gender expression in terms of masculinity and femininity, rather than male or female roles. Her “Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing” (1981) discusses her BSRI studies’ results and explains how “sex-linked characteristics” and sex typing delineate and perpetuate binary gender norms in the gender acquisition process. Joseph Pleck’s *The Myth of Masculinity* (1981) criticizes five decades of androcentric, biased research on the “male sex role paradigm” whose normative features the empirical evidence failed to support. He shows that social problems result from sex roles’ inflexibility, not from men and women who modify or reject the roles, and he proposes a “sex role strain paradigm.”

In 1985, Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne’s “The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology” and Connell’s “Theorising Gender” critiqued sex-role theory’s application of tautological, or circular, reasoning; reliance on biological determinism; ahistorical perspective; and, perhaps most importantly, failure to account for diversity, presuming “universal participation in the enactment of sex roles” (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, 9–10). Connell’s *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (1987) considers masculinity *not* as the standard against which humanity measures, but *in relation to* femininity, offering cross-sectional, analytical, gender and sexuality studies framework. In 1993, Bem continued her critique of sex-role theory by identifying androcentrism, gender polarization, and essentialism as lenses through which sex-role theorists examined people’s experiences (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 59). As Judith Butler spoke of gender as “performative” (1990, 1993), sociologist Judith Lorber theorized gender’s social construction (1994). In 1998, law and social theorist Richard Collier asserted that gender binarism’s “division between sex and gender” still pervaded masculinities research and needed to be disrupted (Connell 2005, p. xix).

In her book, *Masculinities* (1995), Connell critiques sex-role theory’s generalizing abstraction and disrupts gender binarism by presenting her relational view of masculinity as a plural concept, theorizing masculinities as “configurations of practice” (2005, p. xvii). These situationally variable patterns of behavior result from different cultural expectations in social interactions. Connell recalls Pleck in suggesting that concrete, ethnographic, internationally diverse research on masculinity accrued in the 1980s and 1990s contradicts sex-role theory, especially the idea of masculinity as a singular concept. Connell’s framework for men’s and masculinity’s studies consists

of power relations, production relations, and cathexis. Examination of power relations through this framework reveals “the main axis of power in the contemporary European/American gender order is the overall subordination of women and domination of men” (Connell 2018, p. 8). Examination of production relations reveals that labor is not only gender segregated, but also a wage gap persists between people of different genders who do the same work. Finally, examination of cathexis, or “the libido’s charge of [psychosexual] energy” (Felluga 2011) through which sexual desire is shaped and actualized, reveals that masculinities are typically heteronormalized. Connell’s observation that white male masculinity constructs itself in opposition to black/African American and various ethnicities’ masculinities through colonial and postcolonial lenses, as well as constructing itself in opposition to various ethnicities’ femininity leads toward flexible, inclusive, relational understandings of men and masculinities that resonate with researchers (2018, p. 9). Her framework is widely applied by interdisciplinary gender studies scholars who reject gender binarism and sex-role theory, and accept socially constructed concepts of gender.

C.J. Pascoe and Tristan Bridges offer four research trajectories to disrupt gender binarism – historicizing, multiplying, dislocating, and navigating (2016, pp. 20–26) – that complement Connell’s framework and build upon Kimmel and Messner’s (2013) three axes for social scientific examination of masculinity. These trajectories consider masculinity from historical perspectives and recognize masculinities’ plurality and “diverse social practices” rather than a singular quality of maleness. They also disconnect “studies of masculinity from studies of people with male bodies,” examining marginalized and subordinated masculinities through “intersectionally” informed perspectives (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, pp. 22–26). Gender’s instrumentality in our daily lives and social structure permeates cultures to such a degree, “it is now common to say that gender ‘intersects’ ... with race and class” in socially constructed identity formation (Connell 2018, p. 8).

Contemporary men’s and masculinities studies scholars recognize that early gender studies research exaggerated gender differences and elided gender similarities (Kimmel 2016). Recent work suggests that gender inequality exists as an “institutional phenomenon” that not only “*cause[s] the differences between men and women,*” but also systemically ensures male dominance (Kimmel 2016). But while the ostensive authority in patriarchal cultures remains a reified, masculinized ideal, masculine authority operates through multiple levels, systems, and types, all of which reiterate masculinities’ vast, conceptual dependence on gender’s social construction. Considering how multiple systems of domination engage specifics of identity – race, class, gender, sexuality – in overlapping, interconnected oppression requires examining these relationships through intersectionality, a theoretical approach to recognizing and understanding interdependent categories of discrimination. How does intersectionality surface “the combined effects” of traditionally marginalized, “major social statuses in producing systematic advantages and disadvantages” (Lorber, 2012, p. 332) to further disrupt gender binarism and widen the scope of men’s and masculinities studies?

Intersectional theory provides an important function in the development and expansion of men’s and masculinities studies, of identifying disparities and complex power systems, and of understanding “how different forms of inequality deeply rely on and reinforce one another” (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, 229). Thus, intersectionality

offers an especially effective approach to disrupting gender binarism and singular notions of masculinity by replacing single-axis identity politics that “address one form of oppression” with multi-axis identity politics that “address more than one form of oppression” at once (Mann and Patterson 2016, p. 547) to consider the effects of multiple, combined oppression categories. Intersectionality views masculinities from marginalized perspectives, on several levels, where “class, race, national, regional, and generational differences cross-cut the category ‘men,’ spreading the gains and costs of gender relations very unevenly,” locally and globally. (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 592). Feminist scholar bell hooks (1984) notes that intersectional perspectives “‘look at the world ‘from margin to center;’” reversing the direction from which much scholarship proceeds, reshaping the trajectory of research from flat and linear to round and multi-dimensional, thus revealing “enduring patterns” of gender identities and inequalities (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, p. 226).

Intersectional theory emerged from black/African American feminist analyses following the Combahee River Collective’s signal piece, the collaboratively authored “Black Feminist Statement” in 1977. Its authors urged “multi-axis identity politics based on intersectional social locations” and “mass-based, collective action between the many and diverse based identity groups” (1977) (Mann and Patterson 2016, pp. 220–221). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) further developed these authors’ ideas when she identified “webs of intersecting identities and oppressions as the ‘matrix of domination’” to elaborate simultaneous, multiple oppressions (Mann and Patterson 2016; Pascoe and Bridges 2016, p. 226). Collins noted that “macro-level” and “micro-level” social processes engage “interlocking systems of oppression” which create patterns of controlling “social structures” and “social positions” (Collins 1990). She considered “crosscutting inequalities” that “complicate gendered differences” (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 7). In 1991, legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw extended Collins’s work. She observed that “ignoring differences *within* groups contributes to tensions *among* groups” and charged that feminist and antiracist discourses ignore “intersectional identities” (pp. 1241–1243). It is Crenshaw who introduced intersectionality as an approach to considering “various ways in which race and gender interact” to shape social relations, and she proposed examining inequality through three intersectional categories: structural, political, and representational (1991, pp. 1244–1245). Crenshaw’s metaphor of a “traffic intersection” explains inequality’s overlapping layers, “multiple vectors of power” that “are not additive,” but intersecting with “different forms of power and inequality” which form “webs of oppression,” “best understood [...] by considering the complexity of the whole” (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, p. 226). In this way, intersectionality offers a more accurate, comprehensive explanation of complex, intersecting vectors of oppression that converge to limit women of color.

Intersectional analysis shows that male dominance’s gendered social arrangement of inequity between men and women disadvantages both: overlapping patterns and numerous systems of subordination limit groups of men and women. Messerschmidt blends intersectional theory with structural action theory, which “emphasizes that social structures such as gender, race and class are constructed and reinforced through everyday interaction” (Chua, 2015) to articulate his idea of “masculinities as structured action” (Messerschmidt 2016, 207). According to Pascoe and Bridges, “although much of the research relying on this perspective considers race and class

equally important (if not more important than) gender,” men’s and masculinities’ studies examine how different religions, locations or contexts, and sexualities overlap with race and class in forming and typifying masculine identities (2016, pp. 228–229). Intersectional approaches thus expand the scope of men’s and masculinities studies. What might an intersectional schema of masculinities types look like, and how could it envision the multiplicity of masculinities’ social construction?

The concept of a fixed, universal, monolithic masculinity is inaccurate and misleading. Masculinity is most accurately understood as an indefinite range of traits associated with maleness that cohere around context-dependent, variable ideas of what it means to be a man, and even this understanding poses more questions than answers. In fact, the singular term masculinity cannot adequately convey diverse, sociocultural ideas of maleness: we now must speak of *masculinities* (Connell 2018; Kimmel and Messner 2013). Nevertheless, persistent traditional attitudes toward gender continue to circumscribe men. In spite of recent theoretical frameworks that work to determine and interpret masculinities, Jessica Padgett claims that “prominent measures of masculinity focus on traditional masculinity norms, such as high aggression, low emotional expression, and heteronormativity,” even as recent research suggests “that a variety of men embrace alternative forms of masculinity that include characteristics not represented by traditional norms” (2017, p. ii).

Connell identifies four strategies for defining masculinities that overlap with early concepts of masculinity (2018, p. 5). *Essentialist* definitions select a trait claimed as inherently natural in defining “the core of the masculine” upon which to fixate and claim the trait as universal in men’s lives (Connell 2018, p. 6). *Positivist* definitions examine “the pattern of men’s lives in a given culture,” and regardless of cross-cultural or contextual differences, “call the pattern masculinity” (Connell 2018, p. 6). *Normative* definitions standardize what men “ought to be” and then equate those standards with masculinity, treating the standards “precisely as a social norm for the behaviour of men” and blending “normative with essentialist definitions” (Connell 2018, p. 6). *Semiotic* definitions identify masculinity discursively “through a system of symbolic difference” from femininity in which “masculinity is the unmarked,” invisible “term,” the omniscient “authority” where “the phallus is master-signifier,” and femininity is “defined by lack” (Connell 2018, p. 6). Connell, however, identifies masculinity as “simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality, and culture” (2018, p. 7). Her gender order theory “recognizes multiple masculinities that vary across time, culture and the individual.” Kimmel suggests that gendered relations between not only men and women, but also between men and men surface “the power that men as a group have over women as a group” as well as “the power that some men have over other men” to distinguish types of masculinities (2011, p. 105).

## Masculinities by Type

Aligning with Connell’s gender order theory, the two charts shown in Figure 4.1 show 12 masculinities by type to visualize their multiplicity and map their features. The charts convey characteristics and contributions to men’s and masculinities



Masculinities by Type	Adolescent	Competitive	Ecomasculinity	Female	Gay	Hegemonic
<b>Characteristics</b>	Indecision, identity crisis, commitment and responsibility avoidance experienced by males aged 16–26 across cultures; Peter Pan syndrome – see Kimmel’s <i>Guyland</i> (2008)	Aggressive male-domination; limits emotional expression to anger; normalizes combative control through physical contest where authority results from victory; promotes destructive behavior, self-harm, homophobia, and misogyny	Affirmative relationship with ecology and natural resources, supports conservationism	Gender nonconforming women who defy binary gender categorization and stereotypes to adopt traditionally masculinized traits, appearance, and behavior	Bisexual or homosexual attraction, lifestyle, and sexual practice	Male-dominated structures of power and authority; subordinates women and less powerful men; systemically enforces androcentric patterns, practices, social relations and values
<b>Contributions; Criticisms and Effects</b>	Delays marriage, creates male bonding and support systems; <i>Develops mass misogyny, sexism, violence</i> (Kimmel 2008)	Entertains, forms, protects, and serves communities; <i>Socially regressive, creates boundaries between cultures and groups; fosters harmful masculine behavior, endangers women and subordinated men</i> (Kimmel and Kaufman 1995; (Messner 1998)	Opposes exploitation of earth, preserves natural resources (Ruether 1992), (Twine 2001)	Contests biological essentialism and gender binarism (Halberstam 2016 [1998])	Demonstrates masculinity is a social construct unattached to biological sex (Nardi 2000)	<i>Dominates and oppresses women and less powerful men, repeats patriarchal patterns</i> (Connell 2005, 2011; Connell and Messerschmidt 2012)

Figure 4.1 Masculinities by type.

Masculinities by Type	Hypermasculinity / Machosexual	Hypomasculinity / Metrosexual	Inclusive	Mythopoetic	Patri <del>the</del> ologist	Retrossexual / Neosexual
Characteristics	Exaggerated masculinized performativity, physical strength, competitiveness, and sexuality, bravado, careless appearance, pattern of detached erotic conquest traditionally valorized in popular culture and social media	Few or understated stereotypically masculinized traits; open-minded male with careful appearance, refined tastes and intellect; Sensitive New Age Guy (SNAG) portrayed in popular culture and social media	Accepts homosexual experimentation, homosexuality, and same sex emotional, physical intimacy; tolerates a range of desirable male bodies and gendered behaviors	Embraces pop psychology, enacts select Jungian male archetypes and behavior models based on valorized literary-poetic and mythical, masculine characters	Justifies patriarchy through fatherhood by claims of monotheistic male, god-given, divine right; religious discourse that naturalizes gender inequality and stereotypes in faith-based, binary constructs	Joins select traditionally masculinized beliefs, behavior, and appearance of men from previous generations with select nontraditional behavior and appearance in popular culture and social media
Contributions; Criticisms and Effects	<i>Condone sexual control of and objectification of women, promotes violence and homophobia</i> (Zaitchik and Mosher 1993)	Reframes masculinity to include some stereotypically feminized traits (Simpson 1994)	Moves men toward gender equality with women and subordinated men (Anderson 2009)	<i>Mythic essentialism universalizes and overgeneralizes masculinity</i> (Kimmel and Kaufman 1995), (Messner 1998)	Christianity, Judaism, Islam; <i>Discredits and omits feminine <u>theology</u>, controls and devalues motherhood</i> (Christ 2002), (Lee 2011)	Nuclear family nostalgia; <i>Regressive social politics, equates "family values" with patriarchy</i> (Anderson 2008)

Figure 4.1 (Continued)

studies as well as criticisms and effects. It is important to note that this group of adolescent, competitive, ecomasculinity, female, gay, hegemonic, hypermasculinity/machosexual, hypomasculinity/metrosexual, inclusive, mythopoetic, patritheologist, and retrosexual/neosexual masculinity categories classifies only a partial sampling of masculinities' many possible variations. Each category identifies a range of masculinities types within its classification whose specific characteristics, patterns, and practices may vary rather than form a single, homogenous group. For example, *patritheologist masculinity* (Lee 2011) includes religions and fundamentalist denominations created and controlled by patriarchal monotheists that inform the systemic operation of cultures worldwide. Moreover, categories may overlap and blend. For instance, one person may enact a combination of *ecomasculinity* (Ruether 1992; Twine 2001); *hypomasculinity/metrosexuality* (Simpson 1994), and *inclusive masculinity* (Anderson 2009), engaging "masculinities as structured action" (Messerschmidt 2016, pp. 207–219). Perhaps most importantly, while the charts taxonomize multiple masculinities that represent decades of research, most categories are neither biology- nor gender-specific: that is to say, *men, women, asexual, intersexed, and transgendered individuals may engage in gender performativity that practices any one category or any combination of categories*. The existence of these masculinity types worldwide demonstrates masculinities' multiplicity; however, five widespread, influential types – adolescent, female, hegemonic, inclusive, and patritheologist – illustrate the complexity and range of contemporary masculinity, and are discussed briefly.

### Adolescent masculinity

Kimmel defines adolescent masculinity as stalled social development between "dependency and lack of autonomy, ... sacrifice and responsibility" where "peer influenced, ... enforced behaviors" define the passage of boys to men between the ages of 16–26 years (2009, pp. 6–7). He identifies adolescent masculinity with "Guyland," the "boyhood" side of the [masculinities] continuum" where homosocial bonds form around delayed responsibility (2008, p. 9). Kimmel attributes adolescent masculinity's prevalence to dramatic upsurge in the number of different social groups to which young men can belong coupled with dramatic cultural homogenization, "a flattening of regional and local differences with a single mainstream dominant culture prevailing," governed by a "dominant Guyland ethos" (Kimmel 2008, pp. 16–17), and "structured by massive social and economic changes" (Kimmel 2008, p. 17). Growth of men's "lower-wage service occupations" as consumer culture overtakes producer culture and eroding entitlement "that supported white male privilege" in the past combine with growth of women in public governance, industry, and research to create social conditions for more young men to need the "Band of Brothers" Guyland provides (Kimmel 2008, pp. 17–18).

On the positive side, adolescent masculinity delays marriage and allows fuller self-actualization. On the negative side, it can turn toxic. Pornographic objectification of women, exaggerated competitiveness, self-destructive behavior, violent homophobia, and gangsta imitation characterize Guyland. Adolescent masculinity promotes "a constellation of behaviors" as a "distilled essence of manhood" (Kimmel 2008, p. 23) and connects angry response towards waning social privilege to culturally conditioned "entitlement" (Kimmel 2008, 10-12). While adolescent masculinity's expression

varies by culture, its hallmarks are indecision and commitment avoidance. As young men pass through adolescent masculinity to manhood, Kimmel suggests replacing stereotypical “boys will be boys” mentality with a gender-equitable “boys will be people” realization (2008, p. 23).

### Female masculinity

Literary scholar and queer theorist Jack/Judith Halberstam examines “masculinity’s iconicity” through studying women who adopt traditionally masculinized appearances and behaviors, or female masculinities (2016 [1998], p. 332). S/he explains gender binarism’s operation through her experience with “the bathroom problem,” noting that nonconforming people encounter difficulty “passing” in public bathrooms because their outward, physical presentation prevents instant gender recognition and classification into male or female categories (Halberstam 2016 [1998], pp. 332–334). However, Halberstam also critiques Marjorie Garber’s “third space of possibility” that gender nonconformists may occupy on the grounds that it limits the possibility of “a fourth, fifth, sixth, or one hundredth space beyond the binary” (Halberstam 2016 [1998], p. 356). S/he suggests that female masculinity offers gender studies “crucial interventions” to discover “the contours of masculinity’s social construction” (2016 [1998], p. 348). For Halberstam, female masculinity is not male imitation. Instead, female masculinity examines masculinity as physiologically detached, a purely social entity. Female masculinity represents “rejected scraps of dominant masculinity” against a background of “myths and fantasies” that ensure “masculinity and maleness are difficult to pry apart,” making “male masculinity [...] appear to be the real thing” (Halberstam 2016 [1998], pp. 331–348).

Halberstam contrasts approved, conceptual examples, such as “tomboyism” common in little girls with cinematic examples, such as James Bond’s “butch,” matronly female boss, M, played by Dame Judi Dench (*Goldeneye*, 1995; *Skyfall*, 2012), “a buffed Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2* (1991), and Sigourney Weaver, whose heroic ferocity and implied bisexuality in *Alien Resurrection* (1997) threaten heterosexuality (2016 [1998], pp. 350–357). Examples of youthful female masculinity juxtapose physically exaggerated femininity with superhuman strength: Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1996–2003), Diana Prince/Wonder Woman (2017), and Avengers’ Captain Marvel, Black Widow, and Gamora. Significantly, the more powerful the women, the more demonized their depiction, supporting Halberstam’s observation that “masculinity remain[s] the property of male bodies” within cultural studies due to Western conservatism’s “protectionist attitude ... towards masculinity” and “general disbelief in female masculinity,” placing gender nonconformists outside “functional social” realms (Halberstam 2016 [1998], pp. 351–352). Consequently, “masculine women and boyish girls” who continuously disrupt the “coherence of male masculinity” remain shunned (Halberstam 2016 [1998], p. 352).

### Hegemonic masculinity

Connell’s early definition of hegemonic masculinity, a key men’s and masculinities studies concept, identified it as legitimization of patriarchy (1995, p. 77). Systemic patriarchy, or patriarchal society, is a major hegemonic masculinity form that

oppresses women and nonprivileged men through interlinked power structures, between and across multiple genders, to reproduce male domination (Holter 2005, p. 20; Kimmel 2016). Initial explanations of hegemonic masculinity emphasized abstract patterns of practice that systemically dominate women through patriarchal logic. Recent scholarship examines male-centered customs, origins, and purposes, questioning both “men’s advantages over the women in their social group,” or patriarchal privilege (Lorber 2012, p. 333), and some men’s advantages over other men. For instance, compulsory heterosexuality assumes “everyone is heterosexual, unless proven otherwise” (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 523), rewards people through heterosexual privilege that fortifies patriarchy, and disperses hegemonic images of heterosexuality as “the only valid form of sexuality” (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 527), stereotyping men’s gender performativity. Patriarchy supports hegemonic masculinity through social policy that perpetuates its privilege and provides men patriarchal dividends, Connell’s term for men’s collective advantages. These advantages include high wages, “bodily integrity” and physical freedom, “authority, respect” (Pascoe and Bridges 2016, 17). Yet not all men benefit in the same way or to the same degree. While patriarchy’s hegemonic “structure of power” empowers men, Holter claims that the gender system’s “framework of meaning” adapts and responds to a range of issues. Therefore, Holter considers gender a “compromise formation” that patriarchal power structures form (2005, p. 20).

Hegemonic masculinity consists of elite men’s control of cultural values and domination of economic and political power (Lorber 2012, p. 253), “the culturally exalted form of masculinity ... linked to institutional power” (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 527). Hegemonic men occupy top ranks of hierarchy, while others occupy a category Connell calls subordinated masculinities that rank beneath hegemonic (Lorber 2012, p. 254). For example, men whose gender performativity differs from the heterosexual matrix, Butler’s phrase for conventional “cultural expectations” that encircle “the performance of sex and gender,” have traditionally been subordinated (Aulette and Wittner 2015, p. 527). Hegemonic masculinity is one of four relational practices – hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization – that typify Western masculinity patterns (Connell 2018, p. 9). Connell and Messerschmidt also identify four areas of hegemonic masculinity – hierarchy, geography, patterns of social embodiment, and dynamics – that they suggest need reformulation (2012).

In the 1980s, Shepherd Bliss applied the word “toxic” to describe a kind of damaging, hegemonic masculinity that threatens life, health, and safety (Kimmel and Kaufman 1995) through destructive practices and behavior (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 839). Psychologist Terry Kupers defines toxic masculinity as a “constellation of socially regressive male traits” that support men’s control, “the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence” (2005). Toxic conduct endangers its offenders as well as others. Interpersonal indicators include depression, stress, neglect of self-care, risk-taking, substance abuse, and emotional expression restricted to aggression and anger, patterns of greed, homophobia, misogyny, self-aggrandizement, and violence towards others follow. Serious sociopolitical consequences result.

According to Promundo’s report, *Unmasking Sexual Harassment* (Heilman and Barker 2018), toxic behavior is pervasive. It intersects all backgrounds, starts young,

and takes many forms. *Unmasking Sexual Harassment* summarizes survey results that examine “young men’s views about manhood” using “the ‘Man Box,’ a scale composed of 17 attitude statements on toxic masculinity” (Heilman and Barker, p. 1), borrowed and adapted from Paul Kivel’s “‘Act-Like-a-Man’ Box” (2013). Kivel’s model conveys how boys’ masculinities are shaped by verbal and physical abuse that normalizes toxic masculinity. Results show that 1/5 to 1/3 of young men surveyed had in the past month engaged in public threats to girls or women, used social media to “embarrass or harass someone,” or actually hurt someone physically (Heilman and Barker 2018, p. 2). Those who believe “toxic ideas of manhood most strongly” are most likely to act in violent ways (Heilman and Barker 2018, pp. 2–3).

Worldwide, waves of violent conflict such as the activities of Jihadist militant West African Boko Haram, terrorist Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) seizures of Syria and Iraq, Russian military intervention in Ukraine, and recurrent mass shootings in the United States demonstrate toxic masculinity. By contrast, activist demonstrations such as the Arab Spring suggest that dialogue between violent manhood, on one hand, and rational resistance, on another, moves toward gender equality. Promundo’s report suggests frequently repeated stereotypes of “‘real manhood’” idealize domineering, violent, sexually coercive models that socialize young men into toxic masculinity (Heilman and Barker 2018, p. 3). Preventive responses include Promundo’s Program H, part of a global education initiative, Manhood 2.0, that seeks to reduce “young men’s violent behavior” through lessons that discourage such behavior (Heilman and Barker 2018, p. 4).

Analysis of the complex relationships between different constructions of masculinity require a “holistic” approach that recognizes relationships between hierarchy and subordinated groups on “Local (face-to-face), ... Regional ([cultural] or nation-state), and Global (transnational, worldwide) levels” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2012, pp. 258). Behavior patterns of competition, conquest, risk-engagement, exaggerated physicality, and segregation from less able-bodied men demonstrate hegemonic masculinity’s “circuits of social embodiment” that physically actualize and objectify social practice (Connell and Messerschmidt 2012, p. 260). Yet, hegemonic masculinity’s “configurations of practice” build and “change through time”; they are dynamic (Connell and Messerschmidt 2012, pp. 260–261). As changing concepts of masculinities displace old hegemonic forms with new ones and as understandings of multiple masculinities expand, Connell and Messerschmidt predict less oppressive masculinities may emerge (2012, pp. 255–256).

### Inclusive masculinity

Eric Anderson characterizes inclusive masculinity as acceptance of gay and other marginalized masculinities that eliminates what he calls “homophobia,” or “homosexually-panicked culture in which suspicion [of gay sexuality] permeates” (2016, p. 180). He contrasts hegemonic masculinities with inclusive masculinities and claims that a range of atypical behaviors he observed in two groups of American high school male athletes between 1990 and 2013 signal a shift in men’s attitudes. In 1990, Anderson watched an adolescent masculine culture enact Connell’s hegemonic masculinity theory “near-perfectly”: when “a group of men (mostly football jocks) ruled *over* all others” and those who were subordinated “did their best to approximate” their model

(2016, p. 183). At that time, hegemonic young men at the top of the hierarchy accrued “masculine capital,” “jock insurance,” and power through “homosexual banter” to confirm their heterosexuality and reject “all other forms of same-sex intimacy” (Anderson 2016, p. 183). In 2013, Anderson watched another adolescent masculine culture at the same school enact “inclusive attitudes toward homosexuality” that allowed young men to “associate much more freely” with symbols which once homosexually coded men (2016, p. 183). For instance, contemporary adolescent males wear pink, purple, and lavender without fear of homosexual coding; in England, Anderson notes that boys ride pink bicycles (p. 183). As young men enact previously unacceptable behaviors, cultural codes and taboos “lose their homosexualizing power” and normative force (Anderson 2016, p. 183). According to Anderson, disappearance of “homophobia” and “vertical, hegemonic stratification of masculinity types” characterize inclusive masculinity (2016, p. 184).

### Patritheologist masculinity

Intersections of patriarchy and institutionalized, masculine monotheism create patritheologist masculinity (Lee 2011), a kind of hegemonic masculinity that justifies male domination and systemic control of nonhegemonic men, women, the earth, and its resources. Metaphors of an absent, mythic father whose human sons inherit rule by divine right socially construct patritheology. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – monotheistic male systems that sanction patriarchy through mythologized fatherhood – trace their paternal “origins to Abraham” and reject an empowered maternal, divine feminine presence (Aulette and Wittner 2016, p. 521; Ruether, 2006). Patritheology validates androcentric sacred text, patterns, and practice through theology, the term naming religious studies that omits the concept of *thealogy*, the term developed “from the Greek words *thea* or Goddess and *logos* or meaning” to describe “reflection on the meaning of Goddess” (Christ 2002, p. 79). Importantly, “cultural authorities” who lead “major religious organizations” in patriarchal systems are often fundamentalist, “highly conservative men” who “sometimes completely exclude women” to eliminate paternal uncertainty (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 596). A significant, implicit component of gender binarism, patritheology’s monotheism promotes illusory, singular conceptions of masculinity. This function of conventional, organized religion remains relatively undiscussed.

Moreover, patritheology sustains masculinized authority and knowledge production, or the *social construction of masculinized L/logos*. This social construction is an ongoing process in which male monotheism’s implied citation entwines with educational frameworks to convey the idea of authority, of knowing, as male. The neologism *L/logos* acknowledges blended sacred and secular meanings. Its capitalized “L” indicates Logos’s religious reference to both the word of God and the son of God in Judeo-Christian systems. Its forward slash and lower-case “l” indicate blending with secular reference to logos’s rhetorical appeal to logic, reason, and knowledge-making power. Rhetoric scholar Victor Vitanza characterizes logos as a masculinized agent whose “binary and hierarchical way of structuring society and language” creates a culture where “males are privileged over females; logic over emotion; history over fiction” (1997, p. 132). He notes how the ancient Greek philosopher, Isocrates, viewed logos as the foundation of human institutions and how

this idea systemically reflects and transmits an idea of authority as male (Vitanza 1997, p. 176).

Patritheology relies upon phallogocentric and phallogocentric approaches to masculinities. Feminist theorist Hélène Cixous notes that the “phallogocentric system,” focused on the phallus as a symbol of male dominance, masculinizes writing (in Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005, p. 259), whereas science and technology scholar Donna Haraway regards phallogocentrism as “the central dogma, ... the one code that translates all meaning” (in Kolmar and Bartowski 2005, p. 391). Feminist scholar Mary Daly, whose rejection of male-centered religion included remaking language in “nonpatriarchal” ways “as a step towards defeating androcentrism” (Gardiner 2004, p. 39), refers to men’s “language of phallogocentrism” as a hegemonic practice (in Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005, p. 330). Patritheology joins the social construction of masculinized L/logos to advance hegemonic masculinity globally, in male-dominated religions where gender inequality and supernatural claims, ironically, are made to appear part of a natural order: patritheology is an international phenomenon.

### Masculinity in Global Perspective

Hegemonic masculinity is evident when we examine gender ideology and practices in global perspective. Connell suggests situating international gender policy discussions in the “context of the cultural problematization of men and boys, the politics of ‘men’s movements,’ the divided interests of men and boys in gender relations,” and prolific evidence of masculinities’ “changing and conflict-ridden social construction” (2005 [2013], p. 587). Global scholars are generating vast quantities of “research about men’s gender identities and practices, masculinities [as well as] social processes” that construct them (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 588). Diverse sites of men’s and masculinities studies’ “rapid internationalization” – from Germany, Scandinavia, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, India, New Zealand, Denmark, Peru, and Turkey, to the Arab world – host debates, conduct ethnographic studies, seminars, surveys, and establish men’s centers on a global scale (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 588). These conversations affirm feminist claims that gender relations include an “international dimension”; indeed, “colonization of the gender order” in rural areas where “hybrid gender identities” are “now much discussed in the context of post-colonial societies” suggests a blending of masculine–feminine binaries (Connell 2005 [2013], pp. 588–589). While imperialism affects the conditions and experience of masculinities and disrupts traditional ideologies and gender practices through expanded interaction between local, regional, and global constituents, creating new patterns of practice in the “world gender order,” Connell asserts that “no single formula ... accounts for men and globalization” (2005 [2013], p. 589).

The *International Men and Gender Equality Survey* (IMAGES) is the first study of its kind to “map masculinities” globally. IMAGES queries men and women aged 18–59 in over 30 countries worldwide and combines qualitative research of “detailed life histories that illuminate quantitative findings” (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 2). This project responds to Connell’s concern that the considerable corpus



of research regarding men and masculinities includes too much descriptive study and not enough inference about what it suggests by providing information about how masculinities are distributed between social groups with “more general analyses of social change” (Connell 2005, p. xix) and integrating findings with the concept of masculinities as “configurations of practice” (Connell 2005, p. xviii). IMAGES’s Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale identifies key variables that reveal attitudes shaping men’s and women’s gender norms. Although this project’s suggestion of gender binarism omits gender nonconforming as an option for analysis and uneven sampling limits discussion, it generated a vast quantity of vital information from regions often left out of most contemporary gender research. For example, *IMAGES Middle East and North Africa* (IMAGES MENA) gathered data between April 2016 and March 2017 in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine to examine regional, shifting masculinities’ definitions (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 14).

Findings include the significance of economic and educational factors as they influence men’s attitudes. Those who favor gender equity are likely prosperous, educated men whose fathers performed “traditionally feminine household tasks” and whose mothers were educated. Younger men were just as likely as older men to hold traditional attitudes in regions with economic instability and employment difficulties (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 15). However, further research is needed to unpack the finding that “younger men, men with more education, and men who experienced violence as children are more likely” to perpetrate the region’s most prevalent form of gender-based violence, “street-based sexual harassment,” against more educated women (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, pp. 15–16).

Figure 4.2 summarizes selected IMAGES MENA data. Comparison of Egyptian, Moroccan, Lebanese, and Palestinian men’s responses to four statements addressing masculinities excerpted from the IMAGES GEM scale suggest that the majority

<b>IMAGES MENA Selected GEM Scale Statements</b>	<b>Egypt</b> Percentage of men who agreed with GEM Scale Statements	<b>Morocco</b> Percentage of men who agreed with GEM Scale Statements	<b>Lebanon</b> Percentage of men who agreed with GEM Scale Statements	<b>Palestine</b> Percentage of men who agreed with GEM Scale Statements
A man should have the final word about decisions in the home	90.3	70.7	n/a	80
To be a man, you need to be tough	26.6	61.6	35	40
It is a man’s duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives	77.9	76.8	35	82
Boys are responsible for the behavior of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters	79.8	64.2	37	76

Figure 4.2 IMAGES-MENA: Selected GEM scale statements.

understand masculinity in terms of patriarchally controlled domesticity and relationships with women. Yet 25% or more of men surveyed support “some dimension of women’s equality and empowerment” (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 14). Men agreed least with the statement equating masculinity with toughness, suggesting that conceptions of traditional masculinity may be destabilizing in the MENA region.

Men surveyed in all four MENA countries not only control domestic decision-making and finances, but also “expect to control their wives’ personal freedoms” (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 17). In Egypt and Lebanon, “women working outside the home” contribute to higher numbers of men caregiving and performing household chores; data suggests that fatherhood may present a pathway towards greater gender equity. Researchers note that half or more of all men surveyed acknowledged how their work deprives them of time with their children: “men in all four countries reported talking with their children about important personal matters in their lives,” engaging in “emotional intimacy” atypical of conventional masculinity, and “more than 70% of men in all the countries” accompanied their pregnant wives to prenatal visits. Project authors qualify this latter finding in light of the “degree to which male control and male guardianship” of women defines concepts of masculinity (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 17).

Connections between gender binarism’s fixed concepts of manhood and toxic masculinity emerge from the data. IMAGES shows “specific gendered patterns” of toxic masculinity indicators such as “high levels of stress” and depressive “mental health concerns” in the MENA region (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 18). Between 26 and 38% of men “met a screening standard for depressive symptoms” due to “the effects of [political] conflict or current unemployment,” creating a cycle of stereotyping in the “sense of lost masculine identity” that gender-conforming men experience when they cannot “fulfill their socially prescribed role as financial provider” (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 18). IMAGES also exposes connections between political conflict, displacement, and elevated “levels of fear” with high incidence of “occupation-related violence” occurring among men “within the past five years” (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 18). As men’s conflict-driven movement “within or outside their own country” compels women to assume traditionally masculine roles, rigid gender binarism begins to shift (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, p. 19).

National and international gender policy, such as the United Nations’ Human Rights Gender Equality Policy, focuses on women. As the advantaged group – men hold most corporate executive roles; top professional, political, and public offices; “nine out of ten cabinet-level posts in national governments,” and “collectively, receive twice the income that women receive” in addition to women’s unpaid domestic and emotional support – men’s presence in global policy appears only through “implied comparison” with women, the disadvantaged group (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 590). Men’s “background” presence in gender equality policy creation discourages attention to men’s and boy’s issues, and this relative invisibility prompts antifeminists to claim reverse sexism and “injustice” towards men (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 590). Yet while sharp debate about men’s and masculinities studies’ place in domestic and sexual violence and economic development exposes men’s part in gender inequality, involving hegemonic men risks backlash against women and subordinated men (Connell, 2005).

Although inequality patterns may differ in gender relations' multiple dimensions that show men's advantages around the world, "a linked pattern of disadvantages" for men exists in the realms of labor, power, and authority (Connell 2005 [2013], 591-592). While men hold most "managerial positions" and earn higher income than women, men's work "endangers their lives more frequently, men pay most of the taxation," and they bear social pressure to provide for their families (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 592). While men control systemic "coercion" and their tools—military, weaponry, penal institutions—they also make up the "main targets" of these tools (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 592). While masculinized authority earns greater social credibility than feminized authority, relational dimensions of human study and work with young children lack men's participation (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 592). The hierarchy that multiple masculinities create rewards advantaged, hegemonic men while disadvantaged, marginalized, subordinated men "pay most of the costs" (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 592).

Cross-cultural documentation of multiple masculinities, gender equality policy debates, and social change in diverse locations disprove the myth that "men *cannot* change," that "boys will be boys" (Connell 2005 [2013], pp. 593–594). Holter (2005) concludes from his observations of how Scandinavian paternity leave has altered traditionally gendered parenting roles that "a *majority* of men can change their practice ... when reforms or support policies are well-designed and targeted towards an on-going cultural process of change" (as cited in Connell 2013 [2005], p. 594). Men who support gender equality are more likely to be those who wish to improve their relationships; to ensure better prospects and safety for mothers, wives, and daughters; who seek to stabilize their environments and live in peaceful communities; and who follow ethical political principles (Connell 2005 [2013], pp. 594–595).

## Conclusion

Men's and masculinities studies that emerged in the 1970s following women's and gender studies' 1960s formation are currently proliferating as more people work toward gender equity, especially in Western or Northern Countries. Masculinities scholars further the feminist challenge to gender binarism, biological essentialism and determinism, and sex-role theory that cast masculinity as a singular, fixed trait attached to male physiology. By challenging traditional positioning of masculinity as opposite femininity, masculinities research further decenters this myopic binary vision and reveals the critical, relational elements of masculinities' blended gender spectrum, a sampling of which appears in Figure 4.1. Masculinities shift in response to contextual exigencies, revealing masculinities' social construction. Intersectional theory further illuminates the multiple categories of oppression encountered by women and men who do not fit within the hegemonic construction of what it means to be a man. Chopra, Dasgupta, and Janeja observe that masculinity studies has been especially important in contesting "the myth of a unitary, homogenized masculinity which is only an opposite of femininity," and it has expanded the extent to which men have engaged in "women's empowerment" efforts and social justice work (2000, p. 1607) as well as resistance to rigid gender roles.

Contemporary masculinity research encourages a cross-cultural lens as highlighted in the section “Masculinity in Global Perspective.” New directions for men’s and masculinities studies focus on socially constructed, economic, global relationships. For example, recent European neoliberal politics’ endorsement of “free-market principles,” “individualism,” and “rejection of state control” promotes regressive social policy and limited conceptions of masculinity (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 596). In the United States, this movement is known as neoconservatism and is manifest in a steady wave of assaults on welfare, public sector employment, and public education along with decreased personal taxation and labor deregulation. These neoconservative policies have originated amidst “sharp remasculinization of political rhetoric” most notably from “power-oriented” men since the 1980s (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 596). Fortunately, resistance has also emerged to challenge “masculinized” corporate sites where “top organizational” men preserve their power (Connell 2005 [2013], 596) and attempt to “reinstitutionalize patriarchy,” (as cited in Gardiner 2004, p. 45).

Patterns of male domination create dysfunctional social practices whose systemic consequences prevent people from evolving, progressing, and realizing their potential. In androcentric societies that assume male-centered and masculine-viewpoint as their cultural standard, gender remains somewhat invisible to men as “patriarchal structures are comparatively hidden” in male-dominated institutions (Holter 2005, p. 20). The invisibility of unacknowledged privileging mechanisms subordinates women and men who are constructed socially, culturally, or economically outside the hegemonic worldview through everyday encounters and interactions alongside cultural ideology and structural practices. These social and structural relations affirm that while democratizing cracks appear in the “male gaze’s” (Mulvey 2005 [1975]) collective social lens, patriarchy’s myth of monolithic masculinity remains intact worldwide. This myth underlies the practices of “very large numbers of men” who purposefully preserve “gender inequality” to maintain ambiguous power (Connell 2005 [2013], p. 597).

However, the diverse array of increasingly visible masculinities demonstrates movement in gender equitable directions. Connell suggests that eventually the beliefs and practices of gender equality will grow to transform global gender policy and relations. For example, she views the 2004 UN Commission on the Status of Women’s consensus on “agreed conclusions” as an important step in the process, “the first international agreement of its kind” that treat men “systematically as agents in gender-equality” (Connell 2005 [2013], pp. 597–598). Kimmel suggests that “men must follow the lead of the women’s movement,” to “free themselves from the constraints of the masculine ideal” and the fear of uncertainty (2016). People must recognize how social constructions shape relationships and influence institutions and their politics, and how misunderstandings about gender can impose stereotypes and traditional roles that limit *everyone*. Gardiner cautions that “until masculine identity does not depend on men’s proving themselves, their *doing* [gender] will be a reaction to insecurity rather than a creative exercise of their humanity” (2004, p. 42). Meanwhile, we must question structure(s) in which we live, learn, and work, and ask: What would the world be like if people of all genders were recognized, accepted, and valued?

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# 5

## Trans Studies

CRISTINA KHAN AND KOLBE FRANKLIN

This chapter maps the social, political, and theoretical underpinnings of the field of trans studies. In the West, since the nineteenth century, individuals who manifest trans characteristics have been treated as objects of study requiring intervention from medical, scientific, and legal domains. Stryker and Currah (2014) frame this treatment as a process of institutionalization, positing that the “long-term biopolitical project of cultivating ‘gender congruence’ while eliminating incongruity” (p. 4) classifies sex, gender, sexuality, and embodiment through a normative, Western lens. This classification system has enabled a long history of abuses, and trans people have been and continue to be victimized by pathologizing narratives, violence, and incarceration. To understand trans studies as it exists today requires that we acknowledge these injustices as ongoing and not a thing of the past, while simultaneously interrogating the shaping power of race and racialization, class, geography, religion, and (dis)ability in structuring the lived experiences of trans people.

Trans studies destabilizes normativity in reference to gender and denaturalizes gender binarism. Trans studies solidified cisgender<sup>1</sup> as a categorical identity, rendering visible privileges that were previously unmarked (Vidal-Ortiz 2014). The earliest interventions in trans studies engaged with identity politics as a means of claims-making through autoethnographic texts. A shifting critique of transnormativity later emerged and interrogated the notion of a coherent trans identity and/or subject. This modification is evidenced in work that takes on a transfeminist lens. While the first studies that centered trans individuals were rooted in pathologizing logic, today, the field of trans studies deconstructs the foundations of normative knowledge and assumptions about trans people, their lived experiences, and social locations within various geographic and sociopolitical contexts. Trans studies draws its theoretical foundations from critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonial studies, cultural studies of science, and identity-based critiques of dominant cultural practices emanating from feminism, communities of color,

diasporic and displaced communities, disability studies, AIDS activism, and queer subcultures (Singer, n.d.).

### Early Chronologies

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, medical practitioners began acknowledging and formulating theories in reference to individuals who cross-dressed or who broadly displayed gender nonconforming behavior (Beemyn 2013; Stryker 2008). In 1864, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs became one of the first medical professionals to publicly acknowledge individuals who would be described as trans today. In a series of booklets titled *Research on the Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love*, Ulrichs described a population of individuals as "anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa" (meaning "a female soul enclosed within a male body") effectively constructing trans identification as having a biological basis (Stryker 2008, p. 37). Following Ulrichs's findings, a number of medical professionals continued to approach studies on trans communities through a medicalized framework, positing that nonnormative gender behavior was a medical or psychological problem (Beemyn 2013; Elkins and King 2006; Stryker 2008). For example, in 1886 psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing published his influential work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, which documented a wide variety of psychosexual "disorders," including some relating to cross-dressing and general gender nonconformity (Beemyn 2011). In his analysis, Krafft-Ebing created a system for understanding the extent to which individuals displayed cross-gender behavior. This categorization system was intended to determine the extent of psychological pathology and ranged from individuals who preferred the clothing of the other sex to those who identified with a sex other than that which they were assigned at birth. Krafft-Ebing suggested that those individuals who believed that they were not in the correct physical body were the most pathological and described these identities as indicative of severe psychosis (Beemyn 2011).

This framework of viewing cross-gender behavior as a medical or psychological problem continued well into the twentieth century. In 1910, physician Magnus Hirschfield published *Transvestites*, where he coined the term transvestite and explored the idea that gender expression is not inherently related to sexual identity (as had been the prevailing perspective at the time). He posited that some individuals were overcome with a "feeling of peace, security and exaltation, happiness and well-being ... when in the clothing of the other sex" (Hirschfield 1991, p.125). While he did believe that these feelings had a biological basis, he disagreed that they were indicative of psychological disturbance. In 1919 Hirschfield opened the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin which would soon change the ways in which trans identities were understood. In 1922, the institute performed the first medical gender reassignment surgery on Dora Richter (Beemyn 2011; Meyerowitz 2004). This initial surgery was the first of many to be conducted by the institute and throughout the next several years, medical developments paved the way for more thorough and effective surgeries (Beemyn 2011). As surgical procedures improved and doctors became aware of the potential benefits of hormone replacement therapy, a new paradigm for understanding transgender identities and experiences began to emerge. In particular, beginning in the 1950s physicians David O. Cauldwell and Harry Benjamin began to

differentiate between *transvestites* and those who they labeled *transsexuals* (Beemyn 2011; Stryker 2006). Benjamin argued that “true transsexuals feel that they belong to the other sex, they want to be and function as members of the opposite sex, not only to appear as such. For them, their sex organs ... are disgusting deformities that must be changed by the surgeon’s knife” (Benjamin 1966, pp. 13–14). This focus on conducting surgeries to enable individual bodies to align with their gender identity led to the development of the first gender identity clinic at Johns Hopkins in 1966, and a subsequent increase in clinical studies about those who were presumed to fit into the category of transsexual (Beemyn 2011).

First coined by activist Virginia Prince (1957), “transgender” was originally used to denote an identity somewhere between transvestite and transsexual (Stryker 2006). According to Stryker (2006), “if a transvestite was somebody who episodically changed into the clothes of the so called ‘other sex,’ and a *transsexual* was somebody who permanently changed genitals in order to claim membership in a gender other than the one assigned at birth, then a *transgender* was somebody who permanently changed social gender through the public presentation of self, without recourse to genital transformation” (p. 4). Virginia Prince played an important role in bringing (an ironically transphobic) idea of transgender to the national imaginary. In the 1960s, Prince founded the independent magazine *Transvestia*, which was created with “the needs of those heterosexual persons who have become aware of their ‘other side’ and seek to express it” in mind. It later evolved into an organization based in Los Angeles, referred to as the “Hose and Heels club (and later on as Full Personality Expression, referred to also as FPE),” where heterosexual and married cross-dressers held regular meetings. Those who identified as non-hetero and transsexual individuals were not allowed to participate. Prince’s use of the term “femmiphile” reflects this exclusionary practice: for her, femmiphile, or “lover of the feminine,” draws a distinction between heterosexual cross-dressers and gay or transsexual folks who cross-dressed. In a 1957 publication, Prince asserted “the transvestite values his male organs, enjoys using them and does not desire them removed” (p. 85).

In her publication, *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*, Leslie Feinberg repositioned the concept of transgender from a noun to an adjective and called for political unification and mobilization of those who were gender-nonconforming or did not adhere to the norm of the gender binary (Feinberg 1992; Stryker 2006). Specifically, she argued for the understanding of transgender to mean an “umbrella term for an imagined community encompassing transsexuals, drag queens, butches, hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, masculine women, effeminate men, sissies, tomboys, and anybody else willing to be interpolated by the term, who felt compelled to answer the call to mobilization” (Stryker 2006, p. 4).

In the next section, we begin by recounting the case of Agnes as written in Harold Garfinkel’s *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967). Following this, we chronicle trans activism and mobilizations from the 1960s to the 1980s, surveying challenges to biologically determinist approaches to sex, gender, sexuality, and embodiment as they appeared in the social sciences. We then turn to the framework of medicalization, showing how early interventions objectified trans subjects by pathologizing nonnormative identities and expressions. Following our review of these literatures, we discuss two major paradigms in trans studies: gender difference and gender deviance.

Then, we attend to the contributions of queer theory and Butler's deployment of performativity. We survey critiques of a human rights approach to trans advocacy, noting the tendency of this framework to dilute activist efforts, often producing a homogenous representation of trans individuals and communities. We conclude by highlighting new directions in trans studies, specifically the ongoing development of transfeminism.

### The Case of Agnes

Harold Garfinkel's case study on "Agnes," is widely cited as one of the first ethnomethodological studies on the accomplishment of gender in the discipline of sociology. It is regarded as a canonical study on gender, sexuality, and the emergence of trans studies.

In October of 1958, a woman who was given the pseudonym Agnes approached the UCLA Department of Psychology following a referral from her primary care physician. At this point in time, studies on gender nonconforming people were conducted by the UCLA departments of psychiatry, urology, and endocrinology. Agnes was a 19-year-old white woman who came to be seen by Dr. Robert Stoller, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, as well as Dr. Alexander Rosen, a psychologist. Dr. Harold Garfinkel was eventually added to Agnes's team of professionals. Robert Stoller studied "sex disorders" and performed surgeries on patients he deemed had an "intersex condition." Agnes would become a candidate for vaginoplasty should Dr. Stoller validate her status as intersex, but if Agnes was found to be self-administering estrogen, she would likely have been rejected for any type of surgical intervention.

At this point in time, trans was constructed as a medical condition for which psychotherapy was used to "overcome" (Meyerowitz 2004). Agnes underwent a series of interviews and evaluations over the course of six months which eventually led to her medical teams' conclusion that there indeed was a biological explanation for her condition, making her a candidate for vaginoplasty and ultimately affirming her as having an intersex condition. This conclusion was reached despite the possibility that Agnes could have taken estrogen pills, a possibility that was deemed highly improbable by Dr. Stoller. Agnes eventually underwent vaginoplasty and what became a complicated and difficult recovery process.

Eight years later, in 1966, Agnes requested a follow-up appointment with Dr. Stoller regarding her surgery. She revealed during the appointment that she had begun taking estrogen when she was 12 years old. This effectively voided the conclusions drawn in Dr. Stoller's work. In 1967, Harold Garfinkel published an essay about Agnes in his book *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, in which he described biological gender as distinctive from gender as a "cultural event." He asserted that psychiatry departments lent no legitimacy to trans persons and further dehumanized them. By viewing gender as a cultural event, Garfinkel posited that the way we understand gender is informed and mandated by institutions; specifically: expected attitudes, appearances, affiliations, dress, and lifestyle. Garfinkel also took up the concept of "passing" in reference to Agnes, defining it as: "the work of achieving and making secure her rights to live as a normal, natural female while having continually to provide for the possibility of detection and ruin within socially structured conditions."

For Garfinkel, passing required one to be complicit with sex roles, marking gender as a social accomplishment. Regarded as a foundational intervention in the study of gender, the story of Agnes catalyzed a number of subsequent interventions centered on the social construction of sex, gender, and sexuality.

### **Mobilizations, 1960s–1980s**

In a US American context, reference to the term *transgender* was first recorded in the 1960s, at which point various iterations of the term, including transgenderal, transgenderists, and/or practicing “transgenderism” were used by middle-class white men to refer to feminine presentation and cross-dressing. The formation of these terms was rooted in the resistance of the pathologizing associated with medical and psychiatric interpretations of “transvestitism,” which the term “transgender” was thought to rectify by positing that “one could live in a social gender not typically associated with one’s biological sex or that a single individual should be able to combine elements of different gender styles and presentations” (Stryker and Currah 2014).

Advocacy for trans rights surged in the late 1960s and 1970s, during which political organizations such as Vanguard (Currah 2008, p. 96; Plaster 2012; Stryker 2008), Conversion Our Goal (COG), California Advancement for Transsexuals (CATS), the National Sexual-Gender Identification Council, the National Transsexual Counseling Unit, and the Transsexual Counseling Service (Currah 2008) provided important organizing support. As Stryker (2008) notes, “transsexuals had taken the first crucial steps toward redefining the relationship between their needs and life goals and state-sanctioned medical care, social services, and legal accommodations of their identities” (Stryker 2008, p. 89). However, the decade ahead would prove difficult for the continued fight for trans representation.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, movements around trans advocacy centered on communities that routinely faced harassment and persecution from law enforcement (Currah 2008; Stryker 2004). Trans women of color, and trans sex workers more specifically, mobilized at a San Francisco restaurant and rioted in response to harassment from staff and police (Conner 2016; Currah 2008; Stryker 2008). This uprising, known today as the 1966 Compton Cafeteria Riot, exemplified the growing frustration with the policing of trans bodies in the public sphere and catalyzed a wave of acts of resistance, including picketing, sit-ins, and street-fighting (Beemyn 2011; Currah 2008). Just three years later in 1969, drag queens, trans folks, and other gender-nonconforming people were on the frontlines of the Stonewall Riots in New York City, most notably through the iconic figures of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson (Beemyn 2011; Carter 2005; Conner 2016; Stryker 2004, 2008).

Prior to the late-1960s and early-1970s, literature on transgender individuals and experiences could generally only be found in medical and psychiatric journals (Schilt and Lagos 2017). Until the mid-20th century, the study of sex and gender was predicated on the assumption that these traits were inherently interconnected, biologically inevitable, and naturally occurring (Hines 2011; Taylor 2008). Beginning in the 1960s, feminist theorists began challenging the presumed naturalness of these categories, arguing that gender is not a biological imperative; rather it is a socially constructed phenomenon (Hines 2011; Richardson 2008; Taylor 2008). This approach suggested

that gender categories were products of specific cultural and historical contexts, and not universally acknowledged phenomena. A tension between trans theorizing and radical feminism manifested through the notion of “true womanhood” as a biologized construct.

The medical and psychiatric fields were largely responsible for the majority of empirical research published on trans people prior to the 1970s (Schilt and Lagos 2017; Bryant 2006; Meyerowitz 2004; Stryker 2008; Vidal-Ortiz 2008). The perspectives advanced by these disciplines’ approaches treated trans people as objects of study necessitating medical and psychological intervention. The medical gaze under which trans individuals were studied framed trans in universalized terms and collapsed the nuances of it under a singular construction. Since the mid-nineteenth century, medical practitioners have “given sex” (Davis, et. al 2016) to gender-nonconforming patients by “validating the construction of heteronormative bodies and invalidating trans embodiments according to their interpretations of appropriate gender expectations” (p. 492). These normative ideologies are founded upon a medical gaze (Foucault (1973) that lends medical practitioners immense power to shape the lived experiences of trans individuals. Authenticating a person’s gender involves validating markers of ideal health that reinforce normative correlations between sex, gender, and sexuality. Unfortunately, the processes through which these industries intervene in the lives of trans people remain problematic and riddled with excessive bureaucratic requirements. Davis (et. al 2016) posit:

Those who are positioned (because of their intersex and trans expertise) to disrupt stereotypical binary understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality by not approaching intersex and trans embodiments as abnormal in fact often perpetuate the binary rhetoric that pathologizes variance. They do so unreflexively and uncritically through their control and regulation of the interventions which they give gender by giving sex, creating what they consider to be heterosexual and healthy male men and female women.

(p. 508)

The political imperative of trans studies is to produce knowledge that will ultimately benefit transgender individuals and communities (Bryant 2009). Trans activism in the public sphere shaped how trans studies was approached and operationalized within academia, in that transgender studies “has shared epistemological stakes and a moral and political vision that value transgender bodies, identities, behaviors, social collectivities, and cultural representations” (Bryant 2009, p. 849). A contemporary paradigm which gained notoriety during the early 2000s is informed by trans scholars and activists who argue that the difference between trans studies and other fields such as gay and lesbian studies, women’s studies, and even queer theory, lies in the specific social and political goals of this field (Bryant 2009).

### **Difference and Deviance**

Empirical studies centered on trans lives and experiences in the social sciences can be separated into two dominant approaches: that of gender deviance and that of gender difference (Schilt and Lagos 2017). While the gender difference paradigm emerged

after gender deviance was problematized, all the examples highlighted below foreground a social constructionist approach to sex and gender (Hines 2011; Taylor 2008). The central concern of the gender deviance paradigm, which experienced its height from the late 1970s to the 1990s, was how to account for the development of the figure of the “transsexual” as both a medicalized identity as well as a collective group identity. Studies that are symbolic of the gender deviance approach are best exemplified by the work of scholars such as Janice Raymond (1979), Billings and Urban (1982), and Sandra Bem (1993), who posit that the physiological changes and medical procedures trans individuals undergo in order to be read in ways that align with their gender reify the idea that biological sex is mutable (Raymond 1979).

Raymond (1979) and Billings, together with Urban (1982), posited that individuals who seek out genital surgery are overly invested in the medical establishment and the capacity to obtain high-priced commodities (Sagarin 1978). This sentiment was echoed by prominent feminist thinkers, such as Margrit Eichler (1980). (For more, see Kando 1973). Sandy Stone’s foundational text “Posttranssexual Manifesto” (1991), questioned the concept of “transsexual” identity, showing how its usage proved restrictive for many gender-changing people (Stryker and Currah 2014). Often cited as a canonical text for the field of trans studies, Stone pushed audiences to attend to newer obstacles, “whose potential for productive disruption of structured sexualities and spectra of desire has yet to be explored” (p. 296). The late 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a wave of reactionary conservative policies that severely limited progressive activism for trans rights. However, these two decades proved significant for the female-to-male (FTM) trans community in the US, characterized by the publication of Mario Martino’s autobiography. In 1986, the first support and advocacy group specifically for trans men was formed in San Francisco by Lou Sullivan (Califa 1997; Stryker 2008).

The gender difference paradigm emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, positing that qualitative data collection methods have the capacity to capture how trans people experience a wide array of social and institutional contexts. The concept of passing is taken up at length in these studies (Schilt and Lagos 2017). As we alluded to in the case of Agnes, passing is a sociological term that refers to a strategy marshalled by individuals who are attempting to hide a stigmatized identity or characteristic (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1963). However, the attempt to “hide” is not always present. There is a growing body of research on people who are “out” but who “pass” anyway. While passing is approached differently based on disciplinary context, feminist ethnomethodologists argue that when “transgender people are able to pass, it is because they are in social interactions in which the biological aspects of sex assignment are not visible” (Schilt and Lagos 2017). This approach to passing views gender as interactional (West and Zimmerman 1987). The idea of passing is also highly imbricated in whiteness. Vidal-Ortiz (2014) suggests that who becomes constructed as an intelligible trans subject is based on hegemonic conceptualizations of beauty and belonging that position trans people of color on the outer periphery, reifying whiteness as ideal. Serano (2007) argues that passing, as it has been applied to trans folks, assumes that trans individuals pass as men and women. She contends, however, that when trans folks pass, they do so as “cis” people.

The work of scholars such as Gayle Rubin (2002) and Viviane Namaste (1996) shaped the development of the gender difference paradigm, which suggests that the

standpoint perspectives of trans individuals and groups must be centered if the social location of trans people in any context is to be critically assessed. By the 1990s, the term transgender developed its contemporary meaning, by which it refers to the conjoined imaginary of sex, sexuality, gender, identity, and embodiment. The term transgender has also been critiqued (Valentine 2007; Spade 2015) as a form of dilution that collapses a diversity of experience and expression into a single term, an argument we take up further in the section “Trans Rights: A Human Rights Issue” where we discuss a human rights-based approach to trans advocacy and activism.

Despite the mainstream shift from studies that objectified to those that grant trans subjects agency in their day-to-day lived experience, empirical studies on trans people (for examples, see Bornstein 1994; Califa 1997; Elkins and King 2006; Meyerowitz 2004; Raymond 1979; Stone 1991; Wilchins 1997) were accused of using “transgender people to further theoretical positions while ignoring the lived experiences of many trans individuals” (Beemyn 2011, p. 115; Namaste 2000) throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Additionally, some have criticized literature published during this same time period for perpetuating a paradigm of gender deviance as well. According to Schilt and Lagos (2017), “what unifies this diverse body of research is a shared understanding of people who seek or undergo medicalized gender transitions as theoretically useful exemplars of gender deviance that illuminate the ‘normal’ social construction of gender more broadly and an absence of attention to transgender people’s subjective experiences” (p. 427). Similarly, critics have shown how most of the early literature on trans identities and experiences tended to focus on the narratives of transgender women (male-to-female), and overlook those of transgender men (female-to-male) (Brown 2009, Cromwell 1999; Pfeffer 2009; Tasker and Wren 2002). While this early literature often reflected and reproduced problematic assumptions about this specific population, for a substantially longer time, the narratives of trans men remained invisible within academia. Additionally, the voices of people of color, as well as those of lower economic status, remain largely absent in this area of research (Nyamora 2004). A trans of color critique is emergent in trans studies literature, which addresses this intersection and interrogates the normative status of whiteness in the construction of trans citizenship, which often excludes trans people of color (Vidal-Ortiz 2009; Kunzel 2014).

Feminist theoretical interventions demonstrated the social nature of gender categories. Queer theory challenges the gender binary and the operationalization of identity categories relative to sex, gender, and sexuality. Both queer theory and feminism converge as the foundation of critiques centered by trans studies today, namely through their critical approaches to gender identity and gender expression. Beginning in the 1990s, queer theorists began challenging the acceptance of gender as a binary and instead advocated for an understanding of these categories as fluid, multiple, and fragmented (Hines 2011; Taylor 2008). In a significant departure from the medicalized model of trans identity which dominated the social narrative for decades, the introduction of queer theory in the 1990s brought focus to the socially constructed and performative nature of gender. This led to a more nuanced understanding of gender identity and has served to further delegitimize the framework of pathologization.

In her 1990 text, *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler proposes a theory of gender performativity, which suggests that the supposed naturalness of the link between sex,



gender, and sexuality is a result of what she deems, the “heterosexual matrix.” She describes this concept as,

that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, gender, and desires are naturalized ... a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.

(Butler 1990, n. 208)

However, Butler contests this framework and suggests that the perception of gender as a binary and as a core identity that serves to naturalize heterosexuality should not be uncritically accepted. Specifically, she sets out to deconstruct the very notion of gender as an identity, and dispute the “truth” of gender itself (Jagose 1996, p. 84). In order to problematize the assumption of gender as a core identity, Butler introduces her theory of gender performativity. This theory is based on the notion that “gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler 1990, p. 45). To Butler, gender is not an intrinsic characteristic of an individual, or a social truth. Instead, gender is a process and a performance. She suggests that,

within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed ... there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results.

[Butler 1990 p. 34]

Butler underwent criticism for her claim of gender as performance, which was deemed to ignore the materiality and embodiment of trans experience. She responded to these critiques in her 1993 book, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Literature within this field of study has argued that trans identities in particular highlight the problematic nature of binary identity categories and the limitations of understanding sex and gender as inherently linked (Hines 2011).

From the late 1990s to early 2000s, trans activism began to be approached as a human rights issue. The framework of human rights was introduced by political and legislative bodies as a means for enacting trans rights for communities across the globe. This framework, while vast in terms of its breadth and scope, has been the subject of critique for its propensity for diluting trans issues into a homogenous representation, ignoring the localized complexities of lived experience across the globe.

### **Trans Rights: A Human Rights Issue**

The framework of human rights in regard to trans studies can be divided into two categories: (i) valuing acceptance for gender transition, gender ambiguity, and the destabilization of gender categories; (ii) valuing acceptance for living as the “opposite sex” and embodying a gender-normative perspective (Roen 2002).

Sharpe (1999) introduces an example of how human rights discourse is harmful to the political goals of trans activism through the case study of Australia, where he argues that antidiscrimination laws pertaining to trans individuals have the effect of regulating trans bodies in a manner that is reductive. By this he means that trans subjectivities become filtered by the legal system, which allegedly bestows rights and protections upon trans individuals, but instead systematically oppresses them by protecting only those who ascribe to the gender binary. In the case of South Australia, protections for trans citizens are written as pertaining only to those who are “transsexual,” thereby neglecting those who identify as nonbinary or gender fluid. Regulatory regimes render intergroup sameness and intragroup differences visible. Sharpe argues that in Australia, regulatory regimes take on a performative role in “doing” antidiscrimination while actually producing oppressive outcomes.

Focusing entirely on the Commission on the Status of Women in the United Nations, Jauk (2013) argues that the limited, binary definitions of gender in the context of human rights contributes to violence against trans individuals. In addition to providing an incomplete framework, human rights discourse encourages state involvement to rectify injustices done unto trans communities. This provides the state with an opportunity not only to posit itself as necessary, but also to inflict greater harm onto trans subjects by rendering them more visible, and therefore more vulnerable. This vulnerability is amplified by the limited understanding of the relationship between sex and gender by legislative bodies, which Hines (2009) argues reinforces a biological understanding of trans issues. Even though Hines claims that using the framework of universal human rights is productive because it has the capacity to override state law, its attempt to be all-inclusive renders it superficial as it cannot take into account progressive understandings of trans issues without diluting them.

This homogenization of trans identity for the sake of a coherent, fixed (and binary) understanding of gender is critiqued by Waites (2009). Taking the Yogyakarta Principles as a case study example, Waites asserts that by inserting sexual orientation and gender identity into human rights discourse, we privilege a binary model of gender, sexual behavior, identities and desires. Hines (2009) affirms the highly contextual nature of human rights practices through the case study of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, foregrounding it to explore the ways in which gender and the notion of citizenship are continuously constructed and reconstructed. Ultimately, she finds that the privileging of binary sex and gender identities pieces together a model for a “good citizen,” whose rights-based claims are met with the moral and political duty to assimilate. While Hines does not claim that queering binary categories solves the issue of how trans rights are treated within human rights discourse, she asserts that theorizing trans rights through queer theory is more productive than placing it within human rights discourse.

The role of globalization as it is considered in contemporary studies on trans lived experience is central to Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of the “contact zone” (1991). Contact zones are defined as zones where ideas drawn from different cultures crash and later transform. Pratt’s conceptualization of contact zones is similar to Stryker’s urge for “an ethico-critical assessment of whether or how the phenomena towards which the researcher is oriented and invested in either can or cannot ... be apprehended through a transgender optic” (Stryker 2012, cited in Singer 2015).

Both center a lived epistemology predicated on the experiences of the body. Beasley and Bacchi (2000) provide the framework of “citizen body,” grounding their analysis in the claim that “bodies give substance to citizenship, and citizenship matters for bodies.” The “citizen body” framework bridges feminist discourse and trans studies to lay the claim that power and inequality are materialized through the body (Bhanji 2012). While early feminist approaches to trans issues were marked by opposition, trans studies has emerged in simultaneous reaction and interaction with feminist and queer theory. Trans studies demonstrates that there is, indeed, the possibility of productive interplay between feminist and trans theory (Cowan 2005) that is diluted when investigated through the framework of human rights.

### **Transfeminism**

Transfeminism is a developing branch of feminism that posits that because trans women grapple with sexism and because sexism is often articulated through transphobia and vice versa, the oppression faced by trans women must be explicitly foregrounded in movements for justice and equality (Enke 2012). One of the most salient definitions for transfeminism comes from Emi Koyama, who states that trans feminism is “primarily a movement by and for trans women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond” (2003, p. 244). Transfeminism challenges the reification of sex and gender as biological imperatives, and instead focuses on how the social location of trans women is shaped by other interlocking systems of power and privilege. By foregrounding other axes of identity, such as race and income level, transfeminism moves trans studies forward to consider an intersectional approach to deconstructing trans lived experience. Intersectional approaches are based on a feminist intervention that is attentive to the tripartite of race, class, and gender. It understands these as overlapping and interrelated categories of identity and systems that structure discrimination, power, and relative dis/advantage (Crenshaw 1991).

Feminist coalitional politics are at the root of transfeminism, which problematizes the biological imperative of “womyn born womyn” asserted by the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival (Koyama 2006). The Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival was an annual feminist music festival that retained a policy of only admitting women who were biologically classified as female at birth. This policy received attention in 1991 after a trans woman attending the festival was asked to leave. Following the incident, many headlining performers and political advocacy organizations boycotted the festival, citing its transphobic policies as motivation. The festival operated annually from 1976 until 2015, at which point founder and organizer Lisa Volger announced its termination.

The issue Koyama raises with the festival’s policy of only admitting cisgender women is not only tied to its transphobic ramification, but also its inherent classist and racist implications. Specifically, trans women who pass as cisgender are often able to because of access to economic resources, as cosmetic procedures and other necessary steps or processes to pass are inherently tied to access to financial capital. Serano (2007) draws attention to trans-misogyny to refer to discrimination against trans women because of their expressed femininity. For Serano, trans-misogyny is rooted in the systematic devaluation of femininity.

In the United States, trans activism in the twenty-first century has proven to be a continuation and expansion of that of the previous years (Stryker 2008). Significant effort has been made to enact legal protections of trans people, depictions of trans people in the media are more frequent and nuanced, and the internet has continued to provide a space for activism and community building (Stryker 2008). While significant progress has been made, new issues have arisen and some long-term issues have failed to find resolutions. For example, the passage of HB2 (The Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act, commonly known as House Bill 2) in North Carolina in 2016 sparked debate and activism surrounding the rights of transgender people to use the public restroom of their choice, while fatal violence continues to disproportionately impact trans people, specifically trans women of color (Griffin 2016; Kogan 2017; Lee and Kwan 2014). Activists today understand trans identity as multifaceted, and recognize that trans issues cannot be separated from the broader struggle over social justice in terms of racism, sexism, ableism, economic justice, etc. (Currah 2008; Hagen et al. 2017). Acknowledging, for example, the disproportionate number of trans women of color murdered in recent years, the continued fight for trans rights relies on the understanding of trans identities as complex and inherently impacted by intersecting oppressions (Griffin 2016; Lee and Kwan 2014; Williams 2016).

### Transfeminism in Spain

In her 2016 study on the Spanish feminist movement, Sonia Núñez Puente posits that transfeminism is a heterogeneous movement in which activists and scholars take divergent perspectives on what issues are most pressing. Drawing on the work of Sandra Fernández and Aitzole Araneta (2014), she suggests that the transfeminist movement's development in Spain can be traced to two periods: one from 2006 to 2010 in which the movement first emerged, and another from 2010 to 2013 in which it was consolidated. She draws a parallel between transfeminism's import in Spain to the intersectional politics advanced by the Combahee River Collective (a black feminist lesbian organization active in Boston in the US from 1974 to 1980). Though resistant to discourses that collapse transfeminism into singular representations, she asserts that in Spain, transfeminism exists "in resistance to and in dialogue with feminism of an institutional bent – that develops not only new paths of political action and discursive configurations of the female subject, but also new spaces for political practice" (p. 74).

In 2009, a transfeminist alliance and collective published a *Manifesto for Transfeminist Insurrection* that distinguished between institutional feminism and the feminist movement. In it, Medeak asserts that the feminist movement lost sight of its radical roots and has "ceded guardianship to institutional feminism," citing the campaigns, demonstrations, and protests that have transitioned from activist projects to becoming relegated as institutional prerogatives. They call for a return to grassroots organizing and activism and point out a limitation in current feminist interventions for trans rights:

The political subject of feminism, "women," has become too small, it is exclusive in and of itself. Let's blow up the binaries of gender and sex as political practice. We call for insurrection, occupying the streets, the blogs, we call for disobedience, not asking for

permission, creating our own alliances and structures: let's not defend ourselves, let's make them fear us! Feminism will be transborder, transformative, transgender or it will not be [at all]; feminism will be TransFeminist or it will not be [at all].

(For more, see Egaña and Sola 2016).

On an international scale, mobilizations for trans rights that have gained the most notoriety continue to take on a human rights-based approach. The second UN Trans Advocacy Week was hosted in 2018, during which 23 activists from 19 countries presented before the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Trans Advocacy Week was organized by the Asia Pacific Transgender Network, Global Action for Trans Equality, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, Transgender Europe, and Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights. This event followed the World Health Organization's removal of trans identities and categories from the International Classifications of Diseases' chapter on mental and behavioral disorders. This was hallmarked as a turn in nullifying the pathologizing framework through which trans individuals have been constructed and imagined. During this week, oral statements were delivered at the Human Rights Council and meetings held with the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

### In Closing

This chapter traces the development of trans studies, largely in the US American context. What we hope to have demonstrated in this chapter is the nuanced and multifaceted path of trans studies, history, identity, and activism. Because of the incredible diversity of identities under the trans umbrella, charting the experiences of any semblance of a cohesive group or movement is a difficult task. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the ways in which the increased visibility of trans lives and experiences are challenging social beliefs about the gender binary and the link between sex and gender. Perhaps on a basic level, mainstream society is beginning to realize that the terms *man* and *woman* are not sufficient to describe the myriad ways in which people can identify their gender.

We echo the call put forth by contemporary interventions in trans studies for future research to be more attentive to the experiences of trans women of color, as this group experiences heightened forms of discrimination, state-sanctioned violence, and incarceration (Namaste 2005; Vidal-Ortiz 2008, 2009; Westbrook 2016). We see scholarly intervention into this area as exemplary of the feminist tradition of scholar activism, through which we take note of the dialogues that are currently taking shape between academics and activists, both in the US and abroad.

### Note

- 1 The term cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

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# **Part III**

Science, Health, and Psychology

# 6

## Science, Technology, and Gender

SARA P. DÍAZ

### Introduction

From our most fundamental understandings of the science of sex differences, to seemingly far-off fantastical possibilities of artificial intelligence, science, technology and gender are deeply intertwined social phenomena. Gender studies scholars, particularly those in the field of feminist science and technology studies (FSTS), study the complex entanglements between science, technology, gender, and a host of other salient socially defined identities such as race, class, sexuality, and disability. At stake in scholarship about the connections between science, technology, and gender are questions of what and who counts as human; the nature of knowledge, truth, and reality; and the relationships between science, technology and social justice. In this chapter, I briefly survey insights from the diverse, interdisciplinary and intersectional field of gender studies about the relationship between science, technology, and gender, with special emphasis on FSTS. I will discuss several interrelated strands of scholarship: history and critiques of the science of sex/gender, gendered patterns of participation in science and technology fields, and the history of gendered social injustices in relation to technoscience. I conclude with an examination of the ways in which technoscience might contribute to increasing justice.

Let me begin this chapter with a few notes on terminology. Most of us understand the term “science” to refer to the fields of knowledge which study the natural world, and the term “scientist” to refer to those engaged in such study. But, the term “scientist” has only been used since the early nineteenth century (Yeo 2003). Before that time, scholars we might now refer to as scientists were called “natural philosophers.” In those days the term “science” was used much more broadly than it is today. To avoid confusion, and preserve historical accuracy, I will refer to knowledge about the natural world as “natural knowledge” when discussing “science” prior to the nineteenth century. Both science and technology are deeply interdependent.

For example, scientific research often yields innovative consumer technologies while advances in experimental technologies allow for the generation of new knowledge about the natural world. To encompass the ideological, institutional, and cultural overlaps between science and technology, I use the term “technoscience” where I intend to signal the relationship between the two (Latour 1987). Finally, I will also include biomedical fields under the framework of technoscience in this chapter because the medical fields have, over the past 200 years, increasingly modeled themselves on the sciences, as is evidenced by the use of terms like “health sciences.”

Technoscience shapes our understandings of sex and gender differences and their meaning in the social world. Likewise, gender shapes both our scientific understanding of the natural world as well as the development of new technologies and their applications. The body of technoscientific knowledge has long been shaped by racism and sexism because early modern scientists in Western Europe understood sex difference as structuring human capacity for rational thinking in ways that excluded the participation of women and people of color (among others) (Harding 1993, 1998). Western technoscience figures itself as value-free, apolitical, and objective. However, the historical social homogeneity of scientists and engineers has had an impact not only on the science of sex, gender, and sexuality, but on the substance of technoscientific projects (Harding 1991; Merchant 1989; Noble 1992; L. Schiebinger 1999). That is, what we think we know about the natural world, the questions we ask, and the methods we use, are all shaped by gender. As such, gender figures centrally in many historical and contemporary instances of technoscientific exploitation and abuse. Gendered violations of biomedical research ethics have resulted in economic exploitation and death. Further, technology driven global climate change and the military-industrial-scientific complex both have gendered impacts. Nevertheless, many scholars have argued that technoscience has the potential to disrupt unjust and unscientific ideologies, such as biological determinism. Moreover, technoscience may aid in the development of new knowledges and technologies that facilitate more gender self-determination and freedom. The question I conclude with is: given its history of exclusion and exploitation, what role can technoscience play in the movements to achieve gender justice? (Harding 1991; Schiebinger 1997; Shiva 2001).

## **The Science of Sex and Gender**

In this section, I describe the ways in which Western science (biological, medical, behavioral, and social) has historically made sense of the meaning of sex differences and how those scientific understandings produce gender as a social construct. In the Western philosophical and scientific tradition, human biological sex has been understood as existing dichotomously – limited to two sexes. However, even within the binary sex/gender system, the perceived relationship between the sexes and the meaning ascribed to sex difference has changed over time. In contrast, non-Western concepts of sex and gender, have not always been binary – in some cultural contexts two, three, four or more sexes/genders are recognized (Feinberg 1992). The history of the science of sex and gender, particularly since the Enlightenment, has often revolved around questions of who counts as “human,” which had direct bearing on

social, political, and economic agency. By the second half of the twentieth century, FSTS scholars engaged with and critiqued the content of scientific knowledge about sex/gender. These critiques had a significant impact on academic knowledge about human and nonhuman sex differences in multiple natural and social science fields.

Historians of sex often trace Western scientific understandings of human sexual difference to Aristotle who conceptualized the female as passive and material while the male was formative and active (Laqueur 1990, p. 29). For Aristotle, the female sex represented a deformity of the male (de Beauvoir 2012). In this sense, Thomas Laqueur argues, Aristotle's understanding of sex, though it consisted of two types, was distinct from contemporary binary concepts of sex because "he did not regard [sex differentiation] as the signs of sexual opposition" (Laqueur 1990, p. 29). Rather than seeing two opposite sexes, Aristotle understood sex to consist of "male" and "not male." Later, though he was profoundly influenced by Aristotle, natural philosopher and anatomist, Galen, came to understand sex difference not as "male" and "not male," but as an inversion. Galen observed the similar anatomical structures of male and female genitalia, but rather than seeing ovaries as imperfect testes, he argued that the testicles and ovaries were analogous structures. Nevertheless, Galen saw the internal genitalia of female humans as a mark of weakness and inferiority. The belief in male superiority was maintained by arguing that male external genitalia indicated strength while internal gonads were a symbol of the fragility of the female sex (Laqueur 1990). Thus, scientific understandings of sex were simultaneously structured by the gendered social order and served to reinforce it as "natural."

As I describe in more detail in the section "Gender and Participation in Technoscience," during the Scientific Revolution natural philosophers and anatomists saw the capacity for scientific reason as a marker of both civilization and masculinity (Schiebinger 1993). Scholars such as Londa Schiebinger and Anne Fausto-Sterling have shown that early modern scientific understandings of human sex difference were deeply racialized, making it difficult to discuss the history of the science of sex without attending to race. For example, physiologists, such as Johan Blumenbach, studied male and female skulls from different races to demonstrate white European male superiority. Studies like Blumenbach's rationalized the exclusion of European women from the scientific endeavor, but also helped to justify the colonization of the non-Western world (Schiebinger 1989, pp. 189–213; 1993, pp. 43–83). However, European colonizers encountered non-Western cultures throughout the world that had very different sex/gender systems and social roles. European colonizers often pointed to differences in gender roles and nonbinary sex/gender systems as evidence of "savagery" and used non-Western gender roles to justify "civilizing" missions. Paradoxically, nonbinary sex/gender systems were naturalized to demonstrate, not only the social inferiority of non-Western peoples, but also, their biological inferiority (Gaard 2004; Lugones 2007). For this reason, philosopher Maria Lugones refers to the relationship between gender, race, and colonialism as "the coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2016).

The empirical study of sex and race differences that emerged during the Scientific Revolution served to preserve the hierarchical social order under the limited egalitarianism of Enlightenment political philosophy. As progressive universalism emerged out of Enlightenment thinking, racist and sexist beliefs in the social and natural inequality of women and non-Europeans needed a new foundation. The new epistemological

and political authority of empiricism was deployed to reinforce the belief that the “other” was indeed “inferior” by nature, and thus exempt from the Enlightenment ideal of universal human equality. It was during this time period that the sex/gender binary we are familiar with in Western culture today emerged. Women became not just imperfect men, but completely different from men (Laqueur 1990, pp. 154–163).

By the nineteenth century, European scientists and philosophers found a way to reconcile gender inequality with the egalitarian ideals of the Enlightenment. Schiebinger argues that “The theory of *sexual complementarity*, a theory which taught that man and woman are not physical and moral equals but complementary opposites fit neatly into dominant strands of liberal democratic thought, making inequalities seem natural ... women were not to be viewed as *inferior to men* but as fundamentally *different from*, and thus *incomparable to*, men.” (Schiebinger 1989, pp. 216–217, emphasis original.) Evolutionary theory facilitated a functionalist biological imperative for the ideology of sexual complementarity by grounding sexual difference in the most fundamental purpose of sexual selection, the preservation of the species. Though there are several feminist interpretations of the possibilities offered by Darwinism, at the time, evolutionary theory reflected the social biases of industrial capitalist elites in England and Europe. Darwinism helped to naturalize gender roles which positioned women as the helpmate of men, carrying forward older Aristotelian understandings of women as passive/matter, and men as active/form (Grosz 2012; Mills 2017). Social and biological ideologies of complementarity persisted throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. For example, though she does not use the language of complementarity, Emily Martin’s survey of biology textbooks in the 1980s found that scientific descriptions of fertilization continued to reflect the gendered ideology of complementarity despite scientific evidence that contradicts the idea that female biological role is passive in fertilization (Martin 1991).

Martin’s study also demonstrated the way in which our understanding of gender, sex, and sexuality are deeply intertwined. Of course, this also dates back to older models of sexual complementarity, which collapsed sex, gender, and sexuality. As George Chauncey has shown, under the logic of complementarity, what eventually came to be called “homosexuality” was considered an inversion of “natural” gender roles. For example, in the early twentieth century men who took the “passive” role in sex with other men were understood as “gender inverts” – meaning they were understood as have a disordered gender identity rather than a nonnormative sexuality (Chauncey 1994). As the field of psychology developed, sexuality emerged as a characteristic of the mind rather than a description of particular sex acts (Katz 2007). And, by the middle of the twentieth century, sexologists reconceptualized nonnormative sexual object choice as a fundamentally different, though related, trait to sex and gender (Walters 2016). Thus, in the twentieth century, the scientific understanding of sex/gender expanded to include the behavioral science of psychology. While eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists racialized sex, by the late nineteenth and twentieth century, the behavioral and biological sciences of complementarity embedded into scientific understandings of human sexual difference what Adriene Rich termed “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich 1980). Thus, scientific understandings of sex include scientific racism *and* the pathologization of nonnormative sexualities.

By the mid-twentieth century, social science researchers began to foreground the importance of socialization in the development of gendered identities (Mead 1963; Goffman 1979; West and Zimmerman 1987). In the 1990s, feminist critics of the science of sex made a firm distinction between sex and gender (Butler 1990; Lorber 1995). “Sex” referred to assigned biological sex category – whether we are identified by doctors and our parents as male or female at birth – while “gender” referred to the complex process of socialization by which infants categorized male become boys and then men, and infants assigned female become girls and then women. Even feminist natural scientists began to critique the way gender biases shaped the science of sex/gender (Bleier 1984; Hubbard, Henifin, and Fried 1979). More recently, psychology research has disrupted the tradition of scientific research that reinforces sex differences, by demonstrating the differences are actually quite small, and even disappear in some areas, like spatial intelligence, when we control for socialization (Hyde 2005). Social, behavioral, and biological sex researchers increasingly emphasized the importance of the interaction between nature (genes) and nurture (environment) in our gendered lives (Salk and Hyde 2012; Fausto-Sterling 2012; Etaugh and Worell 2012). The shifts in scientific understandings of sex and gender parallel significant cultural and political movements in the Western world with respect to the status and roles of men and women in society. Moreover, they reflect increased diversity among the field of sex/gender researchers.

Though the new emphasis on the role of gender socialization was revolutionary, scientific research about sex/gender has often remained tied to binary understandings of sex and gender. Today feminist science studies scholars continue to critique the distinction between sex and gender in order to make sense of the wide range of nonbinary sex/gender experiences and expressions. For example, nonbinary and trans scholars and activists have argued that scientific explorations of gender nonconformance often fetishize genitalia and focus on binary trans identities (Plemons and Straayer 2018). Though most scientific research proceeds from the assumption of a two-sex system, medicine has long recognized that sex is not truly binary. Nonetheless, the existence of intersex persons has largely been ignored in scientific research about sex and gender. Anne Fausto-Sterling argued that if the biological sciences are to truly capture the full range of human sexual difference, we would need to recognize five human sexes (1993). Some scholars and trans activists have pushed back on what they see as the stark and dogmatic line drawn between sex and gender, arguing instead that the relationship between sex and gender – the biological and the social – is far more complex than most social and natural science researchers acknowledge (Rosario 2004). Because of the complex intersections with race and sexuality, if the sciences of human sex/gender differences were to transcend the binary, they could begin to shed both the coloniality of the sex/gender system *and* the pathologization of nonnormative sexualities while also creating room for scientific knowledge about trans and intersex people that proceeds from a place of normalization.

Though the science of sex and gender has been used to naturalize social inequalities with respect to race, gender, and sexuality, scientific research has also helped to depathologize and denaturalize those very same inequalities. As scientific understandings of “nature” have distinguished themselves from a moral/theological “natural” law, the sciences of sex/gender have been used to undermine ideologies

which consider any nonbinary expression of sex, gender, or sexuality to be immoral or unnatural. For example, by demonstrating that our sexual desires may be innate and that same-sex practices exist in the animal world, some people argue that science has helped lesbian, gay, and bisexual people counter the charge that they have chosen an immoral lifestyle. However, naturalization has also generated much research seeking to identify the “causes” of homosexuality and trans identity, reinforcing the notion that they are deviations rather than a part of human diversity (Walters 2016). Feminist activists and academics alike argue that such research is still deeply grounded in a binary understanding of sex and gender and caution against reductive, essentialist, and Eurocentric definitions of sex, gender, and sexuality (Dussauge and Kaiser 2012).

Though such research can have liberatory potential, naturalizing human sex/gender diversity may be problematic from both a social and scientific perspective. When research about sex, gender, and sexuality is poorly framed it can contribute to the pathologization of nonnormative identities. For example, much social and medical research about transgender people has proceeded from the erroneous assumption that gender nonconformance is a mental illness rather than a part of human diversity. Such research generated the diagnosis “gender identity disorder” (GID) which remained in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders until 2012. Though GID has now been replaced by the diagnosis of gender dysphoria, transgender studies scholars have argued that the current standard of care, which requires trans people who seek gender-affirming surgery to obtain a diagnosis, reinforces the perception that trans identity is disordered (Davy 2015; Dewey and Gesbeck 2017; Engdahl 2014).

Feminist science studies scholars have shown that there is no simple positive or negative relationship between science and the study of human sex/gender difference – science has been both oppressive *and* can play a role in clearing the way for all people to be truly self-determining. Gender studies can help us understand the way in which the historical, economic, and political context of gender has shaped the content of scientific knowledge about sex/gender. That is, gender shapes what we think we know to be the truth about both the natural world and the nature of humanity.

### **Gender and Participation in Technoscience**

Feminist science and technology studies scholars are also interested in generating insights about the gendered patterns of participation in the production of technoscientific knowledge. While women’s knowledge about nature has been generated through their day-to-day activities, modern science developed in relation to the norms of masculinity and upper-class, European nobility. Nevertheless, some women found ways to participate in science prior to the twentieth century. Modern Western science was also produced by and aided in colonization, resulting in complex interactions between gender and race that have had a profound impact on participation in technoscientific projects in the present. White men are seen as the developers of technoscience while women, particularly women of color, are positioned as its illegitimate end users. Women’s science labor played a key role in numerous important



technoscientific developments, particularly in the twentieth century, due to major cultural, institutional, and ideological shifts. Though more women than ever are participating in technoscience projects, dominant masculinity continues to shape the culture and institutions of science in ways that disadvantage women and nonbinary people, particularly people of color.

Historically, the gendered division of labor produced different kinds of knowledge about nature among men and women. Moreover, patriarchal values imbued men's natural knowledge with more significance and worth than women's natural knowledge. Traditionally, the gendered division of labor placed women in direct contact with nature through child-rearing, eldercare, cookery, weaving, and midwifery. Women throughout the world had specialized knowledge about how to control their reproduction; which medicinal herbs could be used to treat various ailments; and both where to locate and how to cultivate natural resources for food, clothing, and basketry (Schiebinger 2004b; Gaard 2004).

Despite the historical wealth of women's natural knowledge, in Western Europe, natural philosophy – the branch of philosophy concerned with what we now call science – was primarily restricted to men. Women's limited access to participation in the production of knowledge about nature resulted from several social phenomena. First, apart from the elite, most women were not literate and thus women's knowledge about nature was often passed on through oral tradition. Convents, on the other hand, were centers for women's literacy and sometimes created space for women to participate in natural philosophy (Echániz Sans 1992, pp. 247–252; Smith 2001, p. 121). During the Renaissance, a small, but notable number of noble women and women religious, such as nuns and religious sisters, were able to contribute to science (Schiebinger 1989). Second, natural philosophers and mathematicians like Galileo required patronage, which limited the practice of natural philosophy to those with the social and economic support for their work. In general, even literate women needed connections through husbands, brothers, and fathers to patronage systems that supported natural philosophers during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and later to the institutions of scientific research in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Harding 1991, p. 22). Third, long-standing gendered cultural norms positioned women as disruptive to knowledge production (Noble 1992). And fourth, as empiricism developed as *the* principle epistemological paradigm for modern science, the social norms of European nobility were embedded in early modern science (Shapin 1988). The interaction between these social forces established patterns of gendered participation in technoscience that persist today.

Because the Scientific Revolution shifted the institutional apparatus of science away from individual patronage and toward scientific organizations, such as the Royal Society in England, it could be said that science was democratized during the eighteenth century. However, the Scientific Revolution precipitated epistemological changes, in addition to institutional changes. Enlightenment rationality, particularly the value of objectivity, was coded as a masculine characteristic making the participation of women and men of color even more challenging (Schiebinger 1989; Merchant 1989; Longino 1987; Harding 1992; Haraway 1988; Oreskes 1996). Feminist theorists have argued that objectivity is gendered masculine in the following way: to be objective, the knowing subject must stand apart from the object of

study. All women and men of color, particularly African and indigenous peoples throughout the colonized world, were categorized by natural philosophers as closer to nature, with similar levels of intelligence to apes (Schiebinger 1993, pp. 143–183; Fausto-Sterling 2002). Because of their proximity to the objects of scientific thought, women and people of color seemingly violated the subject/object split required by Cartesian rationality and objectivity. One cannot be a subject and an object at the same time (Harding 1992). Though women had been seen as less capable of rational thought than men since Plato, the epistemological shift toward empiricism that took place during the Enlightenment made it even more difficult for women to participate in the production of knowledge about nature.

Concomitant with the shift toward defining scientific knowledge production as a masculine domain, was a shift toward scientizing the healing arts. Scholars like Londa Schiebinger and Barbara Ehrenreich and Diedre English have argued that the shift had significant effects for European women and women throughout the colonized world who had, for generations, been responsible for the care of people in their families and communities (Schiebinger 1989, 1993; Ehrenreich and English 2010). Some estimates suggest that 100,000 European women were killed in the witch hunts, many for applying knowledge that had been handed down for generations (Barstow 1995, pp. 22–23). However, in recent years, feminist historians have complicated the narrative that in order to wrest control of medical care from the hands of women, those who practiced healing arts were vilified as witches (Green 2008; Purkiss 2013). Nevertheless, this violence served to create fear among women, and reinforced scientized healthcare as the professional domain of upper-class European men. Similarly, the violent process of colonization led to widespread erasure of indigenous women's knowledge, particularly with respect to means of controlling reproduction. Thus, the twin projects of masculinizing and scientizing healing resulted in a loss of knowledge that benefited women's health – particularly non-noble European, African, and indigenous women – such as midwifery, herbal medicine, and abortion (Schiebinger 2004b; Inniss 2010; Unger 2004).

In addition to misogyny, scientific racism, which was used to justify and rationalize the colonization and enslavement of non-Europeans throughout the world, had an impact on the ability of women of color to participate in the scientific endeavor. White European women were often symbolically associated with nature through the artistic representation as a life-giving mother or muse. On the other hand, Fausto-Sterling argues that eighteenth-century biologist, Georges Cuvier was fascinated with the anatomy of South African Khoisan woman, Saartjie Baartman, precisely because she was not a white woman: “As a woman of color, she served as a primitive primitive: she was both a female and a racial link to nature – two for the price of one.” Race and gender worked together to symbolically position women of color as representations of the wild and untamable savagery of nature (2002, p. 75). The gendered Great Chain of Being that associated colonized peoples with animals had a dual purpose: it both rationalized colonization and justified appropriation of indigenous knowledge.

The indigenous knowledge that colonized peoples possessed was both erased and appropriated through this process in much the same way as the European witch hunts. The colonial project was, in addition to being an economic, political, and religious project, a scientific project; a search for new knowledge about the natural and

social world. Explorers and scientists consulted with indigenous peoples to learn about their natural environments, resources, foods, and medicines, while simultaneously imposing new cultural, religious, and political systems (Gaard 2004; Schiebinger 2004b; Raj 2007). Thus, at the same time as that knowledge was appropriated for the purpose of advancing European science, indigenous peoples around the world were separated from their traditional knowledge and epistemologies by forced religious conversion and European education (MacLeod 2000; L. Schiebinger 2004a; Whitt 2009). Because the knowledge of indigenous people, particularly women, was considered naïve and unscientific, it was extremely difficult for colonized people to be taken seriously as scientific knowledge producers, despite the fact that much of their knowledge was critical to the development of modern science as we know it.

As technology advanced after the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, and the technoscientific endeavor expanded, there were new roles for women within institutions of science. For example, within astronomy there was a need for a large number of laborers to complete complex calculations. Women were often hired as calculators or computers as this kind of mathematics labor was considered to require less masculine genius than science (Ogilvie 2000; Grier 2007; Sobel 2016). At the same time, women were culturally positioned as illegitimate users of technology, even as the proliferation of household technologies meant that women were active and expert users of technology (Wajcman 1991). Advertising often used women to demonstrate how easy it was to use a particular piece of technology (Barbercheck 2001). As automobiles and telephones proliferated, so too did representations of women abusing and misusing these tools. The tropes of the woman driver and the frivolous telephone gossip emerged in our cultural imagination as shorthand for women's lack of technological intelligence (Fischer 1992; Seiler 2008). So, just as more and more women found a place for themselves within technoscience, gendered representational norms emerged to reinforce the notion that science and technology were masculine domains unsuitable for women.

Nevertheless, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more women than ever before had access to an advanced education. Though access was constrained by race and class in the United States, women's colleges and historically black colleges and universities became key sites for women's advancement in technoscience. As the scientific endeavor became entangled with geopolitical shifts in the early and mid-twentieth century, women had limited but increasing opportunities to work on large-scale, urgent scientific projects like the Manhattan Project (Howes 1999). Though many women engaged in forms of "scientific women's work" such as calculation, as computation became automated, women "calculators" found themselves on the front lines of technoscientific advancement in computer programming and software engineering (Rossiter 1982, 1995; Light 1999). During the Cold War, opportunities continued to open as the ideological conflict with the Soviet Union was often used to express the urgency of cultivating the best minds and talents, regardless of traditional gender biases. However, occupational segregation persisted. Women often found themselves at the margins of technoscientific work. But, it is at the margins that advancements are often made (Kuhn 1962; Wylie 1997). In institutions like NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), black women computer programmers and engineers played key roles in the space race (Shetterly 2016).

And, women in the field of computer programming made significant contributions to the development of ARPANET, the precursor to the modern internet.

Technoscience education programs proliferated in the United States during the Cold War. Many such programs specifically aimed to recruit women and people of color. Increased institutional support created some moderate cultural changes that have allowed for more women to participate in science since the 1970s. Indeed, today women earn more than half of all bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields in the US. Despite this overwhelming change, women still face significant obstacles, particularly in the physical sciences and engineering. Though women earn more than 50% of doctorates in biology, for example, only 36% of assistant professors in the field are women (Sheltzer and Smith 2014). In computer science, women's early contributions to the field has not resulted in a culture open to women's participation. In fact, women's participation peaked in 1984, when women earned 36.8% of bachelor's degrees in computer science. In 2014, women earned only 18% of bachelor's degrees in computer science (National Center for Education Statistics 2015).

The early modern gender norms that culturally code technoscience as a masculine endeavor continue to shape science participation today, even as those norms have shifted considerably. The idea that women and men of color are not well suited to science still has wide currency. For example, in 2005, then president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, argued that women are underrepresented in STEM because they lack inherent capacities necessary to excel (Fogg 2005). More recently, in 2015, Antonin Scalia argued in the *Fisher v. University of Texas* case that affirmative action disadvantages black scientists who would be better suited to educational environments with a slower pace of learning (*Fisher v University of Texas at Austin* 2015). Though all women still experience barriers in STEM, ideas about innate capacity for science careers affect women of color in particular (Malcolm, Hall, and Brown 1976; Malcom and Malcom 2011).

In addition, many institutional barriers still remain. Contemporary gender bias in STEM fall into several categories (Williams, Phillips, and Hall 2014). "Prove it again" bias requires women to demonstrate their competence above and beyond what it is expected for men, and on a routine basis. For women of color this form of bias is often magnified by kind of logic evident in Scalia's comments cited above. "Tight rope" bias reflects the phenomenon experienced by many women in which they are not taken seriously if they present themselves as "too feminine" but are ridiculed and marginalized, or simply overlooked if they present themselves in more masculine ways. A third type of gender bias documented by researchers, the "maternal wall," describes the differential impact of parenthood on women's careers. Though some studies show that heterosexual married men's careers are often boosted when they become parents, women's wages decline after motherhood, relative to both non-mothering women and all men (Buffington et al. 2016). Moreover, in the US, the lack of paid parental leave has a unique impact on gestational parents in science. In some fields, such as chemistry, time off from work during pregnancy, in addition to post-natal leave, can be important to prevent fetal exposure to toxins.

In recent years, the widespread phenomena of gender/sexual harassment, and the way such workplace violence also creates gender-based barriers to science participation, has been brought to light on social media. In 2015, a comment by Nobel Prize

winning biochemist Tim Hunt was widely criticized on Twitter with the hashtag #distractinglysexy. Speaking to an audience of women in science Hunt said: “Let me tell you about my trouble with girls. Three things happen when they are in the lab: you fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, and when you criticize them they cry” (Bilefsky 2015). Hunt’s speech highlights the gendered cultural foundations of sexual harassment in the lab. Because technoscientific knowledge production is figured as a heteromale domain, women are positioned as sexually distracting. Likewise, sexual harassment is rationalized as a natural consequence of women’s presence in STEM. Subsequent to Hunt’s controversial comments, widespread and long-standing patterns of sexual harassment in the field of astronomy were exposed (Feltman 2016). In tech fields, cultural commentators have identified “toxic tech bro” culture, as a significant gendered obstacle to participation (Pao 2017; Chang 2018). Though there have been many efforts at diversity in Silicon Valley, the widespread industry acclaim of the antidiversity “Google Manifesto” that circulated in 2017 illustrates that many corners of the tech workforce remain resistant to initiatives to eliminate gender-based cultural and institutional barriers (Wakabayashi 2017).

Though I have focused principally on the US, Sharon Traweek has argued that cultural context has a strong influence on ideas about gender and participation in technoscience. For example, in her famous study of particle physicists, she compared the cultures of physics in the US and Japan in the late 1970s. Traweek found that in both Japan and the US particle physicists argued that women were not well suited to work in the field. However, the explanations for women’s lack of aptitude in physics were fundamentally different. In the US, physicists argued that women were too emotional to contribute to physics, but in Japan, physicists argued that women were not creative enough to participate meaningfully. As scientific knowledge production has become globalized it is particularly important to be aware of the impacts of cultural context which shape the gendered assumptions that facilitate or limit participation in science (Traweek 1988). Gender studies scholars have helped to shed light on the various ways in which the historical association of the capacity for technoscientific knowledge production with white European masculinity shapes who can be imagined to be a full technoscientific subject today.

### **Technoscientific Abuse and Exploitation**

As a consequence of the gendered barriers to science participation, technoscientific research has frequently exploited gendered power differentials, particularly as they exist across race, social class, disability, sexuality, and gender identity. Feminist science studies scholars, such as Donna Haraway, have argued that technoscience is neither wholly oppressive, nor inherently progressive (1991). Instead, in Haraway’s theorizing, technoscience is an amalgamation of the two, a cyborg. Similarly, scholars such as Sandra Harding have shown that technoscientific research has been deeply intertwined with both progressive and conservative social movements which have produced and reproduced gender oppression (1991, 2006). In the concluding section, I will discuss the ways in which science has been or could be used in the pursuit of gender justice and liberation. In this section, I discuss three ways technoscientific

abuse and exploitation is shaped by gender norms. First, rigid binary gender norms form the core of ideologies, like eugenics, which drive the scope and direction of technoscientific research. Second, as a result of gendered ideologies, women and nonbinary people have been exploited in the process of technoscientific knowledge production – a history which has required oversight by research ethicists to prevent such abuses. Third, gender norms and social roles also shape the distribution of the negative impacts of technological “progress.” Here, I briefly survey a few key examples of technoscientific abuses with a focus on research in the areas of biomedicine, reproduction, global economic development, and militarism.

The eugenics movement is a prime example of the ways in which gender shapes key ideologies which have driven technoscientific research. The movement, which began in the late nineteenth century in both Europe and the United States, sought to use science to breed a “better” human. Though eugenics was not uncontroversial in the scientific community, it is not surprising, given that most scientists were elite white men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that many subscribed to eugenicist ideologies and some were active in eugenics research (Kevles 1985; Dorr 2008; Allen 2011; Díaz 2012). Eugenics was shaped by intersecting classism, racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia. Historians argue that there were two principal types of eugenicist praxis. “Negative” eugenics sought improvement of the human species by preventing the reproduction of “unfit” people – poor people, people with disabilities, LGBT people, and people of color – while “positive” eugenics worked by encouraging the reproduction of “fit” specimens – the elite (Levine 2017). Although today we most often associate it with political conservatism, eugenics manifested in a diverse spectrum of practices advocated across the political spectrum (Ordover 2003b). The movement to “breed a better human” emerged in relation to racialized fear of demographic changes on the basis of higher birth rates among immigrants and people of color, simultaneous to independence movements throughout the colonized world. In Germany, the most extreme manifestation of eugenicist ideologies resulted in the horrors of the Holocaust. But it would be a mistake to think of eugenics as grounded exclusively in racism; gender ideologies also informed eugenicist agendas. Women were frequently positioned as the passive vectors of “unfitness,” while men were extolled to choose their mates carefully so as to avoid reproducing undesirable traits (Díaz 2012). In the US, though poor men, indigenous men, and men with disabilities were sometimes targeted by sterilization campaigns, women and queer or nonbinary people were far more often sterilized against their will (Kline 2005; Ordover 2003a; Dorr 2008; Ross and Solinger 2017). Both the scientific basis of the ideology of eugenics and the technologies it rests upon (surgical sterilization, chemical castration, and hormonal birth control, etc.) demonstrate the deep connections between gender, science, and technology. In recent years, scholars have worked to document the enduring impacts of sterilization campaigns targeting Native American, Mexican American, and Black women in the US (Roberts 2014; Kluchin 2011; Gutiérrez 2009).

A complex combination of both eugenicist and feminist ideologies also played an important role in the early scientific development of the hormonal birth control pill. Today, some social conservatives point to this history as a means to argue that the reproductive rights paradigm is inherently racist (Franks 2009; Grant 2014). It is true that the development of the pill was shaped by racism, sexism, and imperialism.

However, as I will discuss in the next section, it is also true that access to the pill radically changed the lives of women and nonbinary people of all races and led to greater sexual and economic freedom in the US and much of the rest of the world. As is the case for many scientific and social revolutions which often simultaneously increase oppression in some ways and decrease it in others, the origins and impact of the pill are complex. Birth control champion, Margaret Sanger's desire to unburden women, particularly poor women, from uncontrolled reproduction, had *both* feminist and eugenicist roots. In fact, it may be that suitability of the hormonal birth control pill for the negative eugenics agenda helped secure the funding necessary to finance its scientific development (Ordovery 2003b).

The racist/sexist ideologies driving early birth control research enabled scientific exploitation and abuse, particularly of women deemed "unfit" under the logic of eugenics. Such logics enabled what we would now consider to be gross violations of research ethics, though it should be noted that regulations pertaining to human clinical trials prior to the 1970s were extremely limited. In fact, twentieth-century research abuses such as Nazi research, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study experiments, and the birth control clinical trials drove feminist and medical ethics activism that led to many of regulations we have today. With respect to the hormonal birth control pill, there are at least two kinds of unethical experimentation that occurred. First, before the pill was released in the United States, researchers conducted a clinical trial in Puerto Rico. The wave of Puerto Rican immigrants – a racially mixed (black and Taino indigenous) population – represented just the kind of threat to the demographic superiority of Anglo-Americans that eugenicists feared. Many of the working-class, undereducated participants were not fully informed of the risks of taking what we now call "high-" dose birth control, as it contained 200–750% more estrogen than contemporary dosing (Seaman 1995, 2011; Liao and Dollin 2012). The risks associated with modern hormonal birth control pills is extremely low, but the high-dose birth control used at that time included the risk of stroke, heart attack, and death. Indeed, three women died of cardiovascular events that went uninvestigated during the Puerto Rican clinical trials. But, since the trial had to show efficacy of the drug for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, it was deemed a success as pregnancy was prevented in 98.1% of those who took the pill regularly (Arellano and Seipp 2017, 120). The decision to trial the drug in Puerto Rico demonstrates the complex intersections between gender, race, eugenics, and imperialism which led to a privileging of pregnancy prevention over the lives of the women who would take the pill. The Puerto Rican women who participated in the trial were seen as expendable and thus appropriate for technoscientific experimentation as a result of the intersection of the gender, race, and class (Briggs 2002, pp. 139–141).

In 1969, Dr. Barbara Seaman argued that the gendered disregard for women's lives and health informed the second unethical experiment, which was the FDA approval and release of high-dose birth control pill to the general public in the mainland of the US. She and other activists argued that the fact that medical science did not yet fully appreciate the risks of high dosages of birth control constituted mass experimentation (1995, 2011). We now know that smoking while taking birth control drastically increases the risks of thrombotic events *and* that the drug is safer and remains effective at lower doses. But, in 1957, when the pill was made available to women with severe menstrual disorders by a doctor's prescription, women who were

able to obtain a prescription received little counseling about the still underresearched risks. Soon problems arose with stroke, blood clots, heart attack and death. In 1970, congressional hearings were held to discuss the widespread safety concerns about oral contraceptives. The hearing included no women panelists which prompted a feminist activist takeover to draw attention to the issue. The publicity eventually resulted in inclusion of the drug facts product inserts many of us are familiar with today (Watkins 2001, pp. 103–131). Eventually, high-dose birth control was removed from the market in 1988.

There are numerous other twentieth-century examples of technoscientific and biomedical research abuses at the intersection of gender, race, and other salient social power differentials. For example, Henrietta Lacks, the woman from whom the famous immortal HeLa cell line was taken, did not give informed consent for her cervical cancer cells to be used for medical research. As a working-class black woman living in Baltimore in the 1940s, Lacks received substandard, racially segregated healthcare and died in 1951. Her cells, however, resulted in such important medical innovations as the HPV (human papillomavirus) and polio vaccines, gene mapping, cancer treatments, and a variety of groundbreaking medical advances. Yet the Lacks family has received very little financial compensation and has continued to receive substandard medical care, despite the billions of dollars of profits generated by Lacks's cells for private enterprise (Skloot 2010). In syphilis research, both in the famous Tuskegee Syphilis experiment and the less well known sexually transmitted disease experiments in Guatemala, patients and their families were unwitting research subjects as a result of both gendered, racialized, and colonial power differentials (Reverby 2009). Gender norms positioned women, in particular, as “guinea pigs” lacking the epistemic authority to be believed about the side-effects they were experiencing. That is, the subject-knower and object-known in technoscience is deeply shaped by gender norms (Hawkesworth 1989; Longino 2001; Lugones 1994). Moreover, the history of birth control demonstrates the way in which gender norms shape which technoscientific projects are pursued. For example, nearly 60 years after the FDA approval of the hormonal birth control pill, research on male birth control is still in its infancy, leaving males little control over their reproduction.

In addition to the gendered burdens of technoscientific and biomedical research, technoscience has produced and reproduced gender-based oppression through the social, economic, and environmental effects of technology itself. The well-established connection between global climate change and our perennial reliance on petroleum-dependent technologies has gendered manifestations. The gendered division of labor means that women's caregiving duties often place them in direct contact with the effects of climate change. Greta Gaard argues that, in fact, “climate change exacerbates pressures on marginalized people first, with economic and cultural elites best able to mitigate and postpone impact” (Gaard 2015, p. 24). In her analysis, sexism, heterosexism, and transphobia, in both technoscientific capitalist enterprises and the environmental movement itself, necessitate an ecofeminist analysis.

In the Global South, technoscientific efforts to advance economic development have often either focused exclusively on the socioeconomic needs of men, or neglected completely the impacts of technologies on women's lives and health. In many areas of the world, the introduction of industrialized farming technologies has displaced subsistence and small-scale farmers, leading to wide spread unemployment and forcing



men to migrate to cities to find employment (Shiva 1993). This often leaves women with extra caring duties and destabilizes familiar relationships. In other cases, development-driven deforestation has led to difficulty finding food, wood, and water (Turshen 1999; Shiva 1993). A major concern throughout the world is access to clean water. The introduction of industrialized food and beverage technologies has led to a depletion of local water resources in many areas of the world (Shiva 2016; Ahlers and Zwarteveen 2009). Due to the gendered division of labor, women often bear the disproportionate burden of resource depletion driven by the environmental impacts of technoscientific development projects.

Similarly, what Valerie Kuletz refers to as the “scientific-industrial-military complex,” also perpetuates gender-based violence throughout the world (1998). In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the way war is waged and its impact on people and the planet has been fundamentally altered by technoscientific advances as a result of the collaboration between militaries, capitalist industry, and academic technoscientific research (Giroux 2015). Gender norms drive cultural expectations that men participate in combat, strategy, and military-scientific advances while women keep up aspects of daily life in the context of war. Just as the gendered-division of labor shapes the effects of environmental devastation brought about by global climate change and development projects, scholars argue that it shapes the effects of militarism. The environmental impact of technoscientific contributions to militarism, such as nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, often directly increase the caring labor women provide (Kirk 2008; Seager 1999). The combination of toxic masculinity associated with militarism and the globalization of military-scientific-industrial often results in increased rates of gender-based violence – including sexual violence, social control, homophobia, and transphobia – both in armed conflict zones and around permanent military bases. For example, the areas surrounding US military bases in the Philippines and Japan have seen increases in rape and sex trafficking (Lacsamana 2011; Seager 1999; Enloe 2016; Sjoberg and Via 2010; Giles and Hyndman 2004).

In each of the cases described above, gendered power differentials play an important role in shaping the negative impacts of technoscientific advances. In some cases, like climate change, it may be that existing social inequalities are exacerbated by the environmental and economic impacts of technoscience. However, in other cases, such as eugenics and population control, we can see the questions that scientists ask and the uses toward which technology is put are inherently unjust. Scholars who study the intersections between gender, science, and technology have shown that technoscience is not, in fact, neutral or value free, but both reflects and is imbued with social values. Because technoscience is not inseparable from human values, some scholars have argued that it is possible to construct a feminist technoscience grounded in values of justice and liberation (Harding 1991; Longino 1987; Bleier 1986; Schiebinger 1999; Haraway 1988).

### **Conclusion: Technoscientific Justice and Liberation**

Technoscience is deeply interwoven with systems of power and inequality. And yet, science has also frequently been associated with progressive social movements (Harding 2006). As we saw in the case of the eugenics movement, the notion of

“progress” itself has been tainted by gendered ideologies and their intersections with racism, class, and ableism. However, liberation movements have also turned to technoscience to help advance their causes. For example, just as technoscience was central to eugenics, it was also key to disrupting biologically deterministic ideologies in the twentieth century (Gil-Riaño 2018). As I have described above, feminist scientists have advanced critiques of assumptions stemming from gender essentialism in technoscientific research. But even as cultural shifts begin to admit that perhaps women are not biologically incapable of rational thought, new essentialisms with respect to gender and sexuality are born. “Born this way” ideology, the rising popular fascination with DNA ancestry testing, and trans-exclusive feminisms each demonstrate ways in which gender, technology, and science exist in constant tension with *both* progressive and regressive ideologies (Harding 1991). As I will show in this section, the liberatory potential of technoscience is usually only secured by interventions, sometimes by scientists as insiders, and other times by activist outsiders.

The use of science to combat biological determinisms with respect to gender and race is rarely uncomplicated. Let us return to the history of eugenics as an example. Though the “science” of eugenics had begun to wane by the early twentieth century, after the eugenics movements reached its apex in the Holocaust, the scientific community actively took a stand against the misuse of science for ethnic and religious cleansing. The 1950 “UNESCO Statement on Race” is widely recognized as the technoscientific turn against eugenics and racial science. Nevertheless, eugenicist ideologies are pernicious and have reappeared in scientific spaces in numerous ways, most notably in the study of global climate change and population and the human genome project (Gil-Riaño 2018; Skinner 2006; Braun and Hammonds 2008; Silliman and King 1999). Though research about gender differences is still frequently constructed around sexist and binary ideologies, as I described above, many more scientists than in the past have worked to free technoscience of sexist bias. Though biological determinisms, with respect to gender or race, still structure much social inequality, scientists have shown that technoscience has an important role to play in demonstrating that biological determinism and a rigid gender binary are unscientific worldviews (Walters 2016; Fausto-Sterling 2000; Dussauge and Kaiser 2012).

Despite these tensions, technoscience has led to innovations that have fundamentally changed social roles and norms. As described earlier in this chapter, the history of the development of the hormonal birth control pill is complicated by eugenicist ideology and unethical research practices. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that the pill fundamentally changed gendered power dynamics by giving people more control over when and how many children they have. A broad spectrum of reproductive technologies, from the pill to dilation and curettage (the surgical procedure for abortion and miscarriage) to in vitro fertilization and surrogacy, have the potential to have profound impacts on gendered power differentials. However, such technologies exist within a society stratified by gender, race, and class. As such, access to them is not evenly distributed. Moreover, the social context of their use will not always mean that choices are freely made. While evidence indicates that women who have access to the hormonal birth control pill have increased autonomy (Marcén 2015; Frost and Lindberg 2013), some scholars question whether assisted reproductive technologies can really enhance freedom in the context of an oppressive

society (Harwood 2008). Though the ability to control reproduction can allow for more self-determination for some people, reproductive technologies like surrogacy highlight important ethical questions. The phenomenon of paid transnational surrogacy has emerged as a site rife with possible exploitation, even as it allows people the agency to use their bodies' reproductive capacities as a means to gain economic security (Twine 2015; Bailey 2011; Deonandan, Green, and Beinum 2012). Though reproductive choices are modulated through persistent racial and class-based inequalities, many women and nonbinary people have benefited from the increased control over their child-bearing that reproductive technologies has afforded them.

Similarly, biomedical technological advances in surgical techniques have enabled some trans people to have more agency with respect to their bodies and health through the development of hormonal therapies and surgical techniques. Access to gender-affirming technoscientific interventions is mediated by institutions which pathologize trans identity *and* the politics of class, race, gender, ability, and body size. It should be noted that trans scholar/activists have been critical of the fetishization of "the surgery." However, Eric Plemons and Chris Straayer argue that though such surgeries should not be the sole focus of cisgender people's interest in the trans experience, more discussion of gender-affirmation surgery is needed to direct research and resources to improve surgical techniques and remove the social and institutional barriers that gate-keep access to them. Biomedical innovations are needed to prevent painful and potentially life-threatening surgical complications (Plemons and Straayer 2018). But, surgery and hormone replacement therapies are not the only, or perhaps even most important, technoscientific innovation that could improve trans lives or lead to gender justice.

In recent years, the proliferation of smartphone technology, has enabled easy (but not free) access to information that can improve autonomy for people marginalized on the basis of gender. Cell phone application developers have created technology designed to aid people who experience all types of gender-based violence. For example, apps like Refuge, Transquat, and Ample map trans-inclusive public restrooms and businesses. Another app, Circle of 6, was designed to provide emergency contacts including location information as a response to the epidemic of campus sexual assaults. To address the criticism about artificial assistants' response to queries about sexual assault, several manufacturers made changes that provide information and resources (Miner et al. 2016; Harrington 2016). Smartphone technology has also facilitated the distribution of video recordings documenting acts of gender-based violence and discrimination via social media throughout the world. Of course, there are many other technologies used by the state, rather than consumers, for gender-based violence response or prevention. For example, with the help of academic researchers, police have used artificial intelligence (AI) to identify child pornographers (Peersman et al. 2016). In 2013, a Dutch children's charity created a virtual child to entice viewers of child webcam sex tourism and turned over the names of the users they caught to international police (Crawford 2013). Each of these examples is a not uncontroversial solution to gender-based violence. Often, technoscientific innovations, such as cell phone apps and AI, do little to alter the social conditions that enable gender-based violence. And, questions about both the legality and ethics of virtualized children and AI, whether used by police or by pornographers themselves, abound (Levy 2002; Malamuth and Huppitt 2006). In fact,

some commentators have observed the feminization of AI is a reflection of the sexual objectification of women (Thweatt-Bates 2014; Woods 2018). Nevertheless, these examples represent some of the various ways in which technoscience – in combination with activist efforts to change ideologies, cultures, and institutions – might facilitate self-determination and autonomy for marginalized groups, and perhaps even work toward gender justice.

High-tech examples such as those described in this chapter often receive much press. But low-tech solutions to injustices are often even more impactful, if less glamorous than high-tech solutions. Because of the disproportionate gendered impact of global climate change, technoscientific research and development in that area can have a significant impact on women's lives. For example, solar cookers and other energy-efficient cooking technologies are a cost-effective, environmentally friendly, low-tech solution to biomass-based cooking. Such stoves can free up time spent gathering increasingly scarce wood and can allow for the sterilization of water for drinking, cooking, and washing that can have a positive impact on the lives of women and children (Valentina 2014; Farhar, Osnes, and Lowry 2014). As with high-tech innovations, low-tech innovations alone are not enough to improve gender-based inequalities in the Global South which are often produced and/or reinforced by neoliberal and neocolonial policies (Mies 2014). Gender studies scholars have an important role to play in helping manifest the potential of technoscience for gender justice and liberation.

The analytical strands of scholarship that explore the relationships between gender, science, and technology discussed in this chapter are deeply interrelated. If we seek to minimize technoscientific exploitation and abuse and reach the liberatory potential of technoscience we need to diversify who participates in the production of technoscientific knowledge, and *that* requires a fundamental shift in what we think we know about sex/gender differences and the capacity for rational thought. The liberatory potential of technoscience is not inherent in the scientific endeavor. In fact, many examples of innovative technoscientific solutions that can lead to more freedom and self-determination for people of all genders actually serve as interventions or solutions to problems caused by other applications of technoscience. As feminist science studies scholars have argued, technoscience is neither inherently oppressive nor necessarily liberating. The *values* at the center of the technoscientific endeavor and the social *context* of technoscientific projects are what shape its oppressive or liberatory potential (Longino 1987; Harding 1992; Haraway 1991; Wajcman 2007). As a result, many scholars have devoted their careers to developing a feminist science to democratically produce scientific knowledge and technologies that increase gender justice, self-determination, and autonomy while decreasing exploitation, violence, and environmental degradation.

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# 7

## Gender Bias in Research

MEG UPCHURCH

### Introduction

Gender bias, generally in favor of males, exists in every branch of scientific research and comprises a variety of characteristics and practices. Bias may occur in the choice of samples and the interpretation of the data. Bias may also influence decisions about the importance of research projects and attitudes about the capacity of subgroups within a population to conduct high-quality research. This chapter focuses on gender bias, but with the recognition that a more complete treatment of bias in science would address race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and national origin as well.

Many instances of gender bias in research can be attributed to androcentrism, defined in Eichler's excellent guide to developing nonsexist research methods as "essentially a view of the world from a male perspective" (Eichler 1991, p. 5). An androcentric approach treats males as the norm for human beings and privileges their interests over those of females. Androcentrism may be frankly misogynistic or it may render females invisible, too insignificant to warrant attention. This bias is so thoroughly infused into Western culture that its effects often pass unnoticed, and efforts to challenge androcentric approaches may be treated as seriously disruptive to the culture as a whole. Even a minor violation of androcentrism, such as using the phrase "she or he" rather than "he or she", may create emotional discomfort and result in protest.

While hostility toward women clearly can affect their inclusion in the research enterprise, even a seemingly benevolent attitude about women and femininity can limit women's ability to become involved in research. Benevolent sexism views women as weak and in need of special consideration. It assumes that men should protect them and can be trusted to act in their best interests. However, this form of sexism may dictate that women should not be exposed to the risks associated with participation in biomedical research and it can be harshly punitive toward women

who stray out of traditional gender roles (Connelly and Heesacker 2012). While on the surface benevolent sexism may appear less detrimental to women than outright misogyny, and it might even lead to greater life satisfaction by providing justification for treating the genders differently, both benevolent sexism and androcentrism have contributed to a dearth of women as participants in research in the natural and social sciences.

### **Bias in the Choice of Samples**

The logic of androcentrism insists that males are the important gender to study if one wishes to learn about biology and that by studying males, one can obtain information applicable to all human beings. Benevolent sexism has historically categorized women, particularly those of childbearing age, as a vulnerable population that should not be exposed to potentially dangerous research procedures. Indeed, between 1967 and 1993, the United States Food and Drug Administration prohibited enrollment of women in the early phases of clinical testing for new drugs and discouraged researchers from including them in the later phases as well (Czerniak 2001). In consequence, we have considerably more data about the effects of drugs and procedures on men than we do on women (Sanfey 2005).

The harms to women that result from this bias have become apparent over the last two decades. For example, historically, most studies of coronary artery disease have taken place in men. While there is increasing awareness of the need to study heart disease and its treatment in women as well, we still have limited information on the effectiveness of treatments for preventing additional cardiovascular incidents in women who have experienced an event and evidence suggests that treatments for such secondary prevention are provided less frequently to women, even when they are known to be effective (Ciambrone and Kaski 2010).

Pharmaceutical testing that failed to include women or that did not separate the analyses by gender has similarly resulted in harm to women. Men and women differ on average in body size and percent of body fat. They may also differ in the amount of drug-metabolizing enzymes they produce. All of these factors influence the pharmacokinetic properties of a drug, or how quickly it is absorbed, distributed, metabolized, and excreted, as well as the percentage of an administered dose that accumulates (Czerniak 2001). Even when body size is accounted for in dosing, the other biological characteristics may lead to gender differences in the amount of drug available within the body and, therefore, to inappropriate or even dangerous dosing.

The bias toward conducting biomedical research exclusively on males is not limited to the study of humans. There is a long history of using only male rodents in studies that provide preclinical information about mammalian biology. Typically, researchers explain that the fluctuation of estrogen and progesterone in female mammals adds “noise” that complicates the interpretation of the results (Sanfey 2005). However, that explanation betrays an androcentric bias that dismisses the effects of those two hormones as problems rather than important phenomena to explore. Moreover, in treating biological processes under the influence of testosterone as normal, this approach may paradoxically underestimate the effects of testosterone on physiology and behavior.

The androcentric bias also appears in research areas beyond the biomedical sciences. In economics, work done by women is less likely than work done by men to be included in labor statistics (Peterson 1993). This bias systematically underestimates women's contributions to a nation's economy and may result in the implementation of economic policies that harm women. Peterson (1993) notes that this problem is particularly acute in developing nations, where women's economically important activities such as water transport, subsistence agriculture, and part-time production of market goods within the home may not be measured, and women may therefore not be granted access to opportunities for economic development.

Primatology had a history of focus on the behaviors and social significance of dominance hierarchies in male primates until research by female primatologists who reported on the characteristics of female primates made the incompleteness of this analysis apparent (Schiebinger 2000). Emphasis on aggressive behavior by males of some primate species led primatologists Sherwood Washburn and Ivan DeVore to develop the "Man-the-Hunter" theory, which states that ancestral human males were largely responsible for resource gathering and for protecting passive groups of females, whose behavior contributed little either to human evolution or to the more immediate structures of their social groups (1961). This concept has persisted within evolutionary psychology despite evidence from other branches of evolutionary behavioral sciences that provides little support for it (Haraway 1991).

### **Bias in Interpretation of the Data**

There is a long tradition of seeing females as passive and acted upon, not only at the level of the whole organism, but also at the level of cellular or molecular components of females. Martin (1991) analyzed the metaphors used to portray the interaction between egg cells and sperm cells during fertilization and showed that eggs were portrayed as passive even in the face of evidence that the propulsive force of the sperm cell's tail is weak and that the egg cell plays an active role in fertilization both by trapping the sperm cell against its surface and by rapidly moving its nucleus toward the trapped sperm.

A similar association exists between the X chromosome with femininity, even to the point of calling the chromosome "she" and associating it with stereotypically female cognitive and behavioral traits. This is despite the fact that males too have an X chromosome and that in females one X chromosome in each cell is silenced, so that males and females receive identical "doses" of X-related gene products. Females do exhibit mosaicism, in which the X chromosome from the mother is silenced in some cells while that from the father is silenced in others. More has been made of this phenomenon than seems warranted based on its actual impact on females' physiology (Richardson 2012).

With the androcentric bias's emphasis on relative levels of agency, researchers may attempt to impose a hierarchy of importance on cellular processes, privileging those of males. Studies of sex determination in mammals provide an example. Once the Y chromosome was identified with maleness, researchers sought the gene responsible for causing the immature gonads to develop into testes. They identified the gene *SRY* and gave it the status of a "master gene" solely responsible for male sex determination.

In doing so, they came to define the development of ovaries as the default state and made little effort to study the genes involved in female sex determination, as well as downplaying the importance of other gene expression in the development of testes. Subsequent discovery of animals bearing gonads that contain both ovarian and testicular cells called the simplicity of the *SRY* master gene model into question. A more nuanced description of sex determination is in favor currently, but reaching this point required once again setting aside notions of the active male and passive female (Richardson 2008).

The gender stereotyping applied to egg cells, X chromosomes, and the *SRY* gene is based in part on the notion that they “belong” to females or males and therefore have gender-stereotypical characteristics; however, a biological entity need not be directly associated with a specific sex in order to be gender stereotyped. Glial cells in the nervous system, which are not known to differ between males and females, were described in stereotypically feminine roles such as “nursemaid” and “housekeeper” when they were thought to serve relatively passive, supportive functions, but took on roles more stereotypically associated with males, such as “orchestra conductor” and “warden” when their importance to communication and homeostatic function became understood as more active (Upchurch and Fojtová 2009).

Bias may also occur in the choice of results to emphasize in a study. The “Man-the-Hunter” model proposed by Washburn and DeVore has persisted within evolutionary psychology in the form of sexual strategies theory, which states that women seek men who can provide resources for them, while men seek women who are physically attractive and fertile. A corollary of this theory proposes that selection pressures should work against men investing their resources in offspring other than their own, and that therefore men should be more troubled by sexual infidelity than by emotional infidelity in their partners. Evolutionary psychologist David Buss and others have found support for sexual strategies theory and can make the claim that men and women differ in the predicted direction, but only by ignoring the numerous ways in which women and men make similar responses when answering a questionnaire about what they would prefer in an ideal partner, and also by basing their research on hypothetical choices of ideal partners rather than on actual choices of real partners (Liesen 2007). The findings about jealousy have been consistently described by Buss and colleagues as showing that males are more troubled by sexual infidelity than by emotional infidelity; however, examination of their data shows that while males are more troubled *than females* by sexual infidelity, they appear to be either equally troubled by either form of infidelity or more troubled by emotional infidelity. The effect that Buss and colleagues attribute to male preferences is in fact driven by a strong female aversion to emotional infidelity as compared to sexual infidelity (for example, see Buss et al. 1992; Buunk et al. 1996).

The androcentric bias in interpretation of data is so pervasive that its practitioners may be entirely unaware of its existence. Interpretations that attempt to address this bias have been derided as politically motivated and not good science, without recognition that adherence to the status quo in the face of poor methodology or strained interpretation of the results is also a politically motivated stance (Liesen 2007).

Attempts to correct for sexism in research run up against biases that ultimately may hinder the correction. For example, an analysis by Weichselbaumer and

Winter-Ebmer (2006) identified a number of characteristics, including prestige of the author or of the journal in which the research was published, that influenced the probability that a gender wage gap would be interpreted as evidence of discrimination, with higher prestige sources being less likely to use this interpretation. Additionally, implicit bias may cause men in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields to be more likely to doubt the quality of a publication showing gender bias in the sciences than are women in general or men in non-STEM disciplines. This finding cannot be attributed to a greater overall critical attitude among men in STEM. When an article abstract is altered to portray no gender discrimination in science, such men are more likely to accept the finding uncritically than are women (Handley et al. 2015). It appears that evidence regarding the existence of gender discrimination or bias is most likely to be disregarded or dismissed by individuals whose position within research disciplines gives them the greatest power to influence access to professional opportunities or to affect social policy.

### **Bias in Consideration of the Results' Implications**

Research on biological sex differences may find that such differences exist, but in itself may provide no information about how those differences relate to gender. Nonetheless, the research may be used to argue for the biological inevitability of current gender roles. Cordelia Fine (2010) documented numerous examples of this phenomenon in neuroscience. Of particular concern is the ready assumption that differences in brain function can be used to account for gender-associated differences in cognitive abilities or other behaviors, despite the absence of evidence for a direct causal link. The correlational nature of studies examining the association between brain images and behavior tends to be downplayed, and in many cases the direct correlation is not even examined – people simply identify a gender-related difference in brain imaging and state that it accounts for a perceived gender-related difference in behavior that was not measured in the study. Fine (2010) also describes a tendency for lay persons and some researchers to interpret any gender differences in brain structure or function as hardwired, paying little attention to neuroplasticity, or changes in brain structure and function in response to environmental influences. That interpretation is then used to argue that attempts to defy current gender role norms fly in the face of biology and are therefore exercises in futility.

A case study by O'Connor and Jaffe (2014) demonstrates that as information about sex differences in brain structure moves from the level of scientific publication through various stages of public presentation and discussion, it accrues an increasing number of gender-stereotyped interpretations. These authors tracked responses to a high-profile journal article on sex differences in the pattern of connections between different regions of the human brain. The original study (Ingalhalikar et al. 2014) reported that adult males showed relatively greater within-hemisphere connectivity while adult females showed relatively greater cross-hemisphere connectivity. Although the authors did not directly correlate connectivity patterns with performance on cognitive or behavioral tasks, they speculated that the patterns could account for previously observed gender differences in sensorimotor skills, intuition, spatial navigation, social



cognition, and attention. Thus, an unwarranted causal relationship was introduced in the original article.

Subsequent descriptions of the study in a press release issued by the researchers' institution, traditional press sources, blogs, and comments posted in response to articles or blogs exhibited a drift toward increasing mention of gender stereotypical behaviors that were not included in the original article. The press release introduced the idea that the connectivity patterns in the brain made women better at multi-tasking while men were better at devoting concentrated attention to a single task. This notion was then used to support claims in subsequent levels of communication (media, blogs, and comments) that women are naturally better at the attentional skills associated with domestic work while men's greater ability to focus on a single task makes them better at doing jobs outside the home. Frank misogyny did not appear in the traditional media sources, but it was present in some posted comments. Even at the level of the original journal article, writers discussed the notion of complementary cognitive traits in men and women, with each gender having certain cognitive advantages over the other. At first blush, this is a nod to equality between the genders, but it does not take many iterations to spin complementarity into a story claiming that current gender roles arose because they best fit men's and women's cognitive strengths, and so to defend a system that disadvantages women economically and socially (O'Connor and Jaffe 2014).

These authors also noted that at all levels of communication about the research, the wording implied a stark difference between women and men, in some cases describing them almost as if they were different species (O'Connor and Jaffe 2014). As Fine (2010) noted, research that shows similarities between the genders receives far less attention than research that shows differences. Brain imaging techniques and statistical analyses, including those used by Ingahlhaliker et al. (2014), statistically "correct" for areas where no difference exists, and can therefore create images in which differences are emphasized, but the extent of similarity between male and female brains cannot be measured.

### **Bias in Decisions about the Importance and Quality of the Research**

The practice of science frequently requires competition for resources such as funds for training or research, opportunities to present one's findings in oral or written form, and access to shared equipment. As a rule, applications for these limited resources are peer-reviewed, which places established researchers in gatekeeping positions that can significantly affect other scientists' careers. Peer reviewers' decisions about the quality of the applications and about whose work is worth supporting could be swayed by conscious or unconscious gender biases. Even in the absence of biases, science's status as a historically male profession can lead to overrepresentation of males among those who gain access. There are more senior males in the profession and their professional networks are more likely to contain males. It is not necessarily easy for reviewers to separate their personal knowledge of the applicants from their decisions about the quality of the applicants' research.

The confounding of gender with other demographic factors such as seniority can make gender bias difficult to identify and can raise questions about the

appropriate means to address inequities. If differential access to resources is simply a result of having a greater number of males at more senior levels of the profession, then eventually the problem should take care of itself as more females become scientists and develop seniority (but see Thomas, Poole, and Herbers 2015 for a model indicating that this will not happen). However, if gender bias is also an issue, more aggressive measures must be taken in order to give female scientists an equal opportunity to compete for resources that will contribute to their professional development.

Access to funding for projects strongly influences the type and quality of research a scientist may pursue. Peer review of applications for research grants is one area where gender bias could have an effect; however, a meta-analysis of application success drawing on data from a variety of disciplines and geographic locations (Australia, Europe, North America) found no evidence that grant funds were differentially awarded based on gender (Marsh et al. 2009). This finding was in contrast to earlier studies that reported an award bias in favor of males based on more limited analyses.

Marsh et al. (2009) did find that success in application for predoctoral or postdoctoral fellowships showed a gender discrepancy in favor of males. They hypothesized that because grant proposals are generally written by established researchers with known track records, information such as the gender of the applicant should have less influence on the reviewers than is the case for fellowship applications, which are written by scientists early in their careers.

Grant applications are unusual in the amount of information made available to reviewers and in the degree of structure in the reviewing process. When making decisions such as who to invite to give keynote addresses or panel presentations at conferences, gatekeepers may operate under a less formal decision-making system more subject to implicit biases (neuroscientist Anne Churchland, cited in Mandavilli 2016). A group of female neuroscientists has established a web site (BiasWatchNeuro.com) comparing the proportions of female and male invited speakers at neuroscience conferences to base rates of males and females within the different subdivisions of neuroscience and has found evidence of a gender imbalance in favor of males. Their results run counter to claims that panelists simply represent the pool of available experts in a field. As Yael Niv, a founder of BiasWatchNeuro, pointed out, being invited to give panel presentations is a way of becoming known in the field. This then increases the chances that one's papers will be published and one's grants will be funded (quoted in Mandavilli 2016).

Some research fields require access to instrumentation far too costly to be purchased by an individual laboratory. In such cases, researchers must compete to gain access to the instrumentation by submitting applications to groups of peers. Here too is an area where gender biases may influence the chances of long-term career success. A recent internal study examining astronomers' access to telescope time at the European Space Observatory found that female principal investigators were less likely than males to have their applications approved (Patat 2016). This discrepancy could be accounted for in part by the career stages of the applicants, with a greater proportion of senior scientists being granted time and a greater proportion of men among senior scientists. However, when seniority was taken into account as an explanatory factor, the gender discrepancy was reduced but did not disappear. Both male and female reviewers rated fewer applications from females than from males as

being of top quality, though the difference in percent rated top quality was larger for male reviewers than for female reviewers.

Membership on the editorial panels of journals is another area where gatekeepers can influence the professional prospects of researchers. Several studies of editorial panels overseeing journals in the STEM disciplines have found that women are underrepresented in a variety of areas, including medicine (Amrein et al. 2011) and mathematics (Topaz and Sen 2016). While it is difficult to pin down the effect of this gender imbalance on chances of being published, it does raise the possibility that diverse viewpoints will not be represented.

Identifying gender bias in decisions about the quality of research or researchers is challenging. In many cases the bias is implicit, beyond the realm of conscious awareness. It can be as present in an oppressed group as in the oppressors. Generally analyses of potential gender bias must rely on regression-based procedures in which the researchers use statistical corrections in an attempt to take confounding variables such as seniority or base rates of gender proportions into account. But when looking at real-life applications, peer reviewers are comparing unique individuals to each other. These applicants cannot be made precisely equivalent and it is often possible to find reasons other than gender for justifying differences in how they are treated.

Conclusive evidence for gender bias requires controlling for all other extraneous factors. While this is impossible to do in completely natural situations, it is possible to conduct experiments that replicate natural situations as closely as possible. In one such study (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012), faculty members at four research universities were asked to rate an application for a lab manager position from someone who had recently received a bachelor's degree. The applications were identical in every way except for the gender of the applicant, as indicated by her/his name.

The faculty members receiving an application from "John" gave higher ratings for competence and hireability than those receiving the identical application from "Jennifer". They were also willing to offer a higher starting salary and to provide more mentoring to "John". This was the case regardless of the faculty member's own gender, age, tenure status, or scientific discipline. A pathway analysis showed that the rating of hireability was mediated by perceived competence of the applicant, which in turn was related to gender. This experiment thus demonstrates that ratings of competence and career potential can be affected by gender when all other factors are held equal, regardless of the demographic characteristics of the raters (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012). This study provides strong evidence for existence of an implicit gender bias in making determinations about quality of an application.

### **Bias in Beliefs about Ability to do Science**

Historically, scientific research was predominantly carried out by white male middle-to upper-class Europeans or North Americans. Women were not absent from science, but few were directors of research projects, instead serving as laboratory technicians or research associates. As Gornick (2009) documented in a collection of oral history interviews, in the mid-twentieth century even women who were well qualified, with terminal degrees in their fields and records of significant accomplishment, frequently could find only dead-end academic positions with no possibility of tenure, lower pay

(or in some cases no pay), and poorer access to laboratory space or equipment than men with fewer qualifications. Many met with deep skepticism about their ability to do good science.

Such blatant employment discrimination is no longer permitted and in consequence there are substantially more women with tenure or on the tenure track in science departments. At the bachelor's level, there is parity in the number of young women and men obtaining degrees in biology, chemistry, and mathematics, though fewer than 20% of bachelor's-level graduates from computer science, engineering, and physics programs are women (Cheryan et al. 2017). Even in relatively high-parity fields such as biology, the proportion of women who are full professors or hold tenure track positions is not yet 50%, and in physics the proportion of women in academic positions remains under 15% (Cain and Leahey 2014).

Explanations for gender disparities in STEM employment abound and range from inherent differences in cognitive capacity to hostile workplace environments and cultural expectations that associate science with masculinity. Among those who favor biological explanations, one of the most commonly cited gender differences is a strong and consistent finding that males tend to outperform females in three-dimensional (3D) spatial rotation tasks. However, there are many areas of science that do not call upon the researcher to engage in 3D rotation, and little evidence actually connects 3D rotation ability to interest in science or capacity for doing scientific research (Ceci et al. 2014).

Lower innate capacity for doing mathematics is another proposed biological explanation for women's underrepresentation in some fields of science. However, although there are more males than females at the extreme upper end of the distribution on standardized tests of mathematics ability, females tend to do as well as or better than males in classroom performance, and mathematics has achieved near gender parity in terms of the number of women enrolled at the undergraduate level (Ceci et al. 2014). Interestingly, gender differences in math performance on standardized tests vary from country to country and there are several nations in which males and females show no differences either on standardized tests or in elite mathematics competitions. The gender variation in math and science performance appears attributable in part to cultural attitudes about what kinds of people are able to do math (Ceci et al. 2014).

Most of the work on drawing more women into scientific careers has focused on creating additional opportunities for girls to learn about science and math, correcting for historic disparities to access to grant funding, and assuring more equal access to employment opportunities. In some fields, this approach has largely or totally eliminated disparities, at least at the undergraduate level. However, there are more subtle systemic barriers that can inhibit girls from thinking about science as a career or persisting in it after obtaining degrees in STEM.

If creative genius is considered a prerequisite for doing good science, then women may be perceived as less capable than men. Correlational and experimental research has demonstrated that men are more likely to be judged creative than women (Proudfoot, Kay, and Koval 2015). Undergraduate women themselves tend to underestimate their own abilities in science and mathematics and to doubt their capacity for going on to do graduate work and make careers in the sciences (Caine and Leahey 2014).

Implicit associations between masculinity and science are also likely to contribute to the gender disparity. In fields where women and men have reached approximately equal representation, fewer practitioners consciously endorse the idea that males are the ones who do science, but even in these fields, an unconscious association that depicts scientists as male may persist (Smyth and Nosek 2015). Children are more likely to draw scientists as males than as females, and illustrations in educational materials for children are also more likely to depict scientists as male (Kerkhoven et al. 2016). Thus, from an early age, culture teaches girls that science is not a suitable career. Those who are interested in science must overcome a subtle but pervasive sense of not belonging. Implicit bias and a sense of reduced self-efficacy within a research field, combined with work environments that appeal to males, could also contribute to women's avoidance of some research fields.

### **Bias in the Workplace**

Societal conceptions about how science should be practiced may inhibit women from entering research careers or persisting in them once they have received degrees. Individuals' commitment to their research may not be taken seriously unless they work 80 or more hours a week and show little sign of having a life outside the laboratory (Hall 2010). For women scientists of past generations, this frequently meant forgoing the opportunity to have children and in essence required them to don masculine characteristics in order to succeed (Gornick 2009). Younger women are less willing to sacrifice family life to scientific careers and they have been able to do good work while assuming primary responsibility for raising children. But they must still strive to succeed within a culture of science frequently at odds with sustaining a family life (Ceci et al. 2014). They may be unable to attend working dinners with colleagues, and there are few or no accommodations for scientist-mothers at professional conferences ([http://momicon.org/documents/MoMiCon\\_Mission.pdf](http://momicon.org/documents/MoMiCon_Mission.pdf)). Women may be less able to travel internationally or to sustain international collaborations (Elsevier 2017).

Overt hostile sexism continues to be an issue as well. While explicit gender stereotypes about women's ability to do science are not as commonly expressed as they once were, they continue to exist. Women must cope with high-profile male researchers who make blatantly sexist statements. Male scientists are more likely than female scientists to hold explicit stereotypes about the relatively poor ability of women to do science, and this is especially the case in fields where the representation of women is low (Smyth and Nosek 2015). Nor is the presence of explicit bias limited to adults. A recent study found that female eighth-grade students whose male classmates expressed high levels of belief that science was not appropriate for women were less likely to aspire to careers in engineering and computer science. This effect could be countered by having a greater proportion of female peers who were confident about their ability to do science, but this study raises the point that efforts to change girls' attitudes about careers in science are not sufficient. Boys, too, need to be educated about the abilities of both genders to do work in all branches of science (Riegle-Crumb and Morton 2017).

More subtle biases can inhibit women's ability to compete on a level playing field with their male colleagues. In the mid- through late-1990s, two committees of

scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) conducted an internal study that identified small but systemic inequities female scientists were exposed to as they progressed through their careers, such as disadvantages in the allocation of laboratory space and funding. Tenured women in particular felt marginalized by their colleagues and the institution, increasingly so as they achieved more senior status. The administration at MIT responded by addressing the inequities (Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1999). However, problems may continue to exist at other elite scientific institutions. A 2017 lawsuit filed by two tenured female professors at the Salk Institute alleges that the administration there “excluded them from funding, pressured them to downsize their labs, disparaged their work, and prevented them from being considered for lucrative grants” (Wadman 2017). A third female scientist joined the suit when her contract was not renewed in December 2017. The Institute settled with the first two plaintiffs in August 2018 (Wadman 2018a) and with the third plaintiff in November 2018 (Wadman 2018b).

While workplaces for senior female scientists may remain hostile in terms of marginalization and attitudes expressed toward them, graduate students and other trainee-level female scientists are more likely to face hostile sexism in the form of sexual harassment or assault. The trainee–mentor power dynamic creates a situation where harassment can become an issue across a range of academic disciplines, but some aspects of scientific research can put women into particularly vulnerable positions. Periods of isolation during field work and expectations that research be carried out late at night when few other people are present can enhance the risk of sexual harassment or outright assault, with the risks being especially high for women of color (Clancy, Lee et al. 2014; Clancy, Nelson et al. 2017). One female faculty member reported that she routinely has to mentor female trainees in techniques for responding to unwelcome advances from male colleagues (Jahren 2016).

### **Race, Class, and Gender**

Thorough discussion of the intersectionality of gender, class, and race in scientific research is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it would be remiss to ignore the fact that bias is experienced differently by women from different social backgrounds. Women of color must contend not only with biases about which gender is more capable of doing science but also with racial biases about intellectual competence (Hanson 2012). Many efforts to recruit more females into the STEM disciplines do not study or address the needs of girls from minority groups and so may not provide the optimal means of drawing women (and men) from these communities into science (Riegle-Crumb and Morton 2017).

Sandra Harding (2015) argues that the very practice of science, with its assumption that there is a true, objective viewpoint from which the nature of the universe can be examined, privileges the points of view and attitudes about correct methodology typical of white men and disregards the experiences and cultural knowledge of other demographic groups. Many white women of the middle class can integrate relatively easily into the existing patterns of thinking about science, as they generally share the cultural norms of their white male colleagues. However,

those norms tend to be dismissive of knowledge obtained from ordinary lived experience or from ways of knowing that do not arise from approaches developed in the European Enlightenment. Harding sees value in the ideals of science, such as objectivity and good methodology, but she argues that objectivity cannot truly be achieved if science is practiced almost exclusively by members of the dominant classes and primarily serves the interests of those classes. Strong objectivity, a nearer approach to a bias-free position, is achieved by incorporating people whose personal experiences relate to the question under investigation and whose lives may be affected by the answers to that question into the research process. This approach is in contrast to one that says science can be improved by conducting business as usual but recruiting more white women and people of color into the STEM professions and expecting them to accommodate themselves to the existing practices.

### **Global Extent of Bias in Research**

Studies of gender bias in research can be divided into two broad categories: those that address biases about women as producers of scientific knowledge and those that consider women as subjects of scientific research. Those that explore barriers to women's participation in the STEM workforce are carried out predominantly in the United States (e.g. Handley et al. 2015, Riegle-Crumb and Morton 2017), the United Kingdom and Europe (e.g. Kerkhoven et al. 2016, Patat 2016), and/or Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (e.g. Hall 2010, Marsh et al. 2009). Elsevier (2017) conducted one of the most internationally complete studies of gender patterns in scientific publishing and reported that Portugal showed the greatest degree of gender equity across all STEM fields, while Japan showed the least. Regardless of geographic region, women were least likely to have publications in materials science and physics/astronomy. The pattern of greater female representation in behavioral, biomedical, and life sciences than in physical sciences and engineering was also found in a study of seven Asian nations (UNESCO 2015). Overall, proportions of female researchers varied considerably between the studied nations, with a high of 51% in Thailand and a low of 14% in Japan.

Women throughout the world tend to be more disadvantaged by the effects of scientific research than are men. Analyses of androcentric biases Eichler (1991) conducted using primarily Canadian examples have been successfully applied to studies of public health in Spain (Ruiz-Cantero et al. 2007) and could be applied as readily to populations in other geographic locations. Harding (2015) describes many examples of the harmful effects of androcentric biases in the physical, biomedical, and social sciences. She points out that women are often the least likely to have their interests served by economic development programs and the most likely to be impoverished by the effects of such programs. Moreover, funding for research in the United States and other industrialized nations historically has been directed toward serving military and industrial purposes, which may well run counter to the interests of women throughout the world (Harding 2015). Future studies of gender bias in research should continue to examine the disparate impacts of science-based policies on women globally.

## Conclusion

In several ways, the status of women in the sciences has improved over the last half century. Women have a far greater presence both as professional scientists and as participants in research. In some branches of science, the number of female academic employees equals or exceeds the number of males. Biomedical research is now practiced with greater awareness that women are not biologically identical to men and that men cannot serve as model representations of all human beings.

Despite these gains, individuals both within and outside science continue to express both implicit and explicit biases about science being a “male” activity. Women continue to be underrepresented in the most highly paid fields of science and technology. Female scientists, particularly those early in their careers, continue to grapple with openly hostile work environments and with the awareness that they may not be supported if they call attention to sexual harassment. Subtle biases in allocation of the resources needed to conduct research have been documented and women still pay a penalty for desiring to combine family life with research.

Current forms of sexism in the workplace are not always easy to measure. While statistics can show trends in numbers of degrees obtained and types of careers pursued, additional qualitative research is needed to measure feelings of isolation or instances of denigration. Analysis of complex systems must be applied to understand how a series of small disadvantages and negative experiences could culminate in decisions by women to leave STEM (Halpern 2014).

Discussions of the underrepresentation of women and minorities in science are often framed in instrumental terms; their absence contributes to understaffing in laboratories and lack of product innovation (e.g. Kerkhoven et al. 2016) This approach emphasizes the role of science in furthering government and corporate initiatives, a role decried by Harding (2015) and other feminist philosophers of science. The harms caused by the corporate-driven approach to scientific research have been well documented and have persuaded some feminists that the goal of employing more women in STEM is undesirable as long as the practice of science as usual continues.

And yet, the methods of scientific research remain among the most powerful available to us for understanding the natural world and improving the human condition. Increased STEM participation by women and minorities has the potential to bring in new points of view that will improve research methodology and broaden ethical considerations about the impacts of scientific findings on human beings from all walks of life and all regions of the world. For this reason, feminists are called upon to engage both in the practice of research and the critique and redirection of its applications (Harding 2015).

The focus on the instrumental benefits of decreasing gender bias tends to disregard the intrinsic joy and intellectual satisfaction women may derive from doing science and mathematics. For many, the opportunity to delve into the unknown has been the driving force that enabled them to persist in the face of disparagement, limited access to resources, and professional isolation (Gornick 2009). But others have decided to leave science, perhaps because they lack encouragement from mentors or belief in their own abilities (Pollack 2013), perhaps because they are afraid to stay in a workplace where they cannot find support or protection from sexual harassment. Decisions by women to leave academic science are generally portrayed



as a choice (e.g. Ceci et al. 2014), but it behooves feminists to continue to explore the reasons behind such choices and to push for systemic social change. Stifling of intellectual passion is a difficult outcome to measure, but it can be a real and very unfortunate result of gender bias in the sciences.

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# 8

## Reproductive Practices, Society, and the State

ANNA KUXHAUSEN

Loretta J. Ross, reproductive justice activist, and Rickie Solinger, feminist historian, argue that regardless of legal, religious, familial, or financial obstacles, “girls and women have always done what they could to shape their own reproductive lives.” (Ross and Solinger 2017, p. 11) Ross and Solinger were referring to the history of reproduction in colonial America and the modern United States, but scholarship suggests that their characterization may be applied to many more eras. Over roughly the last 40 years, historians have undertaken to recover, document, and make visible the range of constraints imposed upon people with reproductive capacities (hereinafter referred to as “women” as the common term for these eras). Historians have also studied women’s agency and their resistance to efforts to control their reproduction, as well as the ideological debates and political struggles over women’s reproductive lives. This chapter seeks to synthesize some of the most significant scholarship to begin a transnational narrative framework for what might be termed the history of the womb, or the historically significant moments when the cultural landscape of reproduction was altered. With little in the way of thoroughly comparative studies, this framework should be regarded as preliminary, stopping far short of the global framework that is needed. This chapter also aims to join the work of early modern historians with that of historians of more recent centuries to underscore changes over the *longue durée*. In addition to the western European (and eventually US) liberal capitalist context, which have been critiqued by reproductive justice activists and scholars as part of the problem, it is critical to include a nation that pursued alternatives to both capitalism and liberalism. Therefore, the history of reproduction in Russia and the Soviet Union will be incorporated with the western European and US histories.

## Overview

Prior to the advent of interventionist state power and the colonization of the New World, women's reproductive lives constituted a private or local matter, with decisions made on the individual, familial, and small-community levels. The Church, professional medicine, and the state enter this history as agents of influence and control beyond the local village. In the case of the Church, this meant seeking to shape attitudes about female sexuality, sexual behavior within marriage and when, during the course of pregnancy, a soul entered the growing fetus. The reach of the Church authorities never met that of the modern state, often acting on behalf of the economic interests of men, whether slave-owners or physicians (Smith-Rosenberg 1985). Once the womb became a matter of men's economic and national concern, women's reproductive lives became increasingly subject to legislation. Historians have shown that states implemented antinatalist and pronatalist policies in racist and classist efforts to control which women had babies and who was allowed to raise them. In the most brutal instances, US law before the Civil War forced rape upon enslaved women and permitted slave-owners to use their children for labor or sell them for profit. In the US and in European countries at various times during the twentieth century, women who were deemed "unfit" to reproduce according to contemporary notions of genetic hygiene were legally sterilized without their permission, while pronatalist policies made access to birth control illegal for women considered "desirable" mothers by the state. Research by historians of disparate regions supports this general narrative, but within a comparative framework cultural differences can be discerned: the growing presence or decline of midwifery, timing and focus of contraception and abortion laws, and subsequent eugenics programs, the construction of the "maternal ideal" in terms of benefits and limits, the effects of colonization, imperialism, and racial nationalism, and the varieties of resistance and cultural discourses (political and religious) marshalled to challenge gendered governmentality.

## The Premodern Era

Historians of midwifery have demonstrated that prior to the seventeenth century, the world of menses, pregnancy, and childbirth was the sole purview of women (Marland 1993). The knowledge and means to prevent or end pregnancy passed from woman to woman, mother to daughter, sister to sister, midwife to client. Experienced midwives trained apprentices, who learned how to lessen pain during labor, how to deliver babies safely, and how to help a woman recover from childbirth and breast-feed successfully (Banks 1999; Kuxhausen 2013). Midwives also knew recipes for powerful herbal remedies that would induce menstruation in a woman who had missed a period or two and wished to "bring the blood." Before embryology was understood, a woman was not considered pregnant until the moment of "quickening," when she first perceived fetal movement. Evidence suggests that until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, in most places in colonial North America, Europe, and the Russian empire, abortions prior to quickening were attainable without threat of criminal prosecution (Dayton 1991; Reagan 1997; Riddle 1997; McLaren 1984).

Midwives also taught their clients how to prevent pregnancy. Contraceptive technologies changed remarkably little until the late nineteenth century. Options included coitus interruptus, douching with acidic solutions, covering the cervix with sticky preparations, blocking the cervix with natural sponges, and using condoms made from animal intestines (Gordon 2002). As literacy spread, some midwives published their own “how-to” manuals, like Jane Sharp who gathered her knowledge and experience into the six-volume *The Midwives Book, Or, The Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered* (Sharp 1671). As the main providers of reproductive services and information to limit fertility for millennia, midwives were fated to collide with the ambitions of men who recognized the opportunity to improve their profits and power by controlling reproduction. Nina Gelbart puts it plainly: “relations between midwives and authorities, whether religious or secular, have been strained throughout history.” (Gelbart 1998, p. 2)

The Church viewed midwives with suspicion. Two examples follow. In 1484, the Vatican issued a papal bull notorious for its condemnation of witchcraft and magic, effectively endorsing witch hunts. The papal bull also accused some midwives of slaying infants while still in their mothers’ wombs (Ranum and Ranum 1972). Two hundred years later, the Jesuit theologian Thomas Sanchez condemned the contraceptive practice of coitus interruptus, equating it to the sin of masturbation, and the practice of inducing miscarriage. Sanchez denounced both “the woman who takes the potion” and her provider as “guilty of a mortal sin” (Ranum and Ranum 1972, p. 7). Early scholarship on the colonial American context established a narrative of the decline of midwifery and the persecution of midwives; this narrative was projected onto other national contexts in the absence of historical research (Ehrenreich and English 1973). As the body of research on both midwifery and witchcraft grew, this early thesis underwent revision. While the premodern Church cast contraceptive practices as sinful and midwives as potentially dangerous, perhaps even guilty of black magic, midwives as a social category did not find themselves persecuted during the period of witch hunts (Gaskill 2008). Based on existing scholarship, it appears that the general status of midwives did not decline prior to the eighteenth century in most contexts (Marland 1993; Kuxhausen 2013).

### Early Modern Era

In the early modern period, roughly the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the emerging medical fields of obstetrics and gynecology presented midwives with challenges. The competition between male physicians and midwives became fiercest in the American and British contexts, where midwives were forced into the margins or lost their livelihoods altogether. Susan Klepp detailed how male physicians represented pregnancy as a pathological state requiring the assistance of a doctor with formal medical training. This marketing helped physicians gain popularity as birth attendants among white women of means (Klepp 2009). In England, campaigning by physicians and “man midwives” against the supposed ignorance of female midwives had damaging consequences for the profession of midwifery (Harley 1993).

Elsewhere in Europe and eastward in Russia, midwives fared better but found their authority and autonomy diminished. As in Britain and America, male physicians

and medics began to enter the marketplace of birth attendants in France, German-speaking lands, and Russia. However, for various local reasons, they tended not to compete as directly or as fiercely with midwives as in the Anglo contexts (Marland 1993). In German and Russian contexts, many physicians found employment with states, which in turn worked to establish licensing and training programs for midwives. In Russia, to take one example, physicians lobbied the state to become the supervisors of these programs, effectively casting themselves as the authorities and instructors on the subjects of reproduction, pregnancy, and birth (Kuxhausen 2013). In France, a renowned midwife, Madame du Coudray, led a state-funded program to train provincial midwives for which she developed innovative instructional techniques involving leather anatomical models of the pregnant uterus and fetus (Gelbart 1998).

In addition to the rise of professional obstetrical medicine, the eighteenth century witnessed other developments that altered the cultural landscape of reproduction and contraception. Fueled by the passion to categorize knowledge and Enlightenment-era optimism of the human potential to harness nature, statesmen and philosophers became obsessed with how best to manage a nation's resources and economy. The documentation and ranking of social groups ("races"), combined with an ethos that Foucault termed "governmentality," led to aspirations to control reproduction and thus population growth (Foucault 1991). Hecht's scholarship suggests that delayed marriage and the practice of coitus interruptus had the effect of limiting population growth in France during this era, resulting in a population equilibrium that in turn had a positive impact on economic growth. However, contemporaries misjudged the institutional and cultural consequences of fewer births; not only the Church opposed contraception, but Enlightenment thinkers and revolutionaries worried about the impact of family planning, failing to recognize that it was, in Hecht's phrasing, "the ineluctable path to modernity" (Hecht 1999, p. 548). Montesquieu popularized the fear that a decline in the birth rate threatened the well-being of the country. He and other liberal thinkers condemned celibacy and contraception, and the Jacobin Maximilian Robespierre called contraception "the horrible secret means of thwarting nature" (Hecht 1999, p. 539).

Meanwhile, during the revolutionary years in North America, smaller family size (for free whites) became desirable. According to Susan Klepp, this change in mentality is historically significant because it dramatically reversed the colonial era preference for large families as a bulwark against misfortune. Whereas many children were previously seen as a source of wealth, increasingly they were judged a liability for a family seeking to improve their economic status (Klepp 2009). While Klepp gives minor attention to the impact of race on a woman's reproductive options and realities, Dorothy Roberts' and Marie Jenkins Schwartz's research presents a more inclusive and accurate picture of this era. Slave-owners enlisted the help of legislators and physicians, to redefine or legalize the rape of enslaved women and force them to give birth. In these cruel circumstances, enslaved women helped one another as they were able; some ingested abortifacients and induced miscarriage when they preferred this outcome to another pregnancy and birth – much to the consternation of slave-owners (Roberts 1997; Schwartz 2006). These men also sought to limit their responsibility for their enslaved children. For example, in 1662, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed an act specifying that the status of a child, slave or free, would follow that of the mother, codifying that ownership of slaves took precedence over

that of fatherhood (Hening 1823). The men who led nation-states in imperial expansion in the New World sought to increase the European and slave populations in the Americas while diminishing the native American. Spanish, French, and British colonizers brought new diseases, “virgin soil epidemics,” that substantially weakened indigenous populations, thereby leading to further depopulation as a result of warfare (O’Brien 1997).

Thus, the eighteenth century saw the emergence of a public discussion of reproduction and childbirth practices across colonial and early North America, Europe, and as far east as Moscow. The personal business of heterosexual sex, pregnancy, and birth quickly became acceptable topics for public discussion, although sanitized of their bodily nature in many publications. Prior to the eighteenth century, these issues belonged almost exclusively to the community of women. While statesmen, physicians, and philosophers imagined how best to maximize the nation’s resources through women’s reproductive capacity, the “great demographic shift” had already begun on both sides of the Atlantic and would soon spread to other European countries.

### Discourse and Culture 1800–1850

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, English utilitarian philosophers contributed significantly to the expansion of the discourse on birth control. In 1798, Thomas Malthus published his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, in which he theorized that whenever the agricultural yield improved, the surplus would lead to population growth. The only checks upon population growth to his mind were misery and vice (leading to early death) and moral restraint (in the form of abstinence to produce fewer children) (Malthus 1798; Riddle 1997; Hecht 1999). While Malthus himself did not promote the adoption of birth control measures, his theorizing about population stimulated many others in that direction. If population size had a determining effect on the overall economic welfare and strength of a country, it was incumbent upon the state to be concerned with such issues – and to pursue policies that would shape population in accordance with its goals. Jeremy Bentham, with characteristic pragmatism, advised the use of a contraceptive sponge as a more effective means of limiting population growth than preaching periodic abstinence to married couples (Riddle 1997). Francis Place, a radical reformer who associated with Bentham and John Stuart Mill, subscribed to Malthus’s perspective and published the treatise *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population* (1822). In anonymous pamphlets, Place energetically advocated the sponge to working-class women as a more effective means of contraception than condoms (Gordon 2002).

Malthus also influenced utopian socialists elsewhere in Europe and in the US. While utopian socialists rejected Malthus’s grim remedies to solve surplus population crises (war, famine, and other disasters) they tended to accept his call for preventative checks on population growth. In other words, limiting fertility through abstinence and contraception would be an essential component to building an economically sound and socially just society. Some utopian socialists, such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, advocated moral restraint in the form of periodic celibacy; others, such as Charles Fourier, favored free love and vague endorsements of birth control (Hecht



1988). In the less-industrialized United States of the 1840s and 1850s, American utopian socialists became explicit advocates for birth control (Gordon 2002). Robert Dale Owen promoted birth control in his New York newspaper *The Free Enquirer*, while his coeditor, Frances Wright, imported the ideas to an actually existing utopian colony in Tennessee in which she lived (Gordon 2002).

During this same era in the United States, nascent women's rights societies and conferences began to discuss sexual double standards and women's sexuality, which later grew into organized movements for birth control espousing "voluntary motherhood" (discussed in the section "European and US Discourse and Culture, 1850–1900"). Elizabeth Lisle Saxon, vice-president of the National Women Suffrage Association for Tennessee, called out the hypocrisy of prevailing public opinion: "For two thousand years we have preached Christ and practiced Moses, in all our dealings with woman – stoning her to death and letting the man go free" (Gordon 2012, pp. 47–52). In the first half of the nineteenth century, discussion of birth control and sexuality was expanding, but still mainly belonged to the purview of white elites.

### **European and US Legislation, 1800–1850**

While discussions of birth control grew more public and robust, nation-states took actions to impede the spread of birth control and the accessibility of abortion. In 1791, France criminalized abortion, establishing a national prohibition based upon lower courts' local laws. In 1803, Britain passed a national law that made abortion at any time during pregnancy illegal (Riddle 1997). Prior to this legislation, known as the Ellenborough Act, abortions induced before quickening were treated as lesser offenses by the law, if regarded as illegal at all. Under Napoleon, France's laws against abortion became stricter: even attempted abortion became a punishable crime, regardless of the outcome. In the US, some states began to criminalize abortion as early as 1820. None of these early nineteenth-century legislative acts seems to have had much impact, however. Lower courts in Britain continued to overlook abortions performed before quickening. Despite Napoleon's efforts, France's birth rate did not recover (Riddle 1997). In the United States, the abortion business continued to thrive in spite of states' prohibitions (Reagan 1997).

### **European and US Discourse and Culture, 1850–1900**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, physicians in the United States, Europe, and Russia continued to consolidate their influence, eventually supplanting the Church as the authorities on when life began. By mid-century, physicians and the scientific establishment had become the definitive experts on when life begins, basing their determinations on advancements in the science of embryology (Riddle 1997). Medical discourse regarding fetal viability eclipsed the religious lexicon of "ensoulment" beginning with quickening. Nonetheless, the common practice among women and the purveyors of abortions continued as before, recognizing quickening as the defining moment in a pregnancy beyond which abortion became an illegal and sinful

act (McLaren 1990). Given the declining birth rate across much of Europe, Pope Pious IX's explicit opposition to all forms of contraception seems ineffectual at best. In 1869 a Vatican council went further still, declaring all abortions sinful and worthy of excommunication. This did not dissuade women who were desperate to end an unwanted pregnancy; abortion continued to be relied upon as a means of ending unwanted pregnancies even in Catholic countries. In 1880s Paris, for example, over 100,000 women received abortions (Riddle 1997).

In the United States, a new movement in favor of limiting fertility gained momentum in the 1870s. The advocates for "voluntary motherhood" tended to be white, Euro-American middle-class women who believed taming men's sexual appetites would lessen married women's burdens of frequent childbearing. The voluntary motherhood campaign promoted the idea that limiting fertility was a responsible, moral undertaking for couples. As Linda Gordon has shown, proponents of voluntary motherhood worked within existing Victorian expectations for "ladies" and favored periods of voluntary celibacy for married couples (Gordon 2002). Among some suffragists, these ideas resonated; they too promoted periods of celibacy as birth control while leaving Victorian ideals of (white) womanhood unchallenged. Men were sexual beings, while white women submitted dutifully to their husbands' desires. Women of color were effectively excluded from the discourse of voluntary motherhood. Although the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, African American women experienced discrimination at every turn, facing the double burden of being black and female. Some African American families during the Reconstruction era practiced contraception in order to limit family size and increase their educational, economic, and civic opportunities (Roberts 1997).

### **European and US Legislation, 1850–1900**

While birth control gained ever more advocates, its legal status shifted toward greater prohibition in the second half of the nineteenth century in parts of Europe and in the United States. In 1858, Britain promulgated a law barring explicit advertising of birth control products (Brooke 2001). In 1867, the Ellenborough Act underwent a significant revision, establishing that the state had the authority to prosecute a woman for inducing her own abortion. As the nineteenth century progressed, the Ellenborough Act was more strictly enforced (McLaren 1990). In 1871, following Germany's unification, the new constitution banned abortion in what came to be referred to as simply "Paragraph 218" (Grossman 1984). In the United States, male physicians became an increasingly powerful lobby. Taking measures to further professionalize medicine and block competitors from the marketplace, physicians began to incorporate and press their interests through the American Medical Association (AMA) (Gordon 2002). Backed by the AMA, physicians led an antiabortion campaign, deploying racist arguments while challenging the patriotism of voluntary motherhood (Beisel and Kay 2004). Dr. Horatio R. Storer, one of the leaders of the antiabortion movement, warned against allowing the West and the South to be populated by the growing number of immigrants, especially those who were not considered to be part of the American "white" race: "Shall [these regions] be filled by our own children or by those of aliens? This is a question our women must answer; upon their loins depends the future destiny of the nation" (Reagan 1997, pp. 11–12).

By 1880, most states in the US had banned abortion. However, doctors retained the legal capacity to perform abortions when they deemed the procedure medically necessary. This gave doctors a monopoly on providing abortions, putting many midwives out of business. This legislation also restricted legal access to abortion to women with financial means and connections to physicians willing to perform abortion (Reagan 1997). All forms of contraception faced an additional hurdle in the US after the passage of the Comstock Laws of 1873. Promoted by the Society for the Prevention of Vice, these laws prohibited the transmission of information regarding birth control via the US Postal Service (McLaren 1990).

### Russian Comparison

As with the ending of slavery in the US, the emancipation of serfs in Russia in 1864 led to a watershed of social upheaval and change. New institutions of local self-government and social welfare (*zemstva*) sought to supply rural villages with improved women's healthcare. Female physicians were accepted among peasant women, who had always received their healthcare from midwives and female healers (Johanson 1987). Russian women lobbied to be admitted to university medical courses, arguing that the fields of obstetrics and gynecology demanded female physicians, especially in Muslim regions of Russia where women would not submit to an exam by a male physician. State-funded midwifery institutes continued to train midwives. During this period of optimism, many of the country's educated people were attracted to the promise of radical social and economic transformation inherent in Marxism and socialism (Stites 1991). Nikolai Chernyshevsky's popular novel *What Is to Be Done* provided a radical portrayal of womanhood liberated from the duty of motherhood. For Chernyshevsky, the economic independence of women and the subsequent building of socialism, was predicated upon a woman's ability to control her fertility (Chernyshevsky 1863).

### Social Action, 1850–1900

In 1870s Britain, restrictive legislation fueled social action on behalf of legalizing contraceptive information. Socialists Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh challenged obscenity laws in Britain by publishing American Charles Knowlton's contraception pamphlet *The Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*. Besant and Bradlaugh's trial for violating obscenity laws served to publicize the cause of birth control (McLaren 1990). Motivated by the trial, a group of men and women established the Malthusian League in Britain. Working-class women were envisioned as standing to gain the most from readily available, reliable birth control products and the spread of accurate information (Ledbetter 1976).

In other parts of Europe, female physicians stepped up their role in bringing birth control to women. In the Netherlands, Dr. Aletta Jacobs, the first woman to earn an MD at a Dutch university, established the world's first birth control clinic in 1885 (Feinberg 2009). Jacobs, also a leading suffragist, offered free services to poor women and popularized the "Dutch cap," a cervical barrier contraceptive device. In France,

Dr. Madeleine Pelletier assumed a leading role in delivering birth control and reproductive services to women. To Pelletier, the needs of the state to increase the population could never trump a woman's individual right to control her reproductive capacity. Pelletier's determination to provide abortions to poor women put her in conflict with the local authorities for years, leading eventually to her arrest and imprisonment, where she died (Mitchell 1989).

By the end of the nineteenth century, in spite of prohibitive legislation and condemnation by the Catholic Church, cultural and demographic shifts had taken root that made birth control a part of the modern, postindustrial era. As Bonnie Smith put it, by the end of the nineteenth century, abortion and contraception had become "a fact of reproductive life" (Smith p. 347). Culturally, attitudes toward sexuality were changing, with more heterosexual women willing to engage in sex before marriage (Clark 2008). The availability of diaphragms, the cervical cap, and rubber condoms contributed to the growing market in birth control products. By the end of the century, the birth rate had dropped significantly among the working classes of Europe (McLaren 1990).

### **Social Discourse, 1900–1930s**

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, on both sides of the Atlantic, social discourses around eugenics constructed notions of healthy, wanted babies and "abnormal," unwanted babies. In 1883, Francis Galton coined the term eugenics, defining it as a "science" to promote "the more suitable races [over] the less suitable" (Timm and Sanborn 2016, p. 211). Eugenicists across Europe and the US helped to popularize fears that the middle and upper classes were limiting births while the "lower orders" contributed a disproportionately high number of children to the world. The racist and classist ideas found wide reception in a climate fueled by social Darwinism and imperialism; survival of the fittest meant that the promotion of birth control among the poor and "less suitable" was an urgent matter for the state (McLaren 1990). By the early twentieth century, the eugenics movement found adherents in many places: eugenic societies had been established in the US, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, France, Spain, and Italy. While eugenics took different forms in these countries, it consistently stimulated belief in public policy that would strengthen the nation through intervention in the reproductive lives of its citizens, especially those of marginalized women (Spektorowski and Ireni-Saban, 2011).

In the United States, eugenic discourse inflamed a controversy over birth control in the early twentieth century. President Theodore Roosevelt and members of the American Medical Association helped popularize a racist discourse that blamed white women for imperiling the health of the (white) nation by avoiding their duty to reproduce the race. While not new, this racist fearmongering gained visibility and status when the president himself warned that white women who avoided their patriotic duty to procreate were risking the "suicide" of their race. He elided the practice of birth control with cowardly treason: "The woman who flinches from childbirth stands on a par with the soldier who drops his rifle and runs in battle" (McLaren 1990, p. 206; Gordon 2002). Some white suffragists, voluntary motherhood

advocates, and childless, educated women recognized this discourse as an attack on the cultural gains made by middle-class women with respect to education and the right to pursue activities and careers beyond the domestic sphere. Having avoided a strong position on women's sexuality prior to the "race suicide" controversy, the viciousness of Roosevelt's full-throated condemnation of birth control led some activists to speak out explicitly in favor of women's right to limit the number of their children (Gordon 2002). Other white American feminists accepted (or coopted) the eugenic logic at the heart of the race suicide discourse, marketing a new slogan, "fewer but better" in support of educated women's choice to have small families (Gordon 2002, p. 93). Similarly, adherents of the "Talented Tenth" philosophy of W.E.B. Dubois were split. Some outright rejected eugenics and advocated for higher education and access to birth control to gain equal opportunities. Others used the language of eugenics to fight for legal contraception and avoid the dreaded solution of forced sterilization (Roberts 1997; Dorr and Logan 2011). When Margaret Sanger joined the chorus of eugenicists, she harnessed fears among white Americans that poor immigrants and African Americans were having large families while middle-class, white families were shrinking (McLaren 1990). However, Sanger did not subscribe to racist theories of the inferiority of certain groups, but she did employ the discourse of eugenics as a political strategy. This racist discourse promoted contraception and abortion as a mean of managing particular populations rather than as a means of increasing women's autonomy (Roberts 1997).

### **Legal and Social Change, 1900–1930s**

In the early twentieth century in many countries, racist and classist fears about the health of the nation propelled eugenicist theory into horrific actions: sterilization campaigns. In the 1920s US, 30 states adopted sterilization laws; 64,000 "feeble-minded" or "genetically defective" people, disproportionately people of color and poor whites, were forcibly sterilized (Gordon 2002, p. 342). During the same era, sterilization was promoted as effective birth control in Puerto Rico, leading to a regular practice of doctors performing sterilizations on women immediately after childbirth (Roberts 1997; Nelson 2003). Denmark, Sweden, and Finland followed, motivated in part to manage the expenditures of their emerging welfare programs. In Britain, attempts to pass a sterilization law failed (Weindling 1999).

In the US during this same era, a coalition of activists emerged who worked across political and class identities to demand birth control. Between 1914 and 1920, Euro-American feminists, socialists, and liberals united around the belief that the ability to control one's reproductive capacity was an essential component in achieving rights for women. The socialist Emma Goldman led early efforts at challenging the Comstock Laws. Goldman became a mentor to Margaret Sanger, who emerged as the leader of the movement. Effective at organizing and willing to focus on one issue, Sanger coined the term "birth control" in 1915. Following a 1913 trip to France, Sanger marveled at the common knowledge of contraception among working-class women. The time Sanger spent in Europe, including her time with Dr. Aletta Jacobs in Amsterdam, was inspirational for her commitment to building a movement in the US (Gordon 2002). While Euro-American women sought access to birth control,

indigenous women and African American women continued to be subjected to involuntary sterilization (Ross and Solinger 2017).

In England, Marie Stopes emerged as the leader of the birth control movement. Stopes met Sanger in 1913 at one of her lectures on birth control. Like Sanger, Stopes espoused explicitly eugenic rhetoric in pursuit of improved access to birth control for working-class women. A divorced, socialist academic, her widely popular book, *Married Love* (1918), promoted sexual pleasure for women within marriage and included a chapter on contraception. She followed this with a book of more explicit advice on limiting fertility aimed at middle-class, married women; she issued a pamphlet-length summary for working-class women. In 1921, Stopes established the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress, which aimed to reduce births among the “the worst end of our community.” She opened the first birth control clinic in London that same year (McLaren 1990). An international movement of birth control advocates began to emerge. Dr. Madeleine Pelletier corresponded with other leading socialist and radical feminists, continued her work on behalf of birth control access for working-class French women, and visited feminists in communist Russia in 1921 (Huber 2017).

World War I had a tremendous impact on gender roles and the legal status of women. Gender stereotypes about the abilities of women were put to the test as women served as drivers, nurses, and even combatants at the war front, and as they moved into factories and traditionally male occupations on the home front, gaining the vote in some cases. In Russia, the communist October revolution and concomitant rejection of religious gender distinctions, created space to explore how Engels’s discourse on women’s equality would be played out in reality. On the other hand, the tremendous loss of life during the war fueled pronatalist policies as nation-states fretted over demographics in their rebuilding programs, which in most contexts worked against legalizing abortion and improving access to contraception. Jean Pedersen’s research evidences how the French state attempted to stimulate fertility. Tax incentives were meant to encourage larger families, while female forms of contraception were criminalized in an effort to discourage their usage (Pedersen 1996). In Britain during the interwar years, the abortion ban remained in place until 1929, when the law was amended to allow abortions “for the purpose only of preserving the life of the mother” (Brooke 2001). Alice Jenkins, Janet Chance, and F.W. Stella Browne founded the Abortion Law Reform Society in 1936 with the aim of decriminalizing abortion in England when poverty reached into the middle classes (McLaren 1990).

In the United States, grassroots local campaigns for birth control gave way to large, national organizations focused on building clinics and lobbying to repeal legislation. Margaret Sanger’s American Birth Control League and Mary Ware Dennett’s Voluntary Parenthood League led the new era from New York, pursuing large donations through charity balls and fancy dinners (Gordon 2002). The Great Depression proved ripe for eugenic arguments regarding “surplus” populations. Sanger argued in a speech in 1935 that unemployment posed a problem that only birth control could solve. While birth control gained respectability in society, most physicians remained opposed to contraception. The editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* asserted in 1925 that no safe and effective birth control methods existed (Gordon 2002).

World War I also brought the downfall of the last autocracies in Europe; in Russia and Germany, dynastic monarchies collapsed, giving rise to social experiments both governmental and cultural. In Russia, after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, they began top-down programs to liberate women and ethnic minorities from bourgeois, imperialist oppression. Within the Communist Party, a Women's Bureau was established to address all of the barriers to women's social and economic equality (although sexism in the private sphere remained beyond its reach). In 1920, communist Russia became the first country to decriminalize abortion. Alexandra Kollontai, the head of the Women's Bureau, had participated in international conferences on birth control, and wrote in favor of free love and women's right to sexual pleasure as integral to the liberation of women (Goldman 1993). She seems never to have accepted the notion that some women might have chosen to remain childless; she predicted that when women could count on child-care and other economic support from the state, they happily would become mothers (Kollontai 1920). Demographic data shows that fertility fell dramatically after the Bolshevik revolution, though other factors such as civil war, famine, and social unrest contributed to women's choosing to limit their fertility (Mazur 1973; Scherbov and van Vianen 1999).

In Germany, after the Great War and collapse of the monarchy, a cultural and social shift toward experimentation and openness emerged with regard to sexuality. Intellectuals, physicians, and sex reformers promoted the scientific study of sexuality and reform of restrictive laws. Birth control clinics also opened during this era. The physician Magnus Hirschfield established the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin in 1919 (Gordon, 2002). With funding from the new Social Democratic government, Hirschfield's Institute attracted researchers interested in understanding the diversity of sexuality and gender identity. One of Hirschfield's associates, Helene Stöcker, who established the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform, promoted female sexual pleasure, called for sex education and advocated for the legalization of abortion. Along with a coalition of sex reformers, feminists, and socialists, Stöcker lobbied against Paragraph 218, the abortion ban, but failed to achieve a complete repeal (Grossman 1995; Allen 1985).

### **American Racism, Totalitarian Regimes, and Reproductive Policies**

The 1930s in the US, Europe, and the Soviet Union witnessed interventions into reproductive life based on reasons other than the well-being and autonomy of women. During the Great Depression, some American states integrated birth control services into their public health programs. North Carolina was the first state to offer birth control as part of a public health initiative in 1937, followed by six other southern states. These southern states established publicly funded birth control clinics aimed explicitly at reducing fertility among the African American population. Thus, the first state-funded birth control programs in the United States sprang not from efforts to empower women to control their reproductive capacity but developed in the Jim Crow south with the racist goals of limiting the size of the African American population. Roberts, Nelson, and other historians demonstrate that the birth control clinics that emerged in the Jim Crow era in southern states were the

products of enduring eugenics and racism rather than benevolent efforts meant to serve black communities (Roberts 1997; Nelson 2003).

While eugenics found adherents in the United States and elsewhere, the most extreme manifestation of eugenic and racist intervention in women's reproductive lives came from the Nazi state. From 1933 until the end of World War II, German women were subject to Nazi reproductive policies. White German middle-class women had the duty to reproduce the "Aryan" race and were denied contraceptives and abortions in order to fulfill their biological destiny (Koonz 1987). Women who were considered genetically inferior for reasons of race, sexual behavior, or disability faced forced sterilization. As the Nazi campaign against Jewish, gay, Slavic, and disabled people grew, "undesirable" women became targets of violence and rape, and were ultimately prevented from reproducing through brutal mass extermination (Bock 1983).

Other fascist regimes in Europe during the 1920s–1940s also implemented reproductive policies meant to bolster the nation's "desirable" population. Francisco Franco in Spain and Benito Mussolini in Italy sought to repress contraception and abortion and promote large Catholic families (de Grazia 1993). Mussolini, in his outreach to women, offered stipends to mothers who gave birth to many children (Ipsen 1996). In 1930, Pope Pius XI lent his support to these traditional gender regimes with a papal encyclical that condemned women who worked outside of the home and all birth control other than abstinence. Despite these efforts, and although women married at an earlier age, family size in Italy declined between 1916 and 1940 (Smith 1989, p. 462). All the exhortations in propaganda to avoid birth control may have had unintended consequences by advertising that contraception and abortion were in fact options (Szreter, Nye, and van Poppel 2003).

With Stalin's rise to power, the Soviet Union began to turn away from its programs to improve the independence and status of women. In the 1930s, Stalin terminated the Women's Bureau, shifted Kollontai to diplomatic duties abroad, and recriminalized abortion in 1936. To encourage male-headed, large families, divorce became more difficult to secure, child support become more expensive for divorced fathers, and stipends and honors were announced for women who had many children (Goldman 1993). As in other national contexts in the 1930s, Stalin's efforts to engineer a higher fertility rate proved ineffective (Scherbov and van Vianen 1999). While Stalin's Terror eventually targeted specific ethnic groups, resulting in the deaths of millions of innocent people, the extent to which his population policies were informed by eugenic or racist thinking is still subject to debate (Weitz 2002).

### **The 1960s: Cultural Revolution and the Pill**

The 1960s ushered in cultural revolutions that loosened the barriers to social change with respect to birth control, including abortion. In Europe and in the United States, youth movements and a new generation of feminists began questioning and challenging political authority and the supposed wisdom passed down through Western civilization. A culture of protest sprang up; frustrated young people and left-leaning philosophers interrogated the logic behind the policies of states on war, imperialism, racism and gender relations. In France, the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's



*The Second Sex* (1949) created a new paradigm for examining gender and other forms of oppression; her concept of the Other created a language for critiquing (European) male-centrism and hegemony. In the United States, the Civil Rights movement challenged racist laws and institutions, while on college campuses students protested the United States' continued participation in the Vietnam War. African American women activists faced the double challenge of pursuing reproductive justice for women while working with men to seek social and political justice for all people of color (Nelson 2003). In the UK, rock music became a hallmark of a relaxed youth culture around sexual expression, which spread to the US and across Europe, even into the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union through underground networks. Students in Western Europe staged political protests of their government's support of Third World dictators, suppression of left-wing activism, and the continuation of colonialism. Within this heady atmosphere, movements for "women's liberation" developed in the United States, Italy, France, and Great Britain (Timm and Sanborn 2016). In the United States, feminists in Chicago organized to create an underground network of abortion providers code-named "Jane," while other feminists joined forces to establish the National Abortion Rights Action League in 1969 (Kaplan 1995).

The 1960s also brought the development of the first new contraceptive method since the development of rubber condoms more than a century before. The formulation of synthetic hormones led to the invention of the contraceptive pill by American Gregory Pincus. "The pill" was approved for use in the US in 1960 but did not become legal until a landmark Supreme Court decision in 1965 (Gordon 2002). The pill became legally available in Britain and West Germany in the early 1960s and in most northern and western European countries by the early 1970s. Dictatorships created delays in Portugal and Spain where the pill became legal only after their collapse in 1976 and 1978 respectively. In Ireland, Catholic cultural hegemony prevented the legalization of the pill until 1980 (Gordon 2002).

### **The (Re)Legalization of Abortion in the Late Twentieth Century**

In 1955, after Stalin's death, abortion became legal again in the Soviet Union. For the rest of Europe and the United States, it would take at least another decade to bring significant liberalization of abortion laws. Between 1965 and 1975, abortion was decriminalized in the US and most of Europe, suggesting that the historical context of the 1960s–1970s in the West played a role in weakening resistance to the liberalization of access to abortion. In Britain, the early efforts of Marie Stopes and other birth control advocates came to fruition in 1967. To finally achieve legalization, feminist activists compromised with the British medical establishment, which retained its control over the procedure (Brookes 2013). In East Germany, abortion became legal in 1972. While the East German state referenced communist-friendly concerns like public health and humanitarianism, Donna Harsch notes that the language of the reform also echoed that of women's liberation in Western Europe and the US (Harsch 1997). In the United States, feminists shifted their discourse around abortion to emphasize the "right of self-determination" (Gordon 2002). In the US, pressure to reform abortion legislation also came from professionals, especially doctors, many

of whom had been providing “therapeutic abortions” in private settings and felt increasing pressure to align medical practice and law. By the time of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, 17 states in the US had already legalized abortion, indicating that the tide had begun to turn in favor of reform (Gordon 2002). In its decision, the Supreme Court recognized that common law in England had permitted abortions before quickening for more than a thousand years (Riddle 1997). Denmark legalized abortion in 1973; Sweden in 1974. In France, abortion became legal in 1975 after lobbying by a wide range of organizations and political parties (Stetson 1986). Abortion was legalized in West Germany in 1976, but with more restrictions than in East Germany. (After the fall of communism and reunification of Germany, more liberal abortion law prevailed in 1992.) Italy liberalized its abortion laws in 1978, but many physicians refused to perform abortions, creating a chasm between the legality of abortion and its accessibility. Finally, in Spain, abortion became legal in 1985, but only in cases of rape, severe fetal defects, or significant threat to maternal health (Acosta 2015). Meanwhile, during the 1970s and 1980s, African American and indigenous women worked to successfully overturn forced sterilization laws from the 1920s and place the focus on their right to have and to raise children. In some cases, states have allocated compensation for the harm caused (Lawrence 2000; Severson 2011).

### 1990s and Later

Building upon the work of activists in previous eras, like the National Council of Negro Women in 1973 and the National Black Women’s Health Project in 1984, women of color activists in the 1990s challenged the premise of “choice” then at the heart of reproductive rights organizations led by white women. These activists, led by Loretta Ross, Luz Rodriguez, and the members of SisterSong, began to articulate a critique of “Pro Choice” reproductive politics. Their critique questions the notion that “freedom of choice” represented the reproductive needs, realities, and histories of women of color and their communities. The freedom of choice assumed the privilege of having access to birth control clinics geographically and financially. This political discourse also erased the centuries of slavery and forced reproduction and separation from children that African American women endured. Like enslaved women, native women also endured forced separation from their children, during the era of involuntarily boarding schools and forced assimilation. The choice discourse also overlooked the racism and forced sterilization of the postemancipation, Reconstruction era in US history, which affected women of color disproportionately. In place of choice, these women of color activists envisioned a new concept: reproductive justice. This new conceptualization recast the framework of reproductive rights from one of individual choice, to one that acknowledges the impact of institutional reproductive policies on communities and structural racism (Ross and Solinger 2017).

True reproductive justice, they argue, will be achieved when all women and their communities have access to affordable reproductive healthcare, housing, work that pays a living wage, and the means to raise children in a healthy environment. The Reproductive Justice movement insists upon inclusive goals for all organizations

claiming to work on behalf of reproductive rights. Since the 1990s, the ongoing work of activists and scholars has produced pathbreaking scholarship that challenges historians of reproduction to employ intersectionality and an inclusive lens. In addition, new organizations by and for women of color continue to emerge, including the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, New Voices for Reproductive Justice and SisterLove (Ross and Solinger 2017).

In 1994, the United Nations hosted the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. At this conference, 179 member nations signed an agreement on a newly formulated statement on reproductive rights. Moving well beyond the 1966 United Nations Declaration on Population by World Leaders, which first recognized control over one's reproductive capacity as a basic human right, the new definition included the right to information to make informed decisions free from discrimination, coercion, or violence, and "the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health." Although the 1994 definition stopped short of the expansive conceptualization of "reproductive justice" to include a living wage and housing, the conference grew into an organization, the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), which pursues a range of programs far more expansive than the "freedom of choice." For example, the UNPF's strategic plan for the years 2018–2019 sets as its central goals to "achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realize reproductive rights, and reduce maternal mortality." The strategic plan recognizes reaching global gender equality and the eradication of poverty as mutually interdependent with its central goals focused on sexual and reproductive health. (UNPF 2017).

Recent scholarship studied abortion access and safety around the world between 2010 and 2014. Scholars found that at the end of 2014, 26 countries in the world banned abortion completely. Thirty-seven countries permitted abortion only when necessary to save a pregnant woman's life. Thirty-six countries restricted abortion unless a pregnant woman's physical health was threatened; three of these are European countries: Poland, Lichtenstein, and Monaco. For the five years of the study, a total of 55.7 million abortions were performed. Of these, the researchers found that 25.1 million did not meet the standards for "safe" abortions. The study concluded that a correlation exists between countries with legislative bans on abortions and the least safe abortions (Ganatra et al. 2017).

## Conclusion

While there is considerable diversity across and within these regions, generalizations are possible. First, women had a near monopoly on reproductive care and services prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, before physicians began to pursue their professional interests at the expense of midwives' and women's autonomy. Second, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, women were their own authorities on whether pregnancy had reached viable status, beyond which termination could be problematic. Third, in capitalist countries, in order to overturn criminalization of contraception and abortion, feminists often had to accept compromises with the medical establishment that allowed physicians to retain their control over birth control. Fourth, the history of the womb as public space is tied inextricably to the history

of eugenics in most countries. Lastly, with some exceptions, socialists proved more radical advocates for reproductive rights than other progressives; communist countries, with few exceptions, legalized abortion earlier than capitalist countries. However, it is in countries with democracy and a free press that women from marginalized communities have been able to raise awareness about forced contraception and redefine “reproductive justice” to include the right to raise children in healthy environments.

In the twenty-first century, challenges to reproductive rights continue. In countries in which right-wing governments have promoted conservative agendas, these rights are seriously threatened. Poland has restricted abortion dramatically since the fall of communism and the resurgence of Catholic authority, while in Russia birth control and abortion have become increasingly subject to the demographic goals of Putin’s state, making their accessibility less consistent and reliable (Temkina 2015). In the US, conservative organizations have successfully pursued legislation on the state level that restricts access to birth control. Poor women and marginalized women continue to suffer the most in contexts of restricted access. The history of the womb as public terrain shows that rarely have states acted explicitly on behalf of women’s self-defined interests, but it also shows that coalitions of advocates can effectively press for legislation and medical care that protects reproductive rights.

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# 9

## Gender and Disability Studies

LINDA M. BLUM

The interdisciplinary field of disability studies emerged from disability rights activism in the 1970s and 1980s to contest the medicalizing of varied forms of bodily difference and impairment as abnormal, deformed, or deficient. Disability scholars sought to valorize the agency and experiences of those living with such differences, as activists sought political voice, demanding access and services rather than simply to be “fixed” or institutionalized. An initial theoretical intervention of social constructionism therefore argued for the social model, with structural inequality, discrimination, and hostile cultural norms causing barriers to access rather than, as in the medical model, biological impairment itself leading to the loss of a meaningful life (e.g. Davis and Linton 1995, among many). The social model proved especially effective for activists tackling issues of built environments and educational exclusion. It also led to a proliferation of theory, life writing, creative expression, and studies of cultural representation and half-hidden histories. As a result, historians Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky point out, the locus of disability studies has come to reside in the humanities (2001, p. 13). But as a qualitative-ethnographic sociologist, my objective in this chapter is to create greater conversation between humanists and social scientists who have engaged deeply with gender studies, feminist and queer theories because gender is so central to the way we understand embodiment and the sorting of normative and nonnormative bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Gender is also central to how we understand modern citizenship or the right to full personhood and status as a legal social member. I organize much of this chapter around the gender divide because challenging the able-bodied, able-minded standard by which liberal democracies deemed adult men and women fit for rights and opportunities has been arguably more central to disability activism and scholarship than deconstructing the gender binary itself. Ideal citizens from the earliest democratic theories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were based on white Northern European men, their capacity for autonomous, rational action, and their ability to be self-sufficient, and to labor, enter contracts, and acquire property. White European



women, in contrast, originally contributed to the nation only insofar as they were fit mothers, deemed able to bear and rear the next generation of self-determining, productive citizens. Contemporary disability scholars have demonstrated the persistence and reach of this early able-bodied, able-minded standard. US historian Douglas Baynton, for example, emphasized that not only did disability make one an unfit citizen, but discourses of disability and defective citizenship were employed to defend slavery and to fuel antisuffragist and anti-immigration sentiments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (2001). Similarly, Australian disability studies scholar Fiona Kumari Campbell writes that in Western or Global North nations: “ability has been used as a conceptual sledgehammer to determine and shape social status” (2015, p. 12); or as US humanists Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell put it, disability has been a “master trope of human disqualification” (2006, p. 125).

The disability rights movements that developed among the Global North nations in the late twentieth century gave the initial rise to disability scholarship. Such movements were modeled after the US Civil Rights Movement to contest this status of diminished personhood. As historian Paul Longmore maintained, this initial chapter, culminating in legal gains across the Western democracies, led to another stage in the 1990s in which disability studies’ place in the academy became firmly established, with objectives to build collective identity and positive disability culture (2003). More recently, Rachel Adams has noted that “a third, and overlapping phase” in disability studies has emerged “in which tensions and conflicts come to the surface,” yet are signs of the field’s vitality (2013, p. 496). In this chapter I emphasize the latter stages of rapid development and address the tensions and conflicts around intersections of disability with gender and other forms of structural inequality and power. I agree with Adams that the latter stages overlap, so delineating a neat chronology would oversimplify complex conversations. Instead, this chapter is organized around the overlapping or simultaneous conversations in which scholars of gender and disability studies continue to be engaged. Such conversations are often separate, with scholars focusing on different sides of the binary of gendered citizenship, but also divided between humanists and social scientists and those considering divergent forms of impairment.

### **The Emergence of a Formal Category, with Manhood at Stake**

The category of disability itself remains unwieldy with its boundaries contested among disability studies scholars. Yet as social scientists pointed out in the 1980s, our definitions fundamentally rely on government policy and “disability is essentially whatever public laws and programs say it is” (Hahn 1987, p. 182; also Scotch 1984). This formal or legal designation has been quite narrow and primarily based on determining men’s fitness. I thus take up masculine citizenship first only because this was the first basis of federal policy in the US and the other Global North nations. The impetus for such law and policy arose from late nineteenth and early twentieth century debates on immigration and citizenship rights for the numerous working-class men in expanding industries; and lawmakers turned to the newly consolidated, ostensibly objective authority of scientific medicine to legitimate sorting by embodied ability, health, and fitness. In the US and Canada, anxieties about unfit immigrants

burdening and polluting the “native” stock particularly fueled desires to exclude – but among the Western democracies as a whole, at issue was the extent of public resources owed to working-class men impaired while contributing to nation-building through military service or industrial labor.

Disability historians have illuminated this linkage between disability and masculine citizenship in the US, documenting how those who had been independent family breadwinners sought, both individually and collectively, “to be men again,” once again “respectable,” and “men among men” when thrown into feminized dependency (Blind Veterans of America cited in Gerber 2001, p. 323). Veterans’ benefits and workmen’s compensation provided income replacement, medical treatment, and vocational training, thereby initiating the sorting of those deemed morally worthy from those cast as undeserving of public assistance – though far more in the US than in the expansive European welfare states (Skocpol 1992, among many). Such judgments of the “deserving” disabled often rested on thinly veiled ethnoracial divides casting even those from outside Northern Europe as suspect, particularly if Catholic or Jewish; for individual men, however, this meant proving they were neither feigning impairment nor concealing their own responsibility for injuries. Labor unions and veterans’ organizations resisted such limitations and struggled for greater benefits, but claims by men of color or “not quite white” ethnicities still tended to be dismissed, their injuries blamed on either “congenital weakness” or “willful misconduct” (Hickel 2001, pp. 237, 250, 256).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, benefits were miserly and even white men considered worthy lost status, falling closer to the subject position of dependent women and children. As Williams-Searle notes, “manly identity [was] based on bodily wholeness and financial independence” (2001, p. 160).

Contemporary studies of disabled men,<sup>3</sup> though less focused on citizenship, legal status, and the state, nonetheless find that such norms of masculinity remain hegemonic and difficult to negotiate. US sociologist Thomas Gerschick, with Adam Miller, interviewed men with mobility impairments, concluding that while many remain reliant on such ideals, even putting themselves at risk by pushing their bodily limits, some may reformulate or resist the hegemonic ideals (Gerschick and Miller 1994; Gerschick 1998). In the UK Tom Shakespeare, also a sociologist, made a similar argument in an exploration of sexuality among physically disabled men (1999). From these first studies of the disability experiences of men as gendered, many more have followed, insightfully reviewed in recent essays by US humanist Margaret Torrell (2013) and by Australian social scientists Russell Shuttleworth, Nikki Wedgwood, and Nathan Wilson (2012). Both assessments agree that the friction between hegemonic masculinity and disability, while difficult for individual men, can be culturally productive, opening up possibilities to recompose masculinities in more open, flexible, and fluid directions. Shuttleworth, Wedgwood, and Wilson caution, however, that this work seriously neglects the unwieldy heterogeneity of impairments, tending to focus narrowly on men with spinal cord injuries or amputations facing the biographical disruption of disability in adulthood. Shuttleworth et al. write that this unrecognized preference, though resting on empathy, is also ableist and gendered, concerned only with those who were once “real” men (2012, p.183). They do not go on to reflect, however, that the narrowed focus also echoes the historical legacy of deeming only some the “deserving” disabled.

Disability historians have demonstrated that “deserving” was originally defined not only by ethnoracial assignment and citizenship; it was also based on those who had once been “real” men according to the hegemonic ideal, contributing to the nation’s vigor and impaired in that service, like the worker who lost a limb to heavy machinery or the soldier blinded or crippled in battle. Yet those with less visible injuries challenged such perceptibility, like the World War I veterans with what was termed “battle fatigue” or “shell shock,” few of whom received benefits (Hickel 2001). Vietnam and Iraqi war veterans similarly contested the boundaries excluding posttraumatic stress disorder (Smith 2006). Most interdisciplinary disability scholars, however, have taken little notice of such past historical challenges, or of their rediscovery by contemporary historians, and continue to define disability narrowly as clearly marked physical or sensory impairment (though see Morrison and Casper 2012). Put differently, visibility has remained the field’s central frame or register, with disability still thought of in terms of wheelchairs, leg braces, prosthetic limbs, guide dogs, and canes. Disability studies has thus also largely ignored the now most prevalent though perhaps most ambiguous of gendered disability categories, the rising rates of invisible social-emotional-behavioral impairments disproportionately diagnosed among young boys.

### **Feminist Disability Studies, Humanities, and Social Sciences**

As disability rights movements promoted the emergence of disability studies, feminist movements created space for the development of feminist scholarship in the academy. Feminist social scientists then began to bring attention to women’s gendered experiences of disability, exploring their “double handicap” in the 1980s (Deegan and Brooks 1985, also Fine and Asch 1988). Such experiences had been less formally categorized historically, with women’s citizenship tied to home and family rather than to the public spheres of productive employment, breadwinning, and military service. Dependence and unpaid reproductive labor remained normative for women as long as that dependence remained privatized within male-headed households (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Malacrida 2007, among many). Initially feminist scholarship was, therefore, mainly compensatory, describing women’s half-hidden experiences of disability; but richer feminist work scrutinizing the intersections of normative femininity with the gender system and what has been named “the ability-disability system” has emerged since.

In the following, I discuss the two major, though separate streams of this recent intersectional work. I first take up conversations among feminists in the humanities demonstrating the conceptual significance of disability as a missing dimension of feminist theorizing. I then turn to those in the social sciences, working in distinct conversations to understand the gendered work of care and how disability figures in the lives of diverse families. I detail the tensions between humanist and social science approaches to care work in families, to engagements with medicalization, and to the forms of disability of central concern. Yet despite these tensions, both streams agree that disability ought to have a more central place in gender studies.

### Humanists engaging and challenging feminist theory

Pathbreaking feminist philosopher Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has argued since the mid-1990s that disability ought to figure more centrally in feminist theorizing. Though feminist theory powerfully analyzes how gendered identities, practices, and structures are co-constructed by race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, Garland-Thomson calls for the full integration of what she labeled the “ability/disability system” into our theories of intersectionality (2011[2002]). She therefore named “feminist disability studies” a field in its own right in two widely cited essays, publishing these in the major interdisciplinary feminist journals, the first in 2002 in the *National Women’s Studies Association Journal*, the second in 2005 in *Signs*. Each essay not only called for more work to be done, but as she emphasized in a 2011 postscript, brought together or “recruit[ed]” texts that “would not have known to call themselves feminist disability studies” to begin to create a legitimating “archive” (2011, p. 43).

For Garland-Thomson, disability centers on the visual, the visibility of embodiment, and the gendered politics of appearance. Citing the utility of “theoretical intertextuality” (2011, p. 34), Garland-Thomson coined the important term “the stare” to complicate feminist film theory’s notion of the male gaze and its constitutive role in women’s sexual objectification in the visual politics of compulsory heterosexuality (e.g. Mulvey 1975). For Garland-Thomson, staring is constitutive in “producing disability identity” (2011, p. 34; 2009). Yet, like treatments of men, masculinities, and impairment, this focus on appearance and the visual excludes those with less perceptible signs of impairment.<sup>4</sup>

Also from the humanities, Ellen Samuels ponders the influence of Judith Butler, preeminent queer, postmodern theorist whose pivotal concepts of embodied fluidity and gender performativity are often understood as denying the materiality of the body and ignoring disability and the work of disability scholars. Because the lens of disability attends to both social construction and materiality, Samuels slyly observes that feminist disability studies, “can’t think with her, can’t think without her,” citing the well-known rejoinder: “What about the materiality of the body, Judy?” (2011, pp. 63, 61). Samuels challenges Butler and others drawing from her framework to: “account for the disabled body in your work, not as a metaphor or sign for gender, but in all its real complexity” (2011, p. 64). At the same time, Samuels encourages feminist disability scholars like Garland-Thomson to more directly engage with Butler because their arguments on the powerful cultural binary systems saturating bodies with meaning have close parallels (though Samuels cautions that ability/disability and gender systems should never be wholly conflated). Yet like Samuels, Garland-Thomson has criticized postmodern feminist constructs of embodiment – most notably Donna Haraway’s ironic embrace of the human-machine cyborg – for treating bodies as textual, with a “metaphorical invocation”: “Erasing real disabled bodies from the history of these terms compromises the very critique they intend to launch” (2011[2002], p. 21). In a quite different venue, nonetheless, Judith Butler has engaged with disability rights activist Sunaura Taylor for a segment of the documentary film *Examined Life*. The segment, with Butler and Taylor in her wheelchair walking in San Francisco discussing ableism and independence, went viral on social media (IMDb 2008, Sharma 2014). Here Butler’s inclusivity shares

with disability studies the narrowed category of the perceptible, “deserving” disabled, walking with Taylor, a highly articulate young Euro-American woman who operates her wheelchair with seeming ease in the physically accessible streets of gentrified, hip neighborhoods.

### **Gender, families, and disability studies in the social sciences**

Rather than the visual, representational, and conceptual concerns of humanists, feminists in the social sciences largely engage with disability through the study of families (in all their diversity) and relations of gendered caregiving and interdependence. Gendered norms and institutional arrangements, such scholars point out, continue to locate women’s citizenship in relations of care, the responsibility for the nation’s health, and the rearing of its next generation of virtuous, contributing citizens. This leads feminist social scientists to explore how both mothers with disabilities and mothers raising children with disabilities negotiate the institutions and ideologies that sort fit from unfit womanly citizens, those selflessly devoted from those selfish, lazy, or immoral. Both mothers living with impairment and those raising such children disrupt dominant norms and practices, threatening to burden or impair the social body with their own and/or their children’s dependency.

Feminist research in social science as well as in related practice fields reveals the increased gendered care work, paid and unpaid, in families with children with disabilities. Such work has detailed the disproportionate impact on women, the accompanying stigma and persisting forms of mother-blame, and the skillfulness required to advocate for services and deal with authoritative professionals in educational, healthcare, and state social service sectors (e.g. Blum 2007, 2015; Gray 2002, 2003, Green 2003, 2007, Landsman 2008; Leiter 2004; Litt 2004; Malacrida 2003; Mauldin 2016; Singh 2004). Such work also demonstrates the difficulties for combining concerted advocacy and care work with paid employment (e.g. Blum 2015; Leiter et al. 2004; Rogers 2007; Scott 2010). Sociologist Valerie Leiter instructs that the first wave of disability rights activism in North America was actually conducted by mothers on behalf of their impaired children; such middle-class mothers acted in the decades prior to the second wave of feminism and also prior to the larger-scale disability activism which was sometimes referred to as the Independent Living movement. The later movement was largely a movement by and for disabled adults (on Independent Living, Kelly 2016, among many). The first wave movement included mothers of children with physical, sensory, and developmental or intellectual disabilities (the latter referred to as “mental retardation” until quite recently). First wave activists sought community-based services to avoid placing children in residential institutions, the only alternative prior to the 1960s. Access to public schooling was their signal achievement, established in the US through federal legislation in 1975 guaranteeing “a free appropriate public education” and mandating special education provisions as supports, to keep each child, insofar as possible, within mainstream classrooms (Leiter 2004).<sup>5</sup> Yet much of the research on mothers’ lived experiences reveals that the inclusivity promised in the legislation has seldom been fully realized. In fact, with the rise of neoliberal politics embracing a volatile, high-stakes economy and a rejection of government protections, “good” mothers are expected to take “personal responsibility,” each for their own child, rather than

advocate for inclusion as a public good – and this within educational systems struggling with tight budgets and increased accountability standards (e.g. Blum 2015; Rogers 2007).

Mothers with disabilities also disrupt or violate gender norms of selfless feminine caregiving, not because of their children's needs, but because of their own needs for assistance or support, needs exacerbated by hostile policies and built environments. In the past, nation-states attempted to simply prevent such "unfit" women from having children through institutionalization and forced sterilization (e.g. Carey 2009); and contemporary scholars find a persistence of such attitudes, if in somewhat veiled forms.<sup>6</sup> Canadian sociologist Claudia Malacrida found, for example, that disabled mothers receiving "needed and wanted" home care services were vulnerable to surveillance, interventions, even challenges to maintaining the custody of their children (2009, p. 746). Malacrida argues that the alternative networks of support created by mothers ineligible for funded services, or for sufficient services, offer better models of dependency as a source of "strength, connection, and identity" (2007, p. 489). Malacrida compared those living with a range of more and less perceptible disabilities, finding that those with cognitive-intellectual impairments faced greater threats to their parental rights (2007). In a related vein, US sociologist Angela Frederick focused on the public discrimination faced by mothers with perceptible physical and/or sensory disabilities, finding those with blindness facing the greatest risk (2017a, 2017b). Frederick discovered that the public "performing [of] motherhood is an act of [everyday] resistance in itself" to the "imperative of childlessness" facing disabled women, a performance particularly effective when accompanied by the display of class and race privilege (2017b, p. 133, 2017a). Finally, Heather Dillaway and Catherine Lysack explored the reproductive health experiences of women with spinal cord injuries, finding that they receive contradictory messages about having children and have difficulty accessing gynecological care, being thought of as questionable as both mothers and sexual partners (2014, 2015).

### **Tensions surrounding care and caregiving**

Rather than the feminist social science approach to revaluing motherhood and gendered ethics of care, many humanist disability studies scholars and activists are troubled by care. They are concerned with histories of abuse and dehumanization in the name of care as well as with the persisting denial of agency and unnecessary medicalization that compromises the autonomy of those living with impairments (e.g. Linton 1998; Longmore 2003). Christine Kelly, a Canadian health sciences scholar, cogently locates the origin of this divide in second-wave disability activism, that is, in the Independent Living movements in the US, UK, and Canada; the movements argued, "We do not need care!" to reject the passivity and infantilism of the sick role at a time when living outside residential institutions was new (2016, pp. 5, 113). But humanities scholars who reject care, according to Kelly, wittingly or unwittingly exclude those with less autonomy and contribute to a "hierarchy of impairments," valuing the (masculine-typed) rationality and relative independence of adults with physical impairments over a stronger alliance with those with intellectual-cognitive impairments or complex medical needs, as well with disabled children, their families, and caregivers (Kelly 2016, pp. 40, 111). This tends to position disability studies as

antagonistic to parents and those studying parents, particularly those, including myself, who speak of care as also a form of intimate labor or of care “burdens.” Although we are primarily critical of the political relations and institutions structuring families’ experiences, for humanists our approach adds to the exclusion of disabled people’s voices and amplifies troubled histories of pity and abuse (Kelly 2016).

Kelly finds at the core of these tensions the framing and treatment of paid care workers – overwhelmingly women from the Global South working in Global North nations for extremely low pay. A large literature in feminist social science demonstrates that such workers, who constitute a growing “global care chain,” are easily exploited due to the gendered and racialized informality of employment, with its isolation in private homes and lack of legal protections, particularly for those without citizenship or permanent residency status (Hochschild 2000; also Glenn 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Parrenas 2001, among many). Many transnational care workers, ironically, must leave their own children and families behind (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). Both Kelly (2016) and disability theorist Nirmala Erevelles (2011) criticize disability studies for its near-complete lack of attention to this research on global inequality and the need for worker rights.<sup>7</sup> But Kelly fully details the collision with disability rights and the neoliberal state through an empirical case study of those receiving home care services in Ottawa. She illustrates that disabled client “consumers” benefit from policies empowering them as experts on their own needs, trusted to select and manage their care workers; yet this tends to cast attendants as simply “arms and legs” on par with service animals and assistive technologies (2016, pp. 6 n2, 129). Client “self-managers” also cultivate informality because they understandably do not wish their homes to feel like workplaces; yet, this reinforces the neoliberal state’s insistence on contingent, flexible labor rather than professionalized or unionized workers valued for their skills. Paradoxically, it also often leaves disabled clients short of needed assistance and skilled support (2016, p. 139).

A feminist ethics of interdependence based on the experiences – and ubiquity – of people, families, and alternative communities living with disability would seem an important extension of earlier emphases in feminist theory;<sup>8</sup> it would valorize the relationality, the paid and unpaid care, needed to challenge such neoliberal individualism, with its ideals of relentlessly productive citizens unencumbered by either the bodily or emotional needs for/of others. And this is often acknowledged by feminists in the humanities such as Judith Butler in her viral video (IMDb 2008; Sharma 2014) and by disability scholars such as Alison Kafer (2013). Kafer indeed writes that we need a “political/relational model of disability” precisely because “disability is experienced in and through relationships; it does not occur in isolation” (2013, p. 8). And this is political in her account because it will require the kind of institutional change suggested by many in the social sciences (2013, pp. 8–9). Yet, there is little engagement with feminist social science; and families and parents are treated either in the abstract or at an extreme, as in Kafer’s lengthy discussion of Ashley X, the young girl whose parents subjected her to much-debated medical and surgical interventions. Ashley’s parents, who defend their decisions in an online blog entitled “Pillow Angel,” sought controversial growth attenuation treatment to ensure that they could continue to care for their profoundly impaired daughter at home (2013, pp. 52, 54). Kafer explicates the many disturbing aspects of such “treatment,” its “slippery

expansiveness,” its reliance on ostensibly objective medical authority, and its deeply gendered basis in Ashley’s “future femaleness,” her future fertility and sexuality, “deemed excessive and inappropriate,” even “grotesque” (2013, pp. 59, 55). Kafer also rightly calls out the unnamed suspicion of paid care workers, their dangerous other-ness because outside the nuclear family (2013, p. 62), and citing African American legal scholar Patricia Williams, the racialized class privilege allowing Ashley X to be romanticized as the “pillow angel” (2013, p. 66). Yet for all that, the case of Ashley X paints a rare, dramatic picture of familial care. Though it should not be set aside as a “spectacular anomaly” (Kafer 2013, p. 67), it is far from the mundane lived experiences and engagements with biomedicine of the vast majority of families dealing with disability largely ignored in suspicions over care.

### **Invisible, em-brained disorders and mundane engagements with biomedicine**

Feminist sociologists have much to contribute in understanding the proliferation of mundane gendered engagements with biomedicine, as many have focused on the burgeoning of invisible, social-emotional-behavioral “em-brained” disabilities among children rather than on the Independent Living model of disability rights among visibly disabled adults. The term “em-brained,” from sociologist Victoria Pitts-Taylor (2010), signals the rise of neuroscientific authority and its alignment with neoliberalism in the privatized imperative to manage and optimize brain functioning and development, a charge she acknowledges falls mainly to mothers. The diagnoses of such impairments attributed to relatively subtle differences in the brain’s hard-wiring or its neurochemical balance, considered in the mild to moderate range of impairment, have increased rapidly since the 1990s, but are mainly ignored by disability studies.<sup>9</sup> While some like Kafer and philosopher Kim Hall do briefly acknowledge the exclusion of psychiatric or mental impairment and call for equivalent rejection of “compulsory able-mindedness,” this call remains unexplored and refers primarily to adults. As Kafer admits, “I have only just begun to scratch the surface of what able-mindedness might mean” (2013, p. 16).<sup>10</sup>

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most prevalent of the invisible, em-brained disabilities;<sup>11</sup> but also included in the increased diagnoses are autism spectrum disorders, other conduct, learning, and mood disorders (comprised of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and the like). Cultural studies of autism may be emerging as a distinct subfield, in part a response to demands for neurodiversity from autistic self-advocates who reject the search for medical cures at the same time as they accept the medical-neuroscientific diagnosis (Murray 2008, Nadesan 2005, among others).<sup>12</sup> Like those in cultural studies, I argue similarly that the invisible disabilities, taken together, are both real, embodied, *and* cultural inventions specific to our time and place (Blum 2015, p. 7). Feminist sociologists studying mothers raising children with such disabilities indeed find the medical-neuroscientific model is widely accepted, though wedded to revised cultural forms of mother-blame and understandings of the brain itself. That is, the direct blame of the earlier psychoanalytic models making overly detached “refrigerator” or overly involved “smothering” mothers the direct cause of children’s disorders – with the mind thought of as deeply interior and reflexive – has largely been replaced by proximate blame for falling



short of the neoliberal standard of relentless optimization of children's brains as superprocessing mechanisms or operating systems (Blum 2015; also Malacrida 2003; Singh 2004).

Few have made the engendering of these youths or of the burgeoning disorders a central analytic focus (exceptions include Blum 2015; Leiter and Rieker 2012; Singh 2003). From cultural studies, however, Jordynn Jack insightfully details how gender has thoroughly shaped popular narratives about autism; these, she argues, currently frame it as the "extreme male brain," linked to the rise of the male computer geek and to largely discredited theories of fetal testosterone exposure (2014). Majia Nadesan adds that it is no coincidence to find this popular narrative about boys and fascination with technical prowess just as manly status (for white men in Global North nations) has been destabilized in the service and innovation-based economy (2005).<sup>13</sup> I discovered in my research that mothers, in addition to the extensive negotiation with educational and healthcare systems left aside by cultural studies, described strategies to inculcate greater masculine body capital to protect sons with a range of social-emotional-behavioral diagnoses from frequent victimization by peers; yet such protective strategies also serve to police gender boundaries. Those few with similarly diagnosed daughters instead described greater layers of cultural invisibility (2015). My research also highlights the need for further feminist intersectional analyses, with masculine embodiment and disability labels in the US carrying different implications for those raising sons of color, a point I return to in the section "The Whiteness of Disability Studies and the Need for Global and Intersectional Perspectives" (2011, 2015).

Feminist sociologists, in addition, demonstrate arguments made more abstractly by humanities-based disability studies scholars for selective engagement with biomedical technologies. Alison Kafer, for example, argues, following other emerging critiques of the strong social model, that those who identify with disability rights may still want to engage with Western biomedicine (though Kafer seems to have only the engagement of autonomous adults in mind). Just as feminist scholars have moved past earlier arguments for any simple, bright line between biological sex and cultural gender to engage with the materiality of the body, such critiques argue that there is no bright line between physical impairment and socially constructed disability (Kafer 2013). By the same token, feminist sociologists find that mothers and caregivers responsible for engaging with biomedicine on behalf of children tend to do so in thoughtful, active, if institutionally and culturally constrained, ways: for families can find relief and recognition along with stigma, expanded care work, disruptive or problematic side effects, and uncertain outcomes in such interventions.

Laura Mauldin, in an intriguing example, instructs that deafness is now understood as also an em-brained disorder, with cochlear implants a "neuroprosthetic device" needed to train the developing brain for spoken language (2016, pp. 11, 167). She finds mothers of deaf children confronted with the institutional prevalence of this powerful technology, despite its requiring a "multiyear process" of surgeries and speech therapy, its "highly variable" success, and its notable contestation by the Deaf community (2016, pp. 3, 8). Mauldin thus explains: "While on the surface we celebrate the CI [cochlear implants] as a technological triumph, we are in reality demanding more and more invisible labor on the part of mothers to achieve its successes and blaming mothers if it does not work" (2016, p. 17).

I found mothers likewise confronted with the prevalence of a growing range of psychopharmaceuticals used to treat kids – from stimulants and antidepressants, to atypical antipsychotics, antihypertensives, and antiseizure medications used at low dosages, sometimes in combinations – amid a scarcity of alternatives such as the community-based wrap-around services and family supports shown to be effective (Blum 2015). Both Mauldin and I develop notions of ambivalence surrounding these biomedical technologies as families approach them with hope and trepidation, feeling “both empowered by *and* [that they are] surrendering to” medical authority (Mauldin 2016, p. 4). I suggest the notion of complex ambivalence specifically to capture the experience of the mothers raising children of color who shared their accounts with me. Large-scale national data reveal that such boys and young men are more likely to be cast as disordered and relegated to special education than are white sons or daughters.<sup>14</sup> Rather than simple acquiescence, complex ambivalence accounts for such mothers’ conflicting responses to biomedical, brain-based framing and psychoactive medications; many saw this labeling as racialized, echoing stereotypes of deficiency and dangerousness, yet wanted to do all they could to keep sons in school (2011, 2015). Mauldin extends a similar notion, ambivalent medicalization, to allow for negative and positive consequences of medicalization, families’ simultaneous desires for children to acquire spoken language and positive disability identities; yet she points out that this entails losing possibilities of Deaf community with its vibrant language and culture (2016).

Such models of active, yet ambivalent, engagement with biomedical technologies are also relevant to the assisted and plural reproductive technologies debated in disability studies and in feminist scholarship on women’s maternal citizenship. In addition to rejecting pronatalist imperatives to mother, numerous feminist researchers have explored lived experiences of social and physical infertility and engagement with, or exclusion from, the fertility industry (e.g. Bell 2014; Martin 2010; Sandelowski 1993). These are fraught issues as such technologies open possibilities for alternative, queer families (e.g. Mamo 2007), but they suggest futures in which disabilities have been eradicated. Kafer’s discussion of several cases is illustrative: the most striking, a white US lesbian couple, members of the Deaf community, sought to have a deaf child by relying on a deaf sperm donor, a family friend, to increase their odds (genetic knowledge to date does not allow certainty). The couple was widely attacked from across the political spectrum for desiring an imperfect child, a potential burden on the state, and a further extension of their problematic difference and queerness (Kafer 2013, 76-80). Intersectional scholars Nirmala Erevelles (2011) and Roberts and Jesudason (2013) also add the troubling racialized implications of such technologies to these eugenic consequences for disability futures.

Models of active, ambivalent engagement with biomedicine also align with transgender rights issues and suggest important coalitions between disability, trans, and queer communities. Queer theorist Jasbir Puar, for instance, has recently written of the similar contradictions facing many trans individuals at once “resisting pathological medicalization yet needing to access benefits through the medical-industrial complex,” paradoxically “reliant on medical care, costly pharmacological and technological interventions” from the very institutions also “creat[ing] systematic exclusions” (2017, pp. 36, 35). Puar seeks alliances, but criticizes trans studies for keeping disability at arm’s length in the quest “to reassert neoliberal norms of bodily capacity”

and productive citizenship (2017, pp. 43, 35–36); similarly Eli Clare, who identifies as a disabled trans scholar, finds trans studies unwittingly ableist when biomedicine becomes the cure for the body's defects (1999). Yet Puar also finds disability scholar-activists keeping trans and queer studies at the margins as “not properly disabled enough” (2017, p. 40), a tension partly shaped in the US by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This major federal protection against discrimination explicitly excludes gender identity disorder, transvestitism, transsexualism, and “other sexual disorders,” perhaps seeming to resist stigmatization but actually bowing to conservative political foes. Instead of furthering alliances, the ADA thus ironically reinforced gender normativity while it challenged other binaries of corporeal normality and deviance (Puar 2017, pp. 37–39; also Snyder and Mitchell 2010).<sup>15</sup>

### **The Whiteness of Disability Studies and the Need for Global and Intersectional Perspectives**

Disability studies emerged in the academy along with ethnic and racial studies as well as with women's and gender studies; its activism was modeled after Civil Rights and antiracist movements and it engaged in similar struggles for recognition and equal rights. Notable feminist scholars, however, have followed the late Chris Bell, African American studies scholar and HIV/AIDS activist, who charged that disability studies might better be named “white disability studies” as it has rarely included people of color and therefore “entrench[ed] whiteness as its constitutive underpinning” (2006, p. 275). Jasbir Puar agrees, adding that both trans and disability studies “suffer from a domination of whiteness” in which normalization and rights claims succeed through the unexamined reliance on white privilege (2017, pp. 42, 48; also Kafer 2013, p. 12). Similarly, Nirmala Erevelles maintains that historical legacies of racism and colonialism must be made a central focus to understand how material conditions of embodiment shape the current context for both queer and crip identities: “I argue that ‘becoming disabled’ (Erevelles 2011) or ‘coming out crip’ (McRuer 2006) is an historical event with different implications for different bodies that foreground almost simultaneously the painful antagonisms and promising alliances” emerging in late capitalism (Erevelles 2014, p. 81).

Erevelles takes this critique of white privilege further to argue that we need a transnational feminist disability studies perspective, with disabilities in the Global South or Third World (the latter her preferred term) often ignored (2011, p. 122). In the Global South, the gendered impact and shaping of disabilities can be more pronounced within more difficult material contexts: with global structural adjustment policies imposed and fewer public supports, heavier caregiving responsibilities are placed on women and the private family to absorb needs of disabled members. Poverty, war, and violence, as well as highly exploitative labor practices, lead to greater disabilities, visible and invisible, among men and children as well as women. Erevelles argues for greater attention to these material realities from both feminist disabilities scholars and “Third World feminists.” Importantly however, she recognizes the challenge for disability studies, as she asks, “How is disability celebrated if its very existence is inextricably linked to the violence of social/economic conditions of [transnational] capitalism?” (2011, p. 17). In a wide-ranging theoretical discussion

to which I can hardly do justice, her answer revolves around reclaiming Marx's historical materialism and making visible those whose disabilities, rather than representing human variation, are a direct consequence of exploitation, brutality, "neocolonial violence, and lack of access to adequate health care" (2011, p. 130). Erevelles challenges us to build transnational feminist political alliances that in practice might end such dis-abling violence and global exploitation as we also keep in mind that it is only "in the advanced industrialized nations in Europe and the Americas" that "upper- and middle-class disabled [white] people may enjoy a certain level of social and economic accessibility" (2011, p. 132).

### Future Directions

Clearly further work in gender, intersectionality, and disability studies is needed to extend the possibilities for productive coalition-building across social justice movements that Puar, Erevelles, and others recommend, from the local to the transnational levels. Adams reaches a similar conclusion, noting the "opportunities for mutually transformative recognition" when disability scholars "recognize affinities with other forms of identity and embodied experience" (2013, 500). Kafer's brief discussion of the potential alliance of environmental and disability movements is suggestive in its attention to concrete objectives; she posits, for example, that creating greater access for the disabled in "natural" spaces could better protect such areas from erosion and human harm while also illuminating the social-political shaping and co-construction of both "nature" and "normal," "natural" embodiment (2013).

Other promising directions include the work of those further interrogating biotechnologies with insights from science and technology studies (STS). STS guides us, as in discussion of ambivalent medicalization above, to look at the specific contexts, from macrosocial to microfamilial and relational, in which particular technologies are designed and implemented to avoid either blanket celebration or condemnation. In this vein, communication studies scholar Meryl Alper's study of diverse families' experiences with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, specifically the Apple iPad with highly regarded Proloquo2go software, is instructive (2017). Alper asks how children with developmental disabilities unable to produce oral speech – or able with significant difficulty – used these technologies and to what extent parents understood them to be giving voice. She illustrates how, in a finely nuanced account, families' (and particularly mothers') class and ethnoracial location matter, such that, at best "giving voice" is only partially achieved" (2017, p. 36). "Tablet-based AAC devices have incredible potential to support agency, independence, and personhood, but they do not enter into a vacuum devoid of other injustices" (Alper 2017, p. 34).<sup>16</sup>

We also need feminist disability studies scholars to continue interrogating forms of ableism, both more and less complex. Here humanist Moya Bailey, drawing on queer, crip, and critical race theories, provides a useful approach, going "beyond the ineffective dichotomy of positive and negative representation" as she scrutinizes "the liminal spaces of hip hop" music and its use of terms like "retard" and "dumb" (2011, p. 142). Bailey argues that, in the specific context of those multiply marginalized, such "seemingly ableist language" is associated with freedom and transgressive escape, making a provocative demand for cultural attention (2011, p. 144); yet at the same time, she acknowledges,

such language does harm when “black men in hip hop” engage in a “futile attempt to manage their own societal stigma” by targeting others (2011, p. 145).

Finally, future work in gender, intersectionality, and disability studies must continue to grapple with the unwieldy heterogeneity of disability itself. The “iconic figure” of the “wheelchair user” and the priorities of physically disabled adults have long dominated disability studies over the concerns of those with less marked impairments, intellectual disabilities, or chronic illness. Yet as Adams cautions, “it may prove easier to find common ground between race, class, gender, sexuality” and such “forms of [physical] disability than it is among the many diverse constituencies that claim the category of ‘Disability’” as a political and institutional identity (2013, pp. 500, 506).

### **Conclusion: Furthering Conversations**

It is difficult to offer a conclusion to the wide-range of scholarship that continues to expand in conversations between scholars of gender and disability studies, which I have here reviewed all too quickly. With gender studies and disability studies each sprawling interdisciplinary fields with contested boundaries, each rooted in social movement activism, the mutual engagement has been and will continue to be enormously fruitful. To date it has resulted in significant theory and research expanding our understandings of how the ability/disability system – and “the dis-abling effects of a normalizing society” (Jung 2011, p. 266) – interact with institutional and cultural norms of gendered citizenship. Points of significant tension have emerged, as well. Those from the humanities tend to prioritize the desire for positive disability identities, which Erevelles points to as the “celebration of disability,” to stand against a past of dehumanization. Yet those in the social sciences tend to study the routine, often ambivalent and selective engagements with biomedicine that may reinforce such stigma and pathology. Relatedly, significant tensions emerge around care and care work: those from the humanities prioritize the masculinized autonomy and rationality of the physically disabled underlying the Independent Living movement, while those from the social sciences, the feminized experiences of those who perform paid and unpaid intimate, embodied labor for others. More recent work has also confronted the field (and perhaps my overly binary presentation) from standpoints of transgender and queer theories, as well as from critical race theory and transnational feminist perspectives.

Despite these significant tensions, nearly all those cited would likely agree that disability is still a largely overlooked dimension of cultural and social life, of local and global inequalities, and of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. Such neglect by the mainstream ought to give common cause and further our conversations. Moreover, many agree on the need to specify differences in types of impairment, with disability a far from generic experience, particularly as it intersects with other salient identities and social locations. Although we employ divergent vocabularies (and our academic institutional locations encourage yet new taxonomies), most feminist scholars agree on the need to build norms of relationality, interdependence, and communities of support – just as most agree that it is the political-economic forces of neoliberal nation states which primarily thwart such objectives. Further dialogue, however, between feminists in the humanities and social sciences might better link theorizing

with the ground of lived experience. As Erevelles suggests, this might lead to better incorporating materialist and institutional analysis with the cultural, representational and discursive, offering inquiry and alliances more apt for those in Global South/Third World locations – and for those living with impairments in marginalized Global North communities. The risks, as Erevelles continues to instruct, of negative gendered engagements remain high without such ongoing scrutiny and alliance-building, in particular, with so much life-enhancing biotechnology emerging from militarization and the push for hypermasculinized “cyborg soldiers” (2011, p. 135).

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## Notes

- 1 My account is far from exhaustive. I attempt to represent notable themes and contributions, but particularly given the volume of work, my selection reflects a partial, situated view. I look forward to other accounts.
- 2 The term “not quite white” is from Brodtkin 1998. In early twentieth-century Canada, immigrant working-class men deemed unfit or disabled were so undeserving they could face deportation even after several years of residency (Reaume 2014). In the US in the same period, local ordinances prohibiting unsightly begging also linked ethnoracial otherness to undeserving, unfit, and unproductive men (Schweik 2009).
- 3 Scholars and activists debate such terms, with some endorsing “person-first language,” i.e. “people with disabilities,” to claim common humanity; yet others demand “identity-first language,” i.e. “disabled people,” to claim positive disability identities. Because there is no consensus, I use both terms, following feminist scholars such as Frederick (2017a, p. 93, n1) and Kelly (2016, p. 4, fn1).
- 4 Garland-Thomson posits a somewhat more inclusive view of the boundaries of disability in more recent essays (e.g. 2014), though her catchy term “sitpoint theory,” intended to call out the ableist assumptions in feminist theory’s well-known notion of standpoint epistemology, is similarly narrow (2011 [2002], p. 34).
- 5 For similar policies and the impact on mothers and families in Canada and the UK, see Malacrida 2003, and on the UK, Rogers 2007.
- 6 Policies also remain harsh. In the US according to the 2016 joint report of the Reeve Foundation and the National Council on Disability, 35 states include disability as grounds for termination of parental rights and in every state disability of the parent can be used to determine the best interests of the child (Reeve Foundation 2016, p. 3).
- 7 Erevelles also offers a critique of those in the humanities developing the concept of affective labor. Like Kelly (2016), Erevelles finds affect theory’s arguments on the positive or transgressive potential in such intimate, embodied, and emotional interactions inadequate in neglecting the stubborn material inequalities of transnational capitalism (2011, pp. 191–197).
- 8 Feminist ethics of care and relationality were notions developed in the 1980s by those referred to as cultural feminists: a notable example was Carol Gilligan (1982), who questioned Kohlberg’s authoritative theory of moral development with detached,

- abstract judgement the highest, most mature stage of childhood development. Thus, assessments of moral dilemmas framed in context- and relationally-specific terms, aligned with traditionally feminine orientations to maintaining relationships, were judged less moral and immature (see also discussion in Erevelles 2011, pp. 175–177).
- 9 Alison Kafer rightly cautions that it is difficult to “draw bright lines between classes of disability ... one person’s ‘severe’ may be another’s ‘moderate’ or ‘mild’” (2013, p. 59), though this point is made in discussion of the Ashley X case and the heroic surgical and hormonal interventions of growth attenuation treatment.
  - 10 Other invisible disabilities, not presently conceptualized as em-brained, are most prevalent among women, particularly auto-immune disorders and other chronic pain conditions. Examples exploring such impairments from the social sciences include Jung (2011), and from the humanities, Gilmore (2012).
  - 11 Sociologist Peter Conrad has been studying the increasing diagnosis of ADHD since the 1970s, arguing that this medicalization of childhood, originally driven by the expansion of medical-psychiatric authority, is now promoted by pharmaceutical and insurance industries (e.g. 2007). Most recently Conrad and colleagues have examined the global spread of the diagnosis (Bergey et al. 2017). While Conrad has made invaluable contributions, gender has not been central to his analysis.
  - 12 On such activism, see the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) website: <http://autisticadvocacy.org> (accessed April 19, 2018).
  - 13 In the US boys are twice as likely as girls to receive diagnoses of ADHD and three times more likely to be on stimulant medications. Boys are four to five times more likely to be labeled with an autism spectrum disorder, and this disparity is higher at the most prevalent high-functioning end. Girls begin to converge in rates of medication in adolescence but are still lower, and their diagnoses and drugs are primarily for depression and eating disorders (Blum 2015, pp. 23–24).
  - 14 Civil rights research has long shown that students of color, particularly boys and young men, are highly overrepresented in special education classes, in serious school disciplining, and then as a consequence, in the juvenile justice system and the school-to-prison pipeline; but such work, rooted in law and education, has not engaged with disability studies or with families’ ambivalent negotiations with medicalization (in Blum 2011, 2015). Critical race theorists have recently turned to this important project, scrutinizing the troubling intersections of ability/disability, gender, and racism as in the recent anthology by Connor, Ferri, and Annamma (2016) and Erevelles (2014).
  - 15 Puar also credits Robert McRuer for his development of crip theory, its alliance of queer theory and disability studies, in an endnote (2017, 176 n.10). Trans scholar-activists continue to debate legal strategies, an important issue beyond the limits of this chapter.
  - 16 Additionally Alper finds problematic inequalities in the design, with Proloquo2Go, for example, offering only 3 of 24 synthetic voice options suggestive of a nonwhite speaker and none of a gender-nonspecific or gender-queer speaker (2017, p. 39); and transnational options are little reflected in varied accents (2017, pp. 52–53).

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# 10

## Gender and Psychology

THEKLA MORGENROTH AND AVELIE STUART

A focus on women's psychology and by extension the analysis of gender was largely ignored in psychology for the first decades of its existence as a field. This changed with the rise of second wave feminism in the 1960s, when more (feminist) women entered psychology and brought attention to gender inequality within and outside of the discipline. They criticized the androcentric focus in psychology and argued that biases held by male psychologists contributed to and reinforced gender inequality. Today, the psychology of gender is a respected and widely represented subdiscipline in psychology (Etaugh 2016), as illustrated by the annual number of publications per year on sex differences, gender, and women, which increased from almost zero in 1960 to over 6,500 in 2009 (Eagly et al. 2012).

Psychological gender research has largely been conducted through quantitative methods with a specific focus on gender differences and their origin.<sup>1</sup> Unlike in sub-fields in gender studies and sociology, psychologists rarely incorporate psychoanalytic approaches to gender (Clarke and Peel, 2007). In this chapter, we summarize the psychology research on gender from essentialist and constructivist theories of gender *differences* across cultures (in quantitative psychology), and social constructionist approaches to the *production* of gender in everyday life (using discursive and conversation analytic methods). Intersectionality (e.g. Crenshaw 1989) and non-white populations have traditionally received little attention in the work on gender we are about to outline, despite the fact that it is impossible to study social identities independently from one another (Shields 2008). Doing so often results in “intersectional invisibility” (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008) whereby those with more power within a category are seen as more prototypical of that social group (e.g. black men rather than black women on issues of race). Researchers who adopt an intersectional approach have often used qualitative or mixed research methods (Shields 2008), which enable them to identify cultural and historical narratives that elucidate the meaning of identities and thus why intersectionality matters (Bowleg and Bauer 2016). However, the point at which intersectionality crosses the boundary

into psychology as a discipline is typically only discussed in relation to quantitative, experimental psychology (e.g. Bowleg and Bauer 2016; Warner and Shields 2013).

### **Gender Differences across Cultures**

There are very few psychological domains – if any – where gender differences have not been examined extensively (e.g. social skills, achievement motivation, competitiveness, see Maccoby and Jacklin 1978). Most empirical work in psychology involves human participants and in the majority of cases researchers test whether male and female participants differ in their responses. Thus, there is a large body of evidence speaking to the differences and similarities between genders in the variables that psychologists typically study, such as traits, behaviors, and cognitive abilities. The vast majority of this work focuses on men and women and ignores any genders that fall outside of the gender binary as well as the diversity of cultural and racial constructions of gender. However, while the work has largely focused on so called Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic countries (WEIRD: Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2011), some cross-cultural work is being done, enabling us to speak to the stability and variability of gender differences. Moreover, meta-analyses, which integrate the results of several independent and sometimes contradictory studies, can speak to the universality and size of gender differences.

So what universal gender differences are there? Not many, according to Hyde (2005). Reviewing 46 meta-analyses on gender differences in a range of domains such as cognitive abilities, communication, social and personality variables (e.g. aggression), and psychological well-being, she found that for most studies, gender differences were either close to zero or small and therefore likely not very meaningful. However, there were some exceptions such as sexual behavior and attitudes as well as physical aggression. Here, meta-analyses consistently show that women reported lower levels of masturbation and more negative attitudes towards casual sex, as well as lower levels of physical aggression.

When it comes to personality traits, while women and men are fairly similar in terms of personality traits in some cultures, they are very different in others. For example, a study by Costa, Terracciano, and McCrae (2001) showed that self-reported differences between men and women were relatively small – but also relatively consistent. They found that men generally reported lower levels of warmth, agreeableness (the tendency to behave in ways that are considerate and promote cooperation), and neuroticism (the tendency to experience negative moods) but higher levels of dominance and assertiveness. Bigger gender differences seem to exist in interests, with men being less people-oriented and more thing-oriented than women. Interestingly, in all these cases, gender differences were most pronounced in WEIRD countries (Lippa 2010).

Cross-cultural examinations of gender differences in behavior have often focused on sexual behavior and preferences. For example, Buss (1989) examined which attributes heterosexual men and women report finding attractive in their partners and found that this was fairly consistent across the 37 cultures he studied. In nearly all cultures, women valued good financial prospects more than men and preferred older men, while men preferred younger women

and valued physical attractiveness and chastity to a higher extent. However, the size of these differences varied between cultures. Eagly and Wood (1999) later showed that the size of the gender difference depended on societal gender equality: where genders were more equal, differences in preference were smaller. This may be unsurprising as it makes sense that if women are more financially independent, their need for a partner with good financial prospects decreases. This research also fails to acknowledge that people's "personal preferences" about attractiveness are reinforced by the normalization of racism (Holland 2012).

### **Essentialist Approaches to Gender Differences**

Essentialist approaches to gender differences draw on evolutionary theory and argue that gender differences are – at least partly – genetic and the result of different adaptive problems faced by women and men throughout our evolutionary past (see Byrd-Craven and Geary 2013), often ignoring or downplaying cultural variation, social construction, and issues of intersectionality – that is, that experiences and behaviors of women and men are not uniform but differ greatly based on other group memberships such as race, class, or sexual orientation. These proposed differences in adaptive problems faced by men and women mainly concern reproduction and are thus shaped through sexual selection (i.e. successful reproduction; Darwin 1871). Sexual selection involves both competing with members of the same sex over access to members of the other sex (intrasexual competition) and efforts to be attractive to members of the other sex (intersexual choice). According to evolutionary theory, since reproduction and parenting roles differ between males and females, so do the attributes needed to successfully compete with other males or females or to attract sexual partners.

In humans, as in many other animals, parental investment differs drastically between the sexes. While the involvement for men can be very low, it is much higher for women, including pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and general care of offspring. This, evolutionary psychologists argue, in turn has consequences for sexual behavior (Trivers 1972). For men, it is argued, the best strategy in terms of reproduction is to compete with other males in order to mate with as many women as possible, while for women, it is more beneficial to invest in their rare and biologically expensive offspring and thus to find the "right man", who has good genes, but also resources and power, and who, more importantly, is likely to stick around and use his resources and power to protect and feed her and their children (Buss 1989). Moreover, the fact that humans live in multimale, multifemale groups results in an interesting situation where there is also female–female competition over men who are willing to invest into them and their offspring and male choice (Byrd-Craven and Geary 2013).

More recent evolutionary approaches acknowledge that these ideas might be overly simplistic and that it is not unusual for women to end a monogamous relationship and switch to a new partner or to have sex outside of monogamous relationships. Evolutionary psychologists have put forward different explanations for these behaviors. The *dual-mating strategy hypothesis* states that it is adaptive for women to seek sex with a man who is not their primary partner because it means

they can get commitment and investment from one partner, while securing the “best genes” (e.g. in terms of health) from another (Gangestad and Haselton 2015). The *mate-switching hypothesis*, on the other hand, explains why women may leave one relationship and enter a new one, arguing that this is an adaptive strategy if a better mate becomes available (Buss et al. 2017).

Evolutionary psychologists argue that the differences in adaptive problems faced by women and men can explain psychological gender differences. Take, for example, the higher levels of physical aggression in men. Not only can this be explained as a result of the predominant male–male competition, but also by the fact that physical aggression with its risk for injury or death incurs higher reproductive costs for women (e.g. by terminating a pregnancy). Thus, for women, other forms of aggression, particularly relational aggression, are said to be more adaptive. This form of aggression generally aims at damaging the other person’s reputation and in turn their attractiveness as sexual partners, for example by labeling them as “sluts” (Geary 2010). In line with this idea, research finds that women and girls engage more in relational aggression than men and boys (Archer 2004), although the magnitude of this difference is unclear (Hyde 2005).

These evolutionary processes can also be used to explain the aforementioned differences in partner preferences found by Buss (1989). For example, before modern technologies were available, men could never be certain that a child was truly theirs. On the other hand, women did not face this uncertainty. Therefore, it can be seen as adaptive for men to be attracted to signals of sexual fidelity and chastity, while these traits matter less to women.

However, while evolutionary approaches can indeed explain a range of psychological gender differences, they cannot always explain the variation of these differences across cultures. Moreover, they can reinforce essentialist, sexist views of gender differences and contribute to gender inequality by justifying existing inequalities as natural. We therefore now turn to approaches which argue that psychological gender differences are not biological, inherent, or essential, but created and reinforced by society.

## **Constructivist Approaches to Gender Differences**

Constructivist theories argue that psychological gender differences are the result of cultural and contextual influences. In this section, we discuss three of these theories and the extent to which they can explain gender differences in general, but also patterns of gender differences across cultures.

### **Social role theory**

This very influential theory, developed by Eagly in 1987, argues that the distribution of men and women into different roles in a given society affects gender stereotypes and in turn behavior and perceptions of the self. Stereotypes can be defined as a “widely shared and simplified evaluative image of a social group and its members” (Hogg and Vaughan 2013, p. 51). Importantly, gender stereotypes are not only *descriptive* (i.e. they describe what men and women are supposedly like), they are also

*prescriptive* (i.e. they prescribe what men and women *should* be like) and affect men and women's own behavior as well as their reaction to others' behaviors. In other words, women and men seek to adhere to expectations of them and thus conform to stereotypes and react negatively to others who violate gender norms, such as women in leadership (Rudman and Glick 2001) or stay-at-home fathers (Rudman and Mescher 2013). In addition, cognitive heuristics such as the confirmation bias (Wason 1960) favor the perception and recall of information that confirms preexisting beliefs such as stereotypes, reinforcing the ideas about what men and women are like.

Social role theory explains where these stereotypes come from. It takes as a starting point the fact that gender stereotypes are surprisingly stable across cultures (Williams and Best 1982) and can be summarized in two core dimensions: agency and communion. Agency includes traits such as dominance and assertiveness, while communion refers to traits such as gentleness and warmth. Women, as a group, are generally seen as high in communion but low in agency, while the opposite is the case for men. It might be tempting to interpret the universality of these gender stereotypes as evidence for a biological basis, but Eagly argues that it is not biology, but the distribution of men and women into different social roles that shape these stereotypes.

It is standard, cross-culturally, for women and men to occupy different roles in society: in WEIRD cultures, women perform more domestic work and spend fewer hours in paid employment compared to men. Moreover, even within the workforce, women are disproportionately found in caretaking roles (e.g. nurse, teacher), and underrepresented in leadership roles. This gendered division of labor (including the gender hierarchy), according to social role theory, is the core reason for gender differences in behavior, through the formation of gender roles and stereotypes.

To the extent that women and men find themselves in certain roles, the behaviors associated with these roles as well as the characteristics necessary for these behaviors become part of the respective gender role. Thus, as being warm, nurturing, and considerate are important traits for the caretaker role, and women are overrepresented in these roles, women are in turn expected to have those characteristics. Similarly, leaders and breadwinners benefit from being decisive, assertive, and dominant, men are expected to have these traits. In other words, these traits become part of gender stereotypes.

There is a large body of evidence supporting the claims of social role theory (e.g. Eagly and Wood 1999; Koenig and Eagly 2014). On the other hand, recent research has shown that the advances of women in the workplace of the past decades have unfortunately not resulted in a change in gender stereotypes (Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016), as would be predicted by social role theory.

### **Stereotype content model**

This model, developed by Fiske and colleagues (2002) argues that gender differences arise from gender stereotypes, but suggests that intergroup relations, namely status and cooperation versus competition, determine these stereotypes. The model was not developed specifically for gender, but as a general model of how stereotypes form. Similar to social role theory, this model also suggests that there are two main dimensions to stereotypes and any group is primarily judged based on these two dimensions. However, according to this model, these are not agency and communion, but warmth and competence.



The concept of warmth is similar to that of communion in that it refers to being kind, nice, and caring. Competence, on the other hand, is somewhat different from agency – it includes traits such as being intelligent, efficient, and skillful.

The authors argue that these two stereotype dimensions are found everywhere, as they originate from two fundamental dimensions which characterize the relationships between groups in every society. First, groups differ in whether they are in cooperation or in competition with each other, and in turn, whether they intend to help or harm one's own group, and second, they differ in how much power and status they hold, and in turn, whether they *can* help or harm one's own group. If a group is in competition with one's own group, they are stereotyped as cold, while those in cooperation with one's own group are perceived as warm. Similarly, high status translates into high levels of perceived competence, while low status translates into low levels of perceived competence. Cross-cultural research demonstrates that the warmth and competence dimensions can indeed be found in many cultures, including collectivist cultures (Cuddy et al. 2009).

Applied to gender, this model suggests that in cultures in which women have lower status than men, women are stereotyped as warm but incompetent (called the paternalistic stereotype), while men are stereotyped as competent, but cold (called the envious stereotype). However, evidence also suggests that these stereotypes do not necessarily apply to *all* men and women even within the same culture. Groups for which status and competition differ are categorized as a subgroup and stereotyped differently. For example, feminists are stereotyped as high in competence and low in warmth, while gay men are stereotyped as fairly warm (Fiske et al. 2002). This subtyping of counter-stereotypical women and men in turn means that the overall gender stereotype remains unchallenged and unchanged, undermining their disruptive potential.

Fiske and colleagues further argue that these stereotypes translate into emotions. Groups perceived as high in competence but low in warmth – such as men – will be envied, while groups low in competence but high in warmth – such as women – will be pitied. These emotions in turn affect behaviors towards these groups (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2008). Of particular interest here is how stereotyping of different groups of women (e.g. housewives, career women) can translate into different forms of sexism, namely benevolent sexism and hostile sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996).

In their theory on ambivalent sexism, Glick and Fiske propose that sexism is not a universally negative attitude towards women. Instead, it has two components which stem from the fact that men possess more power and status, but at the same time are highly dependent on women, for example as their mothers and romantic partners. This creates a situation in which men have to find a way to keep and reinforce their status, while simultaneously fostering positive relations with women. As a result, hostile and benevolent sexism, which are directed towards different groups of women, emerge. Hostile sexism is mostly directed towards nontraditional women who threaten men's status, such as feminists, as well as to women who threaten the heterosexual interdependence of women and men, such as lesbians. It refers to men's negative attitude towards women, combining three core beliefs, namely that women are inferior to men; that men should hold more power; and that women's sexuality threatens men's power.

Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, is a more subtle form of sexism and is particularly directed towards traditional women. It refers to the belief that women – at least those adhering to traditional gender roles – are indeed the *better* gender; that men should protect and provide for women; and that men are incomplete without a romantic relationship with a woman. While benevolent sexism may seem less harmful than hostile sexism, or even as a positive appreciation of women, it contributes just as much to gender inequality by discouraging women from breaking out of traditional gender roles (see Glick and Fiske 2001).

Glick and Fiske (1999) propose that attitudes toward men are similarly ambivalent and include hostile and benevolent elements. Hostile attitudes toward men include the resentment of the disproportionate amount of power men hold, the endorsement of negative stereotypes about men (e.g. violent, arrogant), and the beliefs that men act in a domineering and sexually aggressive way toward women. Benevolent attitudes toward men, on the other hand, refer to the belief that men need women's help at home; that men are more competent in many domains; and that women can only be truly happy and fulfilled when being romantically involved with a man.

Cross-cultural research (Glick et al., 2000, 2004) suggests that ambivalent sexism and ambivalent attitudes toward men are positively related and can be found in most cultures but that levels of these attitudes differ between countries. Interestingly, national averages of ambivalent sexism and ambivalent attitudes toward men are associated with lower gender equality across nations, lending support to Glick and colleagues' claim that both attitudes contribute to the reinforcement of the patriarchy.

### Gender stereotypes and intersectionality

Both theories discussed above propose two universal dimensions of person perception and suggest that women are generally seen as warm and communal but not agentic and competent, while the opposite is true for men. While there is a large body of evidence supporting these claims, including cross-cultural research, issues of intersectionality are largely ignored. Indeed, research shows that stereotypes of women in general are much more similar to the stereotype of *white* women compared to stereotypes of women of color and that, similarly, stereotypes of men in general are most similar to stereotype of *white* men (Ghavami and Peplau 2013). It thus becomes clear that the research on gender stereotypes cannot be applied equally to all groups. So what are the gender stereotypes of different groups?

Psychological research on the intersection of gender and race and gender and ethnicity has largely been conducted in the US, and demonstrates that stereotypes of women and men of racial and ethnic minority groups are not simply a mix or average of the two intersecting identities (Ghavami and Peplau 2013). For example, stereotypes about black women are not somewhere in between the stereotype of black as a racialized identity and women, but include attributes (e.g. confident, overweight) which are not part of either the gender or the racial stereotypes. Similarly, sexual orientation also has unique effects for the stereotypes about men and women. While gay men are generally seen as warmer and less competent than straight men, the opposite is true for lesbians, who are seen as less warm but more competent (Asbrock 2010).

Moreover, research demonstrates that race and ethnicity affect perceptions of gender. More specifically, Asian men and women are seen as more feminine than white men and women, while black men and women are seen as more masculine than white men and women (e.g. Johnson, Freeman, and Pauker 2012). These findings should be kept in mind as they show clear limits of the generalizability of current psychological research on gender stereotypes, which has largely focused on white and heterosexual men and women and may thus not apply to women and men of color or gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women.

### Social comparison and self-categorization

Both social role theory and the stereotype content model can help us understand how gender stereotypes form and in turn affect behavior and gender differences. A model which was developed by Guimond and colleagues (2007), on the other hand, has gender differences themselves (rather than stereotypes) at its very core and can help us understand why and when these differences may vary across culture. The model is based on social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986), and self-categorization theory (Turner et al. 1987) and suggests that the extent to which a culture encourages intragroup vs. intergroup comparisons determines the extent to which gender differences are observed.

These theories suggest that how we perceive ourselves is by no means fixed. Rather, it depends on who we compare ourselves to. When we compare ourselves to someone of our own group (e.g. our own gender), we are more likely to think of ourselves in terms of our personal identity (i.e. what makes us unique), whereas when comparing ourselves to members of other groups (e.g. the opposite gender), we tend to think of ourselves more in terms of group stereotypes. Thus, for example, if a woman is thinking about how warm and nurturing she is, she might perceive herself as quite high in these traits when comparing herself to a man (an outgroup member), but as quite low when comparing herself to other women (an ingroup member). Importantly, they argue that this is not just due to a “shifting standard” (Biernat and Thompson 2002) by which absolute levels of perceived communion would remain the same, while the point on the scale changes. In other words, it’s not that the woman just sees herself as warm relative to a man but low relative to other women resulting in different ratings when making the comparisons. Instead, thinking about one’s ingroup compared to the outgroup changes self-perceptions such that group stereotypes are applied to the self. This also translates into differences in behavior in line with these stereotypes such as more communal behavior (e.g. helping others).

Thus, the degree to which gender differences are observed depends on the specific context and culture and the extent to which these encourage intra or intergroup comparisons. Therefore, observed gender differences should be larger in cultures in which women and men frequently compare themselves to the other group (see Guimond, Chatard, and Lorenzi-Cioldi 2013). This leads to some interesting predictions which are quite different to those of social role theory: rather than predicting *larger* gender differences in cultures in which gender inequality is more pronounced and stable, they predict that in these cultures, there is less intragroup comparison and, in turn, observed gender differences should be smaller. In addition, collectivist cultures, such as many Asian and African countries, generally encourage *intragroup*

comparison, while individualist countries such as most WEIRD countries encourage more *intergroup* comparison. Guimond and colleagues (2007) tested this model and found support for their predictions. For example, they asked women and men from different cultures to compare themselves with the other gender or their own gender before rating how descriptive different attributes were of them. They found that gender differences in communal traits were, as predicted, larger in WEIRD countries (in this case compared to Malaysia) and that in WEIRD countries, intergroup comparison indeed increased gender differences, while this was not the case for Malaysian participants.

They also argue that these processes can explain why gender differences in self-descriptions in WEIRD countries have changed so little in the past decades despite societal changes regarding gender roles. Maybe in the past, when men and women were confined to separate domains and this separation was seen as legitimate, they tended to engage in intragroup comparison much more than nowadays and therefore described themselves in less stereotypical ways. Now, when women and men regularly share domains with members of the opposite sex, intergroup comparison is more common, changing self-descriptions to be more in line with gender stereotypes (see Guimond et al. 2013).

In this section, we have described gender differences across cultures and discussed the two main approaches within psychology to explain these differences: (i) essentialist approaches which draw on evolutionary theories and argue that gender differences are (at least partly) genetic and (ii) constructivist approaches which focus on the formation and effects of stereotypes as well as on self-categorization and social comparison theories. Interestingly, while the theoretical approaches outlined above and the quantitative research that goes with it have been hugely influential within the field of psychology, they have not had the same effect in the field of gender studies. However, qualitative approaches such as conversation and discourse analysis – which are much less known in mainstream psychology – have crossed more disciplinary boundaries. We will turn to these approaches next.

### **Discursive Psychology on Gender**

A subsection of psychology employs a social constructionist approach to analyzing gender discourse (Kurz and Donaghue 2013). Where social constructivism using experimental methods (described in the section “Social comparison and self-categorization”) involves determining relatively stable constructs that comprise personalities and stereotypes and how they link to behaviors, discourse analysts argue that selves and personalities are created and only made real through language (Kurz and Donaghue 2013). They oppose the cognitivist notion that people’s self-reports (i.e. answers to a questionnaire or interview question) can be used as a window into the mind, and instead analyze self-reports for their action-oriented, situationally specific functions. These approaches to gender in psychology are more focused on the (re)production of gender in interactions rather than on comparisons between genders. The interactive situation created by the meeting of researcher and participants produces the instances of behavior or conversations that are studied; or researchers gather naturally occurring data, not originally produced

for research purposes (for discussion of the tensions between these methods see Griffin 2007; Potter 2002).

In this section we give three examples of discursive and conversation analytic approaches to the study of gender and sexuality. These are: (i) a poststructuralist approach to studying the way that socially widespread discourses and social systems produce individual subjectivity; (ii) feminist conversation analysis, which examines embedded presuppositions and patterns in the delivery of speech that serve to reproduce heteronormative gender; and (iii) the ethnomethodology-discursive approach, examining how people acquire a gendered character through talk.

### Feminist poststructuralism and choice discourses in the West

Mainstream psychology is argued to fall within the liberal humanist tradition – carrying assumptions about the authority of individuality and autonomy, rationality, uniqueness, and in turn, individual rights to freedom, justice, privacy, and so forth (Gavey 1989). Although psychologists are increasingly more interested in studying culture and context, it is argued by poststructural psychologists that social psychology still focuses too much on individuals and how they cognize or experience the social world, while neglecting to incorporate an understanding of how power works to regulate individuals, or indeed *produce* their subjectivity (Gavey 1989).

Conversely, psychological approaches inspired by poststructuralist theory (adopting the work of Foucault 1990 in particular; see Gavey 1989; Weedon 1987) decenter the individual, oppose the idea that people can speak with authority from their individual experience, and instead treat “experience” as an instantiation of the workings of power through individuals. This production of experience is primarily studied through the language people use to constitute themselves as an “agentic individual,” which they do by drawing on already available discourses in society to form a coherent and meaningful account of themselves and their behavior. By drawing on available discourses, existing power relationships in society will be reproduced and individuals are socially regulated by “choosing” to define themselves in normative terms or in contrast to the norm (and thereby “other”). A classic example is in Hollway’s (1984) studies, where women who were coerced into sex accounted for their ostensible consent through discourses in which they recount “granting” permission to men to fulfill their overwhelming sexual needs – because “women are permissive” and “men need sex” – a discourse reflecting traditional power relationships between men and women that supports the oppressive status quo and essentializes gender (Gavey 1989; Hollway 1984).

Thus, one of the main themes of poststructural discursive psychology is so-called choice discourse. Choice being a key tenet of women’s movements, and judged on the basis of whether men are pressuring women into adopting a practice, has in post-feminist times led to the deployment of “women doing it for themselves” as a defensive and celebratory argument (e.g. Braun 2009). Even painful, objectifying, and costly practices can be deemed playfully empowering (Braun 2009; Donaghue, Kurz, and Whitehead 2011). The subjective self that is produced through choice discourse has ultimate control and responsibility for her own fate – releasing her from the oppressive requirements of a prefeminist society, and in turn making her uncritical of contemporary society (Gill 2008; Gill and Donaghue 2013; McRobbie

2009; Stuart and Donaghue 2012). Feminist poststructural psychologists have criticized choice discourse for being unable to account for widespread cultural adoption or nonadoption of practices, for hiding the costs involved in maintaining gender norms (e.g. beauty ideals), for failing to challenge narrow definitions of femininity, masculinity, and sexual attractiveness, and for categorizing those who are unable to navigate this complex landscape as irrational or mentally unwell (e.g. Stuart, Kurz, and Ashby 2012). Moreover, Western women can achieve positions of autonomous individuality by “othering” women who are ostensibly not free, or living under patriarchal oppression. Thus, the “oppressed Muslim woman” has become a trope upon which Western women can point to their freedoms and their lack of further need for feminism (Mahmood 2005; Scharff 2011).

Social constructionist avenues of queer psychology have also adopted poststructuralist positions, arguing for example, that the decision to declare oneself as a lesbian is the result of societal regulation that compels people to create an individual identity – however, people adopt their identities within prevalent heterosexual assumptions, meaning that assuming anything other than a heterosexual identity results in being treated as inferior or other (Hegarty 2007). Thus, under a poststructuralist perspective choice has become a thorny domain in which feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) psychologists try to address inequality and oppressive gender norms by situating people’s participation within socially created and rewarded gender practices but without implying that they are “cultural dupes” or victims (see exchange between Duits and van Zoonen 2006, and Gill 2007). However scholars have rarely applied a poststructuralist inspired approach to analyzing discourse from non-Western and nonwhite cultures (cf. Ong and Braun 2016).

### **Doing feminist conversation analysis**

Conversation analysis (CA; Sacks 1972) is the study of repeated patterns in conversations to uncover embedded presuppositions – including in both the way talk is delivered (e.g. how turn-taking occurs through in-breaths or pauses), and in the employment of conceptual terms to set up the conversational direction (e.g. smoothly deflecting or leading further talk on a topic). Kitzinger (2000) argues that CA can be used as a feminist tool, despite its apparent disinterest in psychological or sociological concepts, because CA ensures that concepts or content of conversation only matter when they are employed by the participants themselves. Thus, gender can be studied in CA, if and when participants make reference to it (Kitzinger 2000). Conversation analysts need to demonstrate evidence of how ways of talking actively produce speakers as males or females (and assume binary genders and normative heterosexuality), through repeated performances over time – such as referring to “women and men”, or “heterosexual and homosexual”. Thus gender is an accomplishment, not a pre-given reality. An example of feminist conversation analysis is Kitzinger’s (2005) study of after-hours medical calls requesting home visits, where the family terms that are used in these calls construct a heterosexual nuclear family as normative – using terms such as “wife,” “husband,” “daughter,” “son” as the initial way to refer to the patient leads the doctor to further inquire (or to not inquire) about “the rest of the family” who may also be ill. This body of work demonstrates

that compulsory heterosexuality, and the nuclear family, can be identified as a repeated performance and not a pre-given reality (Kitzinger, Wilkson and Perkins 1992).

### **Ethnomethodological approaches to gender and intersectional identities**

Ethnomethodology is the study of how people negotiate everyday situations and socially interact. Inspired by ethnomethodology, Wetherell and colleagues' approach to discursive psychology (e.g. Edley and Wetherell 1996; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999) does not heed the distinction between poststructuralist discourse analysis and conversation analysis, and pays attention to both societal discourse and microconversational elements. Some particular contributions of this approach are the analytical concepts of "imaginary positions" and "psycho-discursive practices". Imaginary positions are empirical demonstrations of how, in talk, complex ways of identifying with gender ideals are produced or disavowed (e.g. men being "the hero"). Psycho-discursive practices are described as "identification procedures in action" – how people acquire, through the act of talking, a character with an internal mental life – someone who has identity, motives, emotions, and ambitions.

In Wetherell and Edley's (1999) work on the discursive production of masculinity they contrast their approach to the conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Connell 1987) – the idea that there is a range of ways of being masculine that have emerged from history and culture, of which men can conform to or disavow. Wetherell and Edley critique the idea that men simply "conform" and argue that there is a lack of conceptual clarity on what comprises the norms of masculinity or how men adopt norms. Instead they position their analysis as an examination of the microlevel of everyday sense-making (psychology) that also incorporates the macro (sociological) landscape that people are drawing on. The research questions become – how do men "do" masculinity practically, and how do they organize their discourse in ways that reflect institutional sense-making or take up of societal norms? And how is the masculine ideal produced or disavowed, given that no one can perfectly embody or reject that ideal?

They find through studying collected conversations that disavowal of masculine ideals is not the same as the rejection of hegemonic masculinity, because men still invoke hegemonic masculine values like independence and autonomy – "what is being celebrated in this discourse is not so much knitting, cooking and crying per se, but the courage, strength and determination of these men as men to engage in these potentially demeaning activities" (p. 350). Thus they caution that men "abandoning" machoism may still be characterizing their identities in ways that could be gender oppressive – but rather than being a passive process as Connell argued, these ideals are available for men to actively take up, as revealed through the analysis of their psycho-discursive practices – that is, their development of an internal mental life through talking.

Ethnomethodological discursive analysis could also be used to examine intersectional identities – or the ways in which discourses hide intersectional identities. For example, the "underachieving boys" discourse ostensibly addressed at educational underperformance is upon examination revealed to be about young white working-class men (Griffin 2000). However, this ethnodiscursive method has been criticized as treating the need to challenge heteronormative and white assumptions too

superficially (Hegarty 2007). Bowleg (2008) challenges qualitative researchers to identify relevant intersectional identities even when participants do not explicitly identify them.

The commonalities in all of these approaches is that people are viewed as engaging in continual reproduction and performance of empowerment and disempowerment, of gender ideals, and gendered practices and relations – rather than being vessels of society, or as possessing essential qualities and instincts (see Garfinkel 1967). The theory and methods adopted by discursive and conversation analysis feminist psychologists have the potential to identify how discourses and speech delivery systems perpetuate the notion of men and women as essential categories – which in turn reproduces inequality and dichotomous, intersectional-blind models of gender. Moreover, qualitative approaches can investigate some of the *how* questions – such as how people come to adopt gendered traits. Many of the researchers who adopt discursive and conversational methods do so with a critical psychology lens (e.g. Hepburn 2003), involving an explicit intent to identify how mainstream psychology contributes to the endurance of social injustices and lack of civil liberties. For example, mainstream psychology that helps promote ideas of gender-appropriate behavior has arguably contributed to making those who do not identify with this classification feel inferior, invisible, and stigmatized. Adopting a critical lens as a psychologist means questioning the assumptions and norms treated as legitimate by our own field (Clarke and Braun 2008).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have given an overview of the ways in which gender has been studied in psychology. We noted that psychological gender research has largely been conducted through quantitative methods with a specific emphasis on gender differences and their origin, which was the focus of the first part of this chapter. We summarized both essentialist theories of gender differences, which often take an evolutionary approach and view gender differences as genetic, fixed, and universal, and constructivist theories of gender differences, which suggest that gender differences emerge in response to societal factors such as status differences and social roles. Then we moved into highlighting three different types of qualitative approaches to gender which focus on the reproduction of gender in language and social interaction, and how people make sense of social reality through (binary and heterosexist) gendered lenses. Throughout this chapter we have noted that psychological theorizing and research has predominantly focused on gender in WEIRD cultures and has largely ignored issues of intersectionality. Moreover, psychology, and Western feminism more generally, have been criticized for imposing a white, middle-class, liberal humanist lens over the status relations of gender and sexuality – and each branch of psychology that has focused on identities of class, race, sexuality and gender, has committed errors of omission and exclusion. However a special issue of *Feminism and Psychology* in 2015, entitled “‘Young feminists’ doing recognition & reflexivity & (r)evolution”, featured work from 17 nations, a variety of methods of inquiry, and author identities. The editors argue that asking the contributors to push beyond the neoliberal and “postfeminist” shadows of Western feminism requires



reflexivity and recognition of the frames within which they work – for example Liu, Huang and Ma (2015) caution that transnational feminism is a Western construction, “even though it demands to break away from Western hegemony” (p. 13) and therefore in their feminism in China they deal with multiple dialogs: “the forgotten history of women in the imperial era, state-sponsored socialist feminism, and the Western notions of women’s rights” (p. 12). Moreover, while LGBTQ psychologies could help psychological gender research move beyond heteronormative assumptions (e.g. by drawing on alternative methods and theories developed in queer studies, see Hegarty 2007), LGBTQ psychology has also been critiqued for ignoring race, ethnicity, and culture. Riggs (2007) analysis of published articles on the intersections of race, ethnicity, culture, and sexuality, identifies an invisible assumption of whiteness in LGBTQ individuals, which serves to simultaneously define LGBTQ individuals as not having any race, and classifies only “racial minorities” as having race. Riggs calls for engagement with indigenous/lesbian feminist/African American theorists in particular to challenge the ethnocentrism in psychology – arguing that the retention of multiplicity of perspectives is required rather than one broad psychology; and that we should always ask who our research is about, who it is for, and whose purposes it serves (Riggs 2007). In summary, psychology has contributed a range of interesting and informative findings on gender. Its theories have offered explanations of how gender differences are produced as well as testable predictions which have been investigated in a vast body of (largely quantitative) empirical work. On the other hand, many topics and approaches which have gained much attention in neighboring disciplines – for example a view beyond binary gender – has not yet made it into mainstream psychology. A lot of work is still to be done, and the collection for this *Companion to Women’s and Gender Studies* will move us forward.

### Note

- 1 The psychological literature often uses the terms sex differences and gender differences interchangeably. We use the term gender differences as we believe that these differences are largely constructed by society. However, this is not always the way the authors we cite interpret the differences.

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# Part IV

## Culture

# 11

## Gender Ideology, Socialization, and Culture

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### Introduction

Chamanda Adichie (2009), famed Nigerian novelist and feminist, argues that whoever tells the story of a group of people has the power to define them. Heeding Adichie's (2009) warning, we present our chapter on "Gender Ideology, Socialization, and Culture" with caution. Writing about such mundane but powerful beliefs and experiences for an international audience reminds us of how diverse, unique, and dynamic gender ideologies and socialization can be. As four women scholars located in the United States, one African American, one biracial African American/Japanese American, one Korean, and one white American, we recognize how different and dynamic our own experiences of gender socialization can be in the same country. Culture, race, ethnicity, social class, ability, sexuality, and gender identity all play a role in how gender ideology and socialization shape individual lives (Crenshaw 1989; Kimmel 2013; Collins 2004; Lorber 1994).

Therefore, we have elected to present a general introduction to gender ideology and socialization and then elaborate on those beliefs and processes through three national case studies – Nigeria, South Korea, and the United States – to illuminate the complexities of gender ideology and socialization in these three locations. There is not one universal gender ideology or one universal gender socialization process; however, a critical analysis of the complexities of gender ideology and socialization on three continents – Africa, Asia, and North America – provides interesting and hopefully helpful insights into the myriad ways gender is understood and enacted globally (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Mohanty 2003). It also speaks to the different ways in which patriarchy is lived and how both women and men suffer because of it. Further, we note that although patriarchy constrains men and defines appropriate boundaries of masculinity for them, it continues to impact women's lives in a much more negative manner. That is the case for all three countries.

## Gender Ideologies and Socialization Defined

Gender ideologies are beliefs people hold that tell them how to think, act, and be a girl or boy, woman or a man. These beliefs are learned primarily through gender socialization which refers to the complicated social process in which boys learn how to demonstrate masculinity and become men, and girls demonstrate femininity and become women. Major societal institutions such as schools, businesses, families, religions, governments, science, popular culture, media, and what is considered common sense contribute to this gender socialization process and help define what constitutes ideal womanhood and ideal manhood (de Beauvoir 1949, Kimmel 2013). Each of these institutions provides a different set of experiences and beliefs for children to learn from and cement their gender understandings. For example, research has revealed parents interact differently with infant boys and girls and require their children to attend to different household chores based on their gender (Kimmel 2013). This differentiation in the home is taken up in schools where critical researchers have ascertained that teachers and administrators enact a “hidden curriculum,” and instruct children differently based on their gender (Sadker, Sadker, and Zittleman 2009). Although media and popular culture have celebrated the so-called empowerment of girls in the West, images of girls and women in movies, television, print, and online media continue to celebrate their physical and sexual beauty (Tasker and Negra 2007) while popular culture reinscribes men’s and boys’ abilities to hide their emotions within a mask of masculinity (Bettis and Sternod 2009). Thus, major societal institutions work in conjunction to reproduce acceptable gender roles.

It was not until 1949 that white French feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir’s declaration that “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (p. 1) began the interrogation of the prominent role that biology supposedly played in the organization of societies. Instead of accepting the traditional belief that women and men played different roles in society with men’s domination found in most realms, including religion, family, politics, and work, de Beauvoir challenged biological, psychological, and Marxist explanations for these different roles. She argued that males’ (specifically white and of Western European origin) biology and the traits or behaviors associated with masculinity were situated as the norm by which all others were measured. What men were naturally thought to possess, women were thought to naturally lack, and this made women suspect in their abilities.

De Beauvoir’s (1949) work also made the distinction between sex and gender, the former believed to consist of primary and secondary biological sexual characteristics, accompanying hormones and life cycles, with gender referring to the habits, discursive practices, and dominant understandings of what constitutes appropriate masculinity and femininity. Thus, sex is equated with the body and gender refers to how we think about and practice being feminine and/or masculine. In most societies, the sex or biology of individuals is expected to align with their gendered presentation or expression, either masculine or feminine. The power of this binary gender regime is revealed when young children are confused by an individual whose gender identity is ambiguous (Davies 2003).

The gender binary is the hegemonic belief that humans can only express their gender identity in two ways: that of masculinity or femininity. Queer theorists and transgender activists (Butler 1990; Sedgwick 1990), however, suggest that gender is



a fluid concept, in flux, and unstable. Individuals who identify as transgender, androgynous, or genderqueer demonstrate that gender is not innate but rather constructed through one's gender expression and/or gender performativity which lie on a continuum rather than a binary. Fausto-Sterling (1993) argued that the two gender imperative can be seen when infants are born with illegible or intersex genitalia, and doctors advise parents to select which sex the child should be assigned so that the gender socialization process can begin immediately. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) activists have questioned the gender binary along with its association with sexual orientation. Most societies believe that a biological man who exhibits appropriately masculine characteristics must be heterosexual, interested romantically only in women. This conflation between sexuality and gender – the very idea that one's gender is naturally connected to one's sexual orientation – has been problematized as well. Transgender and genderqueer movements in the West continue to disrupt the assumption that gender and sexual orientation are natural partners and advocate for a plethora of ways of enacting gender and sexuality.

Although the LGBTQ movement continues to challenge the gender binary, many people and cultures still believe that biological differences between women and men undergird the rationale for different gender regimes (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; de Beauvoir 1949; Harris 2012; Kimmel 2013). Such traditionalists argue that gendered ideologies and socialization based on biological differences and the gender binary bring order and certainty to individuals, families, and societies. However, these biology as destiny beliefs can easily be discounted when acknowledging that science itself is partially a social construction and what is considered to be “hard” scientific evidence for characteristics commonly associated with men and women is often a reflection of the social norms of the times rather than supposedly objective scientific findings. For example, Martin (1991) found that biology textbooks which examined the processes of egg fertilization were driven by language reflective of sexist understandings. Sperm were imbued with adjectives that characterized traditional masculinity such as aggressiveness while the ovum was situated as a passive and agentless actor which did not reflect the observed interactions between the two.

Patriarchy refers to how masculinity and its ideal characteristics continue to dominate the economic, social, political, religious, and popular culture realms of most societies, and it remains firmly in place around the world (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; hooks 2004a). Thus, although there are variations of how children, adolescents, and adults take up and live their gendered identities, what remains constant is the continuing supremacy of those traits and ways of being and thinking that are associated with masculinity, and the undervaluing of most things feminine. But as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) remind us, although being a man provides men with unearned privileges or a “patriarchal dividend,” it still mandates that all men strive for a particular type of masculinity, called ideal, dominant, or “hegemonic masculinity” which emphasizes rationality, individuality, physicality, and sexual dominance. Most men, due to a multitude of reasons such as race, ethnicity, social class, ability, and sexual orientation, can never achieve that ideal form of manliness just as most women cannot achieve ideal femininity. Thus, patriarchy not only forecloses life choices and possibilities for women, it does so for men as well, although in different ways. For example, boys and men who exhibit what society considers feminine ways of being such as emotionality or softness, face a barrage of criticisms

which include being labeled a “fag,” one of the most reviled monikers for boys and young men (Pascoe 2011).

Critical gender scholars, such as ourselves, argue that such thinking limits the possibilities of individuals to embrace their full humanity and argue for the elimination of the gender binary and the socialization processes that produce this binary. They advocate for a recognition of the variety of ways that people embody masculinity, femininity, and nongendered behaviors, regardless of an individual’s sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

### **Case Studies of Gender Ideologies and Gender Socialization**

We now turn to how gender ideology and socialization play out in different contexts through three national case studies: Nigeria, South Korea, and the United States. Due to national histories, the influence of colonialism, economics, political/social contexts, religious influences, demographics, and popular culture, gender ideology and socialization operate differently in these three countries. What it means to be an “ideal man” or “ideal woman” varies in all three nations, but globalization and neoliberal economic policies have contributed to the collapse of some of those differences.

In presenting three case studies of the dynamics of gender ideologies and gender socialization, we focus on particular facets of these processes. We present brief histories of each country and include demographic information that speaks to the powerful role that colonization and globalization have played in the construction of these nations. We recognize that some scholars dispute the use of the word “globalization” in understanding and naming the worldwide shifts in communication interdependence, the supposed move to a single world market, and the rise of the homogenization of cultures (Forster 1994). Coloma (2013) argued for a more critical analytic term such as empire and a focus on the worldwide struggle over power and education. Our discussion is undergirded by this critical assumption.

We also discuss the important role that religion has played and continues to play in gender ideologies and socialization in all three countries. Interestingly, all three nations are experiencing a revival of conservative thought, including religion and politics, which subscribes to traditional patriarchal gender ideologies and resists contemporary ideologies of parity and gender equality. We explore how these conservative gender movements are partially a result of the unstable and shifting economic landscape in each of the countries since all three are tied to the workings of neoliberal economic policies and worldwide economic shifts. In all three nations, the traditional breadwinner roles that men have played in maintaining patriarchal stability have been disrupted by these worldwide economic shifts. Finally, we note the emergence and growth of gender protest movements which have been driven by women, allied men, and gender-nonconforming individuals who are dissatisfied with the election of conservative politicians and workplace harassment and sexual violence. We now turn to the case of Nigeria.

#### **Nigeria**

Nigeria is populated by over 250 ethnic groups with three major ethnic groups residing in particular geographical regions: the Yoruba in the south and west (21%); the Igbo in the south and east (18%) and the Hausa/Fulani (29%) in the north

(Omadjohwoefe 2011). The Yoruba and Igbo are predominantly Christian and share a similar history with British colonialism due to their location on the coast of the country; the Hausa/Fulani are mostly Muslim and historically had a very different relationship with British colonialism. Currently, about 40% of the nation is Christian, 50% Muslim, and 10% indigenous (Omadjohwoefe 2011).

The British colonized and directly controlled the Yoruba and Igbo in the south through Christian missionaries, missionary schools, and local British governmental administration which demanded the use of the English language in any official interactions (Falola and Heaton 2008). At the same time, the British took a different approach to governing the landlocked Hausa/Fulani. They “allowed” the continuing rule of local emirates or caliphates, begun in the eleventh century when the Hausa adopted the Islamic faith. So while the Nigerian coastal peoples were assimilated into Christianity, English, the economics of the British Empire, and its accompanying gender regime, the Hausa/Fulani continued following the traditions of their ancestors and Islamic faith. These different historical, economic, and religious experiences laid the foundations for differences in gender ideologies and socialization in Nigeria, but surprisingly many similarities.

The introduction of Western educational practices through Christian missionaries in the south did allow a limited number of women to gain literacy skills and increased their social status (Omadjohwoefe 2011). Likewise, in some Christian denominations, such as Pentecostal churches, women were encouraged to gain an education and were given opportunities for social mobility through church leadership positions (Omadjohwoefe 2011), but this too was the exception. With few urban centers and a lack of a coastline for international commerce there were few opportunities for women to gain social status or leadership. Some historians argue that throughout precolonial Nigeria, age and seniority played the most important role in status. However, as Harris argues, “it was the dual contact with the colonial state and with patriarchal religion in the form of Islam or Christianity that destabilized cultural norms, allowing men to assume new levels of dominance” (Harris 2012, p. 213). Thus, in Nigeria, similar gender regimes were being taken up by different ethnic groups with different religious affiliations. The Hausa/Fulani embraced the ideal of female seclusion via Islam while the Yoruba and Igbo people were taught through Christian mission schools that women were to be helpmates to men and that men were the wage earners of the family (Harris 2012).

These beliefs are still expressed in the realities of the accepted gender order in Nigeria. The patrilineal culture is common to all regions of Nigeria, and at the death of the family head, the son assumes the leadership of the extended household (Modupe 2013). In addition, often the male child is given preferred nutrition. Sometimes the girl child is sent to work in a wealthy home in exchange for money, and early marriage at 12–15 years old is still common (Modupe 2013).

These disparities are also evident in Nigeria’s educational outcomes. The reasons for this gender imbalance are many and include: societal/religious beliefs about gender roles; the effects of poverty (46–70% of Nigerians are estimated to be below the poverty line) so that parents must choose among their children who attends school, with boys typically prioritized; the young age at which many girls marry and then become pregnant and consequently drop out of school (approximately 30%); gender-insensitive curriculum and pedagogy, specifically the harsh interactions of teachers; sexual harassment during school; and lack of school infrastructure such as

bathroom facilities (Okebukola 2014; UNESCO 2007). Female gross enrollment ratio in tertiary institutions in 2011 was 8.3% while male enrollment was 11.76% (UNESCO 2007) and even more pronounced gender disparities were found in polytechnic schools and the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields in universities (Oyekanmi and Orulebaja 2014).

Religion has made a substantial impact on how masculinity and femininity are practiced in Nigeria. Most Nigerian Islamic and Christian faiths support patriarchy (Abdulkadir 2015). Male masculinity in religious spaces is expressed by leading prayers, and performing other religious functions. This outward form of masculine expression is viewed as respectable and powerful, whereas women are not given the opportunities to perform the same functions in the church. However, the gender regime is in flux, with democratic rule in place since 1999 and a volatile economy in which women's incomes are needed, and grassroots feminist movements have been on the rise. However, Harris argued that as unemployment rose in the country, particularly after the global economic crisis of 2008, Nigerian men had difficulties in fulfilling their traditional masculine breadwinner role. In response, fundamentalist Islamic mosques and Pentecostal Christian churches grew and provided options for unemployed Muslim men trying to fulfill their economic family duties. Both Muslim and Christian fundamentalist churches and mosques provided solace and moral certainty in the face of rapid change. The churches also offered social services and some financial relief, which the federal and local governments did not offer. Thus, the role of men and women continued to be reinscribed along more traditional gender norms.

The belief in "male-as-breadwinner" continues today, in spite of an economy that often requires women to work. Harris (2012) maintains that gender and religion have been used by both regional and national governments to redirect the populace's attention from the failing economy, high levels of corruption, and lack of national infrastructure. Instead of focusing on solving the nation's economic woes, both levels of government used gender and religion to reinstall idealized masculinity. For instance, a series of laws in 2009 was proposed to criminalize women's "nudity" which made it illegal for a woman to expose any private part of her body. "Sexual intimidation" was also criminalized and referred to prostitution and/or women offering sexual favors in return for employment (Bakare-Yusuf 2011). There was no corollary punishment for men. Amorous relations between members of the same sex can result in a 10-year prison sentence under a 2014 law that prohibits gay marriage and relations. This punishment does not include the typical family estrangement that gay men experience, since more than 90% of all Nigerians oppose homosexuality (Cooley 2017). Although Nigeria has a multitude of ethnic or tribal groups each with its own language, cultural practices, and religion, there is a uniformity of belief against homosexuality because heterosexuality is such an important facet of ideal masculinity.

Besides legal maneuvers to uphold the gender regime, the kidnapping of over 276 female students at Chibok, a small town in the northeast in 2014, made visible Nigeria's struggles with gender disparities. These adolescents were taken from their school by a US-labeled "terrorist" organization, Boko Haram, whose name translates to "western education is forbidden". Boko Haram, which consists of male members of the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group, reject the Westernization of the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups found mainly in southern Nigeria. The girls, most of whom

were Christian, were taking secondary exams when they were captured by this Islamist fundamentalist group. Today, there are still approximately 100 girls under the Boko Haram control.

The national fracturing along ethnic/religious/economic/language lines along with a renewed patriarchy propagated in Pentecostal Christian churches and Reformed mosques (Harris 2012) have intersected to create a context in which little was done nationally to rescue the kidnapped Chibok girls. A worldwide Twitter and activist movement named #BringBackOurGirls urged the Nigerian government to pursue the girls' release, and the Western belief was that patriarchy and sexism played significant roles in the failure of the Nigerian government to locate and free the girls. However, this analysis, may reflect simplistic Western explanations for how gender operates in the day-to-day lives of women and men in non-Western cultures, particularly those which were formerly colonies of the West (Mohanty 2003). Certainly, sexism and patriarchy play a role in the actions of Islamic fundamentalists such as Boko Haram. But, overlooked in the Western condemnation of the federal government's limited response is the powerful effects of British colonial rule, which forced groups with different tribal, language, and religious affiliations to unite as one nation. Thus, the fact that Christian school girls belonging to the Igbo tribe were kidnapped in a Muslim and Hausa/Fulani tribal region of the country, complicates a simple explanation for why national governmental efforts to locate the girls have been unsuccessful. The intersections of gender, and differing culture, language, religion, and place (e.g. the region of the country) have contributed to the lack of coordinated efforts to locate and rescue the remaining children. Further, many who have been released through the International Red Cross and the federal government's efforts have not necessarily been welcomed back into their former communities, since these girls are seen as having been tarnished, meaning they are no longer virgins. Allegations of rape by Boko Haram members have been well documented and reported, but sexual violence and exploitation of those girls who have been rescued have also been carried out by Nigerian government guards, camp officials, security officers, and members of civilian vigilante groups (Searcy 2017).

### South Korea

South Korea, also officially known as the Republic of Korea (ROK) since 1948, provides another story of the complexities of gender ideology and socialization. One of the most ethnically homogenous and population-dense countries in the world, South Korea had 51,270,000 people including 1,410,000 (2.8%) foreigners in 2016 (Statistics Korea 2017). While there has been a growing number of immigrant foreign laborers and increased rates of interethnic marriages with partners from across Asia since the 1990s (Chung and Yoo 2013; Freeman 2011; Lee 2010), the greatest differences in South Korea are in geography between the Gyeong-Sang and Jeol-La regions (Kim 2013). The regional tension, called *Ji-Yeok-Gam-Jeong*, dates back centuries, and continues to play out politically between the conservative elites in the large urban centers of Gyeong-Sang, and the poor rural liberal progressives of the Jeol-La region. This political divide has been exacerbated in modern Korea due to the uneven economic development policies of conservative leaders, who have been almost exclusively from the Gyeong-Sang region (Kim 2013).

South Korea's complicated history of Confucianism, Christianity, and Japanese colonialism contributes to shifting and often contested gender ideologies (Yoo 2008). Many researchers attribute Confucianism and a national history of patriarchy to be the primary sources of the oppression women in Korea face (Chong 2006; Freeman 2011; Han and Price 2017; Hyun 2001; Kim 2006). Freeman (2011) defined Korea as a "patrilocal, patrilineal society where women are expected to adjust to the kinship practices and expectations of their husband's families" (p.114). Tudor (2012) argues that "if Korea can legitimately be accused of sexism, then Confucianism is the culprit" (p. 48).

Confucianism, which flourished during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), was used as a "state ideology" (Tudor 2012, p. 42). Under Confucianism, Koreans are socialized with a strong focus on filial piety (Jang et. al 2016) and ethics to behave according to one's place in the natural order for social harmony. The gender roles prescribed in Confucianism are the cornerstones of fulfilling social harmony and are the foundation for many of the family dynamics and relationship patterns experienced in Korea for centuries (Freeman 2011; Hyun 2001; Kong 2013). For men, taking care of the family and showing benevolence are key markers of masculinity (Tudor 2012), while for women and girls, virtue and following close behind men while walking in public is the embodiment of respect (Freeman 2011). Traditionally, upon marriage a woman must accept a lifelong sacrifice of subordination to her husband and parents-in-law, losing all rights and responsibilities for her own family (Kim 2006; Jang et. al 2016). Under the concept *Nam-Jon-Yeo-Bi*, men maintain power in the family under the mantra "men should be respected and women should be lowered" (Hyun 2001, p. 205). These ideas have been enacted in social policy as a part of the family register *hojuje* system, which requires the male to be the head of household (Cho 2013). Under *hojuje*, children are placed in their father's *hojeok*, and when the father dies, he is succeeded by his first son, and not his widow. Daughters are also removed from their father's *hojeok*, and placed in their husband's (Cho 2010). The *hojuje* system, however, was legally challenged, as it was argued that women are not treated as persons with dignity in a system that cultivates gender bias and results in gender discrimination. Therefore, the Constitutional Court ruled 6:3 that the *hojuje* system was a "legal means of shaping a male-dominated family structure," paving the way for the National Assembly to abolish the system in 2005, with a new system enacted in 2008 (Cho 2010). To some extent, this legal change has helped to promote women's rights and egalitarianism; however, it is also a source of conflict between conservative traditionalists who hold on to Confucianism and traditional gender ideologies as a part of the national identity and younger generations in contemporary Korean society who desire more egalitarian relationships (Cho 2013; Jang et al. 2016).

In addition to Confucian influences, the history of colonization and the rise of Christianity also play prominent roles in gender ideologies and socialization in South Korea. According to Ahn (2014), there is acrimonious debate over interpretations and narratives of the colonial past, particularly with respect to modernization. Since the Cold War, Korean intellectuals have critiqued the dualistic master narratives of domination and oppression often used to discuss Japanese imperialism (1910–1945) in Korea (Ahn 2014). Embedded in these critiques are narratives of gender, where masculinity, or the inability to protect the Korean woman or the female body from coercion

and exploitation as “comfort women” is understood as emasculating and a violation of the nation (Ahn 2014, p. 112). During the 1930s and early 1940s, approximately 200,000 Korean women were forced into sexual slavery as comfort women for soldiers, falsely lured by advertisements for factory work by the Japanese government (Tudor 2012). Ahn (2014) points out that while this system is often discussed as a national shame, the connections between imperialist exploitation and Korean patriarchal ideologies of women’s bodies being treated as the property of a man, are rarely discussed or acknowledged. According to Yoo (2008), colonial rule also saw the emergence of “new female categories unhinged from traditional understandings of women’s status and role in society” (p. 3). In particular, “there was a sharp discrepancy between the ideal of the Korean woman working at home and the reality of women’s growing participation in the labor force over the thirty-five years of colonial rule” (Yoo 2008, p. 3). Korean women entered the paid workforce with rapid industrialization and urbanization under the modernization agenda of Japanese imperialism. Modernization reshaped many Korean notions of work and class, and following the Korean War (1950–1953), South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world, requiring women to work in factories and as laborers (Tudor 2012).

The rise of Christianity in Korea also poses an interesting component to gender ideologies and socialization. Currently the most commonly practiced religion in contemporary Korean society, Christianity saw great increases in the mid-1880s, with the arrival of many foreign missionaries from the West (Grayson 2007). Christian literature was translated into *Hangul* (Korean) that the masses of Koreans with limited education could understand (Tudor 2012), and most of the outreach was done by Korean Christians (Grayson 2007). Some native-born Protestant leaders, such as Kil Son-Ju, connected traditional Confucian culture and Korean history in sermons, making Christianity more accessible and less foreign to masses of Koreans (Kim 2014). Understanding the importance of centuries of focus on filial piety in Confucianism, Christians tended to stress the 5th Commandment, to honor thy father and mother, as well as traditional gender roles (Grayson 2007). Presbyterian Christian missionaries from the West such as Allen and Underwood, and Methodist missionary Appenzeller established Western-styled schools and hospitals (Grayson 2007). Many of prestigious private high schools and universities in Korea, including Baejae Boy’s High School, Yonsei University, and Ewha Women’s University, were founded by those Western Christian missionaries (Tudor 2012). Part of the appeal to Christianity, particularly during colonialism, was a connection to Korean nationalism and social and political activism. The Protestant community resisted Japanese imperialist orders to establish Japanese patriotic schools and Shinto nationalism in their schools, sometimes opting to close their schools rather than succumb to colonial demands. Christian involvement in the March First Movement of 1919 also encouraged Koreans to see Christianity connected to Korean nationalism and a resistance to Japanese imperialism (Grayson 2007).

Christianity has also played a complicated role in Korean society, particularly with respect to women and gender. While Christian schools and universities provided women with educational opportunities and spaces to exercise their voices, particularly under colonial rule, Christianity has also perpetuated patriarchy in Korean society. Ironically, while the Christian church offered opportunities for many Korean women to step outside of the patriarchal Confucian confines of the private sphere

and home, and offered opportunities for “involvement in something wider than the bounds of the family home,” (Tudor 2012, p. 64), many Korean Christian women continue to affirm patriarchy through religious submission (Chong 2006). Korean Christianity guides the political landscape in modern Korea that continues to affect gender relations. For instance, many right wing Korean politicians, including the first president of the ROK, Syngman Rhee and former president Myung-Bak Lee are conservative Protestant (Tudor 2012). Supported by large churches, they continue to propose conservative policies based in traditional gender ideologies (Tudor 2012).

Although globalization and economic trends have brought changes to Korean family structures, with more women in the workforce and attaining higher education levels postcolonization, women continue to struggle for gender equality (Chong 2006; Kong 2013). In an export-led economy, the manufacturing industry preferred young single women, sometimes offering women less than half of the wages of men (Cho 2013; Kong 2013). “The legacy of agrarian patriarchal ideology facilitated the construction of cheap female labor, mediated by male workers who struggled for autonomy and patriarchal status in gender-segregated households and workplaces. Male power became reified and institutionalized in offices, factories, and the state, capitalizing on the cultural practice of patriarchal authority” (Cho 2013, p. 19). Despite unequal working conditions and repressive labor policies from the Korean government, many of the labor movements of the 1980s focused on working-class struggles, and not issues of gender equity.

Amid the economic slowdown and global economic pressures of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1990s, more women than men were laid off at higher rates throughout the economy, perpetuating the “male-as-breadwinner” ideology (Cho 2013). Change in the workplace for gender equality has been very slow in contemporary Korea. Women continue to earn lower wages, work in positions with limited possibilities for promotion, and are overrepresented in less privileged classes (Shin 2013). Confucianism continues to influence gender ideologies and socialization in Korea today. Eun and Lee (2005) found little generational differences in perception of family values among Koreans. In comparison to other countries, Koreans showed conservative and traditional attitudes in terms of marriage, gender roles within family, divorce, and premarital cohabitation (Eun and Lee 2005). In 2007, the Bank of Korea placed the portrait of Shin Saimdang on the 50,000 won bill because she is still considered the “ideal Confucian woman” for devoting her entire life to her son (Tudor 2012, p. 48).

### United States

The formation of the United States, similar to Nigeria and South Korea, includes a history of British colonization. But different from Nigeria, the United States colonization ended in 1776, and the goal was democratic self-rule. Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, and it has only been a democracy since 1999. The United States’ current demographics reveal the nation’s history of slavery, genocide of indigenous peoples, imperial conquests of what is now the Southwest US, changing immigration policies, and British control. According to the 2016 US Census, American Indian and Alaska Native people account for 1.3% of the population; Asian American, 5.7%; African American, 13.3%; Latino Americans



17.8%; and white Americans, 61%. Christianity is the dominant religion with 70.6% of Americans claiming to be Christian (Pew Research Center n.d.). These demographics are a reminder of the central roles that race and ethnicity along with religious faith play in gender ideologies and socialization. Although the US population is growing increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, the dominant gender ideology and socialization processes are predicated on whiteness.

Currently, the US is experiencing a reinstatement of conservatism, in this case that of white dominant masculinity which is often associated with conservative Christian churches. There is a nostalgia for what working-class white men understand as the gender and racial hegemony of the 1950s (Kimmel 2013). At that time, the United States was an unrivaled economic powerhouse following World War II, and former white soldiers easily secured good paying union jobs in factories whose products were sent around the globe. Gender roles for whites were clearly demarcated, with women as subordinate and ensconced in the home and men as controlling the world of work, family, religion and leisure (Kimmel 2013). Although today's economic and social context is vastly different from the 1950s, many white men have romanticized the past gender and racial order and become angry with the current social/political/economic context and their place in it (Kimmel 2013). Kimmel argued that white men are angry because they feel an "aggrieved entitlement" to what is known as the American Dream, which is derived from what is typically called a *bootstrap mentality*. Bootstrap mentality is the common-sense belief that individuals rise to financial success due to their own hard work and not government intervention and has played a part of American identity since the early history of the country where it was grounded in the ideologies of colonial Puritans (Weber 2003). The American Dream translates into a middle-class home, cars, vacations, and children who surpass the financial station of their parents. Since fewer and fewer white American men can achieve the American Dream due to the dynamically fluctuating economy, they turn to other means of achieving manhood, but "mostly, they blame women: ex-wives, would-be girlfriends, the phantom black women who stole their jobs" (Rosin 2013). The ultimate rejection of the current race and gender order of the United States can be seen in the growth and activism of white supremacists and neo-Nazis, most of whom are young white men. Another indicator of the toxicity of this white male anger can be found in recognizing the identities of school shooters and mass murderers, most of whom are white and young men.

Although the era of the 1950s that white men yearn for was more than 50 years ago, the desire for this particular gender order remains with white Christian men. While white men pine for a past that never was, the rates of arrest, incarceration, and death by police have all increased for men of color, particularly African American men (Alexander, 2010). As Collins (2004) notes, black masculinity in the US is read by whites as hypersexual, aggressive, and violent. At the same time, black women are framed within stereotypical tropes of the oversexualized Jezebel, the asexual Mammy, and the controlling Sapphire. Thus, race and ethnicity play an important role in shaping how gender ideologies and socialization operate in a racially diverse culture. The major uniformity, however, is how individuals, of all races, must enact and embody dominant understandings of gender identity and socialization if they are to succeed in a white-dominated social, political, and economic environment.

Part of white male anger is predicated on the fact that large numbers of women work with them in a variety of work settings and are perceived as competitors in a tight employment market (Connell 2005, Kimmel, 2013). Since the 1970s, white liberal feminism has argued for US laws and policies that recognize women's ability to compete athletically, assume head of household status, control their reproductive health, enjoy equal education, receive equal pay for equal work, and work alongside men. For example, Title IX (1972) made gender discrimination in any public institution which received funding from the national government a reason for defunding the institution. Public schools and universities had to ensure that girls received equal treatment in school counseling, curriculum, and athletics. After Title IX was implemented, the number of girls and women playing sports and enrolling in science and mathematics coursework exploded, arenas in which men and masculinity have dominated.

At the time of writing, women make up 47% of US workers although they are concentrated in mostly traditionally gendered occupations such those found in food service and social helping professions (DeWolf 2017). In 2017, women occupied 32 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) positions of the Fortune 500, the largest percentage of women (6.3%) recorded in the 63 year history of this list; only two of the 32 were women of color (Fortune 2017). This statistic along with the percentage of women occupying top government positions, at this point in time 19.6% of the 535 Congressional members (Center for American Women and Politics 2017), does indicate that although women are working in unparalleled numbers, their gender still plays a decisive role in the types of work they do, the status of their job or profession, and thus their income.

These statistics also demonstrate the contradictory status of the US women's movement, that of mandating access to more educational, workplace, and athletic opportunities while simultaneously keeping a majority of women employed in sectors of the economy that do not hold high status and/or pay well. This shows how gender ideologies can remain the same despite legal and policy changes. This is partially because the general sentiment of the nation is that women have achieved equal rights and there is no need to consider the role that gender and race play in the workplace, family, and religion. A conservative middle- and upper-class white feminism found in the work of Sheryl Sandberg's bestseller *Lean In* (2013) advises young women to take up a feminism, sometimes called a "faux feminism" (McRobbie 2009) that is part of a corporate mindset of individualism and competition. Further, young women, particularly white and middle-class young women, have been socialized to become what Harvard psychologist Dan Kindlon (2006) has labeled "Alpha Girls," a term with similar conceptual underpinnings as Sandberg's *Lean In*. Products of feminist mothers, more engaged fathers, and the benefits of Title IX, these Alpha Girls will change the world supposedly, Kindlon claims (Bettis and Adams 2006; Bettis, Ferry and Roe 2016). This kind of feminism neglects the poverty and/or racial discrimination in which many girls and women live (hooks 2013) since the wage gap remains at 80% on the dollar (AAUW, 2017) for all US women. For Hispanic and African American women, the gap is much wider, with Hispanic women earning 54% and black women earning 63% of what full-time white men earn per year. It also ignores the statistics of violence, including domestic violence, perpetuated against all women but particularly against transgendered women who further violate dominant gender ideologies and socialization (Astor 2017).

While the concept of the gender binary is being challenged by transgender, LGBTQ and feminist activists, the process of gender socialization continues to reinscribe dominant gender scripts. Critical masculinity scholars (Connell 2005; Dumas 2016; Kimmel 2013; Katz 1995, 2003), critical feminist scholars (hooks 2004a, 2004b; Collins 2004; Lorber 1994; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981) and LGBTQ activists argue that challenging the gender binary and traditional gender socialization will improve all people's lives. These scholars have critiqued dominant masculine ideology and socialization and labeled it "the mask of masculinity" and "toxic masculinity" which refers to socially constructed values of what men should be and how they should act in our society. These values not only constrain men, but subsequently affect and oppress women. Scholars point to the mental health issues, violence, and sexual dominance that permeate men's lives and argue for the "mask" in masculinity to be lifted from men (hooks 2004a). Finally, the dynamics among whiteness, dominant gender ideologies and dominant gender socialization are recognized and the desire for addressing some of these iniquities are beginning to be seen by the American populace in the various movements for social justice, gender, and race, such as Black Lives Matter, Women's March, and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) marches.

### **Women's Protests and Grassroots Activism**

Ronke Iyabowale Ako-Nai (2013), a leading Nigerian feminist and scholar, states that "the current feminist struggle, and that of Africa cannot be driven by only old theories; new ones must emerge to take care of the interests of the various cultures, ideologies, race, religion, and the home, which are major factors in women's struggle in Africa" (p. 8). Ako-Nai's statement is not just appropriate for the nations of Africa; it also speaks to the need for gender justice movements throughout the world which are driven by grassroots activists and grounded in the realities of women's and men's lives in a particular nation or region. In the past, Western feminism was looked to by women around the world since it was one of the earliest feminist movements discussed in mainstream media. However, women scholars such as Chandra Mohanty (2003) and Chimanda Adichie, who has recently published an international best-seller, *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), have critiqued the way that Western feminism has been held as the standard by which all women must operate and has neglected the important role that colonialism, religion, and local cultural practices have played in gender inequities. This is the reason that Ako-Nai called for new feminist theories. Amidst a backdrop of greater attention to sexual harassment and increases in sexual violence, Nigeria, South Korea, and the United States have all witnessed grassroots gender activism focused on issues pertinent to their particular context.

Interestingly, all three nations have experienced a surge of women's empowerment movements recently. In the United States, the largest women's march in US history took place after the inauguration of a conservative president on January 22, 2017. The protesters worried that the new US President would challenge women's rights to their own reproductive health, argue for a return to an industrial era economy, and call for the building of a border wall to stop "illegal immigration" (Stein, Henrix,

Harslohner 2017). Further, this president was caught on audio and videotape sexually objectifying women and making disparaging remarks about their willingness to engage in sexual acts because of his fame and power. Many of the women in this march and their allies wore pink “pussy” hats which referred to the comments made by the president in the past and represented a reclaiming of women’s voice. Later in 2017, a national movement against sexual harassment in which women detailed how they were sexually harassed at their workplace shook the foundations of the movie, television, and news media industries, and state and federal governments. Some women spoke out and named their harassers publicly which resulted in job loss and public humiliation. These conversations have undoubtedly “sparked the biggest national conversation on sexual harassment since the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas battle in the early ’90s” (Criss 2017, para. 2). The unleashing of stories of harassment and the names of the harassers has continued, and has provoked uncomfortable conversations in many workplaces and in many homes.

Nigeria, as well, has a history of women’s protests (Modupe 2013). In the past, Nigerian women organized to protest their removal from participation in sociocultural, economic, and political activities. Examples of early movements were the Aba riots of 1929; the Onitsha women uprising; the Egba women protests, and more recently the Federation of Nigeria Women Societies led by Funmilayo Ransome Kuti (Modupe 2013). The struggle can be seen also by the ongoing protests surrounding the failed governmental search for the Chibok girls. With 100 girls still missing after being taken three years ago, the protests in the capital of Abuja continue. However, to illustrate the role that colonialism continues to play in Nigeria, the government’s response to the Chibok protests has revealed a gender bias. On June 3, 2014 a national newspaper named *Business Day* ran a story entitled “Chibok school girls: Police ban protests, redeploy DPOs [Divisional Police Officers]”. In it, Joseph Mbu, the commissioner of police of the territory in which Abuja is located, banned any more protests, saying: “the ‘Fountain of Unity’ venue of gathering for the protest was being turned into a place for “cooking and selling” [and] was embarrassing.” According to him, many diplomats live in that area of the territory and thus his reasoning harkens back to the continuing power of colonialism and gender bias. Here, the police commissioner expresses embarrassment that international diplomats might see Nigerian women cooking food for themselves and the protesters, next to a central monument in the capital. The embarrassment did not include the fact that the government had not secured the kidnapped girls’ release as the protesters reminded officials. Although, the #BringBackOurGirls global movement’s goal was the emancipation of the kidnapped girls, that goal has not been achieved since the needs and interests of girls and women in Nigeria continue to be neglected and, as we have stated, at least 100 of girls have not been found.

In South Korea, following several recent high-profile murders and sexual assaults, women are mobilizing to force more public discussions of misogyny and patriarchy. The brutal murder of a young woman at the Gangnam subway station in May 2016 has galvanized Korean feminists as well as citizens and political leaders to focus greater attention on issues of sexual violence (Steger 2016). Sexual violence against women has consistently increased over the past 5 years in South Korea: 341 cases in 2012, 449 cases in 2014, 545 cases in 2016, and 370 cases (up to August) in 2017 (Park 2017). Some cases highlight the serial nature of sexual violence in the

workplace. A 25-year-old female employee of *Han-Sam*, a furniture and interior design company, first reported being victim to hidden cameras in the public restroom by her male peer during orientation. On her third day of working, she was raped by her mentor, the trainer for new employees. And, during a business trip, the HR manager of *Han-Sam*, attempted to rape her at the hotel (Park 2017). Because this case was covered by all mainstream media and received tremendous attention in Korea, many other similar cases of sexual violence in the workplace have been reported. Koreans, particularly women, started a boycott of *Han-Sam*, and 11,200 people signed a petition for an in-depth investigation and severe punishment of her assailants (Park 2017).

A conservative candidate for the 2017 presidential special election in Korea, Joon-Pyo Hong, was also publicly embroiled in a sexual violence scandal. In his autobiography, published in 2005, Joon-Pyo Hong admitted that as a college student he delivered a sexual stimulant for pigs to assist his friend's attempted rape of a female colleague, although that attempt failed (Lee 2017). While the Korean public has shown outrage, Hong's response was that it happened 45 years ago when Korean society was totally different from 2017. Neglecting to issue an apology to the victim, Hong dismissed attempted rape as a prank, said that "washing dishes is women's work," and was confident that he would win the election, comparing himself to US President Donald Trump. "Trump became president despite biased news media" he said. Hong lost the election, garnering 24% of the vote. Jae-in Moon, a former human rights attorney and democrat, won with 41% of the vote, perhaps signaling a shift in the Korean public sentiment.

### Changing Economic Realities

Finally, all three nations – Nigeria, South Korea, and the United States – are economic powerhouses in the world. However, all three countries' economic realities regarding gender are similar to other countries in that women experience poverty at much higher rates than men, and women are relegated to particular types of work with lower social status than men. While natural resources in the form of oil have driven the economic engine of Nigeria in the past, the nation must adapt to a changing economic world climate in which women play central roles in the economy. Since becoming democratic in 1999, Nigeria has experienced a variety of economic and political challenges. For example, the oil crisis of 2008 saw an international drop in the demand for oil and a subsequent drop in its price affected Nigeria dramatically. The unemployment rate rose to close to 20% in 2009 and now is approximately 13% (Trading Economics n.d.). By 2014, Nigeria was considered to be the largest economy in Africa, mainly due to its oil industry, but there was growth in communications and other sectors as well. While the United States and South Korea enjoy relatively healthy economies, these two nations must also rethink their gender ideologies and socialization practices. Although considered to be "developed" nations, both countries harbor gender inequities in the type of work women do, the pay they receive, and the treatment they can expect at work. For instance, Sheryl Sandberg's (2013) now famous claim to *Lean In* at the workplace demands that women adopt traditional masculine ways of being, which include being aggressive, competitive,

and hyperfocused on individualism. We challenge scholars that write about femininity and masculinity not to reinscribe behaviors that already are problematic in work culture.

### Closing Remarks

Generally, societies appear to continue to embrace dominant gender norms and many take pleasure in them (Connell 2013; Kimmel 2013). However, a major problem is that these dominant or ideal forms of femininity and masculinity, since they are not equally valued in most societies, result in a variety of social ills including sexual violence, domestic abuse, unequal pay for the same jobs, women's lack of control over their reproductive health, men's violence and subsequent incarceration, to name a few. This is why a more radical feminism, critical masculinities scholarship, and LGTQ activists are needed to propose new ways of being in the public and private spheres for all people.

This is obviously difficult since gender disparities form the public and private foundation of all three nations and indeed most of the world. Until women and those who do not conform to the gender binary of all races, ethnicities, and religions are able to participate fully in civic, religious, family, and work life, nations will struggle to fulfill their social, political, and economic potential. When a nation neglects the education and growth of one half of its citizens, it loses one half of its future potential, economically, but more importantly, ethically.

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# 12

## Gender and Religion

CARYN D. RISWOLD

Gender studies has transformed the study and practice of religion in the US and around the world. Religions like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have been challenged and changed by key work in feminist theologies, gender studies in religion, and queer theology, while resources from their own histories as well as those of Buddhist, pagan, and indigenous religions have been incorporated into new concepts and rituals. The impact of gender studies on religion is seen by focusing on key topics such as women's humanity and fitness for religious leadership, images of and language for the divine, religions' histories, interpretation and authority of sacred texts, belief and doctrine, race matters, sexuality and gender identity, and transnational justice issues.

### Women as Human

A well-known statement about women's lack of full humanity comes from medieval Catholic philosopher Thomas Aquinas: "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten" (Aquinas n.d.). Despite centuries of women's leadership and activity in his own church as well as in other religions, Aquinas captured a prevailing patriarchal sentiment. In contrast, when speaking of the origins of the Christian movement, Stanley Grenz and Denise Kjesbo note that "despite male dominance among the Hebrews, the Old Testament faith instilled in Israel the seeds of an egalitarian strand unparalleled among surrounding nations" (1995). As part of this Hebrew tradition and in contrast to surrounding ancient Mediterranean society, "Jesus' dealings with all women ran contrary to the cultural norms of his day; he viewed all people, whether male or female, as persons" (Grenz and Kjesbo 1995). This foundational understanding of women as fully human in Judaism and Christianity is one reason for many examples of their public power throughout the centuries: women in the Hebrew Bible like Deborah and Miriam, early Christian

community leaders like Priscilla and Phoebe, women patrons of the early church, and powerful medieval abbesses and mystics. Women claimed a relationship with God that informed their work, and tradition has recognized such roles. Aviva Cayam points out, for example, that “the rabbis of the Talmud do not rebuke Deborah for judging nor criticize any of the queens for ruling” (Cayam 2009).

Nevertheless, religious teachings like Aquinas’s were used to attempt to subordinate women for many generations. Foundational feminist arguments to the contrary build on the history of women in religious traditions. An early modern example is Mary Wollstonecraft’s 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. In this text, she uses Enlightenment philosophy and confidence in the supremacy of reason to make a liberal feminist case for women’s full humanity. This includes arguing that God is the author of natural law, which patriarchal claims of male supremacy violate: “Nature, or to speak with strict propriety God, has made all things right; but man has sought him out many inventions to mar the work” (Wollstonecraft 1792). She uses religious concepts like the idea that all humans, male and female (Genesis 1:26), are created in the image of God to support an argument for gender equality. This strategy affected political campaigns for women’s rights as well as religious concepts and traditions themselves.

A generation later, Sojourner Truth challenged conventional white feminist wisdom about who was considered a woman in her speech at the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. Though the refrain, “and ain’t I a woman?” remains the well-known part of her speech, Truth’s use of explicitly Christian concepts challenges religious assumptions of her audience. Referring to a clergyman nearby, she says:

That little man in black there, he says women can’t have as much rights as men, ’cause Christ wasn’t a woman! Where did your Christ come from? ... From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!

(Truth 1851)

Invoking both Christian claims about the virgin birth of Jesus and the Genesis story of creation and the fall, Truth challenges patriarchal use of religious concepts to oppress and limit women’s roles.

In 1960, Valerie Saiving wrote “The Human Situation,” and launched another generation of scholarship in religion on whether women’s humanity was fully affirmed in Christian theology. Her key argument was that the dominant Christian theological view of sin as pride, or too much a sense of self, reflected men’s experiences, not women’s. Saiving asserted that for women in patriarchal society, the fundamental sin is too small a sense of self: “Her capacity for surrendering her individual concerns in order to serve the immediate needs of others ... [can] induce a kind of diffuseness of purpose” (Saiving 1960). Therefore, when Christians were exhorted to give up their power/pride and sacrifice themselves for others, Saiving argued that the inverse would in fact be life-saving for women in patriarchy.

In the same decade, radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly’s first book, *The Church and the Second Sex*, connected social and political discrimination against women to Catholic church teachings about them. Daly employed the feminist

philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir in her critical analysis of church history to show that women have been constructed as the second sex throughout the Catholic tradition, to the detriment of all. She begins the book by observing that “Catholic teaching has prolonged a traditional view of woman which at the same time idealizes and humiliates her” and ends the book with a “commitment to radical transformation of the negative, life-destroying elements of the Church as it exists today” (Daly 1968). While Daly’s own work soon abandoned such a reforming commitment, this book inspired a generation of scholars committed to affirming women’s humanity.

Attention to gender in theological anthropology eventually leads to creative and constructive proposals like the emphasis on women’s moral agency in the work of *mujerista* scholar Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz. In coining the term, Isasi-Diaz explains in her 1993 book, *En La Lucha*, that “a *mujerista* is a Hispanic Woman who struggles to liberate herself not as an individual but as a member of a Hispanic community.” Her work centers the moral agency of Latinas because “it is clear that theology is not so much about God as about how we understand and relate to God” (Isasi-Diaz 1993). Using ethnographic work, she models what it means to take seriously women’s humanity, Latinas lived-experience in particular, as a source and criterion for doing theology. This is one contemporary example of how the simple claim that women are human transforms religions.

### Women as Leaders

Theological arguments about women’s humanity quickly became relevant to debates about whether or not women should be official leaders in religions. The intersection of gender studies and religion has had a cascading effect on debates about the formal leadership of women in churches, synagogues, and mosques. Antoinette Brown Blackwell is widely recognized as the first woman ordained by an established Christian denomination in the United States. A Methodist minister presided at her ordination in 1853 at a Congregational Church in New York. This was in an era of increasing recognition of women’s leadership roles in Christianity, bolstered in part by the work of social reformers and abolitionists like Quakers Sarah and Angelina Grimke whose 1837 *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes* were aimed primarily at Christian clergymen and made their case for gender equality using the Bible. In the nineteenth century, key women like Phoebe Palmer in the Christian holiness movement were known for their preaching and still others had gained public recognition as founders of “heterodox” Christian churches, for example Ellen Harmon White with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Aimee Semple McPherson with her Foursquare Gospel Church (Grenz and Kjesbo 1995).

It would be another century before the wave of official change took widespread and lasting hold in many US churches. Modern Protestant denominations are complex organisms with often confusing policies and decision-making processes. Frederick Schmidt describes one denomination’s history with multiple qualifiers: “Depending on how one traces the history of the United Methodist Church, the denomination has arguably provided for the full ordination of women since 1956”

(Schmidt 1996). Likewise, the history of the Episcopal Church allowing women priests is characterized this way:

The “irregular” ordination of eleven women in 1974 met with swift rejection at an emergency meeting of the House of Bishops. As a result, the National Coalition for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and Episcopacy and others opted in 1976 to move for a change in canon law.

(Schmidt 1996)

Movement toward greater inclusion of women in ordained Christian ministry cannot be said to be universal, however, as the example of the Southern Baptist Convention shows. Denominational polity maintains the independence of local congregations to carry out their ministry without forced direction from a national body. As a result, many local Baptist congregations called and ordained women as pastors for several decades. Beginning in the late 1970s, however, conservatizing forces began exerting control over the denomination, resulting in a statement from the Convention in 2000 that “the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by scripture” (Baptist Faith and Message 2000). Such a narrowing of the definition of pastor left many women leaders and Baptist congregations in uncharted territory.

Debates about women as rabbis in Judaism also navigate the relationship between cultural shifts and maintaining tradition. Sally Priesand became the first woman ordained by a rabbinical seminary in the United States in 1972, after at least a century of women and men making the case that female rabbis were permissible. In the nineteenth century, various liturgical and ritual reforms to American Judaism had begun:

“The most visible shift from European, premodern forms of Judaism was the emergence of women as synagogue worshippers. [This] sharply contrasted with traditional Judaism’s exemption for women from most occasions of public prayer.”

(Nadell 1998)

Over the next century, Jewish rabbinical schools emerged in the United States, eventually admitting women, and making women rabbis more possible. Nadell argues that “female ordination symbolized the fulfillment of women’s emancipation within Reform Judaism” (1998). Subsequently, Amy Eilberg became the first woman ordained a rabbi in Conservative Judaism in 1985, while Orthodox Judaism remains more resistant to the practice. Controversy around women as prayer leaders and imams in Islam provides one more example of gender studies challenging a Western monotheistic religion. In 2005, Amina Wadud led prayer at a mixed-gender Friday service in New York City. The service “was organized by a group of Muslim activists who hope to elevate the status of women in Islam” (Elliott 2005). Reaction to the event was strong and complex: “All Islamic scholars ‘agree that women do not lead men in (performing) religious duties,’ declared Sheik Yousef al-Qaradawi, a leading Islamic scholar based in Qatar.” (Abdo 2005). The Muslim Women’s League (MWL) issued a statement in support of women’s leadership in Islam while questioning the strategy of the public event in New York:

While the MWL position has been that Islam creates the possibility for women to lead mixed-gender prayers, some of us are not convinced that this Friday’s much-publicized

event is the best way to advance the cause of Muslim women who are in distress here or around the world.”

(Muslim Women’s League 2005)

Muslim women scholars and activists had complex reactions like this, while conservative opposition ranged from declaring the event a heresy to dismissing it as a publicity stunt that had nothing to do with Islam.

In writing about the issue herself, Wadud says “Although public ritual leadership in Islam remains nearly exclusively male, from an ethical standpoint it should not continue that way” (Wadud 2006). She makes her case for women as congregational prayer leaders “on the basis of a Qur’anic principle as an ethical precedent to construct an intra-Islamic rationale” that she refers to as “the *tawhidic* paradigm.” (Wadud 2006). Tawhid is the Islamic concept of the unity of God, the only one to whom all humans, male and female, submit. Men do not exist, she argues, on a higher spiritual plane than women: “Each two persons are sustained on the horizontal axis because the highest moral point is always occupied metaphysically by Allah” (Wadud 2006). As has been the case in Judaism and Christianity, change in Islam occurs as interpretations of sacred texts and theological concepts, along with discussion of the meaning and authority of tradition, come under the scrutiny of gender studies scholars and activists.

### Images of and Language for God

In her 1973 book *Beyond God the Father*, Mary Daly captured the interplay between sociology and theology that lies at the heart of feminist critiques of patriarchal religion: “If God is male, then the male is God” (Daly 1973). As part of making the case against exclusive male imagery and language for God, she points out that traits assigned to the divine reflect what a society values most highly. Such ideas become inscribed in doctrine and used to uphold teachings like a male-exclusive priesthood:

[The] assumption in the minds of theologians down through the centuries has been that the divinity could not have deigned to become incarnate in the “inferior” sex, and the “fact” that “he” did not do so reinforces the belief in masculine superiority.

(Daly 1971)

This illustrates the mutually reinforcing relationship of what is said about the divine and what is understood about humans in the world.

Expanding on this idea a decade later in 1982, Sallie McFague details how models of the divine emerge and function, pointing out that the problem usually occurs when a metaphor becomes literalized. She notes that:

The problem does not lie with the model itself of “God the father,” for it is a profound metaphor and as true as any religious model available, but it has established a hegemony over the Western religious consciousness which it is the task of metaphorical theology to break.

(McFague 1982)

In short, the metaphor of “father” no longer functions in the tentative way it should, and has become an idol that too many are unwilling to challenge. McFague points out that feminist, liberation, and black theologians are best positioned to reinscribe metaphorical thinking into religious traditions with their challenges to status quo thinking.

Because of the entrenched power of male images for God in Christianity, many women and men abandon the religion altogether or never find it welcoming in the first place. Carol Christ points out that “symbol systems cannot simply be rejected, they must be replaced” (1979). Using Clifford Geertz’s theory, she expands on Daly’s aphorism:

Religions centered on the worship of a male God create “moods” and “motivations” that keep women in a state of psychological dependence on men and male authority, while at the same time legitimating the *political* and *social* authority of fathers and sons in the institutions of society.

(Christ 1979)

Feminism must abandon “god the father” and embrace the Goddess as “affirmation of female power, the female body, the female will, and women’s bonds and heritage” (Christ 1979). For some women, this has included embracing Wicca and other pagan traditions long dominated by women.

The symbolism of the Goddess is not a parallel structure to the symbolism of God the Father. The Goddess does not rule the world; She is the world. Manifest in each of us, She can be known internally by every individual, in all her magnificent diversity.

(Starhawk 1989)

Margot Adler describes neopagan religious movements and Wicca as “interwoven with ... the ecology movement, the feminist movement, and the libertarian tradition.” She points out that inspiration for Wicca comes from “pre-Christian sources, European folklore, and mythology,” and includes the worship of a goddess in her three forms of “Maiden, Mother, and Crone” (Adler 1979). Historians and others trace the persecution of witches and Wiccans at the hands of church and society, reaching “indescribable” levels of terror that were “to hold all of Europe in its grip until well into the seventeenth century” (Starhawk 1989). Misogyny overwhelmed patriarchal religions and the cultures where they held sway.

Within those patriarchal religions today, feminist activists, pastors, and scholars have written new liturgies and reshaped congregational life. In 1986, Rosemary Radford Ruether’s book *Women-Church* offered prayers, rituals, and resources affirming women’s full humanity and shunning male-exclusive language for God. Putting theories into practice, she argues:

“It is not enough to hold an ideology of criticism and social analysis as an interpretive base. [...] One needs communities of nurture to guide one through death to the old symbolic order of patriarchy to rebirth into a new community of being and living.”

(Ruether 1986)

In seeking out and creating these communities, Ruether says that “Christian feminists cannot wait for the institutional churches to reform themselves” (1986).



*Women-Church* sits alongside other feminist reconstructive efforts by Jewish women such as Rachel Adler and Susannah Heschel, and pagans such as Starhawk.

One contemporary example where this reconstruction of worship has been put into practice is in San Francisco, at Ebenezer/herchurch Lutheran, whose congregational mission is “to embody and voice the prophetic wisdom and word of the Divine Feminine, to uplift the values of compassion, creativity and care for the earth and one another” (Ebenezer/herchurch n.d.). This is because they are “convinced that the nature of the sacred and divine presented in feminist-inclusive understandings can and will help facilitate a caring culture.” (Ebenezer/herchurch n.d.). Images of and language for God function at the heart of culture, and expansive language for and images of the divine encourage social and political transformation.

Feminist critiques of religion and the concept of God have occasioned the question as to whether or not a society without religion and God is inherently more just and equal. Data on atheism in the twenty-first century indicate that white and male dominance persists there as well, with 68% of self-identified atheists being men while 78% are white (Lipka 2016). More than just numbers, however, have been a series of high profile speeches, statements, and controversies involving prominent “new atheist” writers such as Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris. Marcie Bianco points out that some of these figures “claim to be about liberating people from the shackles of religion. But in importing sexism into the movement, they’ve brought religion’s biggest problem with them” (Bianco 2016). Pushing back against some of these patriarchal tendencies are nonreligious blogs committed to social justice, such as *The Orbit* (n.d.) which states that “our site is feminist and progressive” and the *Women in Secularism Conference*. This is in part because, as the conference description notes, “Women are increasingly living religion-free lives and embodying the values of humanism and skepticism in their activism and professional work” (Center for Inquiry 2016). Whether gender studies leads scholars and activists more deeply into critiquing and reconstructing images of and language for God, or whether it leads to deeper critiques of atheism and nonreligious movements themselves, transformations abound.

### History/Herstory

Gender studies has led to a revisioning of multiple religions’ histories including Christianity and Islam. In her book *When Women Were Priests*, Karen Torjesen debunks the notion that women were not leaders in the early Christian movement: “Most Christians today, including clergy and scholars, presume that women played little or no role in the Jesus movement or in the early church.” On the contrary, “women did in fact play crucial roles in the Jesus movement and were prominent leaders along with men in a wide variety of roles in the early church” (Torjesen 1993). Among other things, she shows how, as the Christian movement gained power and political influence via the Constantinian empire, it became increasingly hostile to women in leadership. As the church became a public institution, it existed in cultures where women wielded power only in the private realm. Gendered study of history makes possible a more complete picture of a religious past, which is necessary when that past is relevant to contemporary debates.

Another historian, Leila Ahmed traces the history of patriarchy and the emergence of Islam as a countercultural movement of inclusion in her 1992 book, *Women and Gender in Islam*, countering a contemporary narrative of the religion as inherently misogynistic. She contextualizes the emergence of particular practices within the cultural origins of Islam in the seventh century. For example, “throughout [the prophet] Muhammad’s lifetime veiling, like seclusion, was observed only by his wives” (Ahmed 1992). In addition, the first person with whom the prophet shared his revelation was his businesswoman wife Khadija, many years his senior and his only wife as long as she lived. Ahmed points out that under the prophet, women had the right to inherit property, and we find ample evidence of their contribution to his work, given the number of hadith (teachings of the prophet) recorded by and attributed to women like his later wives and daughters. Swift changes to such inclusive moves occurred following the death of the prophet as the emerging Islamic community sought new leadership. The reign of the second caliph, Umar, from 634 to 644 brought

a series of religious, civil, and penal ordinances, including stoning as punishment for adultery. He was harsh toward women in both private and public life ... and he sought to confine women to their homes and to prevent their attending prayers at the mosques.  
(Ahmed 1992)

The third caliph, Uthman, however, “revoked Umar’s arrangement for separate imams” and restored some of women’s other liberties (Ahmed 1992). This back-and-forth pattern of granting and revoking rights to women that historians such as Ahmed and Torjesen present are important insofar as they complicate our understanding of women’s rights and roles in the history of religions.

One other example of how gender studies has enabled a fuller understanding of religions is found in John Boswell’s study of tolerance and intolerance in medieval history. He identifies a moment when homosexuality began to be stigmatized and marginalized for cultural and political, rather than theological, reasons. He points out that “the single most prominent aspect of the period from the later twelfth to the fourteenth century was a sedulous quest for intellectual and institutional uniformity and corporatism throughout Europe” (Boswell 1980). Casualties of this intolerance for difference included Jews, Muslims, and groups like the Franciscans and the poor. Eventually, “in such an atmosphere [...] gay people found themselves the objects of increasing mistrust and hostility” (Boswell 1980). Boswell’s detailed study of texts, imperial edicts, and other sources reveals the erosion of tolerance for the “wide variation” of human sexual relations and behaviors in the ancient world, and the reality of gay people as “prominent, influential, and respected at many levels of society in most of Europe throughout the middle ages” (1980). Such historical work disrupts conventional narratives of Jewish and Christian intolerance for homosexuality as a matter of foundational scriptural teachings. On the contrary, intolerance toward gay and lesbian people is “closely related to the general increase in intolerance of minority groups apparent in ecclesiastical and secular institutions throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries” (Boswell 1980). It must be viewed in this complex historical landscape. This is one example of religious beliefs cloaking intolerance, according to Boswell. It also points out why critical engagement with the sacred texts themselves becomes an essential task for gender studies scholars engaging religions.

## Sacred Texts and Interpretation

Methods of interpretation of sacred texts like the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament, and the Qur'an are transformed by scholars focused on gender. In her 1999 book *Qur'an and Woman*, Amina Wadud states why this work matters: "Only explicit Qur'anic indications that women and men were other than co-equals could require acceptance of this inequality as a basis of faithfulness to Islam" (Wadud 1999). Serving as foundational source and criterion for religions, what sacred texts say about women, men, and God is important not only for religious teachings and communities, but also for the cultures they inevitably impact. Gender studies scholars pay close attention to methods of interpretation and how they affect what one finds in a sacred text. For example, Wadud criticizes what she calls "atomistic" interpretations that only focus on one verse at a time, with "little or no effort made to recognize themes and to discuss the relationship of the Qur'an to itself, thematically" (1999). She proposes to use a "holistic" method that accounts for the context in which the text was written/revealed, the grammatical composition itself, and "the whole text, its *Weltanschauung* or world-view" (Wadud 1999). Only by doing this can one discern the most authentic reading of a text, and for religious adherents, the intention of God's revelation.

This kind of sophisticated scholarly work becomes more possible throughout the twentieth century as women gain access to the formal education necessary to work with texts in Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and other assorted ancient languages. This enables their analysis to go beyond that of early scholar-activists like Sarah and Angelina Grimke who simply quoted the Bible to show the nineteenth-century male clergy that women were human. It is also more coherent than *The Woman's Bible*, published in two parts in 1895 and 1898 by Matilda Joslyn Gage and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who simply cut and pasted together passages from the Bible that supported their argument that women were equal to men and should be granted social and political rights.

Judith Plaskow raises a series of key questions about the role and authority of sacred texts as resources in her 1990 book *Standing Again at Sinai*:

Insofar as Jewish sources assume women's Otherness, are they simply evidence for women's oppression? Do they have anything of value to teach Jewish women? How does one sort out the oppressive from the nonoppressive elements in Jewish sources?

(Plaskow 1990)

These questions are confronted in each patriarchal religious tradition: What is the role of the Qur'an, the Torah, the New Testament, or even the dharma texts today? Rita Gross points out that "The men who wrote Buddhist dharma texts lived in patriarchal, not androgynous, societies and had little access to women's experiences. Therefore, it is quite likely that their words are incomplete, however accurate they may be" (1993). If and when texts are shown to be deeply patriarchal, written by and for men in cultures and contexts far different from our own, of what value are or should they be to people of faith committed to gender justice? Plaskow offers her answer: "I pronounce the Bible patriarchal; but in taking the time to explore it, I claim it as a text that matters to me" (Plaskow 1990). In short, this is what many gender studies scholars of sacred texts do.

Christian feminist biblical interpretation as realized by scholars like Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Phyllis Trible shares this goal. In her 1984 book *Texts of Terror*, Trible describes three key things that a feminist hermeneutic contributes to

the study of sacred texts. First is evaluating “long neglected data that show the inferiority, subordination, and abuse of the female in ancient Israel and the early church,” while, second, discerning critiques of patriarchy that can also be found within the Bible. Finally, a feminist hermeneutic “recounts tales of terror *in memoriam* to offer sympathetic readings of abused women” (Trible 1984). Trible and other feminist biblical scholars engage textual and literary criticism, employing linguistic and rhetorical analysis in ways that have transformed the field of biblical studies itself.

In constructing a womanist biblical hermeneutics, Delores S. Williams makes use of these scholarly tools in her 1993 book *Sisters in the Wilderness*, situating the use of the Bible by African American women and men in a complex cultural history aiming toward egalitarianism. She argues that “this egalitarian strain has to do with the interpretive principles (hermeneutics) the folks used in their interpretation of the Bible. And these interpretive principles derived from their life-situation and community aspirations” (Williams 1993). Williams herself opts to use what she names a “womanist survival/quality of life hermeneutic” which she describes as follows:

Liberation is an ultimate, but in the meantime survival and prosperity must be the experience of our people. And God has had and continues to have a word to say about the survival and quality of life of the descendants of African female slaves.

(1993)

Much like Wadud, Williams makes accounts for the overarching worldview and themes of the sacred narratives to aid the work of interpretation. That, in connection with the lived-experiences of particular communities, leads to several constructive proposals.

### Belief and Doctrine

The transformation of central doctrines and teachings in religions is a natural consequence of reframing theological anthropology and critical engagement with sacred texts. In her 1993 book *Buddhism After Patriarchy*, Rita Gross combines analysis of the roles of women in the history of Buddhism with her arguments for a more inclusive tradition. This includes reconstructing ideas about spiritual beliefs and practices such as meditation. Among other things, she argues that “feminist first impressions that the human situation is fundamentally good and should not be rejected by dualistic, anti-worldly spiritual values” must contribute toward reconceptualizing spiritual discipline at the heart of Buddhism. “Sorting out excesses, many of them due to patriarchal limitations, from genuinely sane, balanced approaches will be difficult [and this is] another major task of Buddhism after patriarchy (Gross 1993). Applying feminist insights is essential to evaluating and reconstructing foundational religious teachings. Gross does this not only in relationship to meditation as spiritual discipline, but also with the role of gender in Buddhist understandings of reincarnation.

In Christianity, the implications of a male savior, seen in doctrines of Christology and atonement, have been critiqued and analyzed by scholars such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, Jacquelyn Grant, and Delores Williams. In her book *Sexism and God-talk*, Ruether queries: “Can a male savior save women?” (1983). Her proposal,

after reviewing various Christologies and feminist approaches, is to see Jesus as a liberator within the prophetic tradition, one who has “renounced this system of domination and seeks to embody in his person the new humanity of service and mutual empowerment.” Ruether goes further to insist that “theologically speaking ... the maleness of Jesus has no ultimate significance. It has social symbolic significance.” And she shows that Jesus the Christ “manifests the *kenosis* of patriarchy, the announcement of the new humanity” (Ruether 1983). Williams builds on this critical work at the heart of Christian doctrine and proposes a new way to view atonement, the traditional claim that Jesus’s death reconciles God with humanity. She suggests that “humankind is, then, redeemed through Jesus’ ministerial vision of life and not through his death. There is nothing divine in the blood of the cross” (Williams 1993). She moves away from salvation-through-violence in part because of her womanist focus on black women’s experience:

“God does not intend black women’s surrogacy. ... As Christians, black women cannot forget the cross, but neither can they glorify it. To do so is to glorify suffering and to render their exploitation sacred.”

(Williams 1993)

Transformation of religious doctrines like these has routinely met with intense opposition as much as it has been welcomed by women and men seeking to reconstruct their traditions.

Amina Wadud reconstructs Islamic teachings about creation and the afterlife. In terms of the creation of humans, Wadud offers “ample Qur’anic support for the contention that these pairs are equally essential,” and points out that while male and female do constitute the fundamental human pair in the Qur’an, the sacred text “does not attribute explicit characteristics to either one or the other, exclusively” (1999). This is part of the tawhidic paradigm in Islam that positions men and women as equally submissive only to God. In addition, she applies this insight to the doctrine of the hereafter in Islam, demonstrating that in the afterlife “the individual is not distinguished on the basis of gender, but on the basis of faith and deeds” (Wadud 1999). Consistent with other teachings of Islam, what matters when one stands before God after one’s death is not one’s maleness or femaleness; rather, what counts is what one has done for the good of the world. Social distinctions like gender and race that seem to matter a great deal in this earthly life are far from primary concerns at creation and in the hereafter.

### Race Matters

The intersection of gender and race in religion increasingly influenced scholars in mid- to late-twentieth century theological work. African American women ethicists and theologians engage Alice Walker’s term “womanist” in order to name their distinctive approach. Walker wrote in 1983 of a womanist as “a black feminist or feminist of color,” and concludes her poetic definition suggesting that “womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender” (Walker 1983). Delores Williams says that “womanist theology emerged from what many of us saw as characteristic of black women’s experiences of relation, loss, gain, faith, hope, celebration and defiance” (1993).

Using these experiences, womanist theologians work at the intersection of black liberation theology (critiquing its misogyny) and feminist theology (critiquing its racism). Centering particular human experiences leads to engagement with race and ethnicity as elements of gendered life.

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz's use of the term *mujerista* and its connection to Latin American liberation theology creates a similar space for multiple avenues of critique and construction. She explains the importance of taking race and ethnicity into consideration when issues of human dignity are at stake:

In our history, our racial/ethnic differences have been used to displace us from land, to use us as cheap labor, to exploit our countries for their prime resources, to insist on the need for us to forgo our culture and values.

(Isasi-Diaz 1993)

This human experience of oppression is simply not shared by white feminist theologians, resulting in different perspectives and goals. For example, Isasi-Diaz says "we are not willing to accept fully the Anglo feminist understanding of the family as the center of women's oppression." Ultimately, she argues that "the survival of Hispanic Women is directly related to the fate of Hispanic culture" (1993). With this emphasis on survival, Isasi-Diaz shares strategy and methodology with womanist theologians.

This shared approach of women of color around the world led to some foundational work in a 1988 anthology when a group of women scholars of religion collected stories and essays inspired by the work of Alice Walker's essay *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. What became *Inheriting Our Mothers Gardens* began as a conference designed to "bring together women of diverse backgrounds" wrestling with their inherited religious and cultural traditions (Russell et al. 1988). The volume includes essays by women of Salvadoran, Korean, Cuban, Chinese, Ghanaian, and other backgrounds. This is because "by listening to the voices of those who have been excluded, and beginning with their oppression and marginality, we may find a way to cultivate a global garden together." (Russell et al. 1988). For example, Chung Hyung Kyung refers to her distinctive spiritual tradition as "survival-liberation-centered syncretism" since it features her mother's blend of Jesus, Confucius, Buddha, and other spirits from her Korean childhood (Kyung 1988). This not only reinterprets traditions, it also informs new methods for doing theology.

Asian feminist theologian Kwok Pui-Lan situates social and religious reform in the twenty-first century in the context of global colonization which "brought into being an unequal power structure, reinforced by the ideologies of racial and cultural superiority." The role of religion, Christianity specifically, cannot be ignored: "Missionaries were sent to win souls for Christ, while bodies were colonized and foreign land violently confiscated" (Kwok 2000). She notes that this history is an essential part of Asian feminist theology, and anyone doing theology today must contend with the conquering way that Christianity came to be present in most parts of the world. She describes Asian feminist theology "as a political movement to transform the church and society so that women's freedom and dignity will be fully recognized" (Kwok 2000). It is the precise background of how and why that freedom has been curtailed, by cultures as well as by Christianities, that her work and that of other women theologians take seriously. This has transformed not only gender studies in religion but also postcolonial studies and global feminism.

## Sexuality and Queer Theory

Essential deconstructive work on religion and homosexuality has been done by scholars of the Bible and the history of Christianity to show that human sexuality has not always been understood in the nuanced ways it generally is now, and that same-sex relations have not always been universally condemned. John Boswell's groundbreaking study of *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980) situated the intolerance of gay and lesbian people in a medieval historical moment of cultural shift toward uniformity and state control, rather than in simple application of biblical texts. This, along with the work of Bernadette Brooten and others has been distilled effectively by Daniel Helminiak in his book *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* to argue that "taken on its own terms and in its own time, the Bible nowhere condemns homosexuality as we know it today" (2000). Given the ongoing use of religion to legally discriminate against gay and lesbian people in the United States and around the world, such understanding is crucial. As Helminiak shows in some detail, this includes work with the meaning of Greek and Hebrew terms, methods of interpreting the Bible, and contextualizing understandings of male and female biology, and of sex acts themselves.

The emerging understanding of the history and theology of Islam when it comes to gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims is likewise deconstructing conventional wisdom and challenging contemporary religious communities. In *Homosexuality and Islam*, Scott Siraj al-Haq Kugle argues: "In the Qur'an, I find oblique but potent scriptural reference to gay men, lesbian women, and transgender persons; the speech of God does not condemn them but rather observes them as part of a diverse creation" (Kugle 2010). He uses not only a deep analysis of the Qur'an but also hadith and Islamic legal rulings to argue for the existence and the inclusion of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims. In summarizing a fatwa (legal ruling) from one Egyptian case in the 1980s, on the permissibility of sex-change surgery, he notes the overarching view of the ruling:

One cannot change one's God-given gender, but one can discover through experience that one's bodily structures are ambiguous and one can uncover through medical intervention a more clearly gendered anatomy so that one can live in accord with God's will.  
(Kugle 2010)

This is a remarkable example of how within the Islamic legal and theological tradition, gender reassignment not only is permissible but is part of a deep engagement with God's good creation.

This move beyond mere acceptance toward robust engagement with queer theory and queer people can also be seen in the work of Mary Elise Lowe, who details the gifts that transgender Christians bring to the wider religious community. In a 2017 article, she suggests that everyone can learn from the experience of transgender Christians that "humans are God's created co-creators," that self-love is part of loving God, that "humans are a coherent unity of mud-breath, body-mind," and that transgender Christians provide a model of how to "welcome the Spirit who gives plurality, newness, unity, unpredictability, and freedom." (Lowe 2017). Lowe and Kugle reflect a generation of scholars building on foundational arguments that gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer people are not univocally condemned by religious

traditions. They argue for positive goods gained by the existence of historically marginalized persons in all human communities.

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott offers what she calls “a new, omnigender paradigm” in her 2007 book *Omnigender*, engaging with multiple religious traditions to seek out precedents for embracing gender fluidity. In addition to ancient Mesopotamian religions, African religions, and indigenous and Shamanistic traditions, Mollenkott points out that “traditional Hinduism often refers to sexual ambiguity and alternative sexes, not just among human beings but also among deities” (2007). She refers to the work of Paula Gunn Allen and other native authors who embrace Two-Spirit people as beyond the gender binary. The purpose of such work is

to describe ways in which binary gender has been disregarded in various cultures while bringing about none of the dreadful results certain people seem to fear, including the demise of heterosexual families and the gradual extinction of the human race.”

(Mollenkott 2007)

Here again we see an engagement with the histories and practices of religions around concepts of gender and sexuality for the purpose of deconstruction and reconstruction.

All of this has an ongoing impact on various religions’ practice of including, ordaining, and marrying gay and lesbian members. The processes by which this is taking place in some denominations is not dissimilar from the messy ways that religious groups permitted and forbade women from becoming leaders in their mosques, synagogues, and churches. In its 2009 social statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gave congregations the right to recognize same-sex relations, and to allow gay and lesbian members to serve as rostered leaders of the church. In doing so, it became “the largest Protestant church in the United States to permit noncelibate gay ministers to serve in the ranks of its clergy.” The United Methodist Church’s complicated position on gay men and lesbian women serving as clergy and bishops garnered media attention in 2017 when Karen Oliveto became the first openly gay bishop in the denomination’s history. In response, the church’s Judicial Council found that her election was “in order” but that she should face a ministerial review given the denomination’s official statements precluding the ordination of gays and lesbians (National Public Radio 2017). This took place in a liminal period after the denomination’s General Conference voted in 2016 to review the issue of homosexuality and have a commission study the governing Book of Discipline (Burgess 2017). In 2019, delegates at the Conference meeting in St. Louis actually “voted to toughen prohibitions on same-sex marriage and LGBTQ clergy” (Green 2019). These are just two examples of ongoing change within some religions around the issues of gay, lesbian, and queer members’ inclusion and leadership.

### **Global and Transnational Justice**

Scholar-activists like Vandana Shiva, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Chandra Mohanty have employed, as well as challenged, religious paradigms as a resource for justice alongside various networks and organizations that attend to gender and religion in



global development work. Anzaldúa describes her spiritual activism as grounded in nepantla experiences, “states of mind that question old ideas and beliefs, acquire new perspectives, change worldviews, and shift from one world to another” (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002). With relevance for transnational and postcolonial studies, she seeks new spiritual models for being in-and-beyond the world. As an example, she describes the “spiritual practice of *conocimiento*: praying, breathing deeply, meditating, writing ... [which] enabled you to defuse the negative energy of putdowns, complaints, excessive talk, verbal attacks, and other killers of the spirit. Spirituality became a port you moor to in all storms” (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002). Grounded firmly in activism, Anzaldúa connects the work to spiritual awareness as a matter of survival because “everyday acts contain the sacred” (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002). She combines feminist, queer, Chicana, and postcolonial methods of thinking and writing that integrate spirituality with concrete daily actions.

Likewise, transnational feminist Chandra Mohanty integrates religion as part of her argument for decolonizing feminism and deconstructing the concept of “Third World Woman” that functions as part of white Western feminism. Religion is one way in which women in the so-called “third world” are homogenized and othered, collapsing all experiences of Islam together, for example, and assuming that it stands as a singular cause of women’s oppression (Mohanty 2003). On the contrary, Mohanty argues for solidarity instead of sisterhood. Solidarity requires a concept of women as “real, material subjects of their collective histories” instead of Woman, “a cultural and ideological composite other constructed through diverse representational discourses” (Mohanty 2003). Only when “women” are involved can solidarity be achieved, with “mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities,” instead of sisterhood, “assuming an enforced commonality of oppression” (Mohanty 2003). This is possible when religions are understood in their historical and material complexities, and women in them are similarly viewed.

As a foundational scholar in global ecofeminism, Vandana Shiva argues that it is the worldview of women and indigenous people that will stop corporate capitalist destruction of the world. She draws on spiritual epistemologies undergirding women’s activism. In one example at the end of her book *Staying Alive*, she describes the activist women of the Chipko movement who “put the life of the forests above their own” based in part on a worldview where “nature is Prakriti, the creator and source of wealth” (Shiva 1988). This contrasts with the worldview that undergirds Western corporate capitalism and its development economics: “The modern creation myth that male western minds propagate is based on the sacrifice of nature, women and the Third World” (Shiva 1988). Taking criticism of Western religious beliefs about the world seriously, ecofeminist theologians argue for a view of the world as the “body of God” in Sallie McFague’s 1993 book of that name, and for recovering the notion of the earth as Gaia, as Rosemary Radford Ruether does in her 1992 book *Gaia and God*. This is because, as Ruether notes, creation stories “reflect assumptions about how the divine and the mortal, the mental and the physical, humans and other humans, male and female, humans, plants, animals, land, waters, and stars are related to each other” (1992). For global health and sustainability to be realized, religious concepts about the origins and purpose of life become essential avenues of engagement.

## Conclusion

The study and practice of religions has been transformed by gender studies over the past two centuries. Central theological concepts, methods of engaging sacred texts, understandings of what it means to be human, and many other things have been irrevocably changed by essential insights of scholars in gender studies, and activists who constantly seek to put such transformed theologies into practice. The work expands and deepens now into the twenty-first century.

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# 13

## Gender and Media

AUDREY S. GADZEKPO AND MARQUITA S. SMITH

### Overview

The media saturates our daily lives offering 24-hour news and endless opportunities to consume and share information through blogging, tweeting, podcasting, live streaming, and video sharing practices. Research shows that while traditional media consumption, particularly television and radio, is still quite high in some countries, digital technology has created an abundance of media outlets leading to an increase in internet and social media use around the world (Global Web Index 2017). The Global Web Index (2017) reported that in 29 of 34 countries surveyed, residents were spending more time each day with online media as compared with traditional forms of media. The availability of smartphones is a contributing factor. Smartphones have not only transformed how people engage in their everyday lives but how they consume media. The younger generation (16–24s) are spending the most time online, but online media activities have increased across all ages as well, and multimedia consumption has become the norm. This digital consumption culture has further increased the already powerful status of media and their potential to profoundly shape political systems, cultural ideologies and societal norms.

Transformational changes resulting from digital technologies have added to long-held concerns about the role the media play in the gendered societies in which we live. The availability of new media technologies has increased women's vulnerability online but at the same time also led to new forms of feminist practices termed "cyber-feminism" (Abbott, Tyler, and Wallace 2006).

Conversations on the media–gender nexus have also been influenced by the rise in democracies since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989. This cultural shift opened up political spaces not only in Eastern Europe but in Africa and Asia, resulting in media pluralism, access, and opportunities for millions of citizens. In Africa and Latin America, especially, history is being made as women ascend to the highest

political positions as heads of state. National and local legislatures across the world are also witnessing unprecedented numbers of women representatives (Radsch and Kahmis 2013). Democratization has thus brought about a heightened sense of the role media play in enabling the promotion of participatory democracy and women's empowerment.

In 1995, the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing China, identified the media as one of the 12 critical areas of concern and called upon media practitioners as catalysts of change to take concrete steps to address gender imbalances globally. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identified the following:

- The continued stereotypical portrayal of women in the media and the increase in violent and pornographic images of women
- Increased promotion of consumerism and its attendant drive towards the objectification of women
- The lack of gender sensitivity in media policies and programmes
- Poor access and participation of women in media, and in information and communications technology (ICT)
- The poor status of women in decision-making positions in the media (Beijing Platform for Action 1995).

More than 20 years later these issues continue to dominate the literature on media and gender. In this chapter we acknowledge the media as important actors in promoting equitable gender relations and pick up on some of these concerns by addressing media representational practices in varied media texts, including news, advertising, film, and online media. We have reviewed various theoretical perspectives from gender studies, cultural studies, and media studies in our analysis of how various media types represent as well as provide access to gendered groups while marginalizing others. We have addressed also media industry work environments and promotion practices, and how they influence media products. Finally, the chapter provides examples of new forms of activism in the media and makes suggestions as to how progress can be made towards better representational practices in media that can contribute to more equal gendered relations.

### Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical perspectives on gender and media have been largely influenced by feminist as well as Althusserian and Gramscian notions that media are ideological hegemonic institutions that further patriarchal and capitalist interests (van Zoonen 1997; Fiske 1998). Gender theories on media have thus tended to address how media perpetuate perspectives that reproduce social inequalities and the media's potential also to challenge the status quo. Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminine Mystique* was groundbreaking in establishing the role women's magazines and advertisers play in promoting stereotypical images of the happy perfect housewife, at odds with many women's lived experiences. While Friedan's text has been criticized for not reflecting

the realities of non-white, non-Western middle-class women (hooks 2000), it nonetheless provides a useful critique of how women-targeted magazines and advertisers endorse myths of domestic bliss and perpetuate gender inequalities in society. Marjorie Ferguson's (1983) research on women's magazines similarly identified a "cult of femininity" in such magazines. Friedan (1963) identified two important issues that resonate today – the dominance of males in editorial decision-making in the media and problematic images of women in advertising, magazines, television, film, and other media texts. These two issues are linked as there are people who hold the view that, as long as men dominate decision-making, media content will remain gendered.

Critical perspectives from cultural studies and poststructuralist feminist studies have shown how in representing reality the media work with other social and cultural institutions to reflect and reinforce dominant ideas about gender. Socialist/Marxist feminists argue that media are ideological instruments that further the interests of capitalist and patriarchal societies and are therefore sites of struggle where both content and labor practices must be reformed. In addition to reforming mainstream media they advocate that feminists should produce their own media (van Zoonen 1997). The liberal feminist position identifies as problematic social constructs such as stereotyping and symbolic devaluation of women in the media. It argues that as one of key socializing agents, media reward and punish women for appropriate and inappropriate behavior based on dominant social values. The solution liberal feminists suggest is for women to seek to gain power in the male-dominated media in order to influence media content and the stereotypical portrayals of women. Scholars have, however, argued that women's leadership positions in the media do not necessarily lead to change and that women tend to make similar decisions as men about news because news is a male construct (Tuchman 1979). Radical feminists believe mass media operate to benefit patriarchy and advocate that women should rather create their own means of communication in response to male-dominated mass media. Postmodern feminism encourages a cultural approach to understanding categories such as gender, race, and class. Feminists of this tradition embrace diversity and reject assumptions of universality by highlighting differences in the experiences of women of color and those from developing nations (Gill, 2007a). They insist middle-class feminists do not speak for other women.

Other feminist theories on the media have been helpful in explaining how media endorse existing gender disparities through their representation and framing of issues. Borrowing from George Gerbner's (1972) concept of symbolic annihilation, Tuchman (1978) has argued that by largely ignoring women and relegating them to stereotypical roles the media "symbolically annihilate" them. Laura Mulvey's (1975) male gaze theory, which highlights the asymmetric power relationship in the male-dominated film industry, provides another useful tool with which to analyze gender in film. Mulvey (1975) explains that the camera lens (often operated by men) subjects women to the "male gaze" by depicting them as objects for sexual use. Equally helpful in providing a framework with which to assess the media are theories related to language practices such as the muted group theory (Ardner 1975), which explains how the voices of marginalized groups, including women, are ignored through language practices, and the other critiques of gendered language (Cameron 1998).

Research on multiple forms of masculinities and power relations (Trujillo 1991; Connell, and Messerschmidt 2005) have also directed attention to men as a gendered group and to the construction of masculinity in various media texts. Popular Hollywood action movies such as *Rambo* and *Terminator* that depict men using brute force to assert dominance are examples of how the film industry represents and reinforces hegemonic masculinity (Cohan and Hark 1993; Hanke 1998; Howson and Yecies 2016).

Analyses on the intersectionality of gender with class, geographical locations, ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, age, disability, and other identities provide further nuanced discussions on the subject (Aidoo 1992; Oyěwùmí 1997; hooks 2000; Amadiume 2001; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Mishra 2007; Schönemann 2013). Such studies sensitize us to the multiple hierarchies at play in the construction of gender in varied contexts. Africa-centered feminists, for example, have challenged the universalization of gender inequality and oppression commonly found in Western feminist discourses by pointing out that African societies were historically not gendered, or at least not in the same manner as many Western societies (Aidoo 1992; Oyěwùmí 1997; Amadiume 2001). Economic roles, for example, were complementary and not segregated by gender in many African societies and women were not excluded from the traditional public sphere or silenced (Aidoo 1992; Steeves, 1993; Oyěwùmí 1997; Amadiume 2001). Steeves's (1993) analysis on the marginalization of women in mass media in Africa argues that it was the introduction of newspapers, not biases against women's public speaking, which largely accounts for the metaphorical "silencing" of women. She said traditionally women had strong informational roles in Africa but were historically disadvantaged when it came to "speaking" in the media because compared with men, they lacked education and the necessary literacy skills for working in newspapers. Aidoo (1992) has also complained that the persistent media images of African women and children in a state of constant poverty, hunger, and oppression is misleading. She points to the fact that African women are actively involved in internal trade and agriculture and other sectors of the African economy, yet rarely depicted in Western media as economically empowered. Mishra (2007) and Schönemann (2013) have similarly identified how Muslim women are consistently portrayed as victims of political violence and Islamic practices and hardly as agents of resistance and change within their societies.

Oyěwùmí (2011) sounded another cautionary note on feminist critiques on man-made language by pointing out the ungendered nature of many African languages. Such positions on the gendering process should prompt scholars and practitioners to be more nuanced in analyzing the relationship between gender and media to account for non-Western perspectives.

### **Gendered Representations in the Media**

Gender scholars continue to postulate that media reinforce existing gender disparities through the content they produce. Byerly and Ross (2008, p. 40) note that "the ways in which women are represented in news media send important messages to the viewing, listening, and reading publics about women's place, women's role, and



women's lives." The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has at five-year intervals since 1995 measured women's representation in media across the world. Like other research (van Zoonen 1994; Creedon and Cramer 2007) five rounds of GMMP research (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015) have consistently found that compared to men, women do not make news. According to GMMP (2018) the modest increase in women's visibility in the news in 1995 and 2005 decreased during the period between 2010 and 2015. Only 24% of women in traditional media (newspapers, radio, television) were found in news-making roles in 2015 and only 26% of news-makers in new digital media (internet and Twitter news) were women. As observed in 2000, the GMMP 2018 report also found that only 10% of news stories were centrally focused on women. In fact, studies on Nigerian news products show similar absences of women (Tijani-Adenle 2016). When included in stories, Nigerian women were more often recognized in relation to their husbands, fathers, and male relatives no matter their capacities as individual political and social leaders (Okunna 1992). These global news analyses illustrate the momentousness of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the slow progress being achieved to respond to the demands on the media.

When it comes to media representation of gender, the body of work is equally robust and focuses on news, features in women's and men's magazines, advertising, film, and increasingly digital media (Everitt 2003; Byerly & Ross 2008; Krijen and van Bauwel 2015). Among concerns relating to representation is the stereotyping of men's and women's roles in society, and how media objectify, sexualize, commodify, and vilify women. Hall (1997, p. 15) defines representation as an "essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture." According to Hall representation works by using symbols to depict or describe things. The manner in which issues are framed in the media is a key factor in how media produce gendered representations. Framing refers to ways in which media select perceived reality to influence people's perceptions and acceptance of issues (Entman 1993). Frames can cue readers and audiences toward gendered interpretation of events and reinforce gender myths such as suggesting victims of rape are responsible for it or stereotypes that women belong in traditional roles (e.g. cooking).

Studies have found a consistent pattern of stereotypical coverage on women and men on a wide array of news subjects, from sports, to politics to conflict and crime. Pamela Creedon's (1994) groundbreaking edited volume *Women, Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values* provides perspectives on discrimination against women in sports and women sports reporters. Other literature also demonstrates the tendency to construct women as "other" and to diminish their accomplishments as athletes in sports coverage (Messner et al. 1993; MacKay and Dallaire, 2009). More recent studies, however, suggest there have been improvements in how women's sports are covered and how women athletes are treated in the news, particularly in online media (Kian, Mondello, and John 2009).

The literature on coverage of women politicians continues to suggest women do not belong in the allegedly male arena of politics. Women are less visible in political news as subjects and even where there is increased media coverage the tone of coverage tends to be negative because they are considered as an anomaly (Meeks 2008; *Ibroscheva* and *Raicheva-Stover* 2009, Dunaway et al. 2013). These studies have

shown that often coverage dwells on women's personal rather than professional attributes and depicts them as incompetent politicians.

Other areas of news coverage mirror the social order and are equally gendered. News reports on conflict, for example, often neglect the voices of women as interlocutors in conflict and stereotypically casts them in the victim role (Fröhlich 2017), failing to see women in other roles, such as protagonists or mediators. In recent times, news reports have been filled with issues relating to terrorism, directing scholars to investigate how women and men involved in terrorism are covered. Nacos (2005, p. 486) argues that prevailing stereotypes in the coverage of female terrorists blind journalists to the fact that "women terrorists are neither misfits nor rare." This static depiction of women as victim and not as perpetrator affects how crime is covered also. Studies have shown that women involved in crime are not given the same media treatment as men and are likely to be portrayed as not being fully responsible for their actions (Barnett 2006). Other studies, such as Brennan and Vandenberg (2009) reveal that because gender expectations do not perceive women as criminals, media coverage can lead people to judge them far more harshly than men for their crimes because they are seen as not only breaking the law but also as transgressing norms of womanhood.

The intersectionality of gender, race, and class adds to the complexity of media coverage, especially for transgendered men and women in the US. National Affairs Correspondent Jorge Rivas commented that during his 2014 reporting on undocumented immigrants, he learned that US transgendered detainees were locked up with men. Rivas noted that while detained, these transgendered ethnic minorities, encountered the very hostility and harassment they so desperately worked to escape (Frosti 2012). Traditionally, US media have struggled to move beyond the "coming out" story, as more actors, military personnel, musicians, and former professional athletes have shared their stories. In 2015, *The New York Times* responded by advocating for improvement in the treatment of transgender people and inviting the community to share its stories online (New York Times 2018).

The advertising industry, much like the news industry, has also come under criticism for its gendered portrayals of women and men, particularly for commodifying and objectifying women and girls (Krijnen and van Bauwel 2015). Similar to other mass media forms, advertising displays codes that shape the way in which society views gender and often signals acceptable gender performance. Women are objectified when they are portrayed in ways and contexts which suggest they are objects to be ogled, touched, or used. They are also commodified when projected as products to be acquired for male pleasure and consumption in advertisements aimed primarily at male consumers (e.g. cars, cigarettes, and alcohol). Jhally (2009) and his team of researchers concluded after examining multiple advertising platforms that women are often displayed in highly sexual contexts and men, especially white males, are often pictured as powerful and successful. Such studies on gendered advertisements have also shown how they continue to promote traditional gendered roles for men and women despite the shifts that have occurred in the workplace (Jhally et al. 2009).

When directed at children, mass media becomes a primary tool that introduces and encourages young people to engage in gendered practices (Qadir 2016). Along with television and magazines, advertisements rank as top informants of adolescent

sexuality. They are a source of teenage body dysmorphia because they constantly bombard audiences with images of slim, fair-skinned women as the ideal body type. Advertisements also tend to promote gendered identities and roles which children emulate. For example, the popular US toy company Hasbro Inc., created the “Easy Bake Oven,” marketed to girls between 4 and 10 years old (Benton 2013). Hasbro introduced the oven featuring young girls enjoying baking in 1963, selling half a million units in the first year. As of late 2016, the company was still producing the oven which reinforces domestic roles for young girls around the world. In 1964, the toy company introduced also the 12-inch action figure, “G.I. Joe” to cater to boys. The heavily advertised toy became an international commodity (Benton 2013). The action figures promoted strength and courage for young men, and served as alternatives for dolls which promoted femininity for girls. Nonetheless, research has also shown there have been positive shifts in the gender roles and norms displayed in advertisements. Gill (2007b), for example, noted that studies in the UK revealed that advertisements were now more likely to depict women in the workplace as independent and authoritative. Other findings, particularly on contemporary media culture, offer a more complex perspective on how to interpret women’s objectification and sexualization in the media. For example, some scholars suggest that music videos, advertisements and television which seem to show women’s bodies as spectacle could be read as “signifying sexual autonomy and desire rather than passivity and objectification” (Gill 2007b, p. 38).

Films also have mass appeal and are powerful texts, which, like other media texts have the potential to influence perceptions and identities. Consequently, feminist media studies have drawn attention to how cinema, and in particular Hollywood, constructs stereotypes and social roles as well as underrepresents women. In more contemporary times other film industries such as Bollywood and Nollywood, have come under scrutiny as well. Bollywood, the Indian Hindi language film industry, is the largest in the world; producing about 1,500 films each year (Suresh and Uma 2015) and is second to Hollywood in terms of revenue generation. Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, is the second leading industry with regard to the volume of films it produces annually. These non-Western film industries have spread beyond their locales of production and are now being avidly consumed around the world.

As has been noted by earlier studies on Hollywood films, Bollywood and Nollywood also reinforce gendered societal norms and gender stereotypes by portraying archetypes of women as beautiful sex objects, nurturing mothers or wives/lovers, or conniving temptresses (Dimitrova 2010; Tijani-Adenle 2016). Typically these films show men as strong, financially stable suitors for women or, as depicted in action movies, as violent. In her analysis of Bollywood films, for example, Dimitrova (2010) concluded that, notwithstanding the subject of Hindi films, writers continue to promote conservative and traditional notions of the feminine and the masculine. Nollywood films similarly showcase traditional customs reinforcing stereotypes about the continent (superstition and witchcraft) and about women’s and men’s social roles, while at the same time offering images of modernity. Portrayals of gendered multi-cultural relations in the popular film *Osuofia in London* serve as an example. In this Nollywood film, the white character Samantha, who declares she does not cook, is taken, along with her deceased fiancé’s property, by his brother (Osuofia) and brought to a village in Nigeria. The obvious stereotype is that of

African men acquiring women as property and white women transgressing gender norms because they cannot cook (Okome 2013).

## Gender in the Media Workplace

Will gender representations improve if more women are in decision-making positions in the media? The Beijing Platform for Action sought to promote women's participation and decision-making in the media to achieve equality in newsrooms, as well as reduce stereotypical portrayals of women in the media (Beijing Platform for Action, 1995). Recent revelations about sexual harassment and abuse in Hollywood and top newsrooms in the US, however, provoke questions on power dynamics in media industries and how to tackle systemic and operational structures of sexism, racism, and misogyny. Feminist scholars have long argued that men remain the dominant culture in most newsrooms. More often than not, male editors and media content managers determine what is newsworthy, leaving topics that may be of interest to women out of news reports. The continued practice of assigning greater value to men's concerns and issues, at the expense of women's opinions and priorities thus remains problematic. Pushing women's issues to the margins perpetuates the notion that women are secondary citizens with less to offer their communities (Ross and Carter 2011). The lack of women in media organizations directly impacts the number of women interviewed as primary sources in news products. Ross and Carter (2011) found that men are more likely to be depicted as "experts" and in leadership roles on news programming, and male reporters are four times more likely to quote other men (Ross and Carter, 2011).

The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media which examined more than 500 companies in nearly 60 countries found that men occupy the majority of the management jobs and news-gathering positions in most nations surveyed (Bylerly 2011). Specifically, researchers found that men hold 73% of the top management jobs compared to 27% that women occupy. Men are employed in most of the reporting positions, filling nearly two-thirds of the jobs, compared to 36% held by women. However, in the most senior positions there is more equality, according to the study. Women account for 41% of the editing, reporting and writing jobs. Additionally, the report stated that the number of women in top management jobs have increased, compared to a Margaret Gallagher study in 1995 that showed women occupying on average only 12% of the top management positions in 239 nations (Bylerly 2011). The global study identified obstacles for women in 20 of 59 nations. Most often barriers showed up in middle and senior management levels. Bylerly (2011) reported that just over half of the companies surveyed ensured a policy on gender equity. These ranged from 16% of companies surveyed in Eastern Europe to 69% in Western Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The study (Bylerly 2011) cited training for women journalists as one of the reasons for progress and culture shifts. The majority of media companies surveyed reported educational opportunities for women in the newsroom. In most regions, more than 70% of companies made such provisions for women journalists (Bylerly 2011). However, only 56% of media organizations surveyed in Sub-Saharan Africa provided such training opportunities for women.

Despite an increase in the number of women serving in media leadership positions, not much of a philosophical change has occurred. Ann O'Brien conducted a qualitative case study focused on the experiences of five women in leadership in the Irish media (2017). She reported that women saw their relationships as social and more relational, which highlights traditional gender norms. O'Brien also found that while women did create organizational changes which resulted in increased gender equality in media products, it did not always translate into a greater feminist agenda in the gendering of media as an organization. This accords with Tuchman's (1979) contention that women have similar news judgments to men, and that the priorities, preferences, and stereotypes of female editors are not much different from their male colleagues. According to Tuchman (1979, p. 535) "when women do see a topic differently from men, professionalism limits the possible presentations and defuses radical critiques. More generally it is difficult for women employees to resist ideas and attitudes associated with success in their profession, even if those ideas disparage women, for sexism, like racism, is best understood as an institutional, not a personal, phenomenon."

When evaluating women in management, research on media senior leadership reflected unequivocal and vague effects of gender stereotypes. Schein's (2007) seminal work "Women in Management: Reflections and Projections" illustrates this point: she states, "Think manager, think male." She suggests that understanding the dual purpose of the media in shaping and reflecting communities is crucial to the evaluation of women in leadership. Schein (2007) reported that how media represent women can hinder or encourage the advancement of women in leadership positions. Benoit (2000, 72) blames "gendered stereotypes for making it more difficult for women to be taken seriously within the workplace" and for creating the impression that men make more dedicated workers than women. Benoit's findings also indicate that the media's authority inhibits both men and women by imposing gendered ideals. However, recent literature highlights that women who ascribe to gender norms are often more successful as leaders (Cukier et al. 2016). Moreover, women continue to be held to higher standards than men, including the expectation that they are kinder and gentler leaders, competent and attractive (Stewart and Taylor 1995; Fulton 2012). For top media managers in newsrooms, women's power has been directly connected to their personal brand and image. Women need to perform hegemonic femininity, while simulating more masculine leadership characters in order to be taken seriously.

Decades of research suggests that the gender gap found in newsrooms extends into news consumption as well. Overall, news consumption ranks high on mobile devices in countries such as the United States, with a third of those surveyed reporting getting news daily on the tablet and the smartphone (Pew Research Center 2012). That use is gendered with 43% of male tablet owners consuming news daily on their device versus 32% of female tablet owners. The gap is almost the equivalent on smartphones with 41% compared with 30% among women (Pew Research Center 2012).

Benesch (2012) used two different data sets, the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Social Survey (ESS) to examine the gender gap in consumption. The World Values Survey asked respondents how often they follow politics in the news on television, on radio, or in daily newspapers. Benesch (2012) reported that her

analysis found women consumed less political news than men but was unable to explain why. However, the study showed that the gender differences were noticeable among parents who worked. On a national level, the news gender gap is interconnected with gender equality. Benesch (2012) found the gap widened in countries with little progress in gender equality in politics as well as in the economy:

The sources of the gender gap appear not only to be located in the political sphere (e.g., lower political interest among women or lower benefits of political knowledge for women) but also in the economic one. Specifically, the dual burden of job and children seems to restrain women's news consumption in certain countries. Hence, gender-specific opportunity costs of time that are shaped by intra-household division of labor and more general gender roles seem to play an important role. Keeping up with the news and with politics takes time. (Benesch 2012, p.16)

As fewer women globally are consuming political news, this can also contribute to fewer women engaging in the political process. Ultimately, this could erode democracy in many countries (Poindexter 2008). In fact, the gendering of media extends far beyond politics and often has influences earlier in life. Psychologist Lawrence Kohl has argued that gender identity is developed in early childhood, and mass media messages often perpetuate gender roles (Maccoby 1990). Gender roles continue to be perpetuated because the media and society continue to accept and share codes, even with young children. It is important, therefore, that regular viewers, readers, and listeners are aware of what the media is presenting and make sure they are not actively participating in gender politics.

### **The Promise of Online Activism**

As women fight for equality many have found digital spaces to express opinions and to shape conversations worldwide. Scholars such as Radsch and Kahmis (2013) argue that feminist activists now leverage social media to advance leadership, agency, and empowerment and to express voice more freely than before. But other studies suggest digital technologies, much like traditional forms of media (newspapers, television, radio, film, etc.), are not free from patriarchal gender relations (Hafkin and Taggart 2001). Some of the literature on digital divides has shown women have less access to and are more hesitant in using internet and digital technologies than men (Hafkin and Taggart 2001; Wasserman and Richmond-Abbott 2005; Hafkin 2006). Concerns about the pervasiveness of pornographic content that is denigrating to women, online misogyny, and cyber bullying, have also mitigated the advantages the internet represents as a democratic and empowering space for women (van Zoonen 2002).

As scholars such as Daniel (2009) have suggested, online activism can take on different forms with varied results. According to Daniel:

While some cyberfeminists are wildly enthusiastic about the subversive potential of a cyborg future, identity tourism, and disembodiment that is offered by digital technologies, evidence from cyberfeminist practices and empirical research on what people are

actually doing online points to a more complicated reality. For some, the internet economy reproduces oppressive workplace hierarchies that are rooted in a global political economy. For others, the internet represents a “tool” for global feminist organizing and an opportunity to be protagonists in their own revolution. For still others, the Internet offers a “safe space” and a way to not just survive, but also resist, repressive sex/gender regimes.” (Daniel 2009, pp. 117–118)

Women continue to seek out resources to help teach other women how to use digital technologies in order to give them greater voice and empowerment (Shulte 2011). A direct product of such efforts includes the blog *Feministing.com* – an online feminist community. Jessica Valenti, the founder and editor of *Feministing.com*, described the blog as an online community operated by young feminists who provide contemporary analysis on topics ranging from politics to pop culture (Shulte 2011). She said that she liked the idea of numbering waves of feminism and that the online space may indeed be a fourth wave. Regardless of whether or not the online space constitutes a new wave of feminism, research supports the view that the online space is indeed capable of sustaining social movements, especially those with feminist agendas.

Social media such as Twitter have become popular platforms for advancing feminist ideals. Former US First Lady Michelle Obama used the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. This hashtag focused on the Chibok students in northern Nigeria who had been abducted by the terrorist group Boko Haram. #BringBackOurGirls started as a campaign for the release of the kidnapped girls but began to create a greater narrative of the struggles women face in many global communities. The popular hashtag overtime evolved into a “broader rhetoric about girls’ education, safety and rights in the global south” (Khoja-Moolji 2015, 348). Chiluba and Ifukor (2015, p. 268) described the hashtag as a “global feminist outcry.” Carter (2016, p. 776) surmised that the hashtag helped catapult the international women’s movement to top news spots by focusing on “the exploitation of women and girls around the world, education for girls, and equal opportunities for women and girls in developing countries.”

Another example of feminist activism occurred in South Korea with the global hashtag #iamafeminist. In 2015, this hashtag became an important platform for feminist identification and activism against misogyny and a way to resist prevailing antifeminist sentiment in Korea. The hashtag allowed women to create their own narratives free from stereotypes and stigmas centered on identifying as a feminist. In addition to opposing stigmas on being feminist, #iamafeminist persisted for three months giving voice to gender concerns and the personal stories of women (Kim 2017). The hashtag was used in India and Africa, but did not trend as long.

More recently a Twitter campaign #MeToo was resurrected to create awareness on sexual harassment and abuse following accusations against the Hollywood movie producer Harvey Weinstein and several other prominent men. This online movement is in real time, and scholars have yet to study the implications of the wave of feminism it has unleashed, with women around the world speaking out about sexual harassment. Although the movement originated in the US, women in Nigeria, Senegal, and Southern Africa have joined women in India and the UK to share their stories. Tarana Burke, founder of Just Be Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps

victims of sexual harassment and assault, originally came up with #metoo after working with a teen who had been abused (Garcia 2017). In October 2017, actress Alyssa Milano made those words commonplace in social media with #metoo, giving voice to women who had experienced sexual abuse. Following from that a new organization, Press Forward Initiative, has recently been formed by women who have suffered sexual harassment at the hands of powerful men in the US media. According to Associated Press (AP) they are pushing for a “zero-tolerance policy for sexual misconduct at networks, better awareness of legal rights of women coming into the [media] industry and better accountability for executives to ensure safety and improvements” (Sisak and Lee 2017).

Beyond Twitter, the internet continues to forge equality on women’s concerns and issues. Manisha Desai’s *Gender and the Politics of Possibilities* discussed the role of the internet in helping to construct the agency of women (Desai 2008). Her work focused on how gendered social actors contribute to globalization and as a result have influence on global justice. Desai noted how digital technologies have allowed women to become a part of larger communities which create economic and social capital around the world. She found that cyber information could be repackaged as print and radio products, giving women greater access. Desai’s work provides a case study of women traders in Africa, who comprise 20–30% of all cross-border traders, and debunks stereotypes of women mostly oppressed in political and business systems in Africa.

Despite the fact that social media has empowered women globally, it has also created an environment for hostility and harassment. Today, both women and men are constantly being harassed and threatened online, with women especially becoming targets of aggression from misogynistic online attackers. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), an estimated 25% of 18- to 24-year-old women have been physically threatened online and 26% have reported being stalked. Moreover, 2 in 10 women aged 18 to 29 (21%) said they have been sexually harassed online, and 53% reported receiving sexual/explicit images unrequested (Pew Research 2017). Twitter and Instagram are not the only digital spaces where women have experienced aggression, in fact; according to Pew (2017) 66% of online harassment victims said their latest incident happened on a social network or app. With the escalation of online harassment, researchers and policy-makers must continue to advocate for social media networks to increase safety protocols.

### Concluding Thoughts

The media will remain an inescapable part of our lives for the foreseeable future and representational practices in the media will continue to attract scholarly attention and fuel public debate. It may appear from the many examples in this chapter that little has been achieved in the many decades of gender activism on media reform. Progress may be slow but modest gains have already been achieved in the 50-plus years since second-wave feminism stimulated interest in how media constructions of gender contribute to inequalities in societies around the world. Journals such as *Feminist Media Studies* now provide a regular dedicated space to critical scholarship on gender and some media organizations are charting a more progressive gender agenda. It is instructive that *Time Magazine*’s person of the year 2017 went to the



antiharassment movement which has emerged following sexual harassment and abuse scandals leveled against men in the media industry and in politics. Titled the "Silence Breakers," the cover of the magazine features various women victims of sexual harassment including former Uber employee Susan Fowler whose blog about sexism led to the firing of Uber's CEO, and actress Ashley Judd, one of Harvey Weinstein's accusers. That special issue of *Time* underscores the media's culpability and at the same time potential for giving voice to victims and highlighting problems of sexism and gender inequality in its own backyard as well as in society in general.

Nonetheless the push for more equitable and accurate media will need to be accelerated through academic scholarship and activist initiatives. Scholarship documenting shifts in media representation and industry practices, and the varied ways in which women's agency is articulated must continue. The intersectionality of media and gender with variables such as race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, sexuality, and other identities means we cannot assume universality of experiences. We need to constantly seek multiple perspectives informed by different expressions of gender as well as different media cultures from non-Western countries.

We must educate media, when culturally appropriate, to cover gender more fluidly and we must interrogate old assumptions. For example, more research is needed to fully interrogate whether it makes a difference if more women produce news and advertising, and if gendered practices will change if more women are found behind the cameras in the television and film industry. Additionally, we must go deeper and evaluate the impact globalization and economic change in the media industry have had on consumers of media products. Such an analysis is important because as culture becomes more mediatized, global media have become a powerful lens through which people experience a sense of others. Disempowering media images of women of color and of women of non-Western descent contribute to racism, xenophobia, and discrimination against women. With the expansion in new media technologies as well as global film and advertising markets, it is especially incumbent on researchers to continue to provide analyses of the positive and negative impacts on gendered experiences of women worldwide.

On local, national, and international levels, we must engage in more intersectional analyses to reveal more meaningful connections and relationships in order to continue to improve media workplaces and products for women and marginalized gendered identities. Also, research must continue to highlight the value of educational opportunities for women in media leadership and more studies should be conducted to determine if such training translates to promotion and greater influence in media organizations.

Finally, as the push for more inclusiveness in the media continues, media organizations need to find better ways to mainstream, represent, and cover gender. Benchmarking assignments should take place to determine if the quantity and quality on reporting gender issues has improved over time.

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# Women, Gender, and Popular Culture

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## Introduction and Theoretical Frameworks

Women comprise many of the great authors, artists, and creators of culture in all forms. However, women have often had limited or no access to the institutional structures that control the production and distribution of culture. Cultural systems have their own histories and logics that powerfully shape how gender works within those systems. For instance, in the arts, the trope of the male genius who is born with creative skills has resulted in a devaluation of women artists who have sought to bring greater attention to issues of training and institutional access. For this reason, the production of cultural objects needs particular attention within the analysis of gender and culture.

Producers of popular culture sit at one of the four points on what sociologist Wendy Griswold (1994) calls the “cultural diamond.” In addition to production, the other points on the cultural diamond are the cultural object, the audience, and the social world in which culture is situated. Gender disparities are rampant in the social world, but the disparities found within culture are not merely a reflection of the larger society.

Richard Peterson, another sociologist of culture, suggests six aspects of cultural production that should be considered: technology, law and regulation, industry structure, organizational structure, occupational careers, and market (Peterson and Anand 2004). Together, these six facets of cultural production provide a more comprehensive view of how cultural objects are produced than any one of them alone. We won't address each of these six facets explicitly in this chapter, but all have deeply impacted the ways women produce culture objects. Additionally, each of these facets has its own cultural ideologies, many of which are gendered and can hinder women's recognition as cultural producers. Historically, women who have found success in producing cultural objects – such as books, paintings, plays, films,

etc. – have often had to present their ideas in coded form in order to appease male power figures within masculine coded cultural spaces like technology and the market.

Applying an intersectional lens to the analysis of women as producers of culture – by examining the ways that gender works hand-in-hand with other social forces like race and class – reveals that those women who do succeed in developing professional careers in the culture industries, from the arts to the mass media and digital technology, are overwhelmingly white, heterosexual, nondisabled and more likely to come from middle- and upper-class backgrounds (Kidd 2014). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) has discussed the ways that black women have had especially limited access to the institutional structures that are used to create, legitimate, and share knowledge. Other women of color, lesbian women, transgender women, and women with disabilities all face compounded barriers to participation in institutional structures of cultural production and are less likely to be considered legitimate producers of culture.

### Gendered understandings of the public/private dichotomy

Underlying most discussions of women's exclusion from cultural production is a gendered understanding of the public/private dichotomy in the Western liberal tradition. Within this tradition, "men have been associated with the public sphere, in the character of government and civil society, while women have been indelibly associated with the private sphere, in the character of the family" (Thornton 1991, p. 449). Historically, Western androcentric cultural constructions of women associate them with nature through the processes of gestation and childbirth. This led to the assumption that women are less rational than men. Conversely, "men's supposed distance from nature has grounded the claim of male rationality and superiority of intellect which has enabled (white, Anglo-Celtic) men to dominate public and professional life," (Thornton 1991, p. 450) including cultural production.

Because cultural production sits in the realm of ideas, as an ideological endeavor, it has historically been under the purview of men. According to feminist scholar Dorothy Smith, there is a circle effect:

Men attend to and treat as significant only what men say. The circle of men whose writing and talk was significant to each other extends backwards in time as far as our records reach. What men were doing was relevant to men, was written by men about men for men. Men listened and listen to what one another said. (Smith 1978, 281)

In this way, men's dominance of the public sphere indicated that men were rationally "superior" to women, which then allowed them to continue to exclude women from public discourse and participation. The fact that women did not participate in public life and conversation was then taken as further evidence of women's "inferiority," which, in turn, justified their continued exclusion.

Sociologist Joan Acker (1990) argues that even seemingly gender-neutral concepts, such as "a job," have gendered underpinnings: "'A job' already contains the gender-based division of labor and separation between the public and private sphere. The concept of 'a job' assumes a particular gendered organization of domestic life

and social production” (Acker 1990, p. 149). In a society where culture is “manufactured” (Smith 1978, p. 282), cultural production becomes a job like any other, and therefore implicitly coded as male.

Though the gendered distinction between public and private is a useful tool for social analysis, some scholars caution against leaning too heavily on its explanatory power. Lawrence Klein cautions scholars against the “tendency to overestimate or rely uncritically on the binary opposition either as a feature of people’s mental equipment in the past or as an analytic device for those of us who write histories” (Klein 1995, p. 98). Though there is ample evidence that gendered understandings of the public/private dichotomy exist, we should not assume that this dichotomy is rigid, clear, or all encompassing. Similarly, feminist historian Joan B. Landes notes that many scholars, even those committed to not reifying the public/private split as an “invariable expression of universal male power” often fall short, ultimately “uncritically imposing a middle-class Western model on quite divergent social practices” (Landes 2003, p. 28).”

The relationship between gender and cultural production across human history and across human societies has been taken up by a number of anthropologists. In an attempt to explain the seemingly universal devaluation of women Sherry Ortner (1972) has posed the question, “Is female to male as nature is to culture?” Ortner argues that societies around the world have used a culture/nature binary as a way of explaining the human consciousness and humanity’s distinction from other living creatures. Culture is the transformation and cultivation of nature into something higher and more meaningful than the raw materials provided by the earth. These cultivated goods are seen, within this binary lens, as the highest outcomes of the society. Ortner suggests that women are universally devalued because their bodies are believed to be closer to nature than the bodies of men. To make this point, she cites Simone de Beauvoir’s discussion of the ways that women’s bodies emphasize reproduction to a greater degree than men’s bodies, and over and above other aspects of women’s lives. Ortner does not argue herself that women are closer to nature than men, but rather that a universal interpretation of women’s bodies has resulted in a conflation of a nature/culture binary with a woman/man binary.

Just as the public/private dichotomy is overly simplistic, the conflation of nature/culture with woman/man likewise obfuscates a number of important issues, including women’s participation in the production of culture, men’s experience as natural beings, the cultural character of nature as a concept, the naturalness of culture in human society, the highly varied ways that societies attribute meaning to gender categories, wide variations within gender categories, and nonbinary expressions of gender. Nevertheless, Ortner’s discussion of the tendency to make this conflation helps to explain why women’s contributions to the production of culture are so often marginalized within institutions or excluded from cultural histories. In response to Ortner’s assertion that the association of women with nature explains their universal devaluation, anthropologists Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (1980) published an edited volume of essays that each examines the relationship between culture and gender in various societies around the world. Collectively, these perspectives highlight the ways in which the gender/culture question is itself socially situated and replete with assumptions about these concepts.



## Women as Producers of Contemporary Popular Culture

Turning to contemporary popular culture, women tend to be underrepresented as cultural producers and often experience discrimination when they are present. In many realms of cultural production, women's participation is not increasing. Martha Lauzen's annual report "Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes and On-Screen Women in 2013–14 Prime-time Television (2014)" found that only 27% of behind-the-scenes professionals in television are women. That number shows no significant increase over recent years – 28% in 2012–2013; 27% in 2009–2010 – and only a slight increase from the 21% of television professionals who were women in 1997–1998.

Data from the Writers Guild of America suggest that the number of women writers for TV is actually decreasing. In a study of 2724 writers on 292 shows across 36 networks covered by the Guild's collective bargaining agreement, 29% of writers for the 2013–2014 season were women. This is a decrease from 30.5% of writers for the 2011–2012 season (Hunt 2015, p. 2). When looking at shows outside of sitcoms and dramas, the numbers are worse. Women made up just 18% of those writers in 2013–2014 (Hunt 2015, p. 6). Cable networks tended to employ the largest percentages of women writers, while 11% of shows had no women writers on staff, including all shows from Cartoon Network, Cinemax, and PBS covered in the study (Hunt 2015, p. 9). Additionally, only 15% of women writers were also executive producers, down from 18.6% in 2011–2012 (Hunt 2015, p. 7).

The numbers are worse in the film industry. According to the report "Celluloid Ceiling," also by Martha Lauzen (2015), women comprised just 17% of off-screen professionals in film in 2014. That shows no particular change over previous years: 16% in 2013, 17% in 2005, 19% in 2001, and 17% in 1998. There is no indication of recent improvement.

Women made up only 7% of directors in 2014 and 93% of films made that year had no female directors (Lauzen 2015). In 2015, the number of women directors in the US, increased slightly to 9%, but fell back to 7% again in 2016 (Lauzen 2017). The filmmaking gender gap is even wider if we only look at the top grossing films where only 4.1% of directors are women (Smith, Pieper, and Choueiti 2015). This is in stark contrast to the percentage of women directors featured at the Sundance Film Festival (26.9% between 2002 and 2014) (Smith, Pieper, and Choueiti 2015). This disparity suggests the paucity of female filmmakers is related to structural discrimination, rather than simply due to a lack of women making films.

Internationally, the story is similar. A 2014 report from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, "Gender Bias Without Borders," looks at films from eleven countries released in 2010–2013 with an MPAA G, PG, or PG-13 equivalent rating. Of the 120 films studied, women made up 7% of directors, 19.7% of writers, and 22.7% of producers, for an overall gender ratio of 3.9 men for every woman (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper 2014, 6). The UK, Australia, and Brazil significantly outpaced the industry average (based on the total sample numbers) for women writers, while the US, Russia, India, and France had significantly fewer women writers than average. In terms of producers, Brazil, the US, and Australia stood out with higher than average numbers of women, while India, France, Russia, and Japan underperformed on this metric (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper 2014, 6). Five of the eleven countries had no films

in the sample with women directors: France, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the US. Overall, Brazil had the most gender parity in the sample, with 1.7 men for each woman. France's film industry was the most skewed (followed closely by Japan), with nearly 10 men for every woman (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper 2014, p. 6).

India, the world's largest producer of films, puts out nearly 1,000 films per year in many different languages including Hindi (Bollywood), Tamil (Kollywood), and Bengali to name only a few. "Gender Bias Without Borders" reported that women made up only 9.1% of directors in India for films in that study (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper 2014, p. 6). More recent data suggest an upward trend for women directors. In 2016, Bollywood released approximately 100 films and while women directed only 12 of these, half were first-time directors. This is also an increase from 2015, when only nine films had women as directors (Mehrotra 2016). Although the number of women directors and producers appears to be on the rise in Bollywood, women directors still face challenges in getting their work produced and recognized as legitimate. It was no so long ago the only women on set were make-up artists and many women directors feel they need to work twice as hard to be recognized or convince someone to produce their work. Exacerbating the problem is the misconception that women only make films that address social issues (Jamikhandikar 2010).

Female filmmakers are not only in the minority numerically, but are also at a disadvantage when it comes to distribution. The Female Filmmakers Initiative (FFI) tracked films presented as part of Sundance Film Festival's US Dramatic Competition from 2002 to 2014. While gender played no role in whether a film was acquired for theatrical distribution, there were large differences in the types of companies that acquired men's and women's films. Films with female directors were more likely to be distributed by independent companies with "fewer financial resources and lower industry clout" (Smith, Pieper, and Choueiti 2015, p. 3). Women filmmakers are also much less likely to have their films distributed to more than 250 theaters (the highest platform for distribution); at this level, men outnumber women 6 to 1 (Smith, Pieper, and Choueiti 2015).

Women represent only about one third of professionals in the music industry. Communications scholar Kristin Lieb (2013) has argued that female musicians are treated as brands, rather than artists, that are carefully controlled and packaged and all too quickly abandoned. In music reviews, women's careers are discussed on different terms from those of men. Sociologists Vaughn Schmutz and Alison Faupel (2010) conducted a qualitative analysis of the reviews presented alongside a *Rolling Stone* list of the top 500 albums of all time. While the male artists who made the list were discussed in terms that focused on their creative genius, the female artists were discussed in terms of their relationships and their access to social networks that helped them to succeed – primarily networks composed of men.

Boden Sandstrom (2000), a sound mixing engineer, explores the experiences she and other women mix engineers faced in the 1970s and 1980s as women professionals in a world dominated by men. Sandstrom argues the creation of women's music festivals, particularly the Michigan Women's Music Festival in the 1970s, opened up spaces for women sound engineers to build professional networks and hone their technical skills without the need to prove themselves to men. Lesbian women were often key players in the development of women's music festivals, expanding opportunities for women engineers.

Outside of the women's festival circuit, women sound engineers adopted different strategies for navigating a highly gendered work environment. Some highlighted their unique disposition as *women* engineers, including a willingness to listen to artists' concerns and respond to their preferences. Others focused on their technical skills and attempted to neutralize their gender in the eyes of their male coworkers (Sandstrom 2000).

Helen Reddington (2007) explores the "lost women" of British Punk Rock from the 1970s. Though women were an integral part of punk music, men have traditionally been the focus of punk histories and compilations. Reddington cites the role of gatekeepers, particularly music journalists, in limiting the exposure and perceived importance of women in punk music. More recently, Laura Jane Grace, the lead singer of the punk band Against Me!, has come out as transgender. In *Transgender Dysphoria Blues* (2014), Grace describes her experiences as a transwoman in punk rock and transitioning in the masculine culture of punk.

Although women are underrepresented in almost every area of cultural production, "comedy is probably the last remaining branch of the arts whose suitability for women is still openly discussed" (Goodyear, qtd. in Mizejewski 2014, p. 2). Comedy, particularly stand-up, has historically been one of the most hostile forms of cultural production for women. Linda Mizejewski (2014) discusses the ways in which female comedians have been forced to engage with body politics in their work, whether they explicitly espouse feminist principles or not. The twenty-first century has seen perhaps the highest number of well-known women comedians, each of whom must engage the perceived cultural tension between "pretty" and "funny" women. While comediennes of the past were often seen as successful in spite of their looks – often by overtly denigrating their (lack of) beauty – contemporary women comedians are most successful when they are pretty *and* funny, even while satirizing the cultural norms that disproportionately favor conventionally attractive women like Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Women in comedy have slightly more success in writing for television, though not much. Women writing for Comedy Central shows covered by the Writers Guild of America collective agreement made up just 13% of staff writers for the 2013–2014 season (Hunt 2015, p. 9).

Funny women who are not straight and white face even more challenges trying to be successful in comedy. Each responds to the condescension and skepticism accorded female comics in different ways. Asian-American comic Margaret Cho embraces a bawdy, queer, feminist humor that faces structural oppression head on. Black comic Wanda Sykes mocks white-produced imaginaries about what sexy black female bodies look like. As the first out mainstream black lesbian comic, she not only challenges the white male gaze, but also reverses the gaze to offer her perspective on white men. White lesbian comic Ellen Degeneres is less overtly challenging of the status quo. Instead, Degeneres quietly subverts mainstream notions of prettiness as feminine and heterosexual, by becoming seen as the soft butch girl next door. Her daytime talk show and CoverGirl status has placed Degeneres at the center of mainstream American culture and has introduced Middle America to funny (gay) women in a nonthreatening manner.

Women in sports and sports media also must battle body politics in the accomplishment of their professional duties. Women sportscasters have reported widespread discrimination in the profession, from overt sexual harassment to a need to

prove their sports knowledge beyond the level of any of their male peers (Grubb and Billiot 2010). Historically, women have been actively shut out from locker rooms as reporters, due to their gender. In 1978, a Federal judge ruled that women reporters should have equal access to locker rooms as their male counterparts, though that did not become a reality across the professional leagues until the mid-1980s (Grubb and Billiot 2010). Women sportscasters have made great strides in the past 40 years. From only a handful of women sportscasters in the 1980s, there are now 50–100 women sportscasters across multiple television networks (Grubb and Billiot 2010). However, there is still a long way to go for gender parity as most women are still positioned as sideline analysts and reporters for lower-profile sports and struggle to be taken seriously as analysts and commentators for the major four men's sports.

Even when women make it to the sports desk, they rarely get to talk about women athletes. The Amateur Athletic Foundation has been analyzing gender in televised sports since 1989. In 2004, only 6.3% of early evening and late night television sports coverage was devoted to women's sports, a decline from 8.7% of coverage in 1999 (Duncan and Messner 2005). Coverage of women's sports was also significantly less varied than coverage of men's sports, with women's tennis accounting for nearly half (42.4%) of airtime for women's sports (Duncan and Messner 2005).

Women do not fare so well in literature either. Although studies indicate that women read more (Griswold, McDonnell, and Wright 2005), men publish far more books than women do. An annual study by the literary organization VIDA finds that men are published more than women in most literary journals, and their works are reviewed more than works by women (King 2014).

Gender is one of several fault lines that create what is known as the digital divide, a term that refers to disparities in technology use. Since the early days of the worldwide web, studies consistently show that women lag behind men in terms of experience with the internet and related technologies, frequency of use, and familiarity with digital literacy (Jones et al. 2009). Eszter Hargittai and Gina Walejko (2008) shift the focus from a digital divide to a participation divide, asking whether men and women create and share information online at different rates. They find that men and women actually have similar levels of digital creation – 62.3% of men and 60.0% of women claim to have made content in the form of music, artistic photography, poetry/fiction, or film/video. But men are more likely than women to publish their work online in a way that allows them to find an audience for their creations. Men and women also create different kinds of culture using digital technology. Men are more likely to create music, film, and video. Women are more likely to create photography, poetry, and fiction. In the growing field of digital culture and social media, women have very little industry influence. For instance, Sheryl Sandberg is the only woman on the five-person management team at Facebook and she is one of just two women on the board of directors. Twitter has one woman on its 10-person management team and one woman on its board. Google has three women on its 20-person management team and three women on its board. New media follow old patterns when it comes to leadership and hiring.

The absence of women as cultural producers is not necessarily the result of an absence of women preparing for careers in these fields. According to the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Enrollments (Becker, Vlad, and Simpson 2013), two-thirds of students in those fields are women. That proportion

has been consistent since at least 1988. The numbers are lower for film specific programs. According to 2011–2012 data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2015), women comprise only 37.8% of bachelor's level students in film studies; only 30.8% of bachelor's level students in cinematography; and only 43.0% of bachelor's level students in film and video production. Women may be the minority in these programs but women still make up a larger proportion of the undergraduate programs than they do in the film and television industries. Leaky pipelines are not limited to film and television. Women account for about 60% of creative writing Master of Fine Arts (MFA) graduates (including both poetry and fiction) (Cima 2017), though most faculty are men. An informal study of poetry faculty at 45 top MFA programs (Brown and Prufer 2015) indicated most programs had more men than women faculty and gender parity got worse the higher in faculty rank.

Women are underrepresented in academic research publication globally as well. In a cross-disciplinary bibliographic analysis of the relationship between gender and research output, men produced more published research in almost every country in the world (Larivière, et al. 2013, p. 212). Women accounted for fewer than 30% of coauthorships and for every paper with a woman as first author, there are 1.93 first-authored by men (Larivière, et al. 2013, p. 212). Greater gender parity is found in South America and Eastern Europe, while women tend to dominate research output only in countries with lower scientific output overall. This finding holds true for US states and Canadian provinces as well (Larivière, et al. 2013, p. 212).

### **Women's Recognition and Remuneration as Cultural Producers**

Despite women's long history as producers of culture in all forms, women are much less likely to be recognized for their cultural contributions than men and the cultural objects produced by women have often been devalued as compared to similar objects produced by men. This systematic undervaluing of women and their cultural products presents itself clearly through evidence of a glass ceiling and wage gaps for women in cultural production and in the low numbers of women selected for major cultural awards.

Book publishing is one of few cultural fields where women are actually overrepresented at almost every level of employment, making up 74% of the total workforce in 2016. But even in publishing, women do not advance as frequently to the highest levels. While women account for 84% of editorial staff and 73% of sales and marketing employees, only 54% of managers are women (Millot 2016). Despite the large proportion of women, publishing still struggles with diversity – 88% of publishing professionals of all genders are white – so even though white women are well-represented in the industry, women of color are still largely absent from the industry. Additionally, despite being the majority of workers, women still make significantly less than men in their field. In 2016, *Publisher's Weekly* reported a \$35,000 difference in median incomes between men and women in publishing according to their annual survey of the industry (Millot 2016).

The careers of those women who do work in the film and television industries also tell an important story, as they do not fare well as compared to male professionals. A 1996 study by sociologists Denise Bielby and William Bielby found that

women writers in the film industry suffer from a “cumulative disadvantage.” They begin their careers with a gap between their incomes and those of men and that gap widens over the course of their careers. As a result, men benefit financially from accumulating experience far more than women do. Sociologists Anne E. Lincoln and Michael Patrick Allen (2004) have found that women suffer more than men from the detrimental impact of age on acting careers. In addition, they find that although the gender gap in the number of film roles is lessening, the presence of women as prominent cast members still lags behind men in significant ways. Finally, leading women actors also make less than leading men do. According to *Forbes*, the 10 highest paid women actors made only about half as much as the top 10 paid men (\$218 million compared to \$431 million). The gender pay gap in television is less pronounced, with top earners each earning about \$28–29 million, regardless of gender (Setoodeh 2015).

In addition to studying cultural production, we also need to consider the gendered nature of cultural valorization or the processes by which some cultural objects are celebrated and sacralized above others. The prominence of cultural prizes began at the turn of the twentieth century with the first Nobel Prizes (English 2005). From 1901 (the first year of prizes) to 2015, 49 women received a Nobel Prize accounting for just 5.6% of recipients, compared to 825 men. Things have improved for women over time, however, with 19 of those women receiving prizes between 2000 and 2015, the same number that received prizes in the first 80 years of the Nobels (1901–1980). The Nobel Prize for Literature has the most women recipients at 12.5% between 1901 and 2015, with the Peace Prize a close second at 12.4% of recipients. The Nobel Prize in Physics has the fewest women winners at only 1% (Zarya 2015). The lack of women Nobel winners in the sciences is perhaps unsurprising, given that scientific articles with women as sole, first, or last authors attract fewer citations than those with a man in those positions (Larivière et al. 2013, p. 212), which would presumably lead to less visibility and notoriety in the form of cultural prizes.

Looking more closely at the Nobel Prize for Literature tells a familiar story of women as producers of culture. Since 1901, 14 of the 113 Literature winners have been women, including Jewish writer Nelly Sachs who shared the prize in 1966 with a male Jewish writer. Of the 14 women winners, only three have been women of color. Women of color account for just 2.6% of Literature prizewinners. The first Latin American woman to win was Gabriela Mistral, a Chilean author, awarded in 1945. It was not until 1993 that US author Toni Morrison became the first black woman to win the prize, followed by Canadian Alice Munro in 2013.

As women, particularly women of color, are more widely recognized by traditional culture, there is a resistance to even minimal gains by nonmale and non-white cultural producers. The 2015 Hugo Awards nomination process is a telling example. The Hugos are science fiction’s most prestigious awards and have been awarded annually since 1955. Most prizes are awarded to individual works (Best Novel, Best Novella, etc.). 2014 marked the first year that more women were nominated for Hugo Awards than men. 2014 also included increased numbers of nominations for people of color, including women of color. In response, a group of science fiction authors and fans calling themselves the “Sad Puppies” started a campaign to nominate a slate of works for the 2015 Hugos that did not take on issues of race or gender inequality, as so many of the 2014 nominees did. Soon after, a group more overtly

hostile to women and people of color in science fiction started their own nomination campaign. This group, the Rabid Puppies, was led by author Vox Day – an early supporter of Gamergate. During the height of the nomination process, Day took to Twitter to call N.K. Jemison, a Hugo award winner and black woman author, a “half-savage.” The result of the Puppies’ campaigns was a 2015 ballot with overwhelmingly male nominations in fiction categories, and more than twice the amount of men than women on the ballot overall (Waldman 2015).

One explanation for why women win fewer awards is that the evaluative frameworks used to determine quality disadvantage women, especially women of color and other multiply marginalized women. Audiences and critics for cultural objects determine what those objects mean through sets of ideas that are often referred to as interpretive strategies. Interpretive strategies are “ways of seeing (Berger 1972)” that help audiences make sense of objects, determine what the message is, and decide how to use that message as social actors. These interpretive processes intersect with wider cultural understandings of identity such as gender, race, and ability. Cultural ideologies often position men as workers and producers in the public sphere – including producers of culture – whereas women are seen as reproducers, focused on nurturing children and managing the private sphere. This gendered division of public and private has historically relegated women’s creative work to the realm of craft or hobby, while men’s creative products were classified as art.

The development of feminist aesthetics has provided new lenses for interpreting culture produced by women. Those feminist lenses have been important tools for renegotiating some cultural works by women into literary and artistic canons. This process of cultural valorization is documented by the work of Sarah M. Corse and Sandra Davis Westervelt (2002) who show that Kate Chopin’s novel *The Awakening* moved from a position of critical disdain to acceptance into the Western canon due to the increasing embrace of feminist aesthetics. The trend of studying gender demographics in cultural production owes much to the social activism of a group called the Guerrilla Girls. The Guerrilla Girls began as an anonymous feminist collective of artists who used social action and visual culture to address gender disparities in the arts. They formed in New York City in 1985. They are known for appearing in public wearing guerrilla masks to protect their identities and they take the names of dead female artists. The visual works they are most known for are images on posters and billboards that combine powerful imagery with striking statistics. For instance, one iconic image showed a reclining female nude wearing a guerrilla mask with the headline “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?” Copy below the headline offered powerful data: “Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Arts sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.” The Guerrilla Girls call themselves “the conscience of the art world” and their work serves as a reminder that for all its alleged progressivism, the art world is persistently sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic (Kidd 2010).

Other social movements have also advocated for a reevaluation of aesthetic standards to include not only women, but also people of color, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Each of these movements has questioned the standards by which cultural products are assessed and who has the authority to determine what counts as “good art.” Many of these critiques have criticized the predominance of straight, white men as the traditional arbiters of

cultural quality. As new interpretive frameworks are introduced, communities traditionally marginalized in cultural production have insisted they be included on awards committees and as legitimate cultural critics. Social media has proven to be an effective tool for raising awareness and building movements for diversity in cultural production. Hashtags such as #weneeddiversebooks, #ownvoices, and #oscarssowhite have called attention to the need for supporting diversity in cultural production and evaluation. Creating new systems for producing and distributing knowledge and culture is both a tool for liberating oppressed groups and an opportunity for expanding the kinds of knowledge that are available to all.

### **Impact of Women as Cultural Producers**

Beyond abstract ideas of equality and justice as social goods, we should be concerned about how few women are represented as producers of culture because of the tangible social changes we find when women produce cultural objects. When women are involved in cultural production, there is a ripple effect out into the wider society. Overall, when women are involved in cultural production we see an increase in the number of women represented in culture, as well as qualitative changes in how women are represented.

Returning to the international film industry data from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, films with women as directors included 6.8% more women characters than those without women in director positions. When women were part of the writing staff, there were 7.5% more women characters in the films (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper 2014, 23). In the United States, the numbers are similar. From 2006–2009, women made up 35.1% of characters in family films with women directors, compared to only 28.8% with directors who were men. Family films with just one woman writer on staff had 10.4% more women on screen than those without women writers (36.4% and 26% respectively) (Smith and Choueiti 2010, p. 4). And the impact of women as producers of culture is not limited to content shifts.

What we see in the media impacts how people behave in their everyday lives. In follow-up studies to the 2014 “Gender Bias Without Borders Study,” The Geena Davis Institute asked people around the globe about the impact of gendered representations in media on their lives. In Brazil, 75% of survey respondents agreed that “Brazilian TV and movies have much influence on how people think and act” (Geena Davis Institute 2015a, p. 11). While focus group participants in India asserted that media have an impact on women’s lives in particular. Participants credited TV and film with raising awareness about issues with the dowry system, sexual violence, and child marriages (Geena Davis Institute 2015b, p. 10). In Nigeria, media images of women in occupations outside of traditional gender roles directly influenced the career aspirations of young girls. Numerous girls in Nigeria now want to be doctors after seeing women play doctors on TV and in movies (Geena Davis Institute 2015c, p. 20). Film and television also influences career aspirations of children in the UK (Geena Davis Institute 2015d, pp. 11–12). Finally, respondents in Nigeria also expressed a desire for Nollywood films to take on more social issues, such as domestic violence, pointing to the role of film as a powerful social influence (Geena Davis Institute 2015c, p. 29).



Women have consistently struggled across many times and places to be recognized as legitimate producers of culture. We hope the information presented here provides a snapshot into the current state of women as producers of culture, which highlights both how far we have come and how far we have yet to go before women are considered equally deserving of a cultural voice as men. Expanding the opportunities for women to be producers of culture, and expanding the ways that social institutions recognize how women have long been producers of culture, promotes social equality and generates innovation in the creation of knowledge.

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# 15

## Gender-Based Violence and Rape Culture

BRIAN N. SWEENEY

### Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to violence that occurs as a result of normative ideas about differences between men and women and the unequal distribution of power and resources that is justified by these ideas in a given society. GBV refers to the myriad ways that gender shapes the predictors, dynamics, and outcomes of violence, and it encompasses actual or threatened physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, deprivation of liberty, and economic harm and suffering. Some common forms of GBV committed by individuals include stalking and harassment, bullying, sexual assault and rape, battering, and homicide. Other forms of GBV are better understood as family- or community-based, and these include forced marriage, honor killings, dowry-related violence, and female genital cutting. States and other political entities can also organize the perpetration of GBV, including rape as an act of war, forced sterilization, and sexual slavery. Organized criminal networks are often responsible for forms of GBV such as sex trafficking and forced prostitution. Regardless of the specific form it takes, GBV is always related to gender and unequal relations of power.

While GBV disproportionately affects girls and women, the term is broad and inclusive and encompasses many forms of violence against boys and men and cisgender, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals. GBV occurs in every society and cuts across dimensions of social inequality, including social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, and others. At the same time, individuals' positions within these dimensions of inequality may magnify or diminish their risk of experiencing violence and may also impact how their victimization is perceived and treated.

## Politicizing Gender and Violence

Efforts to address GBV face significant obstacles, as gender inequality is foundational to social life in virtually every society, and gender systems privilege men in ways that configure their harassment and violence, especially against girls and women, as natural, normal, trivial, invisible, or otherwise unproblematic. In some cases, formal laws may enshrine customs and traditions that ensure men's privilege, including their right to abuse female dependents. In other societies, informal customs and beliefs subordinate women, creating conditions of routine risk for women and relative impunity for their victimizers. Formal legal systems and informal customs and community standards often collude in ways that configure GBV against girls and women as a private matter, with causes, consequences, and solutions that are the provenance of individuals or families, not wider society.

Early efforts to understand men's victimization of girls and women tended to narrowly focus on individuals or family contexts with the goal of identifying the characteristics that make some individuals or some families more violence-prone than others. While this research achieved laudable goals – bringing to light the routine nature of some forms of men's violence against girls and women, and addressing gender-related violence through empirical research – its tendency to focus on the qualities of individual men or on the dynamics of individual family units implied that only a few “bad” men batter and rape and only some “dysfunctional” families experience violence, leaving larger power structures unexamined.

Feminist-inspired research and activism aimed to shift the analytic lens onto society itself. Profound and still felt today, the reverberations of this shift have revealed powerful insights into how gender, power, and sexuality intersect to shape the dynamics and outcomes of violence; how gender organizes power and privilege so that women are subordinate to and dependent on men; and how formal laws and policies work together with informal customs and beliefs to devalue women in society, place them at risk of violence, and diminish the weight given to their victimization.

### Feminism and violence against women

Feminist-led efforts of the 1960s and 70s politicized gender-related violence by drawing attention to the widespread victimization of girls and women, especially at the hands of male family members and intimate partners. Unified under the term “violence against women,” this work uncovered a range of routine abuses, including harassment, stalking, battering, rape, and incest. Guided by a basic principle of second-wave feminism, these efforts sought to make the personal political by highlighting the connections between private experiences of abuse and larger social and political forces that enable the abuse, especially sexism and patriarchal family values. Second-wave feminists argued that violence against women, as with other problems rooted in society, demanded political analysis and public solutions.

The “Power and Control Wheel,” developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, brought attention to the many ways batterers can take control over an intimate partner's life, including through emotional abuse, isolation, and the manipulation and control of children, and through economic abuse, such as controlling bank

accounts or otherwise limiting the financial independence of an intimate partner. Still in wide use today by organizations that advocate for and assist abused women, the wheel illustrates that the kinds of violence women routinely face are distinct from those that men face, and that men's abuse of power occurs on a number of fronts, with visible signs of violence only the most obvious (Ray, Carlson, and Andrews 2018). Thus, men's control of women can be both totalizing and largely invisible to outsiders – and even to victims themselves. While centrally concerned with intimate partner violence, the wheel provides a useful heuristic for understanding the systematic nature in which gender inequality subordinates women to men, placing women at risk for violence. Like viewing just one wire on Marilyn Frye's metaphorical birdcage, viewing just one type of abuse gives an incomplete sense of the “network of systematically related barriers ... which, by their relations to each other, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon (Frye 1983, p. 2).

Second-wave feminists also placed power at the center of their analyses of sexual assault. American feminist Susan Brownmiller argued in 1975 that rape was a political act of violence: “a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear” (p. 13). While Brownmiller's ideas were met with controversy at the time, they formed a core part of an antirape movement that led to significant rethinking about rape. Through an analysis of 95 band and tribal societies, anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday (1981) explored the social context of rape and challenged the belief that rape was universal, something all men would do if given the chance. She would later extend her findings – that rape was a social phenomenon, and that environments characterized by high levels of gender segregation, male dominance, and female subordination were the most rape-prone – to examine American universities, publishing her influential book on fraternity gang rape in 1990 (Sanday 2007). Legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon (1998) argued that, given the severe power imbalance between men and women, a significant amount of sexual interaction is likely coercive, and rape, she argued, is a predictable outcome of sexism. Feminists increasingly embraced the notion of rape as a political act, inseparable from gendered power dynamics, and scholars continue to theorize sexual assault as a tool of masculine dominance used to control women's bodies (Cahill 2001; Dworkin 1991; Jeffreys 1998; MacKinnon 1989).

### Spousal rape

One specific issue addressed by the antirape movement of second-wave feminism has been the criminalization of spousal rape. Defined as nonconsensual sex in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse, spousal rape is often part of ongoing victimization in an abusive relationship (Yllo and Torres 2016). Perpetrators can use physical force or threats of force toward the victim or toward another person (a child, for example) in order to overcome resistance. In this sense, spousal rape is a form of *intimate partner violence* and must be understood in the context of interpersonal relationships, power, and control.

While many countries have criminalized spousal rape, it remains legal in large parts of the world, including areas with an estimated 2.6 billion females (Yllo and Torres 2016). In the United States, men had legally enshrined “conjugal rights” to their wives' bodies up until the 1970s, and criminalizing spousal rape – eliminating

the “marital rape exemption” – entailed organized political protest, changes in cultural ideas about men, women, and intimacy, as well as the rewriting of legal codes, state by state. To this day, almost every US state treats spousal rape as different from other types of rape, with, for example, narrower definitions of criminality and less severe punishments compared to nonspousal rape (Yllo and Torres 2016). In the state of Ohio, for example, there must be “force or threat of force” for an act to be considered rape within a marriage, which leaves open the possibility that a man may drug and rape his wife but not, in the eyes of the law, be considered a rapist (Minority Caucus 2017). Compounding problems of inequality, such as lack of access to power in public spheres and limited financial resources, likely prevent many women from coming forward as victims of spousal rape or successfully prosecuting their victimizer husbands, in the United States and elsewhere. Thus, even in parts of the world where spousal rape is criminalized, it is rarely reported much less prosecuted, illustrating the power of social and cultural dynamics, organized by unequal gender structures, to render the abuse and sexual assault of women as normal, unproblematic, and difficult to address.

### Rape culture and rape myths

In the summer of 2012, a 16-year-old high school girl from West Virginia went out for a night of partying with friends in nearby Steubenville, Ohio. Over the course of the night, she became visibly intoxicated, vomited repeatedly, and blacked out. While she had little memory of what happened, events came into focus in the following days through texts and social media posts, including many pictures and videos posted by her peers (Levy 2018). In one picture, two football players are carrying the girl while she is unconscious – one holding her ankles and the other her wrists – so that she drags, near the ground. In another picture she is lying on a floor, blacked out, with what appears to be semen on her chest. In an over 12-minute-long video filmed at a party that night, and uploaded to social media, a boy tells jokes about the girl to a roomful of laughing people: “You don’t need any foreplay with a dead girl.” And: “They raped her quicker than Mike Tyson raped that one girl” (Ludlow 2013). In addition to her peers gleefully documenting her public abuse through texts, pictures, and videos, the two football players penetrated her vagina with their fingers. Days later, the girl’s family and police marshaled social media evidence to launch a wider investigation that resulted in the football players – juveniles at the time – being charged and convicted with rape.

While the Steubenville perpetrators were on trial, the victim herself faced intense public scrutiny and adjudication, especially online, where commentators faulted her choices and character, diminished her victimization, and exonerated her attackers (Kosloski, Diamond-Welch, and Mann 2018). Her victimization and treatment afterwards are part of what activists and scholars refer to as “rape culture.” A concept closely related to GBV, rape culture refers to a social setting in which ideas about gender and sexuality normalize sexual violence and shift blame from perpetrators to victims: “In a rape culture, sexual assault is not caused by a few deviant or depraved bad guys; ‘normal’ men can be rapists, and rape is part of the very culture in which we live and forge romantic relationships” (Pascoe and Hollander 2016, p. 71). Components of rape culture identified by scholars include the sexual objectification

of girls and women, an adherence to traditional gender roles, a belief in the adversarial nature of cross-gender relationships, hostility toward women and other forms of misogyny, and a general acceptance of violence (Johnson and Johnson 2017). Violence, in a rape culture, is seen as sexy and sexuality as sometimes violent (Jeffreys 1998). Within a rape culture, sexual violence is routine and predictable, not extraordinary or aberrant.

*Rape myths* are the “prejudicial, stereotyped and false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists” (Burt 1980, p. 217). Rape myths can take many forms but commonly fall into a few broad and related categories, each of which can be seen in the discourse surrounding the Steubenville case, especially mainstream media coverage and social media posts.

*Blame the victim* myths suggest women invite their sexual victimization through clothing, intoxication, flirtation, or previous sexual behavior. In Steubenville, the rape victim’s peers and other community members harshly criticized her for irresponsible, excessive drinking – criticisms that often conflated intoxication with promiscuity. As one individual posted on social media: “Never seen anything this sloppy lol.” Another post from the same account states: “I have no sympathy for whores” (Kushner 2013). Other posts questioned why she was out so late, and why she had left her friends behind to follow the perpetrators from one party to another. According to this rape mythology, rape victims often invite danger by choosing to go someplace or by engaging in illicit behavior, such as underage drinking. Several social media posts, for example, questioned why the rape victim did not face criminal charges herself.

*Ideal victim myths* rely on stereotypes of victims as virtuous, blameless, and deserving of sympathy. Ideal victims fight back and have injuries to prove it. In the eyes of many community members, the Steubenville rape victim was far from virtuous and blameless: Her intoxication was highly visible – “sloppy,” as social media posts characterized it – as she stumbled, slumped, vomited, and lost consciousness, all in clear sight of others. Victims are considered ideal, in large part, because they have been clearly injured by more powerful, immoral perpetrators – *ideal criminals* – a profile the Steubenville perpetrators did not easily fit. In a struggling, small town that worshipped high school football, the perpetrators were varsity players – conventional, good looking, with college and bright futures ahead of them (Levy 2018).

*Boys will be boys myths* cast boys’ and men’s sexual aggression as a normative expression of masculinity and presume men will “push” for sex whenever possible. By suggesting that men’s sexual urges are natural and hard to control, these myths normalize a range of men’s sexually aggressive and coercive behaviors, including street harassment, unwanted touching, and rape, especially if the boy or man has been “turned on” and “can’t help himself.” Importantly, these myths correspond to dominant ideas that place responsibility on women for “putting on the brakes” to halt men’s sexual advances. In a sense, these myths frame women as forewarned: men’s intentions are obvious, and if women do not want sex to happen, they must exercise all manner of due diligence to prevent it. Social media posts and public comments portrayed the perpetrators in Steubenville as otherwise good boys who made mistakes, illustrating important consequences of this mythology: the mitigation of culpability and lack of accountability.



*Rape is rare myths* focus on the idea that rape is a rare phenomenon perpetrated by singularly bad men. “Real rape,” according to these myths, often involves a stranger who surprises a victim and uses physical coercion to overwhelm her (brute strength or weapons such as knives and guns). Rapists attack victims in dark alleys, parking garages, or from behind bushes, for example, and victims will sustain injuries – especially from resistance – that can be used as evidence to prosecute the rape. The Steubenville victim’s inability to resist (because of extreme intoxication and lack of consciousness) undermined her claims to “real rape” victim status: “If they’re getting ‘raped’ and don’t resist then to me it’s not rape. I feel bad for her but still,” one person posted (Levy 2018). Moreover, the Steubenville victim had been friendly with the perpetrators, and perhaps had engaged in romantic “talking” with one of them in the months prior to the rape. Even the victim herself did not immediately characterize what had happened as rape: “we know you didn’t rape me,” she texted one of the perpetrators, in the early days before she had a complete picture of her treatment while unconscious and before she understood the legal definition of rape (Levy 2018). Police and hospital staff had documented no clear injuries to the victim (albeit two days later). Many social media posts expressed the belief that real rape is rare but women crying rape is not. Perhaps the largest contingent of social media commentators simply felt that, whatever had occurred that night in Steubenville, it was not that serious (Kosloski, Diamond-Welch, and Mann 2018).

Other rape myths include the idea that women say “no” but really mean “yes”; that “no” means men should just try a little harder; that rape is a natural result of male lust and passion; and that husbands and other intimate partners cannot be guilty of rape. Taken together, these myths shift the responsibility for preventing sexual violence to women, who must follow strict “rules” for safety or else be culpable for the abuse inflicted on them. These myths normalize and excuse men’s sexual coercion and violence, making it less likely that victims will be heard carefully and sympathetically, provided with the necessary medical and legal resources, or given reasonable guarantees that the criminal justice system will pursue their victimizers. While the Steubenville perpetrators were tried and convicted, the case provides cautionary tales for victims coming forward to report rape and bring perpetrators to justice.

### University sexual assault

In 2014, a student at Columbia University named Emma Sulkowicz attracted widespread media attention when she began carrying a mattress everywhere she went on campus. Two years earlier, Sulkowicz contends, a fellow student raped her during a sexual encounter that had begun as consensual. Frustrated by the university’s handling of her case, Sulkowicz began her “Carry That Weight” activist art project, vowing to haul the 50lb mattress everywhere she went on campus as long as the man she accused was still there (Smith 2017). While the university cleared the accused student of any wrongdoing, the effects of Sulkowicz’s project have been significant: Sulkowicz became the face of a national movement to change the way universities deal with sexual assault, and Columbia University has become a leading center for research on sexual violence among university students (Columbia University 2019; Tolentino 2018).

Decades of activism have failed to reduce high rates of sexual assault on American university campuses, where approximately one in five women will experience sexual assault before graduation (Krebs et al. 2007). Sexual assaults on university campuses tend to occur between individuals who know each other (at least somewhat) and under circumstances where both perpetrators and victims have been drinking alcohol in a party setting. Such “party rapes,” as they are categorized by the Department of Justice, tend to occur at off-campus houses or at fraternity houses on or off campus, and are likely to involve a perpetrator “plying a woman with alcohol or targeting an intoxicated woman” (Sampson 2002, p. 6). In addition to the strategic use of alcohol, perpetrators typically use other forms of low-level coercion, such as isolating victims and otherwise manipulating situations to undermine victims’ agency and control – in other words, their ability to resist. In key ways, then, these assaults fail to meet the standards rape mythology sets for “real rape” and ideal victimhood.

While early explanations of university sexual assault focused on individual level determinants such as perpetrators’ personality traits, sexual history, or attitudes toward women, explanations shifted to focus on specific social settings, especially fraternities, which a significant body of research has identified as dangerous places for women (Sanday 2007; Martin and Hummer 1989; Stomblor and Martin 1994). Debates exist about whether fraternities *attract* rape-prone men (with preexisting rape-supportive beliefs, attitudes, and orientations) or *produce* them through indoctrination and socialization. In her far-reaching investigation of a particularly egregious form of sexual assault, fraternity gang rape, Sanday (2007) found that rape was common and rarely reported. She documented a culture of male bonding characterized by binge drinking, sexist attitudes, and abusive behavior toward women. Men intentionally got women drunk while willfully ignoring the negative consequences of combining heavy drinking and casual sex. Men compulsively dehumanized women as sex objects and approached sex with women as an entitlement – something they deserved at the end of a night of partying. And men, by and large, refused to monitor their peers’ sexual behavior, almost never stepping in to prevent sexual assault. Importantly, research shows significant differences between fraternities, with some more dangerous than others, something Sanday acknowledges and Boswell and Spade (1996) explore specifically. Race has historically played a key role in organizing fraternity life on American university campuses, and data indicate that fraternities of color, on average, are sexually safer places for women than historically white fraternities (for history and discussion see Rashawn and Rosow 2010).

More recently, scholars have focused broad attention on the social dynamics of four-year residential universities, adopting a kind of “social ecology” approach that attends to multiple dimensions where social processes produce gender inequality, and, therefore, sexual danger for women. Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006), for example, rely on multidimensional gender theory to argue that sexual danger for women is produced at the level of individuals, interactions, and organizations (in this case, universities):

The concentration of homogenous students with expectations of partying fosters the development of sexual peer cultures organized around status ... Cultural expectations that partygoers drink heavily and trust party-mates become problematic when combined

with expectations that women be nice and defer to men. Fulfilling the role of the partier produces vulnerability on the part of women, which some men exploit to extract non-consensual sex (p. 484).

Social processes, some clearly gendered and others not, work synergistically to create conditions of sexual risk. Because party scenes often form an essential component of university life, producing a great deal of fun as well as danger, efforts to combat party rape face resistance, from students, alumni, and administrators.

Columbia University's "Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation," or SHIFT project, aims to conduct a comprehensive investigation of student sexual health and violence by adopting a holistic approach to understanding the undergraduate student experience. Recognizing that previous investigations of sexual assault have largely focused on individual level determinants, SHIFT explores the "ecology of sexual assault" and the many social and institutional forces that may shape student sexual health, especially risk of sexual violence (Columbia University 2019). The project is notable for a few important reasons: the team of investigators is large and multidisciplinary, with an ambitious mixed methods approach that includes ethnography, quantitative surveys, and student diaries; the project enjoys unprecedented institutional support, including major funding from the Office of the President of Columbia University; and the project's holistic approach, with attention paid to individual, interpersonal, and structural factors, acknowledges the complex and multidimensional factors associated with forms of GBV.

### **Intersectional and inclusive approaches to GBV**

Gender is a relational system that produces difference and domination, but it also intersects with other social structures – i.e. race and ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, physical ability – thereby conferring differential access to power and privilege, or what feminist scholar Patricia Hill-Collins refers to as the "matrix of domination" (1990). Systems of inequality interlock to form sites where resources are distributed and power and privilege conferred. This "intersectional" approach to inequality is broadly accepted in social theory and research today. Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, credited with developing intersectional theory, argued that violence against women could not be understood as only an issue of gender. She used the example of battered women of color to illustrate the importance of appreciating how multiple power structures intersect to shape women's experiences of violence:

Shelters serving these women cannot afford to address only the violence inflicted by the batterer; they must also confront the other multilayered and routinized forms of domination that often converge in these women's lives, hindering their ability to create alternatives to the abuse relationships that brought them to the shelters in the first place (1991, p. 1245)

Crenshaw argued that efforts to address battery and rape often fell short because of their tendency to locate women's subordination "primarily in the psychological effects of male domination" rather than in the myriad social, cultural, political, and economic factors that disempower women of color. While she recognized that an

important shift had taken place in conceptualizing violence against women – the “process of recognizing as social and systemic what was formerly perceived as isolated and individual” (p. 1241) – she argued that we must also delineate and politicize differences *among* women and people of color, rather than treating both groups as uniform (and distinct) categories of identity and experience. Efforts to address battery and rape, for example, will only be effective to the extent that these efforts recognize the ways racism and sexism work jointly to place women of color at greater risk of experiencing burdens related to housing, employment, and childcare – all burdens that increase women’s risk of experiencing abuse while limiting their ability to leave abusive situations. Moreover, shelters and other crisis-response organizations may be hamstrung by charters and funding agencies that narrowly focus on violence rather than on the many compounding and immediate problems women of color disproportionately face.

As Crenshaw’s work illustrates, intersectionality has profound implications for how GBV is conceptualized, researched, and addressed through policy. Intersectionality draws our attention to differences in *rates* of violence experienced by different groups of people but also to the ways our positions in these dimensions of difference shape the meaning and experience of violence. An impoverished immigrant woman without proper documents will experience spousal battering very differently than a native-born, educated, white woman with financial resources and family support. Intersectional work often aims to excavate the otherwise hidden experiences of marginalized and subordinated individuals in order to illuminate the workings of larger and interlocking systems of domination. A key goal of intersectionality, therefore, is not just to examine those categories of identity that are marginalized and subordinated but also to critically examine identities at the center. Intersectionality encourages us to ask questions such as: Through what social processes are dominant identities constructed, legitimated, and reproduced so that the relations of domination and associated privileges become largely invisible and acceptable, even normative? How is this dominance actively produced through exploitation, discrimination, and violence?

### LGBTQ individuals and GBV

In 1995, a 23-year-old African American transgender woman named Chanelle Pickett was found dead in a Boston apartment. She had been beaten and strangled by William Palmer, a man she had met recently and with whom she had spent the previous evening. At his trial, Palmer used the defense that his actions were the result of “trans panic” – wild, unthinking behavior provoked by the discovery that Pickett was transgender – and he was sentenced to only 2½ years in prison. Three years later, another African American transgender woman was murdered in Boston. Thirty-four-year-old Rita Hester, a well-known and beloved local entertainer, died in a hospital after being found in her apartment, stabbed 20 times in the chest. Despite having lived as a woman for several years before her murder, media coverage referred to Hester using male pronouns and her deadname (the name associated with her gender assigned at birth). The news described Hester as a man who liked to wear women’s clothes and who was living an “apparent double life” (Allen 2015). Hester’s murder went unsolved, and her death sparked outrage in the Boston lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) community. One activist, troubled by the similarities between Pickett and Hester, established the Remember Our Dead project, an online effort to document the transgender deaths that seemed both too common and, at the LGBTQ community's peril, too easily forgotten. That project evolved into the Transgender Day of Remembrance, observed every November 20, worldwide, to commemorate the lives lost because of anti-transgender violence (GLAAD 2012).

Members of LGBTQ communities may be targets of violence for their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived sexual orientation. Homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination intersect in complex ways to shape the risk for experiencing violence among those whose sexual orientations and gender identities challenge prevailing gender systems, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, gender expansive, and gender variant individuals. Same-gender sexual desire and behavior challenge widespread heteronormative beliefs – for example, that *real* men seek out sex with women or that *real* women value the sexual attention of men. The stigma of homosexuality therefore emerges from widespread beliefs that privilege heterosexuality as natural and normal while denigrating homosexuality as unnatural and abnormal. In a similar way, transgender individuals contradict widespread assumptions about the fundamental nature of gender – namely, that it is a stable and straightforward expression of some innate essence or biological programming and that one's outward appearance is an accurate signifier of one's sex assignment at birth.

The violence LGBTQ individuals face is often related to the policing of gender expression and identity. As stated in a 2011 UN Human Rights Council report, homophobic and transphobic attacks occur in all regions of the world and are often “driven by a desire to punish individuals whose appearance or behaviour appears to challenge gender stereotypes” (United Nations 2015, p. 7). Such policing occurs when victimizers aim to regulate and enforce gender rules by punishing perceived rule-breakers through discrimination and psychological and physical violence. For example, in her ethnography of American high school students, sociologist C.J. Pascoe (2007) found that boys incessantly policed each other's masculinity through homophobic taunts and teases. However, they expressed a particularly virulent homophobia toward boys and men they perceived as feminine in dress or behavior. As one student in the study said: “Gay people I don't care. They do their thing in the bedroom and that's fine. Feminine guys bother me.” Another student strongly agreed about unmasculine boys and men: “If they try to get up on you. I'll kill you” (Pascoe 2013, 73). Pascoe's findings illustrate the complex relationship between gender and homophobia: gender dynamics motivate a great deal of sexuality-related discrimination and hate, but not all of it.

In a similar way, transphobic violence can be seen largely, but not entirely, as the result of gender-driven processes that stigmatize and dehumanize trans individuals, especially for defying norms for gender expression. As seen in the cases of Pickett and Hester, and in the deaths of many other transwomen of color, compounding layers of discrimination intersect to create lethal conditions of exploitation, discrimination, dehumanization, and violence. According to the Human Rights Campaign, over 100 trans individuals have lost their lives since 2015 because of antitransgender bias or because of circumstances related to their transgender status

(Human Rights Campaign 2019). Transwomen of color bear the brunt of this violence. Besides race and ethnicity, transgender victims of hate-driven homicides have other things in common. They tend to be individuals assigned male at birth but whose gender expression is feminine. They are young, typically under 30 at the time of their deaths. And they are overwhelmingly poor (Wilchins and Taylor 2006; Grant et al. 2011). Sexism, racism, and transphobia intersect in these women's lives to undermine their access to housing, employment, healthcare, and various protective social services (Grant et al. 2011). These compounding hardships mean transwomen of color face discrimination and violence that cut across dimensions (the physical, social, psychological, and material) and social settings (families, schools, workplaces, communities, etc.) (Grant et al. 2011; James et al. 2016; Lombardi et al. 2002). Notably, young transwomen of color suffer high rates of homelessness and are more likely to participate in survival sex work – both circumstances that dramatically increase their risk of fatal violence (Grant et al. 2011; Lombardi et al. 2002).

The perpetrators of fatal transgender violence also have things in common. They are typically cisgender males, roughly the same age as their victims, and they tend to live in large cities (Lombardi et al. 2002; Wilchins and Taylor 2006). They use extreme violence in their attacks – multiple stabbings, shootings, and bludgeoning – that often continues even after the victim's death. Most perpetrators of fatal transgender violence also go free: rates of convictions for trans homicides are significantly lower than homicides overall (Wilchins and Taylor 2006; James et al. 2016).

These low conviction rates, trans advocates believe, are related to several problems in how transgender deaths are reported and investigated. Compared to other deadly crimes, trans-related deaths are relatively underpublicized in the mainstream media, diminishing public pressure to solve the crime and leading to fewer witnesses or others coming forward with valuable information. Transgender advocates also fault the media and police for using victims' deadnames in their coverage and investigations. Using the victim's preferred name is essential for effectively taking statements and collecting evidence once a crime has been reported. In many cases, victims have lived as their preferred gender for many years, and community members and even friends may not know their previous names (Waldon and Schwenke 2018).

Many instances of antitransgender violence go unreported or are mislabeled, giving us an incomplete picture of the scope and severity of these gender-based hate crimes. According to the Center for Public Integrity, approximately 300,000 hate crimes were committed against LGBTQ individuals between 2012 and 2016, yet only a small fraction of these show up in official crime statistics, and an even smaller number are successfully prosecuted, especially at the federal level. Indeed, out of 15,254 US police departments that pass data on to the FBI crime-tracking program, only 1,776 reported having any hate crimes in all of 2016 (Keith and Gagliano 2018). A lack of trust between transgender community members and police may partially explain the underreporting of hate crimes (Grant et al. 2011; James et al. 2016). Many victims never come forward, fearing revictimization by insensitive, transphobic emergency service personnel, police officers, or social service providers. In some cases this transphobia could be deadly: 24-year-old Tyra Hunter, severely injured in a car accident, died after an emergency medical technician purportedly paused in treating her to laugh with his partner about her male genitalia (Bowles 1995).

Transgender individuals face a high risk of violence in jails, prisons, and juvenile detention centers. According to a 2015 survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality, transgender individuals are 10 times as likely to be sexually assaulted by other inmates and five times as likely to be assaulted by prison staff compared to the general population of detainees. Among survey respondents who had been detained in the previous year, 23% reported being physically assaulted and 20% reported being sexually assaulted while detained. Recognizing the high level of sexual violence in US prisons, the Prison Rape Prevention Act of 2003 set important standards for preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual violence. After a period of review and study, the US Department of Justice implemented the act in 2012. The act mandates screening of individuals at admission and transfer for risk of experiencing abuse and recognizes the need for case-by-case assessment of LGBT individuals in making security classifications and housing placements (“LGBT People and the Prison Rape Elimination Act” [PREA] 2012). Because detention facilities have too often isolated or segregated those individuals most at risk of experiencing violence, including LGBT individuals, the PREA standards limit the extent to which individuals can be placed in “protective custody.” All other alternatives must be assessed before individuals are placed in segregated or isolated housing, and when no alternatives exist, every effort must be made to grant protected individuals access to facility resources and programs. In an important addendum, however, the Trump administration, as of 2018, directed the federal Bureau of Prisons to disregard key aspects of the PREA’s guidelines, including many relevant to transgender individuals. For example, the Trump administration has directed prison officials to primarily consider individuals’ “biological sex” when making housing decisions – a directive that violates federal law under the PREA and contradicts data collected by the Department of Justice (Branstetter 2018).

### **International Responses to GBV**

Major international organizations have coordinated sustained efforts to better address GBV at local, regional, and national levels. The 1979 rights treaty adopted by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was updated in 1992 to state that GBV against women qualifies as a form of discrimination. The CEDAW governing committee defined GBV against women as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (United Nations 2017). The Four World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995, defined 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” (United Nations 1996). Such violence can occur within families or communities, and can be perpetrated or condoned by states. The Beijing conference platform identified violence against women as a critical area of concern and included mandates to prevent and eliminate GBV against women and to study its causes and consequences.

International organizations increasingly recognize GBV as a human rights issue and a public health problem. Because actual or threatened violence systematically

undermines a person's right to life, liberty, and security, intergovernmental organizations such as the UN have attempted to hold governments responsible for addressing human rights violations related to GBV, especially at the federal level, but also at the regional, local, and municipal levels. In 2008, the United Nations launched the 7-year accelerated campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" which identified several broad outcomes to address GBV against women, including efforts to bring nations' laws into alignment with international human rights standards, to collect and analyze data, to establish national and local campaigns to raise awareness about GBV, and to support systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations (UN Women 2008). Through a broad and multifaceted approach, UN Women coordinates efforts to address GBV at multiple levels of governance, formal and informal, and consults with a range of leaders who exert control over women's lives, including formal legal authorities, tribal chiefs, religious elders, or commanders of armed bands and militias. A comprehensive list of UN system activities to address GBV against women, updated annually, can be found in the "Inventory of United Nations Activities to End Violence against Women" (UN Women 2016).

### **GBV during crisis and chaos**

During times of crisis and conflict, the risk of GBV increases for women and girls. The dissolution of community (the social resources, institutions, and familiar rhythms of collective life) increases risks for potential victims and creates opportunities for perpetrators to victimize with impunity. Simple daily activities, such as collecting water or attaining food, can place already vulnerable individuals in unfamiliar circumstances and unsafe spaces. More drastically, persons displaced by crisis face increased risk of GBV while on route, in refugee camps, and in countries where they seek asylum, including risk of sexual harassment, forced marriage, rape, forced prostitution, and sexual slavery. Victims of GBV during times of crisis often lack access to education, legal, and health services, compounding their victimization.

The ongoing Syrian civil war and crisis that began in 2011 provides a case study for how conflict and the resulting chaos lead to increased risk of physical, psychological, and sexual harm of girls and women. More than 6 million Syrians have been internally displaced and over 5 million have fled the country. As in other conflict-affected areas, Syrian women increasingly find themselves alone, as husbands join the fighting, go missing, or are killed. Lacking access to basic services and security, women are especially vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation – for example, the expectation they will trade sex for aid and assistance (UN Women 2018). Many Syrian women, having been confined at home and "protected" by male guardians from a young age, are not educated and therefore lack the means to provide for themselves and children, whether in Syria or beyond (Spencer et al. 2015).

The Syrian crisis has caused a spike in child marriages, especially between Syrian refugee girls and older men in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey. For desperate families compromised by displacement and terror, marrying off an adolescent daughter could bring potential financial security while also alleviating concerns about female and family honor, which face particularly acute threats during times of chaos and migration in foreign lands. In Jordan, for example, registered marriages involving a girl under 18 represented 12% of marriages in 2011 but 32% in 2014, after an



influx of nearly one million Syrian refugees (Hikmat 2017). Given that many marriages go unregistered during times of crisis and conflict, the true number of child brides could be higher. A similar spike in child brides has likely occurred within Syria, but data on marriages has been limited or nonexistent since the conflict began. While many of the social and cultural dynamics associated with child marriage were part of these societies before 2011 – such as poverty, low levels of education for girls, patriarchal norms focused on family honor, limited economic roles for girls and women, and weak law enforcement – the crisis and forced migration has exacerbated preexisting risk factors (UNFPA 2012).

Another case study is Nigeria, where poverty, violence, and corruption have driven many individuals to migrate to Europe. Despite life-threatening obstacles and high costs, many girls and women immigrate willingly, while others do so by coercion and force. Most Nigerian women and children do not have the financial or organizational resources to migrate, leaving them susceptible to organized crime rings with connections in both Europe and Africa. Often lured by promises of educational opportunities and legitimate work as housekeepers, cleaners, or factory and restaurant workers, the women quickly find themselves trapped – without proper documentation and indebted to the traffickers who brought them to Europe (Carling 2006). According to a 2006 report by the International Organization for Migration, 80% of female migrants from Nigeria to Europe have their journeys sponsored by sex traffickers, often unknowingly, and many others will be trapped upon arrival to Europe in sex trafficking rings that thrive around migrant camps and other areas with susceptible migrant populations (Carling 2006). Some reports indicate that many Nigerian women who migrate to Italy understand they will work as prostitutes, although deceit, coercion, and other hallmarks of trafficking still characterize their experiences at all phases, from recruitment and migration to their experiences of working and living in Italy (Prina 2003).

### GBV as a weapon of war

Calculated to inflict terror and fear not just in victims but also in victims' families and communities, wartime instances of GBV can be seen as *crimes against humanity*, or crimes that are part of a systematic campaign designed to inflict widespread human suffering. Recent armed conflicts in Bosnia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Rwanda illustrate how forms of GBV can be used as weapons of war.

During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, an estimated 800,000 people lost their lives and between 200,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped, leading UN Special Rapporteur on Rwanda, René Degni-Segui to write, "Rape was systematic and was used as a 'weapon' by the perpetrators of the massacres," and, "Rape was the rule, and its absence the exception" (Degni-Segui 1996). A team of Dutch researchers estimated the number of rapes at 354,440 after interviewing rape survivors, investigating pregnancies that resulted from rape, and documenting deaths that included rape (Nowrojee 1996).

Preceding the genocide and fueling its beginning, a systematic Hutu-led propaganda campaign portrayed Tutsi women as *femme-fatales* – as sexual spies who aimed to subvert the Hutu ethnic cause through the seduction and manipulation of

its men. Once the genocide began, sexualized violence became an integral part of the ethnic cleansing. Tutsi girls and women were mutilated, raped, gang raped, and intentionally raped by HIV-positive men or men claiming to be so in order to inflict greater terror (Nowrojee 1996; Degni-Segui 1996). There were instances of forced incest and other forms of sexual humiliation: women “were stripped and/or slashed and exposed to public mockery. Others had pieces of trees branches pushed into their vagina. Even more had their external genitals, their buttocks and their breasts cut off” (Degni-Segui 1996). Some survivors were impregnated by their rapists and later gave birth. Patriarchal beliefs that babies take on their father’s ethnicity infused these assaults with greater cruelty and underscored the role of rape and sexualized violence in the Hutu’s systematic campaign to eliminate the Tutsis (Taylor 1999).

While horrific, the Rwandan genocide illustrates significant, positive shifts in international law regarding how GBV, especially rape, is understood in the context of armed conflicts. In a groundbreaking international trial in 1998, Rwandan politician and mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu became the first person to be tried and convicted for genocide and crimes against humanity, including rape and sexualized violence. Recognizing the role of rape in the “physical and psychological destruction of Tutsi women, their families, and their communities,” the tribunal set the precedent for treating rape as a form of violence against a group and not just against an individual. In its pivotal ruling, the Rwandan Tribunal concluded that “sexual violence was a step in the process of destruction of the Tutsi group – destruction of the spirit, of the will to live, and of life itself” and thus constituted a form of genocide. The tribunal effectively rewrote international law and stood firmly against the historical practice of treating rape and other forms of GBV as inevitable by-products of war (Coleman 2002).

## Conclusion

Feminist efforts brought GBV into the public realm – as a social problem with roots in the organization of society. Since then, increasingly diverse theoretical models and research methodologies investigate a broad range of causes and consequences of GBV that span social, psychological, and physical dimensions of the human experience. Efforts to address GBV have increasingly adopted intersectional and inclusive approaches that focus on how gender works together with other categories of identity and systems of inequality to shape experiences of violence; they provide further corrective to early tendencies in scholarship and activism to focus narrowly on *violence against women*, or on violence that male-bodied individuals inflicted on female-bodied individuals. Together, these themes form the core of the feminist, constructivist, intersectional approach that underlies contemporary research and activism on GBV. The entrenched and multidimensional nature of gender inequality creates formidable obstacles to fully uncovering the scope and severity of GBV and addressing it effectively through research-driven policy interventions. However, with the rise of the global women’s and LGBTQ movements, efforts to address GBV have gained legitimacy and traction, and the coordinated efforts of international, national, and local organizations hold great promise for reducing GBV around the globe.

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# Part V

Politics, Economics,  
and the Environment

# Gender and Occupational Segregation

YAN LING ANNE WONG AND MARIA CHARLES

Occupational gender segregation – the uneven distribution of men and women across occupations – is one of the most pervasive and persistent features of labor markets around the world (Roos 1985; Jacobs and Lim 1992; Charles and Grusky 2004; Chang 2004). Because occupations dominated by women tend to have lower pay, fewer promotion tracks, and less opportunity to exercise authority than occupations dominated by men, segregation is also a central contributor to women’s socio-economic disadvantage. Highly skilled “women’s” occupations pay about \$10 per hour less than highly skilled “men’s” occupations in the United States (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). Similar disparities have been documented around the globe, with gaps between male- and female-dominated occupations of about 25% in Australia, 28% in Korea, and 30% in Portugal, for example (International Labour Organization 2010).<sup>1</sup> Whether these pay gaps reflect men’s greater access to more desirable occupations, the devaluation of female-labeled work, or both, the persistence of gender inequality in contemporary labor markets most certainly runs through occupational segregation.

Labor market gender segregation occurs across many locational dimensions, including occupations (defined with respect to work tasks), industries (defined with respect to product markets), and physical work establishments. We focus here on occupations, which are central determinants of economic rewards, lifestyles and identities in modern societies. Even if the pay of men’s and women’s occupations were to be equalized, extreme sorting of people into different occupational roles reinforces ideologies of difference, reduces the pool of available talent, and constrains identities and life choices of future generations.

Occupational gender segregation remains extreme in the twenty-first century, even in reputedly gender-egalitarian and policy-progressive societies (Charles 2011a). Gender inequalities become more striking the more deeply one looks into the occupational structure. For example, the occupation of medical doctor is more gender-integrated than are its specialties, such as surgery and pediatrics (Crompton

and Le Feuvre 2003; Boulis and Jacobs 2008; Williams, Pecenco, and Blair-Loy 2013), and some seemingly integrated occupations (e.g., assembly) may be men's work in some firms and women's work in others (Bielby and Baron 1986).

Gender segregation is often compounded by inequalities across other demographic categories. It is well documented that men's and women's occupational distributions differ by race, class, age, and nativity in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; McCall 2001; Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 2006) and around the world (World Bank 2012). For example, labor market stratification in contemporary China cannot be understood without attention to the joint workings of gender and rural/urban origins (Otis 2011), and inequalities in the Swiss occupational structure are strongly shaped by the joint logic of gender and citizenship status (Charles 2000).

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the measurement of occupational gender segregation, followed by descriptive summaries of how segregation varies across time and space – both around the world and within the United States. Where data are available, we discuss how other axes of identity (e.g., race, class, nativity) intersect with gender in shaping patterns and processes of occupational segregation. We then review important explanatory accounts, and conclude with reflections on the future of segregation.

### Measuring Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation is most often measured using the dissimilarity index,  $D$ , which gives the percentage of men or women who would have to leave the labor force to equalize the gender composition across occupations; a value of 0 indicates perfect gender integration and a value of 100 indicates perfect segregation.  $D$  was developed by Otis Dudley Duncan and Beverly Duncan (1955) to study the separation of races across residential neighborhoods and later applied to study the “sexual segregation” of the US occupational structure (Gross 1968).

Although  $D$  has an intuitively appealing interpretation, it has some well-known limitations when used for comparative analysis. One limitation is that it is sensitive to historical and cross-national differences in occupational structure. For example, growth in a highly segregated occupation, such as nurse or computer programmer, could cause the value of  $D$  to increase even if all occupations became more gender-integrated over time.<sup>2</sup> This and other compositional dependencies of existing measures led Charles and Grusky to develop the association index ( $A$ ) for cross-national and historical comparison of segregation (2004).<sup>3</sup>

But *all* segregation indices share a more serious limitation, which is that they tell us about the amount of gender segregation but nothing about its qualitative contours: which occupations are more integrated or segregated and how these patterns differ over time and space. The usefulness of summary indices depends, therefore, upon the degree to which segregation can be represented as a unitary quantity that rises and falls evenly across occupations – in response to the level of patriarchy or egalitarianism in a given context, for example. Contrary to such unidimensional conceptualizations, recent analyses show that gender segregation varies on at least two independent dimensions: *Horizontal segregation* refers to the uneven distribution of men and women across positions that are not clearly hierarchical – for example,



men's concentration in manufacturing and women's concentration in service. And *vertical segregation* refers to men's dominance of the highest-status and best-paid positions – for example, professions and management. The available summary indices cannot capture this sort of multidimensional structure.

In the following section, “Describing Segregation,” we provide a descriptive overview of occupational gender segregation with attention to both overall levels and qualitative patterns.

## Describing Segregation

Gender segregation varies a great deal across space and time. We describe this variability first in a global context and then over time within the United States.

### Occupational gender segregation around the globe

Modernization theories and conventional wisdom offer a simple prediction: gender inequality will decline with economic development, because it is an inefficient relict of traditionalism (Treiman 1970; Jackson 1998). Observed levels and patterns of occupational gender segregation reveal no such simple evolutionary logic, however.

#### *Cross-national differences in occupational gender segregation*

Countries' levels of gender segregation – whether measured by *D* or *A* – are poorly predicted by socioeconomic and cultural modernization (Jacobs & Lim 1992; Blackburn et al. 2000; Chang 2004), and when a relationship is found, it is generally *positive*, not negative. For example, affluent and reputedly gender-egalitarian Scandinavian countries have some of the highest overall levels of occupational gender segregation in the industrial world, while index values have been markedly lower in Italy, Portugal, and Japan (Roos 1985; Charles 1992). We discuss possible cultural and structural explanations for these counterintuitive patterns in the section “Macro-level accounts.”

It is possible to discern some systematic relationships if we consider specific occupations or occupational groups. For example, a more gender-egalitarian culture is associated with better representation of women in high-status professional occupations, and sometimes in management, but the same egalitarian ideals coincide with strong segregation of nonelite occupations – in particular, a sharp separation between female service and male manufacturing and craft occupations (Charles 2003). Recent statistical data from the International Labour Organization, ILO (2016) reveal broad similarities and differences between developing and developed countries. Global similarities include women's overrepresentation among clerical, sales, and service workers and their underrepresentation among skilled craft and manufacturing workers. Differences include more segregation of (female-typed) nonprofessional service occupations and of (male-typed) craft occupations in developed than developing countries,<sup>4</sup> and less segregation of high-status nonmanual workers in developed than developing countries. In advanced industrial countries, women have made dramatic inroads into some medical, law, and finance professions, while other elite occupations remain extremely male-dominated. Two such pockets of resistance

are high-level leadership and science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) fields (ILO 2015; Charles 2011b; UNESCO 2017; Charles and Thébaud 2018).

### *Global trends in occupational gender segregation*

Most countries showed declining levels of segregation (as measured by *A* or *D*) during the 1970s and 1980s, followed by stabilization (Jacobs and Lim 1992; Chang 2000; Charles and Grusky 2004; ILO 2016). Decreases were more modest in developing than developed countries.

The significance of declining index scores depends upon the occupation-specific changes that produced them. In industrial countries, declines during the 1970s and 1980s were largely attributable to decreasing vertical segregation through gender integration of professional and managerial occupations; the horizontal segregation of service, clerical, and skilled manual occupations persisted, and in some cases intensified (Charles and Grusky 2004). Little is known about occupation-specific trends before 1990 in the developing world, where historical data are much more limited.

An overview of trends in the new century can be discerned from a sample of 14 economically diverse countries assembled by the ILO. These data suggest continued declines in vertical segregation, due to gender integration of some professions during the last decade, but also increasing horizontal segregation, due to women's growing concentration in clerical, sales and service occupations and men's growing share of manufacturing and craft work (ILO 2016).

The complex patterns of cross-national variability in gender segregation are clearly inconsistent with accounts suggesting across-the-board improvements in women's status. We turn now to an analysis of trends in the United States.

## **Occupational gender segregation in the United States**

Following a brief overview of changes in level and pattern of occupational gender segregation in the US context, we explore variations by age, race/ethnicity, class, and education.

### *Trends in overall levels of segregation*

Summary indices of occupational gender segregation declined in the United States during much of the twentieth century and then stabilized around 1990 (Vanneman 2005; Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). Both *A* and *D* indices showed their strongest declines between 1960 and 1990, when women's representation in the professions increased substantially.<sup>5</sup>

Similar trends in gender segregation are observed when the US population is broken down by race. Indices of gender segregation declined for all racial groups from 1960 to the late 1990s and then leveled off (Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 2006; Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). Recent calculations of the *D* index for four major US racial/ethnic groups show the strongest gender segregation among Hispanics, the weakest level among Asians, and intermediate levels for whites and blacks (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014, Figure 3). In 2011, Hispanics and Asians differed by more than 10 points in their scores on the *D* index. The occupations into which men and women are concentrated vary by race (Hegewisch et al. 2010). The occupational profiles of

white and Latina women differ significantly, for example. Men's occupational distributions are slightly more racially segregated than are women's.

Patterns of occupational gender segregation also vary by educational class in the US. In 2011, the index of dissimilarity for those with at least four years of college was 40, compared to 60 for those with less than four years of college (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). This education effect may partially account for the relatively low level of gender segregation found among Asians in the United States.

### *Occupation-specific trends*

Again, the relevance of declining segregation index scores for women's relative economic status depends on the distributions that underlie these aggregate trends. Kim Weeden's disaggregated analysis reveals much historical unevenness in the occupational sources of the observed twentieth-century declines (2004). For example, the gender integration of manual occupations during World War II contributed to declining index scores in the 1930s and 1940s, while women's growing access to professional occupations in the civil rights era contributed to declines in the 1960s and 1970s (see also Goldin 1990). Dramatic integration of some occupations has again coincided with the persistence of extreme segregation in others.<sup>6</sup>

Paula England (2010) points to important class differences in segregation trends during the second half of the twentieth century, with middle-class occupations in the professions (especially health and law), management, and nonretail sales integrating dramatically, but working-class occupations in craft, retail sales, and nonprofessional service showing very little change. Hegewisch and Hartmann (2014) find similar trends for the 1972–2012 period: women's representation increased among physicians and surgeons from 10 to 35%, among pharmacists from 10 to 50%, and among lawyers from virtually zero to about 30%,<sup>7</sup> while many working-class occupations remained hypersegregated, including prekindergarten teachers and dental assistants (both nearly 100% women) and carpenters (more than 95% men). These occupation-specific developments help explain why trends have differed by educational status: segregation declined most among college graduates, because they are more likely to work in the professions and less likely to work in persistently segregated blue-collar and care occupations.

Some of the last strongholds of gender segregation in the US professions are in STEM fields, where acute labor shortages and concerns about women's missed opportunities have spurred numerous government- and industry-funded diversification initiatives. In 2015, women made up only 28% of STEM workers, compared to 47% of the labor force overall (National Science Foundation [NSF] 2018, Appendix 3–12). Gender composition varies strongly across STEM subfields, however, with women's representation ranging from 15% of engineers and 28% of physical scientists to about half of life scientists and 70% of health-related professionals (National Science Foundation [NSF] 2017). The share of women computer and math scientists peaked at just over 30% in the 1980s, then decreased to 26% in 2015 (NSF 2017). The gender composition of STEM occupations also varies by race and ethnicity. In 2015, women's share of employed scientists and engineers was highest among blacks (33.8%) and lowest among American Indians or Alaska Natives (10%) (authors' calculations from NSF 2017 data, Table 9.7). In most

STEM fields, the gender gap is weaker among immigrants than the native-born (Xie and Shauman 2003; Nores 2010).

The above descriptive account leaves little doubt as to the ubiquity and persistence of occupational gender segregation. We turn now to a review of the existing theoretical accounts of these gendered distributions.

## Explanations for Occupational Segregation

In reviewing the most common explanations for gender segregation, we distinguish between micro-level accounts, which consider individual and interpersonal processes, and macro-level accounts, which focus on characteristics of larger units such as firms, historical eras, and countries. We consider how each framework accords with the available evidence, and how micro- and macro-level processes may interact to produce highly resilient forms of gender segregation.

### Micro-level accounts: Individual traits, behaviors, and tastes

Micro-level explanations of gender segregation focus on the attributes of people seeking jobs and the attributes of people who hire them. These are often described as “supply-side” and “demand-side” accounts, respectively, reflecting the distinction between sellers and buyers of labor in classical microeconomic theory.

#### *Supply-side processes*

Differences in aptitudes, affinities, and workplace productivity of men and women are central to supply-side accounts of labor market gender inequality. The feminization of care work, for example, might be attributed to women’s greater capacity for nurturance and childrearing or their preferences for part-time work that allows them to spend more time at home.

Some of the most influential supply-side explanations for gender segregation have been offered by neoclassical economists, who attribute gender-differentiated occupational outcomes to efforts by men and women to optimize the wellbeing, or “utility,” of the (nuclear) family unit. By this account, segregation results from women’s rational decisions to pursue occupations that are compatible with childrearing and that minimize the skill atrophy (and corresponding salary penalties) associated with intermittent employment (Becker 1985; Mincer and Polachek 1974; Hakim 2000). The argument is that because women have a competitive advantage in childcare and domestic labor, they will invest less than men in “human capital” such as professional credentials and occupation-specific training. The origins of women’s presumed domestic advantage has received little sustained attention in this literature, but the implication seems to be that it reflects biology, early childhood socialization, or both.

Socialization-based explanations for gendered work roles describe a system of rewards and punishments that induce children to adopt the masculine or feminine behaviors that correspond to binary sex categories. Because gendered traits are eventually internalized, adult women prefer roles that draw upon “feminine” traits and adult men prefer roles that draw upon “masculine” traits (Parsons and Bales 1955;

Marini and Brinton 1984). Biology-based explanations emphasize sex hormones and brain structures (Lillie 1939; Ceci and Williams 2011). Simon Baron-Cohen argues, for example, that women are underrepresented in the sciences because the female brain is hardwired for empathy and the male brain is hardwired for systems analysis (2003). High-profile examples of this argument are found in a speech by Harvard president Lawrence Summers in 2005 and a memo by former Google engineer James Damore in 2017, which were featured prominently in the popular press. Both point to fundamental gender differences as reasons for women's underrepresentation in STEM fields.

Sociological analyses have yielded mixed support for rational-choice accounts of gender segregation. Okamoto and England (1999) find that the likelihood of working in female-dominated occupations is indeed greater for (Latina and white, but not black) mothers than for similar nonmothers, but there is little evidence that this is an economically optimizing choice. Contrary to popular beliefs, predominantly female occupations do not offer greater schedule flexibility or fewer financial penalties for intermittency (England et al. 1988; Glass and Camarigg 1992; Kennelly 2002), and few women or men college students report that family plans influence their career choices (Cech 2016).<sup>8</sup> Among the standard supply-side variables, occupational aspirations and expectations appear to have the most robust effects. Gender is a strong predictor of occupational aspirations, and aspirations significantly affect occupational outcomes, holding constant a host of other factors including expectations for marriage and children (Okamoto and England 1999; Xie and Shauman 2003; England 2010). The causes of gendered occupational preferences are less well understood; we discuss how stereotypes about innate gender differences may produce cognitive biases that reproduce gender-specific aspirations in the section "Multi-level accounts."

Explanations for gender inequality that rest upon differences between men and women in aptitudes and affinities are often popularly resonant – perhaps because they align with widespread gender-essentialist stereotypes. But strong variations in the gendered division of labor across time and space and over the individual life course lead most sociologists to believe that sex-linked traits are insufficient explanations for occupational gender segregation (Jacobs 1989; Charles and Grusky 2004; Penner 2008; Ridgeway 2011). Even if men and women differ *on average* in some trait or disposition, between-gender differences are typically much smaller than within-gender differences (Eagly 1995). In short, the considerable overlap in men's and women's distributions of skills and tastes is difficult to reconcile with the extreme patterns of gender segregation that we observe. It is possible, however, that certain social structures (e.g., nuclear families, physically separated domestic and work realms) support the conversion of small average gender differences into large distributional differences.

Advocates for gender equality often resist supply-side accounts of segregation because these explanations seem to suggest that the current gendering of occupations is inevitable, and because they seem to blame women for their lesser status (Eagly 1995; England 2011). Rather than focusing on attributes of workers, demand-side approaches examine how attributes and actions of employers and clients affect men's and women's occupational opportunities.

*Demand-side processes*

Economist Gary Becker (1957) has suggested that some employers have “tastes for discrimination” and are willing to pay a wage premium to hire members of a preferred racial or gender group. This wage premium puts discriminating firms at a competitive disadvantage that will, he argues, eventually drive them out of business. To account for the persistence of discrimination in competitive market economies, economists later introduced the theory of “statistical discrimination,” which holds that employers’ imperfect information about the future productivity of potential employees may make it economically efficient to discriminate against members of groups who are *on average* less productive (Phelps 1980). For example, if women are more likely to interrupt their labor force careers to raise children, it might be rational for employers to discriminate against women in hiring for jobs where employment continuity is at a premium. Efforts by sociologists to map patterns of segregation onto measurable gender differences in job-relevant characteristics have yielded mostly negative results (Bielby and Baron 1986). Nonetheless, employers’ beliefs about average gender differences need not be true to affect outcomes: statistical discrimination may be a powerful mechanism for the perpetuation if a common set of gender stereotypes shape many employers’ beliefs, as discussed in the section “The cultural bases of gender segregation.”

Employer discrimination also figures prominently in Reskin and Roos’s queuing theory (1990), which holds that modern labor markets are built around two queues: the labor queue in which employers rank the desirability of employees, and the job queue in which workers rank the attractiveness of jobs. Because men are consistently privileged over women in the labor queue, they are able to move out of less desirable occupations and into more attractive alternatives. Consistent with queuing arguments, Christine Williams (1992) has shown that men are preferred even in female-labeled professions like nursing and elementary education, and that they are tracked into areas within these professions that are considered more masculine and more prestigious. Subsequent research documents how men’s advantage among nursing assistants is heightened or moderated depending upon workers’ race, ethnicity, and nationality (Price-Glynn and Rakovski 2012; see also Wingfield 2019). These “glass escalators” reproduce vertical segregation *within* professions. Sharla Alegria shows that they can operate in both gender- and race-specific fashion to further disadvantage women of color (2019).

Gender discrimination has proven a difficult concept for social scientists to measure – not least because it is illegal in the US and few people will admit to it. Some of the most compelling evidence of gender discrimination in hiring has been gathered through experiments and audit studies. One widely cited study showed that women musicians were more likely to be hired for orchestras when a screen was used during auditions to conceal candidates’ identity (Goldin and Rouse 2000). Another showed that mothers, but not fathers, faced employment penalties relative to equally qualified nonparents (Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007). More recently, Jill Yavorsky (2019) sent paired “male” and “female” resumes in response to more than 3,000 actual job postings. She found that woman applicants to male-dominated working-class jobs and man applicants to female-dominated jobs across the occupational structure were especially targeted for discrimination. Unequal treatment in the hiring process was also revealed by a recent video analysis of job talks, which showed that women candidates for academic STEM positions were interrupted more than men (Blair-Loy et al. 2017).

*Supply-demand feedback loops*

Supply- and demand-side processes can be mutually reinforcing. For example, workplace discrimination may be both cause and consequence of women's lesser investment in credentials for historically male-dominated occupations: girls may avoid coursework and training in STEM fields if they believe that science and engineering work environments are hostile and discriminatory towards women. This lesser human capital investment will in turn reduce women's qualification and competitiveness in STEM and strengthen gender segregation.

A pioneering ethnographic study by Rosabeth Moss Kanter reveals how occupational gender segregation within organizations can constrain the behavior of numerical minorities and amplify supply-demand feedback loops (1977). For example, performance pressures and social isolation may negatively affect performance of token women in male-dominated managerial occupations and reinforce negative stereotypes about women's leadership capacity.<sup>9</sup> This feedback loop is an especially powerful mechanism for reproducing gender segregation in organizations because women in male-dominated positions are highly visible and their performance is often construed as representative of all women.

Workplace effects of gender categorization and tokenism have also been studied by scholars of social interaction. The influential "doing gender" framework explores how people's perceived accountability to dominant understandings of femininity and masculinity leads them to engage in gender-conforming interactions that reinforce stereotypes (West and Zimmerman 1987). The gender segregation and numerical imbalances that follow can increase the salience of gender and shift workplace interactions further in stereotype-consistent ways (Ridgeway 2011). Workplace interactions and gender displays are also shaped by complex inequality regimes that emerge out of intersections of gender with other social identities, including race, ethnicity, and sexuality (McCall 2011; Fenstermaker and West 2002; Acker 2006). A recent study of technology firms by Alfrey and Twine, for example, reveals racially differentiated strategies by which women navigate male-dominated work environments (2017).

We turn now to accounts that explore the production and reproduction of occupational segregation through processes occurring at higher levels of aggregation.

**Macro-level accounts: How context matters**

Individual-level accounts of occupational segregation focus on the matching of (potential) workers and jobs. This matching process occurs within widely varying structural and cultural environments, which are the focus of the following sections.

*The structural bases of gender segregation*

Individual workers and workplaces operate in the broader context of social institutions, including organizations, national economies, and policy regimes that influence patterns and processes of gender segregation. We explore some of these relationships below.

One of the most commonly theorized macro-level correlates of gender equality is socioeconomic modernization. According to functional theory, gender inequality will gradually wither away under competitive market pressures because discrimination is

too costly to sustain in industrial, knowledge-based economies (Treiman 1970; Jackson 1998). Neoinstitutionalist scholars point to similar evolutionary processes toward equalization, but attribute this trend to the postwar rise of universalistic, gender-egalitarian principles and their diffusion through the media, schools, and other carriers of global culture (Ramirez, Soysal and Shanahan 1997; Berkovitch 1999; Meyer 2004). An evolutionary sensibility is also reflected in popular beliefs about women's steadily improving social status. Lending credence to these linear accounts are some obvious global trends toward equalization – for example in voting rights, employment rates, and educational attainment. But other types of gender inequality have proven to be highly resilient (Mandel and Semyonov 2006; Charles 2011a). In fact, some forms of occupational gender segregation are strongest in countries that are reputed to be among the most modern and gender-progressive in the industrial world (Charles 2003; Pettit and Hook 2009).

Another significant structural force in the development of occupational segregation is the global expansion of the service sector, which today employs approximately half of the global working population, disproportionately women (Oppenheimer 1973; Charles 2003; ILO 2016). In advanced industrial societies, service-industry expansion contributed to the feminization of sales, clerical, and service occupations, because growing labor demand led employers to restructure some occupations (e.g., through part-time scheduling) to attract married women and mothers, and because many service industries sell products, such as care, that are symbolically or functionally proximate to women's traditional emotional and household labor.<sup>10</sup> New “occupational ghettos” are consolidated when occupations become imprinted with specific gender labels (Charles and Grusky 2004). Ironically, strong feminine labeling of growing service-sector occupations may have buffered some women from the adverse employment effects of the recent economic crisis (ILO 2009).

Structural features of educational systems are also relevant to the development of occupational gender segregation. As part of concerted postwar efforts to democratize and modernize higher education, national governments and international organizations sought to encourage women's educational attainment by expanding two-year and vocational institutions and building feminine enclaves in fields such as human development, home economics, and teacher education. Administrators and policy-makers consciously designed some programs to appeal to what they regarded as women's natural social predispositions and to prepare women for occupations to which they were expected to aspire (Bradley and Charles 2004). By incorporating women *as women* into higher education, the twentieth-century educational expansion simultaneously increased female enrollments and increased gender segregation.

Occupational segregation is also influenced by social policies related to childcare, family leaves, taxation, and gender equality (Estévez-Abe, Iversen, and Soskice 2001; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Charles 2005). In their study of 21 industrialized societies, Pettit and Hook found that policies that are family friendly in intent can have very different effects on different dimensions of women's labor market status (2009): public childcare provisions appear to be associated with higher female employment rates and increased occupational integration, while provisions for part-time work can be accompanied by greater gender segregation, because women are concentrated in sectors of the economy that are more conducive to flexible scheduling.



Sarah Thébaud (2015) finds similar tradeoffs in her cross-national study of entrepreneurial labor markets. People's experience with prevailing policies and organizational arrangements in turn generate normative models of motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood that further influence the types of occupations that are sanctioned for women and men (Buchmann and Charles 1995; Charles and Cech 2010; Gerson 2010; Pedulla and Thébaud 2015).

Occupations are also embedded in work organizations that differ on diverse structural dimensions. Organizational characteristics that have been linked to gender segregation include firm size, personnel policies and practices, skill requirements, unionization rates, women's presence in management, bureaucratization, and workplace traditions (Kanter 1977; Bielby and Baron 1984; Reskin 2000; Williams 2000; Gorman 2005). Much has been written about the effects of organizational bureaucratization on gender equality, with some scholars suggesting that formal rules and procedures enhance opportunities for underrepresented groups (Baron et al. 2007; Whittington and Smith-Doerr 2008) and others suggesting that bureaucracy obscures discrimination through discourses and procedures that leave the gender of the ideal worker unspecified but presume a male figure (Acker 1990). For example, some professional jobs are structured so as to require workers to devote the great majority of their time and energy to their jobs – a devotion that is only possible for those with wives or others at home to take care of the family. This “work devotion schema” may force some middle-class women to withdraw from lucrative and high-status occupations (Blair-Loy 2003).

#### *The cultural bases of gender segregation*

Culture affects patterns of occupational segregation by shaping people's beliefs about the intrinsically masculine or feminine nature of occupations and persons (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). Because people tend to remember evidence that is consistent with their preexisting beliefs and discount evidence that undermines them, cultural gender beliefs can persist even in the absence of empirical validation (Fiske 1998).

The initial gender composition of occupations in a labor market may reflect their functional or symbolic proximity to work historically done by men or women, or the external economic and social conditions that were operative at the time of their emergence or expansion (e.g., labor shortages, changing technology, barriers to entry). But once an occupation comes to be dominated by men or women, people will often draw upon gender-conforming aspects of the work process to generate cultural stories about its intrinsic masculinity or femininity (Faulkner 2000; Tolley 2003). The resultant occupational gender labels become imprinted in the popular imagination and are widely taken for granted within a society. For example, American school children's drawings of nurses or scientists will typically reflect these occupations' highly skewed gender compositions in the contemporary United States. These gender labels are compounded by racial stereotyping of fields. In academic physics, for example, Ong shows how the cultural image of the white male scientist affects women of color, who frequently face skepticism about their competence and belonging (2005). The gender typing of occupations can vary strongly across societies. For example, computing is viewed in the US as a masculine domain inhabited by “nerdy geeks” and “hip, successful, cool guys” (Margolis and Fisher 2002), but is

much more gender-integrated in Malaysia and India, where office workplaces are thought to offer safer environments for women than construction sites and factories (Lagesen 2008; Varma and Kapur 2015; Chow and Charles 2019).

Beliefs about the intrinsic natures of women and men are also powerful drivers of occupational segregation. Charles and Grusky identify two tenets of gender ideology that exert independent effects on occupational outcomes: male primacy, which undergirds vertical segregation, represents men as more status worthy and socially dominant than women; and gender essentialism, which undergirds horizontal segregation, represents women as more competent than men in nurturance and social interaction (2004; Levanon and Grusky 2016). Whereas ideologies of male primacy tend to weaken with the rise of liberal universalistic principles, gender essentialist beliefs show remarkable resilience, perhaps because they are easily reconciled with liberal egalitarianism (Tolley 2003; Knight and Brinton 2017). Under contemporary “different but equal” ideological regimes, gender segregation appears legitimate to the extent that it can be construed as the result of free choices by equal but naturally different men and women (Charles 2008).

The cultural labeling of people and jobs as either feminine or masculine helps reproduce occupational segregation through effects on labor demand and labor supply. On the demand side, the most obvious intermediary mechanisms are discrimination against gender-nonconforming workers and applicants, and biased assessments of individuals’ relative qualifications (Becker 1957; Phelps 1980; Bielby and Baron 1986). On the supply side, gender typing reinforces segregation by leading people to make gender-conforming choices that affirm their masculinity or femininity, avoid social sanctions, and anticipate gender-specific treatment and discrimination (West and Zimmerman 1987; Ridgeway 2011). People may also choose gender-conforming occupations because they believe, often erroneously, that they will be more skilled at this work or enjoy it more (Correll 2004; Charles 2017). Effects of such biased self-assessments are discussed in the following section, “Multi-level Accounts,” which focuses on the interactions between macro- and micro-level processes of gender segregation.

### **Multi-level accounts: Stereotypes into aspirations**

Newer analyses of occupational gender segregation blur the distinction between micro- and macro-causal processes by positing effects of macro-cultural stereotypes on individual cognition and individual identity. In addition to affecting hiring and workplace climates directly, gender stereotypes can have second-order effects by biasing people’s understandings of their *own* aptitudes and affinities. These biased self-understandings can influence occupational aspirations and behaviors even in the absence of any immediate structural constraints or individual-level socialization (Charles 2008; Thébaud and Charles 2018).

A great deal of research points to effects of gender stereotypes on people’s confidence in their abilities to carry out the tasks and assume the identities associated with specific occupational roles (Correll 2001; Cech et al. 2011). In one experimental study, Correll shows that exposure to the (erroneous) belief that men are superior at a specific task leads women to rate their own task performance worse than men and to be less interested than men in careers drawing upon related skills (2004). No gender

gaps were found in self-assessments or aspirations when participants were exposed to the belief that men and women were equally task-proficient.

Stereotypes can also affect actual task performance. Experiments have shown that people perform worse on tests when they fear confirming a negative stereotype about their gender (or racial) group. In one study of “stereotype threat,” researchers found a significant gender gap in test performance when subjects were told that men generally did better on the test, but no gender gap when subjects were told that men and women did equally well (Spencer, Steele, and Quinn 1999). The resultant performance gaps create self-fulfilling prophecies by discouraging gender-nonconforming activities. Beliefs in essential gender differences have especially strong effects in fields whose practitioners attribute success to innate talent (Leslie et al. 2015).

In addition to affecting people’s expectations about how well they will perform work tasks, stereotypes affect how much they expect to *enjoy* them (Charles and Bradley 2009). Because self-understandings are influenced by essentialist gender stereotypes, people will more often expect to enjoy (and therefore prefer) work that is gender-typical and involves gender-conforming tasks. Cech (2013), for example, finds that college students who describe themselves in culturally feminine terms, such as emotional, unsystematic, and people-oriented, are more likely to later choose female-dominated occupations.

Career aspirations may be especially gender typed in societies characterized by broad-based affluence, where people expect to find fulfillment and self-expression in their work lives (Charles and Bradley 2009). We are encouraged to follow our passions and do what we love in these “postmaterialist” contexts (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), but because people often do not know in advance what they will love doing, they are likely to draw upon stereotypes about what “people like them” (often same-gendered people) love. Occupational choices that feel deeply personal may reproduce the gender order by drawing upon widespread cultural beliefs about essential gender differences (Charles 2011a, 2017; Cech 2013).

## Conclusion

Nearly 50 years of sociological research on occupational gender segregation has revealed a great deal about what work is done by men and women, how this varies across time and space, and the individual and social consequences of this distributional inequality. But many questions remain.

First, scholars have only begun to explore the structural and cultural roots of contextual variability in gender segregation. Going forward, diverse methods and analytical approaches should be applied to address the following sorts of questions: To what extent do different patterns of gender segregation correspond to different cultural beliefs – for example, about the essential natures of men and women, the purpose of work (e.g., self-expression vs. material support), or the task content and skill requirements of specific occupations? And does variability in occupational gender composition across time and space map onto variability in economic structures, legal and social policy provisions, social movement activism, or the particular configuration of labor supply and demand that prevailed around the time of an occupation’s emergence or expansion?

A second set of unanswered questions concerns the tasks that distinguish male- and female-dominated occupations. It is well established that historically male- and female-dominated occupations differ in their (real or reputed) physical, analytical, and interactional demands (Charles and Grusky 2004; Levanon and Grusky 2016), but much work remains in identifying the occupational characteristics that correlate with gender composition and how these vary by race, class, nativity, sexuality, country and other categories.

Third, more research and better data are needed to understand patterns and processes of gender segregation in the developing world and to assess how these have varied over time and across regions and economic systems.

Finally, the interactive micro- and macro-level processes by which gender-conforming and gender-nonconforming career aspirations are formed requires further research, including through in-depth interviews, ethnographies, surveys, and audit studies.

We conclude by looking to the future. What would it take to equalize men's and women's occupational distributions, if we wished to do so? The sociological research reviewed here suggests that desegregation would, at a minimum, require eliminating the gender-based discrimination, self-appraisals, and performances that arise from cultural beliefs in extreme gender difference. Because the gender binary is so central to the organization of interaction and the establishment of socially meaningful identities in our contemporary world, any such change will occur slowly and with resistance (Ridgeway and Correll 2000; Lorber 2000; Risman 2009). One intermediary step involves altering the content of hegemonic gender beliefs so that they are less hierarchical and less disadvantaging to women. Modest movement in this direction may be seen in the declining legitimacy of male primacy – and some accompanying declines in vertical gender segregation. But horizontal distinctions, for example between women's care work and men's craftwork, remain firmly entrenched in modern societies, as do the essentialist gender beliefs that support them. Eliminating these forms of segregation will require challenges to the contemporary ideological regime that represents many forms of gender inequality as the result of free choices by “different but equal” men and women.

### Notes

- 1 See also Petersen and Morgan 1995, Cohen and Huffman 2003, and Levanon, England, and Allison 2009 on the United States; Petersen et al. 1997 on Norway; He and Wu 2017 on China.
- 2 This shortcoming, referenced in Gross's original article, has spurred development of many alternative gender segregation indices. Most of these remain sensitive to differences in occupational structure, or they introduce a new sensitivity – to changing rates of female labor force participation (see Charles and Grusky 2004, Table 2.1).
- 3  $A$  is the only summary segregation index that is invariant to changes in both occupational structure and women's employment rates. In contrast to the individualistic interpretation of  $D$  (“% of men or women who would have to leave the labor force”),  $A$  compares gender ratios (women/men) of *occupations*, with its exponent giving the factor by which men or women are overrepresented in the average occupation.
- 4 Men account for more than 60% of skilled craft workers in developing countries but more than 80% in developed countries (ILO 2016).

- 5 Weeden's (2004) analysis of census data shows declines in both indices between 1910 and 1990, although at different rates due to *D*'s sensitivity to changes in the occupational structure. For example, expansion of historically male-dominated manufacturing occupations and contraction of more gender-integrated agricultural occupations put upward pressure on *D* but not *A* during the 1930s.
- 6 *Industries* also remain highly segregated, with women making up about three-quarters of workers in the education and health services industries, but only about 10% in the construction industry (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014; see also Weeden and Sørensen 2004).
- 7 Registered nursing also desegregated slightly, from nearly 100% women in 1972 to 90% women in 2012.
- 8 Moreover, early plans for intermittent employment have no effect on later occupational gender typing, and even women with interrupted market careers would increase lifetime earnings by avoiding female-dominated occupations (England 1982, 1984; Okamoto and England 1999).
- 9 In a recent study of the white male-dominated leveraged buyout industry, Turco (2010) identified two elements of organizational culture that contributed to women's social isolation: an ideal-worker image that excluded mothers, and a cultural hierarchy that prized resources not generally possessed by women (e.g., knowledge about sports).
- 10 We still know relatively little about how the transition from agriculture to manufacturing to services (or directly from agriculture to services) is affecting occupational distributions of women and men in the developing world. Exceptions are the large increase in women's employment in the services sector in Eastern Asia over the past 20 years and the concentration of women in the services sector in Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO 2016).

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# Gender Discrimination Policy

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Law is the fundamental expression of government policy. Governments which allow discrimination to persist endorse and promote inequality. The enactment and enforcement of laws which guarantee women substantive equality are essential to achieving equality and access to justice for all women.

– Equality Now 2011, p. 6

Recently, the World Economic Forum (2017) raised eyebrows with its prediction that the global economic gender gap could take 217 years to close. Such gaps reflect the persistent and pervasive, yet somewhat dynamic, nature of gender inequality that scholars have been documenting for years (e.g. Ridgeway 2011). One reason for such inequality is discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of gender<sup>1</sup> shapes opportunities and experiences wherever it occurs. Much of the scholarship on gender discrimination focuses on the arena of work (e.g. Bobbitt-Zeher and Roscigno 2007). Hiring discrimination has been found in contexts as varied as restaurants (Neumark, Bank, and Van Nort 1996) and symphony orchestras (Goldin and Rouse 2000). Once on the job, employers hold women to higher standards than men when making promotion decisions (Olsen and Becker 1983) and pay women lower wages (Meitzen 1986). Moreover, sex discrimination has been found to contribute to women's higher rate of quitting jobs (Meitzen 1986, p. 158), and women – and women of color in particular – are more likely than men to report exclusion from the best job assignments and networking opportunities as well as unjust performance evaluations (American Bar Association 2006). In addition, research suggests one particular form of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, is quite prevalent (see Welsh 1999).

We also know discrimination is an issue outside of the employment context. In schools, girls and women confront widespread sexual harassment (Hill and Kearl 2011) and globally discrimination remains a barrier for girls in access to primary and secondary schooling (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization [UNESCO] 2012). Discrimination prevents women from participating as full citizens by restricting the exercise of basic human, social, and economic rights (World Bank Group 2015) and reduces social cohesion (Fredman 2013). In essence,

discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity

(Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, p. 1)

Policies may be part of the gender discrimination problem as well as part of the solution. Discrimination may be supported by laws which restrict women's rights. As Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu (2013, p. 2) note, laws which discriminate may shape the "assets controlled and owned by women, restrict their mobility, and limit their autonomy to make everyday decisions, such as getting a job outside the home or going to court." Failing to create nondiscrimination law similarly supports inequality by turning a blind eye to patriarchal practices and customs, which are often rooted in traditional gender ideologies. And nondiscrimination policies which are improperly applied, enforced, and implemented may leave women vulnerable to the very treatment the policies were designed to counter.

Yet, antidiscrimination laws also are an essential element in reducing gender inequality. While reducing inequality requires changing norms, laws establish standards that should be at the heart of the change (Hassan 2012, p. 1). In the absence of "laws that promote and safeguard the rights of women and girls, they remain vulnerable, have no access to justice, and lack the government support and legal standards necessary for equality" (Equality Now October 2012, p. 2).

In this chapter, I consider policy as both a weapon against and a tool in perpetuating gender inequality. First, I consider how discrimination policy is generally conceptualized in law, which involves issues of intent and impact. Then, I review the multiple levels of antidiscrimination policy. Finally, I examine key policy issues that illuminate how discrimination persists and present key directions in antidiscrimination policy.

### **Conceptualizations of Discrimination**

There are two primary legal conceptualizations of discrimination. The dominant manner follows the equal treatment principle (Fredman 2013, p. 22). An example of such discrimination would be when a woman receives less favorable treatment than a man due to her being a woman. This kind of discrimination is often called disparate treatment or direct discrimination (Fredman 2013). A second conceptualization of discrimination focuses on the impact of treatment: although treated similarly, the effect of the action is adverse for a protected group. This is often called disparate impact or indirect discrimination (Fredman 2013). Let's look at each in turn using research based primarily on the United States, which has both legal conceptions.

### Disparate treatment discrimination

Disparate treatment discrimination is considered to flow from an intention to discriminate (Rhode and Williams 2007, p. 236). A classic example would be the employer who refuses to hire a woman for a specific job and hires a man instead because they believe women are unsuited for such work. The discrimination may be systematic or individual (Lidge 2002, pp. 833–884). Establishing that the protected status of sex figured into the decision-making process is legally necessary yet difficult in practice (Mercat-Bruns 2016, pp. 61–68). Intent may be shown directly or indirectly with circumstantial evidence (Lidge 2002, pp. 834–865). Given that in most cases direct evidence is generally lacking, indirect evidence is used in the form of a comparison to a similarly situated person (a person who does not share a protected characteristic who did not receive the discriminatory treatment) (Lidge 2002, p. 835), and more recently, evidence of sex-based stereotypes (Rhode and Williams 2007, pp. 236, 254). Such stereotyping may be descriptive (describes how women are thought to be) or prescriptive (describing how a particular woman should be) (Herz 2014).

Further complicating the matter, motivations to discriminate may be conscious or unconscious (Mercat-Bruns 2016, pp. 67–68). Social scientists have long documented how beliefs about gender, and stereotypes specifically, may translate into discrimination (e.g. Ridgeway and England 2007). Given gender's salience as a social construct, individuals, without conscious consideration, engage in a process of automatic sex categorization whenever they encounter someone. This process activates gender stereotypes, which provide behavioral expectations and shape evaluations of others. It also brings notions of sex and gender into the workplace as salient bases for ingroup/outgroup dynamics (Ridgeway and England 2007, p. 193). Such stereotypes fit into a larger gender ideology which associates men with more desirable traits like competence and women with less valued ones like communal skills (Ridgeway and England 2007, pp. 193–194). Through these processes, individuals are primed to incorporate gender status beliefs and stereotypes into their evaluations and treatment of others, thus leading to gender discrimination. Furthermore, disparate treatment may be motivated by individuals seeking to appease a prejudiced constituency (England 1992), suggesting yet another way in which gender bias may lead to discrimination.

### Disparate impact discrimination

Unlike disparate treatment, disparate impact discrimination does not rest on intention; rather it is the differential impact of policies and treatment that is discriminatory when there is not a legitimate business need for the differential treatment (see Rutherglen 1987).

Adverse impact occurs when identical standards or procedures are applied to everyone, despite the fact that they lead to a substantial difference in employment outcomes (selection, promotion, layoffs) for members of a particular group *and* when the standards are unrelated to success on the job.

(Cascio 2007, p. 144)

Testing is a frequent issue in such cases. For example, in the late 1970s, the Fire Department of New York used timed physical abilities tests, which all 90 women applicants and half of the men applicants failed. Several women denied jobs filed suit for sex discrimination (*Berkman et al. v. City of New York et al.*). With no women passing the test while half of men did, there was differential impact which was adverse to women applicants. As with many cases of disparate impact, the case hinged on the issue of business need. During the trial, the plaintiffs were able to show that performance tests used to simulate victim rescue (e.g. lifting and carrying weighted dummies; speed tests of equipment use) did not accurately capture the job as it would be performed in reality (Cascio 2007, pp. 144–145). To show disparate impact, courts look to statistical analyses. Typically, statistics are used to show a group's disproportionate exclusion (Rutherglen 1987, p. 1330), usually with a statistical significance test or the four-fifths rule (i.e. the selection rate of one group is less than four-fifths of that of the comparative group) (Mercat-Bruns 2016, pp. 98–99).

Sociologists Cecelia Ridgeway and Paula England (2007, p. 200) make the case that disparate impact discrimination may result from assumptions about gender status and stereotypes that become institutionalized:

A classic example is the practice of employers giving extra credit to veterans in hiring. This is discriminatory because women were barred from major military service for many years and because veteran status is not clearly related to an employee's productivity or work performance. Although not necessarily intended to discriminate against women, preferences for veterans were devised by decision makers with an implicitly gendered image of workers they wished to assist, an image of a (male) veteran. As they devised the procedure, the decision makers unintentionally wrote into the procedure cultural assumptions about status and deservingness based on a culturally masculine activity, military service. Once embodied in an organizational practice, the practice itself becomes an agent of stereotypic treatment of men and women independent of the biases of the individual actors who carry out the procedure.

(Ridgeway and England 2007, p. 200)

Thus, while conceptually distinct from intentional discrimination, disparate impact discrimination may share roots in cultural ideas about gender.

While most discrimination policy frameworks rest on these two conceptualizations, as the definition of discrimination expands, some forms do not fit neatly in one area. Rhode and Williams (2007, pp. 236–237) point to sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination laws in the United States as examples (see also Fredman 2013, pp. 22–23). Sexual harassment includes quid pro quo harassment, where sexual favors are made a condition of employment, and hostile work environment, where sexualized behavior is pervasive to the point of being abusive (see Rhode and Williams 2007, pp. 236–237). Pregnancy discrimination law mandates the equal treatment of pregnant and other workers (Rhode and Williams 2007, p. 237).

### Levels of Discrimination Policy

Policies addressing discrimination may exist at multiple levels: international, constitutional, and statutory (Fredman 2012). International policy is most clearly set by the United Nations (UN), which in 1979 adopted an international bill of rights for

women at The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW (1979, p. 2) broadly defines “discrimination against women” as

any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

CEDAW also explicitly encompasses educational equality. The treaty lists actions that adopting nations commit to take, such as abolishing discriminatory laws, adopting laws prohibiting discrimination, and creating legal bodies to enforce nondiscrimination. Most of the world’s countries (189) bound themselves to CEDAW, with Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, Niue, and the Vatican standing out as UN-recognized member or observer states who have taken no action toward adoption, and the United States and Palau signing but failing to ratify the treaty (United Nations 2017). Regional charters also lay out member commitments to eliminating sex discrimination (Gomez 2014). Such charters include the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Revised Arab Charter on Human Rights, the revised European Social Charter, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region (Gomez 2014). Despite such international policies, recent studies found widespread legal barriers to women’s equality (World Bank 2015; Equity Now 2011). To understand this discrepancy, we must move to domestic policy.

Constitutions may have a general equality guarantee (like the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the US constitution) or gender specific clauses, which grant protections to women (Lucas 2009). Constitutional protections for women, which are more common in documents written post-World War II, are associated with improvements in women’s legal protections but are insufficient to bring about gender equality (Lucas 2009). My review of 2016 World Bank data<sup>2</sup> on 189 nations worldwide finds the vast majority of countries (95%) have at least one such constitutional clause. However, 62 of the 189 nations studied do not have a clause specifically on discrimination and 19 that have a nondiscrimination clause do not mention gender. Also there are countries which have constitutional protections for family and customary laws that formalize inequality regardless of constitutional protections of equality (Fredman 2013).

While constitutional clauses apply nationally, they are generally limited to state actions. However, statutory policy allows for prohibition against public and private discrimination (Fredman 2013). Thus, even with constitutional guarantees, nations as well as provinces and local entities enact legislation to protect against discrimination. For example, one of the primary discrimination policies in the United States is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sex discrimination in both public and private employment (Blankenship 1993). Another is Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination



in educational institutions which receive federal funding (Fredman 2012). While the total number of nondiscriminatory statutes worldwide is unknown, scholars do note movement in the law toward more nondiscrimination and gender protections (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013). Such policies, for example, include gender-based nondiscrimination policies in access to credit, found in 46 states (World Bank Group 2015) and in access to education, noted in 42 countries (UNESCO 2017).

Just as US discrimination law originated with the disparate treatment conceptualization of discrimination and moved to encompassing disparate impact, international policy has followed suit (Weiwei 2004, p. 11). Human rights treaties concerning discrimination, including CEDAW, tend to include “purpose or effect” in their definitions of discrimination (Weiwei 2004, p. 10). However, around the globe, constitutional and statutory law tend to focus on disparate treatment discrimination (Fredman 2014, p. 6). Since the vast majorities of countries bound themselves to international policies, such as CEDAW, individual nations may find themselves with inconsistent equality directives.

Moreover, the presence of such legal protections does not automatically lead to the elimination of discrimination. Laws must be implemented and enforced to achieve the intended effect and these remains barriers around the globe (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013; Sattar 2012). For example, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (US EEOC 2017) resolved almost 29,000 sex discrimination cases in 2016, representing the tip of the iceberg of workplace sex discrimination. Such cases point us to look not just at the law but how governments and organizations implement policies and practices that may eliminate or contribute to discrimination (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011).

Despite international, constitutional, and statutory protections against sex discrimination, a recent study revealed only 18 out of 173 countries worldwide had no legal impediments to women’s economic opportunities (World Bank Group, 2015). And while 90% of nations had at least one legal impediment for women, most had multiple impediments: there are over 900 unique gender differences in law in those 173 countries (World Bank Group 2015). This current situation reflects years of legal reform, mostly in the direction of greater equality (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013).

As this review suggests, issues related to discrimination policy fall along several lines beyond the presence of antidiscrimination laws. First, countries may fail to provide legal protections or nondiscrimination policies. This would lead to state-sanctioned inequality in everyday life. Second, nations may support discrimination with policies that institutionalize discriminatory practices. Within those nations, organizations and individuals would be required to implement and follow such policies detrimental to equality. Third, despite legal protections, discrimination may happen through failure to effectively implement policies or via differential application and enforcement of policies. This may play out through governments failing to implement laws, or within countries and localities, organizations differentially applying and enforcing policies based on sex. Let us look at each of these issues in more depth, focusing first on workplace sex discrimination and then turning to discrimination in other forums.

## Workplace Sex Discrimination

### Discrimination policy

Employment is often a focus of discrimination law (Fredman 2014, p. 1). What is meant by sex-based discrimination in this context can vary across time and space. Traditionally this has meant treating men and women differently “because of their sex” (see Halet 2017). In the realm of paid work in countries like the United States and the European Union, sex-based discrimination has come to include sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination (Mercat-Brunns 2016). Most recently, the definition has broadened even further in a minority of countries. For example, European workplace discrimination law has expanded sex discrimination to include gender identity and sexual orientation (International Commission of Jurists, 2009). Similarly, in the last decade, the US EEOC expanded the definition of sex-based discrimination prohibited under federal law to include discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, although the implementation of this redefinition is at risk (Halet 2017; Haigh and Kraham 2017).

Workplace sex discrimination takes many forms (US EEOC n.d.a, n.d.b). United States’ discrimination law forbids a variety of practices that cover all stages of employment. Such prohibited practices include pre-employment discrimination in application, hiring, recruitment, and pre-employment inquiries. Once on the job, it is illegal to discriminate in job assignments, training and apprenticeship programs, promotions, pay and benefits, and terms and conditions of employment. Sex-based harassment and sexual harassment are also outlawed. Sex also cannot be taken into consideration in decisions to discipline, fire, or force the resignation of an employee. Members of the European Union also prohibit discrimination in self-employment (European Union n.d.). Despite legal protections, researchers find every form of workplace sex discrimination across contexts (Bobbitt-Zeher and Roscigno 2007; Bobbitt-Zeher 2011).

On the global scale, most countries do not protect workers from the range of sex-based discrimination forms. The World Bank Group’s 2016 data provides the most updated and comprehensive information on discrimination policies globally. My review of the data finds uneven policies. More than 80% of world economies prohibit the termination of pregnant workers. Yet, only 4 in 10 nations worldwide mandate equal pay for work of equal value. And the vast majority (92%) fail to prohibit inquiries about family status in the hiring process. On the whole, the regions with greater percentages of states providing legal protections against workplace discrimination tend to be in Europe and Central Asia and High Income OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) states, while the least are in economies of the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia (my analysis of 2016 World Bank Group data).

### Discriminatory absence of policy

At the societal level, discrimination may occur through a general lack of legal protections against discrimination. One comprehensive study of sex discrimination policies globally (Equality Now 2011) considers such discrimination against women, examining 137

countries from 2005 to 2011. The report documents the absence of employment-related policies as discriminatory in 34 of 137 countries studied. More recently, a study using World Bank Group data (World Bank Group, 2015) noted, while most nations have laws mandating maternity leave, only half mandated paternity leave and less than one-third required paternal leave. Furthermore, while most economies have laws prohibiting sexual harassment in employment, there is great variation by region: 94% of OECD High Income countries have such laws, while 79% of economies in the Middle East and North Africa lack such legal prohibitions (World Bank Group, 2015, p. 23). Roughly one-quarter to one-third of economies in other regions lack laws banning sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank Group, 2015, p. 23). And only about a third of nations have criminal or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data).

Several workplace policy issues affect women's ability to achieve economic equality. Most economies (59%) do not mandate equal pay for work of equal value (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data). Even fewer (38%) have laws mandating nondiscrimination in hiring (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data). Also the lack of regulation of informal and domestic labor is a gender discrimination issue in 18 nations (Equality Now 2011, p. 19).

In a workplace context, discrimination through absence of policy occurs when an organization discriminates as the result of failing to have necessary policies. In a study of EEOC-substantiated sex discrimination cases, I found 13% of cases involved an issue of lack of policy. The kinds of policies often lacking pertained to sexual harassment, maternity leave, and evaluation criteria (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Lack of policies was a more substantial issue in female-dominated workplaces than in other settings (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011).

### Discriminatory policies

Another policy issue concerns policies that are discriminatory. The majority of nations placed restrictions on women's work (World Bank Group, 2015) with 55% having legal restrictions on what kinds of jobs women can do (my review of World Bank Group 2016 data). For example, Russia explicitly prohibits women from 456 jobs ranging from deckhands to plumbers (World Bank Group 2015, pp. 14–15). Often, women are restricted from jobs in industries that pay higher wages, like manufacturing and mining (World Bank Group 2015, p. 14). In addition to limiting the kinds of jobs women can do, some countries restrict women to working during day-time hours and/or prohibit them from working in certain locations or with certain materials. Countries that have any restrictions on women's work have higher gender income gaps than countries without restrictions (World Bank Group 2015, p. 15).

Legal restrictions on work are more common in Sub-Saharan African economies, where 28 of 41 economies have at least one restriction. They are least common in OECD High Income states, with 8 of 32 countries having at least one such policy (World Bank Group, 2015, p.15). Moreover, laws in 18 nations (overwhelmingly located in the Middle East and Africa) allow husbands to restrict their wives from working (World Bank Group 2015, p. 9).

Looking at one state in the United States, I found 10% of substantiated workplace sex discrimination cases investigated by the EEOC involved a discriminatory

policy (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). This results from a disconnect between federal mandates and employer policies. Most of these sex discrimination cases involved leave, in particular maternity and disability leave. Often, these employers did not understand their legal obligations and instituted policies that had negative outcomes for women. These kinds of cases are disproportionately more common in female-dominated work settings (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011).

### **Discriminatory policy application, enforcement, and implementation**

The establishment of legal prohibitions against discrimination and the provision of legal protections are important policy elements for combating sex discrimination. However, scholars note a substantial obstacle to gender equality: discriminatory policy application, enforcement, and implementation. Policies may be applied unequally, differentially enforced, or implemented ineffectively leading to disparate treatment and outcomes by gender.

At the societal level, this could mean failing to implement legislative measures that are concrete and gender-specific that would allow the nation to achieve equality guarantees (see Equality Now 2011). Equality Now (2011) documented 36 nations with such discriminatory policy implementation issues in the areas of employment, equal pay, maternity leave, and paternity leave. As a case in point, Equality Now (2011, p. 71) points to China where weak enforcement and ineffective mechanism to monitor labor laws “infringe on women’s enjoyment of their rights ... including the right to equal remuneration, maternity leave, social security and protection from sexual harassment.”

Within a society, social organizations are often in the position of incorporating non-discriminatory policy mandates into organizational policy and practice. Discrimination may occur as individual organizations fail to implement the mandates effectively, resulting in differential treatment by sex. In a study of workplace discrimination, I found discretionary policy application or enforcement in half of the substantiated cases of workplace sex discrimination filed with the EEOC (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011).

In workplaces, policy discretion resulting in discrimination happens in a variety of ways (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011). This may happen through differential application of existing policies. For example, an employer may selectively apply specific criteria in order to justify the choice of a man for a job. An employer also may choose to apply a policy, such as a dress code or attendance policy, only to one sex. Or they may hold women to a higher standard than their male counterparts when applying such policies. Sometimes discretion may manifest in decisions to investigate claims of misconduct and in how such investigations proceed. This is especially true in cases of sexual harassment. Often, the policies employers unequally apply or enforce concern vague notions of professionalism and/or insubordination. Insubordination is frequently an issue raised in sex discrimination cases involving biracial and black women (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011).

Discrimination resulting from policy discretion may or may not be intentional. However, it does appear to be grounded in gender stereotyping and gender status beliefs. Ideas about competency, appropriateness, and liability in particular connect with employers’ choices to apply and enforce policies, leading to sex-based discrimination (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011).

## Beyond Workplace Sex Discrimination

Much scholarly work has focused on discrimination in the workplace. However, sex discrimination policy issues can be found across the gamut of institutional contexts and take many forms. These policy issues contribute to gender inequality by limiting access to opportunities, shaping experiences, and supporting violence.

### Discriminatory absence of policy

By failing to enact legal protections, countries may discriminate against women and girls. A central issue in this area is the absence of laws protecting women from violence. In 1990, almost no countries had laws against domestic violence; by 2015, of 173 economies studied, 46 remained without any domestic violence prohibitions and 94 failed to protect against economic violence (World Bank Group 2015). Absence of comprehensive domestic violence legislation is most notable in OECD High Income states (75%), Sub-Saharan Africa (63%), and East Asia and the Pacific (56%), and least common in Europe and Central Asian and South Asian countries (26%) (World Bank Group 2015, p. 20). Moreover, about 60% of nations worldwide lack a law prohibiting marital rape (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data). Following a somewhat different pattern than comprehensive domestic violence legislation, the absence of marital rape criminalization is disproportionately found in the Middle East and North Africa (with only Malta having such a law),<sup>3</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific countries. Criminalization is most common in Latin America and the Caribbean, High-Income OECD states, and Europe and Central Asia (my review of World Bank 2016 data).

Similarly, my review of 2016 World Bank Group data suggests that the lack of policies regarding sexual harassment remains an issue. About one-quarter of economies globally lack legislation that addresses sexual harassment. The majority of countries lack civil or criminal penalties for sexual harassment, and almost 90% of nations fail to address sexual harassment in public places with legislation. Moreover, 7 out of 10 countries lack legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in education. The absence of such sexual harassment laws are more common in the Middle East and North Africa, where Egypt and Malta are the only nations with such laws. The East Asian and Pacific region are similarly skewed, with only four of 21 economies (Fiji, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Taiwan) legally regulating sexual harassment in education. The regions most likely to have such protections are South Asia and High Income OECD economies, where about half of the countries have them. Also concerning in the area of education is the lack of laws allowing pregnant students and mothers to access education. A UNICEF study (2014) revealed that only a third of nations have policies allowing pregnant girls and young women to remain in or return to school.

Other concerns about the discriminatory absence of law in the area of violence against women are trafficking and female genital cutting (known as female genital mutilation in policy statements), which are considered human rights violations<sup>4</sup> (United Nations 2013; Equality Now 2011). For example, in Mali there is no national law banning female genital cutting and its practice is widespread, leaving girls with no recourse from injuries (Equality Now 2012, p. 4). Moreover, Mali has

become a safe haven for border crossers seeking the practice, as other West African nations have criminalized female genital cutting (Equality Now 2012, p. 4).

Important barriers to equality also exist in the area of family. Equality Now (2011) identified 28 countries with discriminatory absence of law issues in the realm of family. Such family matters range from bride prices to polygamy to marriage age. For example, in some countries, laws do not prohibit or invalidate child or early marriages. Most of the countries lacking laws regulating marriage and family equality are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia (Equality Now 2011).

In the absence of legislation, customs rooted in patriarchal gender ideology may lead to discrimination. This appears to be especially true in the realm of family. For example, in its assessment of Gabon, Equality Now (2011, p. 103) notes how customs matters:

The Committee expresses its concern about the prevalence of entrenched adverse customs and traditions, including early and forced marriage, polygamy, widowhood practices, and levirate, as well as the persistence of stereotypes that discriminate against women and constitute a violation of women's human rights under the Convention. The Committee is particularly concerned about the State party's limited efforts to address directly such discriminatory practices and stereotypes and its position that the current widespread support for and adherence to these practices would prevent compliance with legislative measures designed to eliminate them.

(Equality Now 2011, p. 103)

Customs, then, may support discriminatory practices both directly (by encouraging behavior treating women and men differently and having a negative impact on women) but also indirectly through fostering resistance to antidiscriminatory regulations and policies.

### Discriminatory policies

At the forefront of international discriminatory policy discussions are nationality and citizenship. Over a quarter of countries have discriminatory nationality or citizenship laws, the vast majority of which discriminate against women (Equality Now 2016). Generally such laws restrict women from passing on their citizenship either to a child or spouse. In 48 countries, married women cannot legally pass their citizenship to their foreign spouse in the same way a married man can (Equality Now 2016, p. 14). About half of these same countries do not allow women to pass on their nationality to their children in the same way a father could (Equality Now 2016, p. 14). Less common but still problematic are laws preventing women from acquiring, changing, or keeping citizenship. Discriminatory citizenship and nationality laws are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa (20 countries), the Middle East and North Africa (16), Asia Pacific (11) and the Americas (6) (Equality Now 2016, p. 14). In addition, almost a dozen countries have placed restrictions on women which make it more difficult for women than men to obtain a national identity card, thus restricting women's opportunities, for example, to obtain a loan (The World Bank Group 2015, pp. 8–10).

Legislation protecting women against intimate partner violence is increasingly common (World Bank Group 2015); however, there remains concern over legislation regarding rape (Equality Now 2011). Of the 113 economies worldwide that do not explicitly criminalize marital rape, 33 prohibit women from filing criminal complaints of rape against a husband (my review of World Bank Group 2016 data). Thirty economies have a marital rape exemption, preventing husbands from being charged with rape of a spouse (my analysis of World Bank Group 2016 data). And 13 countries or territories exempt rapists from criminal charges if they marry the victim; all but one (Bulgaria) is located in the Middle East and North Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa (my analysis of World Bank Group 2016 data). While less commonly supported by law, advocates are also concerned about policies on “honor crimes,” virginity testing, and incest (Equality Now 2011).

In the area of family, data from Equality Now (2011) suggest 149 explicitly discriminatory policies across 61 different countries. One of the most popular policies concerns marriage age, as some countries set different minimum ages to marry for men and women. In 18 countries, the minimum age to marry is set lower for women than men (my review of World Bank 2016 data). Human rights groups argue this type of gender inequality harms women, as early marriage is associated with many negative outcomes including decreased educational opportunities, increased risk of intimate partner violence, and increased risk for early childbirth and its elevated risk of both infant and maternal mortality (Heymann and McNeill 2013, p. 15).

Similarly, there are numerous laws explicitly discriminating against women in divorce, separation, and child custody (Equality Now 2011). There are also more than a dozen countries whose laws support polygamy, which is considered a form of discrimination against women under CEDAW (Equality Now 2011; CEDAW 1979). Nineteen countries remain with laws requiring women to obey their husbands (my review of World Bank 2016 data). And there are numerous laws that limit women’s property rights, such as giving husbands rights to administer all marital property (8 countries), bestowing property rights differently to married men and women (15 countries), and granting rights to inheritances differently to sons and daughters and surviving spouses who are husbands versus wives (39 countries) (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data).

### **Discriminatory policy application, enforcement, and implementation**

In addition to discriminatory laws and the absence of legal protections to prevent discrimination, discrimination may happen through the implementation, application, and enforcement of policies. Often such policies appear gender-neutral on the surface; however, they differentially affect women and men. Important areas that illustrate such discrimination are marriage age laws, property laws, and policies related to violence against women and educational inequality.

Numerous countries have marriage age laws that have a disparate impact by gender. In 2011, 14 countries from Latin America, Europe, Central Asia, the Pacific, and High Income OECD states were identified with having such laws (Equality Now 2011). Such policies often set a minimum age for marriage for men and women, such as 18, but there are pressures for girls and young women to marry younger. Most nations and territories (86% in 2016 according to my review of 2016 World Bank

Group data) allow for exceptions to minimal age marriage laws, generally with parental or judicial consent. As social expectations and pressures push girls into marriage at younger ages, such exceptions, then, tend to be gendered, having the effect of placing more girls into child marriages (see Chae and Ngo 2017).

Just as traditions influence what does and does not become law, culture affects how laws are put into practice. Advocates often point to religious, family (personal), and customary law as contributing to discriminatory policy implementation issues in countries which have such laws alongside constitutional and statutory law. Rabenhorst and Bean (2011, p. 7) give the following example:

In Tanzania, women are entitled by law to inherit and own land, but courts often use a “mode of life” test when faced with conflicts between customary and statutory laws. This means that customary law may be applied when the parties are members of a community where traditional laws are accepted, again providing an almost unlimited loophole for a judge to favor male property holders.

As the example illustrates, decision-makers may not enforce anti-discrimination law when provided with such “loopholes.” Roughly a quarter of economies worldwide recognize customary law as a valid source of law under the constitution, and thirteen economies – all in Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia – explicitly exempt their customary laws from invalidation if violating constitutional or nondiscrimination provisions (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data). Similarly, almost 20% recognize personal law as constitutionally valid, with one third of those failing to invalidate personal law if it is in violation of constitutional or nondiscriminatory provisions (my review of 2016 World Bank Group data). Such personal laws and the social norms they support, then, may prevent non-discriminatory and equality legislation from attaining the desired affect (Rabenhorst and Bean 2011, p. 7). Similar effects may be found in countries with widespread practice of certain religions, most notably Hindu and Muslim religion, as courts fall back on religious notions to guide decisions about property distribution (Rabenhorst and Bean 2011, p. 8).

Another important area in which to consider policy implementation issues concerns laws regulating violence. In 2011, Equality Now identified 122 such issues across 65 countries. The most prevalent of these concern violence against women, domestic violence, and child marriage. As with other areas, there is concern that customary practices and patriarchal beliefs prevent effective implementation and enforcement of laws to prevent and redress violence. Less common, but still problematic, are discriminatory policy implementation issues regarding forced marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, and levirate (wife inheritance) (Equality Now 2011). For example, in Kenya, female genital mutilation is illegal. However, the practice remains prevalent in the Maasai community, where police were not trained on the law and did not enforce it (Equality Now 2016, p. 7).

Along similar lines, international human rights law protects girls and women from sex-based and pregnancy discrimination in education. Yet, in Tanzania, for instance, schools with no legal mandate routinely test female students for pregnancy, expelling those who are pregnant and preventing them from reenrolling at any public school (Center for Reproductive Rights 2013). Despite laws criminalizing



their behavior, boys and men who impregnate these female students face no legal action and at most may be transferred to another school (Center for Reproductive Rights 2013, p. 82).

### **Directions in Gender Discrimination Policy**

In a 2013 study of women's legal rights, Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu found that the number of legal restrictions placed on women and girls had substantially declined since 1960. Of the 100 countries studied, three-quarters had at least one legal impediment in 1960; by 2010, only half did. And of those 75 countries that began the period with a discriminatory law, most had changed at least one policy (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013). Between 2010 and 2015, we see further progress as 94 legal changes take place in 65 economies (World Bank Group 2015). Most reforms have involved accessing jobs and protecting women against violence (World Bank Group 2015). The most notable progress has taken place in Europe, Central Asia, and Latin America, while Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asian economies cut legal prohibitions in half (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013). The fewest changes have taken place in South Asia (World Bank Group 2015; Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013).

While the overall trend has been toward laws promoting gender equality, Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu (2013, p. 15) also found regression in one important area: constitutional exemptions to nondiscrimination and equality clauses for religious and customary laws. In 2010, there were more of these exemptions in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa than there were 50 years prior (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013, p. 15).

What explains changes in nondiscrimination and equality policies? In part these legal changes can be seen as result of CEDAW ratification and implementation (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013). Also, women's increasing representation in government plays a role. As more countries have 25% or more of their legislators being women, laws change to be less discriminatory (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013). Also, human rights campaigns and conventions at both the international and regional level are credited with increasing laws protecting women from violence (World Bank Group 2015). While discriminatory policies remain a challenge, as laws change, the implementation and enforcement of nondiscrimination policies at all levels may become even more important.

As we have seen, the concept of discrimination itself has changed over time and place. To the notion of direct discrimination that is intentional we have added the concept of disparate impact that requires no discriminatory motivation. We are currently recognizing limits of these frameworks, including the possibility that unconscious bias may combine with more conscious biases to result in discrimination (Sperino 2011, p. 85). And negligent and structural discrimination have emerged as conceptualizations of discrimination yet to be incorporated into the major discrimination paradigms (Sperino 2011, p. 85).

Just as "discrimination" is reconceptualized, so is the concept of "sex-based." A minority of countries, including those in the European Union, have expanded sex discrimination laws to encompass protections for gender identity and sexual orientation (International Commission of Jurists, 2009). Many questions have emerged over the implications and fate of this expansion (Halet 2017). There is precedent for considering

sexual orientation discrimination as sex discrimination in international law, yet there remains much disagreement about such laws internationally (Yecies 2011). At the heart of such debates is who is included in the definition of legally protected groups, particularly the expansion of sexual orientation to mean sex (Bell 2012) or the inclusion of sexual orientation as an “other status” protected against discrimination as a fundamental human right (Yecies 2011).

## Conclusions

Gender inequality remains a persistent, multifaceted, yet dynamic issue in contemporary society (World Economic Forum 2017; Ridgeway 2011). The 2017 Global Gender Gap Report shows the widest gender gaps in political decision-making and economic participation with substantially smaller yet enduring gender differences in educational attainment and health. Regional differences in gender gaps tend to parallel regional differences in number of laws legitimating discrimination (World Economic Forum 2017; World Bank Group 2015, p. 3).

Discrimination both contributes to and results from gender inequality. As the United Nations (2014, p. 20) states:

... discrimination against women is universal. Many young women are not empowered in the course of childhood. Instead, they are socialized to embrace subordination to men and to adopt gender values that hold ideal femininity to be incompatible with independence, power or leadership. In certain regions, women’s agency may be further compromised by early or forced marriage, unintended pregnancy and early childbearing (particularly without adequate support from the health system), lack of education, lower wages than men and gender-based violence.”

(United Nations 2014, p. 20)

Scholars note the primary causes of sex discrimination are shared cultural beliefs about women and men and how they relate, specifically gender stereotypes and gender status beliefs (Ridgeway and England 2007, pp. 192–193). Secondary causes lie in institutional practices and policies that embody such beliefs and ideas (Ridgeway and England 2007, pp. 192–3). As we have seen, discriminatory policies, such as restrictions on occupations and working conditions, reveal such biases. The absence of protections from sex discrimination – such as violence – often reflect cultural notions about gender roles and expectations. While the growth of antidiscrimination and equality laws suggests ideological shifts towards gender equality in opportunity, notions of gender essentialism remain (Charles and Grusky 2004; Ridgeway 2011). Such disconnect could lead to ineffective implementation and unequal enforcement and application of nondiscrimination and gender-neutral laws. Addressing these discrimination policy issues and their underlying causes will be important in moving towards gender parity.

While not a curative, nondiscrimination and equality policies matter for women’s opportunities. As the World Bank Group (2015, p. 2) concluded:

Lower legal gender equality is associated with fewer girls attending secondary school relative to boys, fewer women working or running businesses, and a wider gender wage

gap. Where laws do not provide protection from domestic violence, women are likely to have shorter life spans. But where governments support childcare, women are more likely to receive wages.

And as the number of legal restrictions placed on women and girls has declined over time (Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Rusu 2013), the status of women has tended to improve in important ways. Girls have increased access to education, are marrying later, and live longer (United Nations 2015). While more work is needed to show changing policies' effects, these trends are encouraging. Although countries and subgroups may face unique policy challenges to achieving equality, policies and their effective enforcement in the area of family, violence, and employment seem especially important to address.

### Notes

- 1 Feminist scholars distinguish between sex and gender in ways not generally reflected in the law. Generally, sex is conceptualized as perceived biological differences between males and females, while gender refers to social meanings attached to sex categories (i.e. man and woman). In legal discourse, however, the distinction between biological sex and social gender is not common; instead the term sex is generally used to mean both physical and social differences (Rhode 2009, p. 5). In this chapter, I use both terms, employing sex as legal scholars do when discussing policies, and gender as a social construct when moving beyond policies.
- 2 World Bank Group data capture territories that report data independently, including some which are not politically independent countries (for example, Puerto Rico). Consistent with World Bank Group practices, I use the terms *countries* and *nations*, as well as the more precise *economies* when referring to the unit of analysis.
- 3 The World Bank classifies Malta in the Middle East and North Africa region.
- 4 While outside of the scope of this overview, feminist discourse considers the complexities and complications of such cutting and attempts to eradicate practices via legal change (e.g. Shell-Duncan, Wander, Hernlund, and Moreau 2013; Meyers 2000).

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# Global Care Chains

ROSALBA TODARO AND IRMA ARRIAGADA

## Introduction

Research on global care chains is nascent in its development, and centers scholarly approaches from both feminist and human rights traditions. Two central concerns in this literature are the unfair gendered distribution of care work, and the second is discrimination against women in the labor market. In the case of paid domestic and care work, this aspect is particularly significant. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2010, the main occupation of at least 52.6 million women and men over 15 years of age was domestic work. Of all domestic workers, 83% were women, and domestic work accounted for no less than 7.5% of global female wage employment. In the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, more than a quarter of all women wage earners are domestic workers (Organización Internacional del Trabajo [OIT] 2010). Moreover, in these geographical areas, care work remains heavily relegated to a low-income female population. More recently, there has been a growing concern about another axis of discrimination against women who perform care work: immigration status.

This chapter starts with a synthesis of recent debates on global care chains and continues with an analysis of care and care work, stressing its unequal distribution within homes and in the labor market. We then discuss migration issues, the feminization of migration, and the importance of the financial flows generated to the migratory country of origin. Our intersectional approach is used to identify the overlapping and interrelation of gender, class, ethnicity, country of origin, and race in the discrimination of care workers. It concludes with recommendations for further development in this area of inquiry.

In the specialized literature and in current political debates, care refers to all the activities, whether paid or unpaid, needed for the welfare of people. In this chapter, care is defined broadly as the generation and management of the resources needed

for the daily maintenance of life and health; and the daily provision of physical and emotional well-being of people throughout the life cycle. Therefore, care refers to the goods, services and activities that allow people to feed themselves, to be educated, to be healthy and to live in a suitable habitat (Arriagada and Todaro 2012).

The concept of care and its measurement are issues currently in debate as they receive different meanings: these considerations include work and nonwork, material and immaterial, public and private-domestic, selfishness and altruism, and equality and inequality in access and provision, both in the present and the future. Because of the polysemy of the concept, the limits of care work are difficult to determine in terms of what is done, for whom, where, and for how long.

The complexity in the conceptualization of care also affects the measurement of its magnitude. Most research on the subject takes a dependent person as a starting point, from which their caregivers are identified. However, informal care occurs at all ages and for a wide spectrum of conditions. In a broad sense, all are, at some point in life, beneficiaries of the informal system, and many are or will be caretakers (García-Calvente, Mateo-Rodríguez, and Eguiguren 2004). One way to measure care work is through time-use surveys and quality of life. These surveys systematically show that there are women who perform almost all the domestic and care work and analyze the adverse impact this has on women as well as on the economy and society. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and regional and national institutions have pointed out the need for a strong database to understand the nature of sharing responsibilities between men and women, and the impact of these responsibilities on the broader society (Hirway 2008).

### Key Concepts and Terms

Defining care is an important, although complex, task, as Carrasco, Borderías, and Torns point out: “The varied dimensions that it encompasses, the ideological conflicts that cross it, the social inequalities it generates and reproduces, make a simple and unique definition in risk of being a narrow characterization” (2011, p. 74). However, it is necessary to advance our knowledge of this phenomenon, in its measurement and assessment, and, above all, in improving the living conditions of the people who receive care and their caregivers. Emphasizing only the logic of people who receive care can obscure the perspective of the caregivers, who are generally women, and the obstacles they face, including, for example, the obligation to provide care in their own homes, and to deal with job tensions as well as the lower resources they have throughout life due to ubiquitous gender asymmetries. It is necessary to reflect on the circumstances and conditions under which social care services can effectively contribute to the expansion of caregivers’ life choices and their well-being. This refers to many related aspects, such as the need and capacity to generate good-quality jobs (Sojo 2017, p. 204).

This definition of care has progressed by distinguishing between different components of care. Thus, it is pointed out that a multidimensional view of care encompasses the *material*, which implies the use of time in the accomplishment of the task and the economic cost entailed. A *cognitive* dimension refers to the knowledge and skills needed. A *relational* dimension refers to the invisible links between the person



who cares for and the one who is cared for. And an *emotional* dimension involves a certain management of the expression of emotions by both caregivers and recipients. As a social relation, it combines asymmetric relations crossed by gender, age, race or ethnicity, and social class. It also requires authority to handle situations, and specific qualifications related to the care of children, the elderly, and sick people (Aguirre 2011, p 91).

In addition, the epistemological status of care work and its relationship with welfare states is under debate. Thomas (2011) analyses the “scarce theoretical development on the nature of different forms of care and the relationship between them.” The author concludes that ‘care’ is an empirical category, not a theoretical one. The forms of care are empirical entities that have to be analyzed according to other theoretical categories (Thomas 2011, pp. 146, 174). The analytical model proposed by Dale and Lewis (2011) is based on the dual perspective at the macro-level (institutions) and the micro-level (actors, people). They argue that there is, on the one hand, a division of labor between state, market, family, and voluntary work, and, on the other hand, people who give or receive care of one kind or another, in the family or in public or private institutions, with or without economic compensation. In recent years, the concept of social care has also come to incorporate changes that have been taking place in care modalities, as well as in expectations about who should care and how. This approach includes the concern of placing the problem of care at the center of the discussion on welfare states, and the restructuring processes underway (Dale and Lewis 2011).

### **Global Care Chains: A Synthesis of Current Debates**

Although the theoretical bases on global care chains are still in the process of development, literature on the topic is vast and diverse. Global care chains relate three major concepts: care work, women’s migration, and globalization. As Yeates (2005) points out “this concept captures the phenomena of migrant care workers, the ‘globalization’ of families and households and the internationalization of care services, issues that have been relatively neglected by ‘mainstream’ globalization, migration, and care studies.” More generally, the concept of global care chains is particularly effective at highlighting the socially reproductive labor that is central to understanding contemporary patterns and dynamics of development within and across country contexts. “As Thanh-Dam Truong argues “[no] production system operates without a reproduction system, and it should not be surprising that the globalisation of production is accompanied by its ‘intimate other’ i.e. the reproduction” (Truong 1996, p. 47 quoted by Yeates 2012). The concept of “global care chain” was first used by Arlie Hochschild in a study on caregiving, citing an investigation by Rachel Salazar Parreñas about a Filipino immigrant in the United States. Hochschild (2001) defines a global care chain as a series of links between people from different parts of the world, based on paid or unpaid care work. Thus, it relates to paid care and unpaid care by linking the care tasks in the homes of migrants who were hired and the care situation within their own homes and families. Hochschild argues that chains also vary in the number of links: some have one, another two or three, and each is a link of different strength. “One common form of

chain is: (1) an older daughter from a poor family in the third world country cares for her siblings while (2) her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrant nanny who, in turn, 3) cares for the child of a family in a rich country” (Hochschild 2001, p. 357). However, there are differences in the form and links that can constitute a global care chain.

Pérez Orozco (2007) emphasizes the unequal exchange in the different links of the chain, generating an unfair care system. The author argues that men and women have a distinct presence in the care chains. Men tend to be beneficiaries rather than assuming systematic responsibilities in the provision of care. These responsibilities tend to fall on women, who assume the active role throughout the care chain (Parella 2003). Higher income groups perceive the benefits of meeting their care needs, even when it implies neglecting the needs of those who provide them with these services. In this way, they can transfer their own care work to others: men to women, upper classes to lower classes, national citizens to immigrants. The people at the end of the chain cannot hire a domestic worker and must rely on family unpaid domestic work (Yeates 2005).

Women caregivers – who occasion care chains – are subject to various inequalities based on their gender, class, ethnicity, country of origin, and race. Attention to the complexity of these inequalities gave rise to a feminist framework shaped around the concept of intersectionality. The intersectional perspective allows us to broaden and make more complex the way we understand the production of inequalities in specific contexts, capturing power relations in social life and their impact on the daily experiences of the subjects (Crenshaw 1989). Although inequality and discrimination seem to be features specifically applied to care and domestic work, they extend to other activities that extract value from relational and emotional elements which are more likely to be part of women’s experiences in different occupations within the labor market (Morini 2007).

Care chains are based on deep inequalities in terms of wealth, income, and status: migrants from poor regions provide care services to rich households located in more developed regions or countries. In this sense, the unequal distribution of care reveals and reproduces the existing economic, social, and power relations in a society. Therefore, the configuration of care chains involves several possible unequal exchanges: from the exclusively monetary ones to monitoring and controlling the ways in which the resources are used, as well as the education and forms of socialization of children that have remained at home. There are also various cultural, social, and economic exchanges between the employer in the destination country and the immigrant worker.

### **Critical Approaches to Care Work**

Historically, women have been relegated to the private sphere of family and home and have been excluded from rights of citizenship, including the right to vote, property ownership, and other signs of autonomy. Since the social imaginary and the institutions of modernity define reproductive and care work as female activities, the perception of it as a natural extension of women’s identities is reinforced, thus contributing to the denial of its character as work (Arriagada 2013).

Gender theorists and activists have highlighted the socially constructed nature of gender relations in all social domains, and the role of unpaid work in social reproduction, referring to the processes that ensure the self-perpetuation of a social structure over time. Fraser (2016) remarks that social reproduction includes the creation and maintenance of social bonds, being attentive to the ties between generations, specifically in terms of birthing, raising children, and caring for the elderly. Another important component is about sustaining horizontal ties among friends, family, neighborhoods, and community. Simultaneously affective and material, this process supplies the “social glue” that underpins social cooperation (Fraser and Leonard 2016). At the same time, gender theorists and feminist activists have posited that there exists a lack of analysis focused on the interrelation between the processes that occur in public and in private domains (Carrasco, Borderías, and Torns 2011).

### The formation of the field

Since the end of the twentieth century, theoretical debates about domestic work have continued to deepen (Torns 2008). Between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the feminist movement brought concerns about women’s work to the new academic field of women’s studies (Carrasco, Borderías, and Torns 2011). Different issues converged to give grounds to this debate. Some focused on expanding the notion of work to include reproductive work (Picchio 2001, 2003); other currents, such as that of Marxist feminism, sought to establish the material bases of oppression of women and the arguments to define the position of women as a class and their emancipation (Pérez Orozco 2006).

Feminist sociologists and economists showed that none of the existing theoretical approaches and analytical categories of labor – mainly neoclassical and Marxist theories – allows us to capture and analyze the diversity and complexity of women’s work experiences, either at home or within the articulation of domestic and market work (Borderías and Carrasco 1994; Gardiner 1996). From the extension of the concept of work, economists have unveiled nonmarket labor, especially domestic work (Carrasco 1999), clarifying the interrelationships that exist between the demand for labor in the sphere of production and the labor supply, which is strongly conditioned by the characteristics and position of the different class, gender, ethnic, and race groups in the field of reproduction. It is the position of women in family relationships (housewife, mother, daughter, domestic worker), and the roles and responsibilities assigned to them that determine the types and level of participation in the labor market.

The differentials in social and economic participation of men and women constitute a mechanism that affects the family structure (Borderías and Carrasco, 1994). The position in the family structure, as in wage and nonwage labor and the role of the state in the reproduction of the population and the labor force, is highlighted in relevant literatures (Carrasco, Borderías, and Torns 2011; Molyneux 1979; Picchio 1999). These studies show that households that benefit from women’s care work support the functioning of economies by ensuring a daily supply of present and future labor force, which includes the work of raising and socializing children. In this way, the family becomes a fundamental factor in the studies of the dynamic processes of production (Carrasco 1999).

Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, the organization of production and the rules that regulate the economy have experienced changes. Along with the transformations of social behavior promoted by the feminist movement, economic changes such as the privatization of public services and pressure from international markets to lower costs of production including labor have resulted in the need for increasing family income. As a result, more women entered the labor market, and their presence in the labor force became more salient. This was an important factor in weakening the gender order (Fraser 1994) through which masculinity and femininity are shaped, and the hierarchical places of women and men in society.

In a historical view, Fraser states that liberal capitalism privatized social reproduction; state-managed capitalism partially socialized it; and financialized capitalism is increasingly commodifying it. In each case, a specific organization of social reproduction went with a distinctive set of gender and family ideals: from the liberal-capitalist vision of “separate spheres,” to the social-democratic model of the “family wage,” to the neoliberal financialized norm of the “two-earner family” (Fraser and Leonard 2016, p. 2).

The paid work of women has been analyzed from the perspective of the family economy as an “aid” to the family budget. In the labor market, women are frequently considered as “secondary” labor force, that is, complementary to the main income of the male head of the family, an aspect that is often presented as a justification for the payment of lower wages to women than to their male counterparts.

Domestic and care work, shared among women, is usually undervalued and devalues those who do it. Domestic workers, care workers, and housewives share the gender devaluation that implies being responsible for domestic and care work, though they have a different place in terms of class, and eventually, in terms of race or ethnicity. The way in which workers have conceptualized their job is summarized in the phrase “I work like this ... in a private home, serving a family” (expressed in interviews carried out in Chile in the 1980s; Gálvez and Todaro, 1985). This expression reveals ambiguity and embarrassment about what workers do and reveals the mechanisms of subalternization entrenched in the coloniality of labor and in the coloniality of gender (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010). Unionization of domestic workers, national regulations, and, as an important milestone, the Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 of the International Labour Organization, have been an important achievement for domestic and care workers toward overcoming coloniality of labor and the gendered and racialized dynamics within care work and labor.

### Undervaluation of women's work

The fact that the labor of a stay-at-home partner takes place in a private home, performing tasks related to the generation of the necessary conditions for the reproduction of daily life, means that a personal relationship is developed, often involving emotions and affections, which makes it difficult for the activity to reach legitimacy as work (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). However, paid domestic work represents the commodification of the tasks of care – the transaction in the market of daily tasks of social reproduction for a salary, that is, a job – but also being part of a continuum of unpaid domestic tasks for which women in the family are responsible. The quality of these activities goes unnoticed, thereby influencing the level of

precariousness of domestic work and rendering the labor relation not clearly visible, even when paid domestic work involves a transaction in the labor market (Valenzuela and Mora 2009). In a study of Catalan employers who hire Philippine domestic care workers, Mora and Medina (2011) point out the ambiguous and diffuse limits established between care and service under market relations, identifying changes in gender position of both employers and employees. In an effort to give visibility to this issue, time-use surveys have been applied, showing the differential burden of domestic and care work according to gender, and the influence of gender inequalities (United Nations Statistical Commission 2018). This fact supports the idea of the presence of coloniality of gender on top of coloniality of labor in a type of work that is only noticed when it is not done.

The undervaluation of care work is not only women's problem. Caring for people, either remunerated or unpaid, is a public good since it generates benefits that have repercussions for the whole society (Razavi and Staab 2010). These externalities are rarely accounted for by the markets and can only be valued by strengthening state regulations and increasing funding to assure the availability and quality of care.

On the other hand, the intrahousehold division of labor has been resistant to transformation: working women continue to be responsible for care and domestic work, while paid work remains organized as if the model of the man provider/woman caregiver continues to be the rule (ILO-UNDP 2009). This, despite the increasing demands of care for the family in aging societies, results from an insufficient supply of care by men and by public services (Arriagada 2007).

### **Crisis of care**

The crisis of care has a double dimension: on the one hand, it refers to an increase in the demand and complexity of care. On the other, it denotes the reduction of the supply of potential caregivers that hinders the daily reproduction of people. Also, a crisis of long-term social reproduction refers to the difficulty of ensuring the reproduction of a large part of households and the difficulties they have in achieving satisfactory levels of well-being in multiple dimensions, including care. The crisis of care reveals and exacerbates the difficulties confronted by broad sectors of the population. "These problems are a result of the destabilization of the traditional model of assigning care responsibilities, and restructuring of the whole socio-economic system, without altering the sexual division of labor in the household or the gender segmentation in the labor market" (Ezquerro 2011, p. 176). Thus, there is a growing participation of women in the labor market without substantial changes in the distribution of work inside the household, and/or in society as a whole.

Three main factors combine to generate this crisis of care: (i) demographic change such as aging and the rise in the life expectancy of people with chronic diseases and disabilities, which increases both the number of people that need to be cared for and the complexity of care; (ii) socioeconomic changes, including family structure and ways of life that limit the availability of caregivers; this decreases the fecundity and the size of the home, increases the mobility of its members, and the families adopt forms of coexistence that are more diverse and complex as a result; a critical factor is the increasing incorporation of women into the labor market, despite which women continue to assume the responsibility of care, and (iii) finally, the institutional

changes, as the evolution of the formal systems themselves, including reforms of health services with outsourcing and privatization. The tendency in many countries toward privatization results in increasing the value of these services, so middle- and low-income families must assume care in their own homes, increasing both domestic and care workloads.

In many countries, the lack of coverage of public care services for early childhood compels families to develop different care strategies by seeking informal support from relatives or neighbors. During deep economic crises, the traditional family characterized by the division of labor into man provider/woman caregiver, not only shows an ideological aspect of the ideal family – seen at various moments in history – but also an economic strategy aimed at cutting public and social spending (Ezquerro 2013).

## Migration

Migration is the basis for articulating the links of global care chains, while participating in the major economic, transnational, and geopolitical dynamics. Thus, the influx of migrants is part of the global exchange phenomenon, not only of people, but also of capital, goods, and intangibles (Sassen 2003).

There is an important diversity of migratory flows: economic migration, forced displacements by war and conflicts, political refugees, new forms of retired migration, mobility by search of other lifestyles, along with other phenomena such as desertification, water level increases and others, such as massive land-grabs and poisoning of land and water due to mining, which has been termed “massive habitat loss” (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014; Sassen 2016). Sassen (2016, p. 204) points out the importance of the larger context within which migration flows emerge. She examines three flows that have appeared recently: “the sharp increase in the migration of unaccompanied minors from Central America – specifically, Honduras, Salvador, and Guatemala. The second is the surge in Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar. The third is the migration toward Europe originating mostly in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and several African countries, notably Eritrea and Somalia.” She states that a key factor explaining these migrations is the extreme violence and the stress that 30 years of international development policies have brought, leaving much dead land (because of mining, land grabs, plantation agriculture) and expelling whole communities from their places of residence (Sassen 2016).

Inequalities between different regions and countries, the presence of transnational capital, and the reduction of travel costs among other factors, have encouraged the displacement of large numbers of people in search of work. As local economies undergo adjustments which strongly impact the labor market, people seek to increase family income through migration. However, immigrants rarely have the same occupational and industrial distribution profile as nationals in receiving countries (Sassen 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005; Salazar Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004).

Migratory flows may occur in countries that are simultaneously recipients of immigrant labor. “Brain drain” refers to the emigration of better-qualified labor, at the same time that less-qualified migrants move to the country. Migratory flows also

occur between different regions, from the South to the North but also among countries in Europe or in Latin America, whether bordering or not. One of the most significant specificities of this new migratory flow involves women from the middle sectors with high levels of vocational training. In the face of the impossibility of finding work in their countries of origin, they are forced to transfer their capacities to a market that receives them, but in the devalued fields of the care and domestic service (Salazar 2010). In this way, the brain drain is more pronounced in the case of women than in men (OECD-UNDESA 2013). According to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), in 2006 Sub-Saharan Africa retained only 1.3% of the world's health professionals (UNFPA 2006).

In this way, migratory processes can be seen as the consequence of the interaction between macrostructures and microstructures. Macrostructures refer to large-scale institutional factors. These include the political economy of the world market, relations between states, and laws, structures, and practices established by countries of origin and destination to control migration. This process is consistent with the neo-liberal model of production, distribution and exchange within an international economy (Castles and Miller 2004). Microstructures include informal networks, the practices and beliefs of migrants themselves, and ways of dealing with migration and settlement in destination countries, where the family and community are central to migration networks. These two levels are linked by a set of intermediate mechanisms that are often called "mesostructures."

It is therefore necessary to examine both ends of the migratory flow and to study previous existing links between countries and postcolonial processes, the influence of political conflicts, financial exchange, and investment or the bonds that make up a new globalized culture (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). Basically, it establishes the existing inequality between the living conditions of places of origin and of arrival, in terms of economic development, job opportunities, education, health, and public and private security.

The various topics, with different levels of abstraction, included under the concept of international migration that must be articulated in a systemic way. The macrosystemic level includes human rights, gender, economic globalization, migration and development, international regime (institutions and standards), health, vulnerability, xenophobia, and discrimination. Those issues related to armed conflicts and natural disasters, refugees, borders, integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, transnationalism and identities, labor markets and trade, policies, and information systems are included at the exosystemic level, formed by the concrete environment that influences the individual, but do not contain him/her directly. At the micro-level, issues related to communities and diasporas, families, networks, remittances, migration status, types of mobility, and migration tradition are included. Finally, at the individual level, biographies, work qualifications, decisions, sex and age, schooling, and psychosocial profile are considered (Martínez 2003).

Global care chains cross these three systems. At a macro-level, there is a gendered dimension that includes economic globalization, conflicts, and violence. At an intermediate level families, networks, and remittances are located and at the micro-level are working conditions, marital status, and other individual dimensions. Migration is, to a large extent, a family strategy of economic survival. On the other hand, the demand and opportunities in the labor market of the country of origin and

the destination country contribute to determining whether men or women emigrate according to the sexual division of labor at destination (Mora 2008).

International migration is a complex process that involves all areas of personal, family and social life of individuals. Sexuality is not alien to this process. In certain cases, the migration of women who travel independently appears as the only way out in situations of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse. Likewise, migrants from poorer sectors and care workers are at greater risk of being sexually abused by those who transfer them or by their employers during the migration process, especially in cases where their migratory status is not legal, and they do not have formal identification papers in the host country.

### **Kinship and remittances**

Global care chains involve kinship relationships with relatives often in more than one geographical location, thus forming transnational families. Migration as a family strategy entails the fragmentation of families in a more or less permanent way, which raises the creation of new forms of family relationships (Jelin 1998). Aspects such as family organization, agreements, sharing of reproduction work, and the transformation of forms of communication are modified. The encounters and disagreements that occur in transnational families are located in a different time frame and space (geographic) than in the families that live geographically closer and generate new challenges. The transnational family is also paradoxical, since its transformation can be located within the dilemmas, debates, and normative pressures on what is “the normal family” (Bordo 2016).

In the case of women, the demand for domestic and care services has increased in the countries of destination along with the labor participation of women in skilled and high-income jobs. This contributes to the fact that professional careers continue to be organized according to the professional model, which seeks to minimize the interference of family life with work (Todaro 2001). In countries of origin, the need to support their families pushes women to migrate; generally, mothers and/or sisters of migrants remain in charge of the direct care and receive remittances for supporting the family. These monetary flows are also important financial flows for the country of origin.

Remittances from migrants to developing countries have increased in recent decades, partly due to lower transaction costs and improved living conditions in host countries. The feminization of international migration also helps explain the increase in remittances. Despite the difficulties migrant women encounter in the labor market, their total remittances are often higher and more sustained than those of migrant men, because women have stronger links with family members in countries of origin and for reasons of self-protection, in case they return. Public policymakers need to understand how this new and important upward trend in women’s migration could affect the economic and social development of countries of origin (Le Goff 2016).

The increasing migration of women from peripheral (South) countries to central (North) countries is stimulated by a new demand for personal services – some of which are sophisticated and specialized (care, haute cuisine, leisure and personal aesthetics, etc.) – that is associated with, among other factors, an increase in the income of elite sectors and the incorporation of women to high positions in the labor market.



**Table 18.1** Migration of women according to marital status and type of migration

	<i>Married or couple, with family responsibilities</i>	<i>Single and without family responsibilities</i>
Dependent	Reunification of the family in the country of destination Wife migrates with husband	Daughter joins parents in country of destination
Autonomous	Woman head of household migrates with or without children in search of employment.	Woman migrates in search of education and employment.

*Source:* Based on Acosta (2015).

Their professional careers continue to be organized on the basis of the predominant model: to perform a professional job, to compete with colleagues, to obtain recognition, to create a reputation, and to minimize family life, so that they need to find another woman to assume the domestic and care activities in their homes. In the past, the professional was a man and the other person was “his wife” who absorbed the human vicissitudes of birth, disease, or death, which were not contemplated in the workplace. On the other hand, from the point of view of the national economies, the work of migrants not only supports their families, but also constitutes a fundamental financial flow for their countries of origin.

Similarly, new forms of autonomous female migration may be the result of different situations depending on the marital status of women and the objective of migration (see Table 18.1; Acosta 2015). Migration of married women with family responsibilities usually has a component of dependence, since it is mainly due to family reunification, when the husband has migrated before or, in the case that the whole family migrated, the wife went as a companion. It is also the case of single women regrouped by the father. Autonomous migration as a head of household with children, or as a single woman, is a more recent phenomenon; in some cases it is a question of escape from the violence of the partner, in others the independent search for means of life, where the possibilities of female employment are greater than that of male employment, as with domestic work and paid care.

Although men represent a substantive portion of migration flows, they are rarely part of care chains. However, they participate in supporting their families that remain in the countries of origin and contribute to financial flows through the remittances.

### Colonialism and coloniality

All elements of classification (race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality) are present in global care chains, although they differ among countries or regions and change over time. They depend on economic, social, and cultural factors: the rate and pattern of economic growth influencing employment opportunities for women who hire domestic and care services, and the demand for alternative jobs for care workers; and labor laws related to domestic service employment, such as, limits imposed in reference to the work day, including working time, minimum wages, and demographic factors. The proportion of the dependent population (children, sick, aged

people) and values related to domesticity, for both employers and employees, are also centrally considered in global care chains.

Colonialism and coloniality are useful concepts to understand the construction of social hierarchies and subordination. Colonialism refers to the policies of domination pursued by the powers imposing a political and social structure on another people through the territorial occupation by coercive means: military, political, economic (Quijano 2007; Garzón López 2013). Coloniality denotes the pattern of power that begins with the conquest and subsequent colonial expansion, and the imposition of a cultural imaginary from which a racist conception permeates all social relations, establishing hierarchy and classification (Quijano 2007; Lugones 2008).

It can be said that coloniality is the living legacy of colonialism in contemporary societies in the form of social discrimination. The concept of coloniality identifies the power relations on a global scale that emerged with the expansion of colonialism. These power relations are internalized in the subjectivities of individuals, in social structures, and in institutions. When colonial administrations disappear, that multiplicity of global power hierarchies – which constitutes the coloniality of power – remains intact (Grosfoguel 2013).

Dominance and subordination are constitutive of colonial processes affecting, among other things, the type of work that people – of different national or regional origins, race, ethnicity, class, and gender – can or cannot do. Differences are constructed as hierarchies which are often internalized in the people who are subject to discrimination. This fact often leads to the reproduction and perpetuation of monopolies of power that are usually effective in controlling social mobility (Dube 2011).

The complexity and interrelation of the different forms of discrimination, together with the naturalization of the socially constructed hierarchies of types of work and the discrimination of people who perform them, create the need for consciousness-raising practices and for public policies to protect their rights.

### **Public Policy Implications**

Public and state agendas do not typically address the conditions of work of migrant and nonmigrant women caregivers. Neither do they emphasize the importance of care as vital for development. Therefore, public policies do not incorporate care and migration as central elements. These public policies need to be evaluated periodically to prevent negative effects on both care workers and people who are recipients of care.

It is important to evaluate legislation and regulations on public health and the social security of paid care workers. This analysis should be done in the context of social welfare models, and the possible tensions between social and labor regulations for the whole of the workforce and for care workers. The devaluation of care, in general, and of household employment, in particular, feeds back to the impasse on labor rights, allowing it to maintain a discriminatory status (Pérez Orozco and López 2011). That is why it is important to sign, ratify, and comply with the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and ILO resolutions on domestic workers (No. 189).

Raising awareness is a key factor for changing cultural patterns of co-responsibility and searching for a fairer distribution of work and care responsibilities between men and women, among generations, and between families and society (Arriagada 2008).

Another approach to formulating policies is the analysis of successful and promising experiences such as the case of Uruguay, which is one of the outstanding examples in the developing world in designing a “National Plan of Care” (see Aguirre 2014). The document recommending the implementation of an Integrated System of Care Policies (2012) states:

The proposals to be implemented should consider the strategic role that families play in raising, socializing and caring for people. It is necessary to adopt measures of co-responsibility for family and work life that apply equally to women and men, bearing in mind that sharing family responsibilities in an equitable way and overcoming gender stereotypes creates favorable conditions for the political participation of women and men in all its diversity.

The National Integrated Care System of Uruguay proposes not only the construction of a co-responsible model between state, community, market, and families, but also aims at changing the current sexual division of labor for unpaid care work, and the valorization of paid care work in the labor market. What makes the Uruguayan process unique is the virtuous articulation between academic bodies, the feminist movement, the women’s movement, and government agencies for the achievement of a national agreement that led to the recognition and construction of a new right, the right to care and to be cared for. The recognition of care as a right implies a change in the focus of social policies and the design of a new social welfare organization that, through benefits and services of a new kind, allows a new distribution of care time between families, the state, and the market. This is a complex process – currently underway – to which different actors are incorporated, and in which different interpretative frameworks come under tension (Aguirre 2014).

There are also proposals from the General Secretariat of UN Women that stress the importance of moving forward to improve the conditions of women who migrate to work in care activities (Bachelet 2011) recommending “acknowledg[ing] that care work is critical to development.” It must be brought from the margins to the visible core of the development and women’s economic empowerment agenda, by providing labor and social protections for care workers, revising labor laws to include all care workers, and introducing standard employment contracts for them. We can draw on the good practice of several countries – among which are Jordan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, South Africa, India, and others – and implement suitable monitoring and grievance-redress mechanisms for care workers, including for those situated in private homes. Additionally, there is a need to provide gender-sensitive protection and services for women migrant workers, including predeparture training and information services, and access to health insurance, education, and other social services. It is also important to facilitate remittances from migrant workers and ensure that they will find suitable investment options for their return. Moreover, remittances of care workers can contribute effectively to sustainable development in their countries of origin (Bachelet 2011).

### Future Research

The study of care crosses several sectors: infrastructure, health, education, social protection, and labor market policies, making a comprehensive approach necessary for its analysis and in the designing of policies (Razavi and Staab 2008). Therefore, the mobility of the borders between public and private care should be considered in relation to care workers, and in the provision of public care. The greatest difficulty in the provision of care is the unequal distribution of care by gender, which remains relatively unchanged, placing a heavy burden on women – especially those who make their living through care work.

Care work, whether remunerated or unpaid, is a public good since it generates benefits that have repercussions on a global scale (Razavi and Staab 2010). These externalities are rarely accounted for and can only be valued by strengthening state regulations and increasing funding to assure the availability and quality of care. Improving the quality of care will have a positive impact on the quality of employment, health, and the general well-being of the population. It is important to acknowledge how care practices have been shaped by their economic, social, and historical contexts.

On the other side, migration, whether for political, economic, or family reasons, between frontier countries, between different regions, or from ex-colonies, shows important differences that need to be assessed in a distinguishing way. Also, it is necessary to assess the ways that sexuality has impelled migration by individuals, such as: lesbians, gay men, and unmarried pregnant women seeking to avoid discrimination or stigmatization; married people seeking employment to support children; women and men using marriage as a strategy for legal migration; those going abroad to sell sex; individuals seeking HIV/AIDS treatment; sex tourists; and others (Luibhéid 2014).

Comparative studies exploring the main geographical trends in global care chains are needed: differences among regions can arise from their level of development, from social and labor policies, and from cultural and historical reasons. Ethnic and racial issues also play an important role. In order to facilitate country and regional comparisons, standardized definitions must be formulated. Women's migration is frequently shaped by different patterns than those that men follow when they migrate. These patterns need to be assessed, and labor market positions must be attentive to the intersection of class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Research on the ways in which care is provided should consider the standardization of definitions and, at the same time, generate measurement instruments.

The impacts of gender inequalities on parental leaves, and the time devoted to care by mothers and fathers, should be traced and evaluated as frequently as possible. For assessing and following up these inequalities and their evolution, time-use surveys need to be implemented.

On the subject of migrations, intersectionality between race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality should be considered in order to understand the worrying indifference toward the violence that is systematically perpetrated against women of color, in other words, non-white women who are victims of the coloniality of power and, inseparably, of the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2008).

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# Gender and Environmental Studies

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## Introduction: Our Questions and Goals

What is gender? What is the environment? How do they shape and inform each other? Each of these questions could, and do, take up full books. Here, we concern ourselves briefly with the connections between these three questions and how they can be traced through the histories and practices of environmental studies. It is important to recognize from the start that these histories (and presents) are plural, that ideas of gender and nature and the relationship between them differ within cultural settings, often in ways that are unacknowledged or glossed over as universal, essential, and “natural,” as opposed to being evolving cultural elements. Hence what we seek to do here is highlight the multiple coexisting and sometimes contradictory intersections between conceptions of gender and conceptions of the environment. We look at how these relationships have been differently theorized within environmental studies, within the branch of feminism known as ecofeminism, as well as within non-Western, indigenous cultures. In so doing, we ultimately seek to affirm the efficacy of an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2020) that recognizes the impact of cultural perspective on both gender and the environment (Godfrey and Torres 2016a).

Intersectionality recognizes the inseparability of the social constructions of race, gender, and social class, as well as other constructions such as sexuality, religion, and nationality, and in our case, understandings of the environment (Godfrey and Torres 2016b). Coming out of the field of feminist critical race theory, intersectionality is a theoretical lens and a heuristic tool for social justice activism. In using intersectionality as our theoretical lens, we recognize the social constructedness of identities and their supportive institutional structures. As such we aim to not only avoid essentializing women/nature/the environment, but more insidiously, to avoid essentializing all humans as being of one culture – namely, that of the industrialized West – thereby obscuring differences and depoliticizing inequalities. Instead, we use intersectionality

as a theoretical device to engage in a culturally diverse examination of the practices of women facing environmental challenges across the globe and taking collective action in response to these challenges.

### **Environmental Studies: The Field and Its History**

Environmental studies, as a discipline, is vast and multifaceted. Writing in 2008, Adelson et al. argue that the term environmental studies has become “a flexible, common term, perhaps the most common term, for collective efforts to understand the interrelated systems and phenomena of nature, including the human presence in those systems and its effects on them” (Adelson et al. 2008). Such an endeavor does not fit neatly into disciplinary boundaries or definitions, leading some to critique the field as incoherent (Soulé and Press 1998) and others to argue that an integrated transdisciplinary approach is valuable and indeed essential to solving inseparable environmental-social problems (Cooke and Vermaire 2015).

Under this disciplinary canopy, many branches have sprouted, diverged, and entwined themselves, making it impossible to thread together a single history of thought. Mann (2011) identifies the Industrial Revolution as a point of emergence for environmental concern, as worries about pollution and health began to garner public attention in the late 1800s. Such concerns were largely focused on rapidly industrializing urban areas, and the “environment” in question included human labor and living conditions, as evidenced by the activism of the Progressive movement at the time (Mann 2011). Soulé and Press (1998), on the other hand, trace the roots of environmental studies as a discipline back to the early twentieth century, when preservationists and conservationists were the prevailing (and often conflicting) voices trying to shape the United States’ approach for handling its natural resources, particularly the areas of remaining wilderness. In this debate, the environment was framed as the place where humans are not, the place that “stands apart from humanity” (Cronon 1996, p. 69). Gifford Pinchot became the poster child of the “wise-use” conservationist position, under which natural resources were to be managed responsibly for human use, while preservationists like John Muir and the Sierra Club placed more emphasis on the spiritual and inspirational value of wild places and often argued that they be left untouched by economic enterprise (Meyer 1997).

In the 1960s, the winds shifted again, as the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and the growing environmentalism social movement prompted renewed attention to the connections between humans and their surrounding ecosystems (Beyl 1992, Soulé and Press 1998), with an increasing sense of urgency about “the growing crises facing the natural world and humanity” (Cooke and Vermaire 2015). *Silent Spring* prompted audiences to consider the place of the human body within a broader ecological web, encouraging the realization that the same activities that threatened harm to the environment also threatened harm to human well-being (Hazlett 2004). On the international stage, 1972 marked the first United Nations conference focused on the environment, with pollution, urban growth, and nature conservation emerging as key priorities at the Stockholm meeting (Liverman 1999).

Additional branches of environmental studies in the latter half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first include ecofeminism (arguably one of its

more controversial and highly divided offshoots, as described later in this chapter), as well as environmental justice (Bullard 1996; Taylor 2000) and, more recently, works emphasizing a more holistic view of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, including “just sustainabilities” (Agyeman 2013) and critical environmental justice that seeks to include nonhuman animals in its analysis (Pellow 2017).

In recent decades, attention has increasingly turned to the planetary scale of both the recognized problems and the needed solutions. At the United Nations conference in Rio in 1992, global issues such as global climate change (GCC), ozone depletion, and the loss of biodiversity took center stage (Liverman 1999). GCC in particular has been the subject of a vast international scientific and political discourse, with planetary stakes rapidly increasing. Rising concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (largely emitted through human industrial activities) have led to a continual increase in the earth’s surface temperature, which in turn has begun to set in motion a multitude of adverse consequences, including extreme weather events, species extinction, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, food insecurity, and more (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2007, 2014; Peñuelas et al. 2013). We are at a point of such profound human impact upon the environment that some scholars have begun calling this time period the Anthropocene (Crutzen 2002). It is in this context that the discipline of environmental studies currently finds itself.

Adelson et al.’s (2008) excellent text *Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* gives an indication of the field’s breadth, with a table of contents ranging from biodiversity to sustainable development to national security to toxicology to public policy to economics and more. Such range is both an opportunity and a challenge. There are many points of entry for the interested student or scholar, and many wells of expertise to draw from when seeking to solve the global crises we face. But weaving these pieces together to form an “integrative interdisciplinary” is difficult – which areas of knowledge should be considered requisite for environmental literacy, and how does one make them coherent (Proctor et al. 2013)? Proctor et al. (2013) argue that the problem-solving focus of many environmental scholars needs to address these theoretical questions in order to maintain clarity and relevance in the modern context.

Adding to the challenge, as Mann (2011) argues, is the fact that the history and present practice of environmental studies is not immune to social power gradients, and so is heavily weighted toward the dominant social groups – largely white, middle-class American men – with less attention paid to “women working on the margins” both nationally and around the world. We must therefore engage a more critical eye in order to understand “the multiplicity of oppressions entailed in environmental struggles” (Mann 2011). To address this gender deficit, we seek to explore aspects of ecofeminism and review aspects of its “controversial” history.

## Ecofeminism

### History of ecofeminism / Ecofeminism as a critique

In the 1970s, to counter the lack of attention given to issues of gender within environmental studies, ecofeminism emerged as a multifaceted branch of feminism that included a theoretical focus, as well as a more practical social movement component.

The term is credited to the French feminist writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her work *Feminism or Death* (1974) and has come to represent “a wide range of views concerning the causal role of Western dualistic thinking, patriarchal structures of power, and capitalism in ecological degradation and the oppression of women and other subjugated peoples” (Allison 2017, p. 1).

Ecofeminism, understood as a broad body of theory with many manifestations, sought to liberate women and nature and to instigate new pathways based on equity and sustainability. Emerging from such foundational works as those of Ortner (1974), Ruether (1975), Griffin (1978), and Merchant (1980), ecofeminism came to be loosely organized into four categories that have emerged over the last 40 years. These nonexclusive, overlapping four main categories (Allison 2017) are: *liberal* (concerned with fighting for gender and environmental equity) (emerging from Carson's work); *cultural* (concerned with women's lived experiences and their perceived tendency toward environmental activism) (see Christ 1995; Plumwood 1993; Spretnak 1993; Starhawk 1979); *socialist* (concerned with addressing the material oppressions of nature and women in relation to the transformation of capitalism, also identifies as materialist) (see Biehl 1988; King 1991; Plumwood 1993); and *postmodern* (concerned with presenting a critical lens to the experiences of men and women, while viewing them as socially constructed) (see Sylvester 1994; Sturgeon 1997; Sandilands 1999). The last two more materialist categories also overlap with feminist environmentalism and feminist political ecology (FPE; Sapiro 2012), while throughout all four approaches have been various emphases on the lives of indigenous women and those in the Third World. However, such emphases – from a political perspective as opposed to a cultural one – have been most tied with the materialist ecofeminists as in works of Shiva (1988), Mies and Shiva (1993), and Salleh (1997).

The most controversial writings on ecofeminism are, generally speaking, the earlier works understood as being “cultural” in expression. What made them controversial was their emphasis on celebrating the perceived privileged connections between women/indigenous peoples and nature. Such claims led other theorists, within both ecofeminism and feminism in general, to interpret these claims as expressions of “essentialism” (Mallory 2018; Godfrey 2005), wherein gender characteristics are seen as having essential, innate, “natural” roots. In fact, Mallory (2018), in recently reviewing the history of ecofeminism, recognized that ever since d'Eaubonne coined the term, ecofeminists of all perspectives (including postmodernists, who are at the opposite theoretical end to such perceived essentialism) still struggle to defend and uphold the merits of its “theoretical work” (p. 14). Therefore, given Mallory's position in both reviewing and defending ecofeminism, we look briefly to her article to situate our own overview of the field, as well as to point out some problematic yet recurring themes, using other seminal and recent works.

### Essentialism and ecofeminism

Essentialism within the works of some ecofeminists was understood to have manifested itself by their articulation of “an essentialized subject position for women, in which women are presumed to have an automatic affinity with nature, and thus a privileged affective and epistemic point of view toward the protection and restoration of the more-than-human world” (Mallory 2018, 13). For example, early ecofeminist

writings such as the anthologies *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (Plant 1989) and *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (Diamond and Orenstein 1990) put ecofeminism on the academic map, while also raising theoretical red flags for many feminists, including some ecofeminists (Mallory 2018). The titles of the anthologies, as well as many of the essays within, evoked a call to “heal” the earth and others through “reclaiming a purported ancient value system, religions, rituals and practices,” including what many authors understood to be the special connection women have with nature to the exclusion of men (p. 19). Highlighted by Mallory as having been seen by critics as linking women with “parts – or the whole of nature” was Allen’s essay, “The Woman I Love is a Planet; The Planet I Love is a Tree” in *Reweaving the World* (1990). For Allen, who was from New Mexico of Laguna, Sioux, Pueblo, and Chicano family cultures, spirituality in relation to nature as well as gender expressions is an integral part of individual/collective cultural identity and her assumed “essentialist” expressions should have been understood as being culturally specific as opposed to universal. However, when Mallory highlights Allen’s essay, among a number of others, she neglects to mention Allen’s cultural context, further leading to a conflation between claims of essentialism and a deracinated cultural context. In other words, by not differentiating between Allen’s work and that of other Western ecofeminists, Mallory erases significant cultural differences even as more generally she is defending the works against essentialist gender critiques.

Wilson (2005), in theorizing ecofeminism in relation to aboriginal culture, argues that although some Western spiritual ecofeminists have looked to indigenous cultures for affirmation of their positions, many have done so in ways that constitute cultural appropriation and inaccurate representations (p. 335). In addition, she recognizes that indigenous people’s imagery and culture are often taken out of social and historical context within ecofeminism, which as a result “essentializes” them by silencing “their voices even while idealizing them” (Wilson 2005, p. 338; quoted in Sturgeon 1997, p. 269). As ecofeminist Sturgeon (1997) also argues, the tendency in ecofeminism to position “the Native American woman as the ‘ultimate ecofeminist’” ends up creating “a form of racial essentialism [that] is used in part to avoid the appearance of a form of gender essentialism” (p. 119). In other words, by attempting to uncritically link Western constructions of gender and nature with those of non-Western cultures in an effort not to essentialize gender (as in the case of Mallory mentioning Allen’s work without contextualizing it), some ecofeminists ended up inadvertently essentializing race and culture. Additionally, such appropriated cultural constructs often do not carry with them the collective political commitments to land, to knowledge, and to resource rights that are the means through which such cultural constructs are authentically expressed (Goduka 1999; Sturgeon 1997; Wilson 2005).

To further illustrate this point, Zimbabwean gender scholar Chauraya (2012) argues that although the term “gender” has “been universalized, gender interpretations are [in fact] not a universal sisterhood, and hence cultural specific norms of gender should always dominate gender applications” (Chauraya 2012, p. 254). Chauraya’s point is supported by another African gender scholar from Nigeria, Oyewumi (2002; also see Oyewumi 1997), who in focusing on the Yoruba culture argues that seniority is in fact a much more significant social category than gender.

Oyewumi states, “Because the fundamental organizing principle within the family is seniority based on relative age, and not gender, kinship categories encode seniority not gender” (Oyewumi 2002, p. 3). Given this strikingly different cultural position, Oyewumi ends her article stating, “Meanings and interpretation should derive from social organization and social relations paying close attention to specific cultural and local contexts” (Oyewumi 2002, p. 4). Hence, Oyewumi, like Chauraya and Wilson, is calling for the need to recognize cultural specificity, which brings her to ask the provocative question, “Why gender?” By this question Oyewumi problematizes the focus on gender as the central identity for analysis, as opposed to other identities, such as seniority, or other oppressions such as those linked with the constructions of race and class, including those linked with “imperialism, colonization, and other local and global forms of stratification” (Oyewumi 2002, p. 2), including relations to the environment. In this respect, both scholars who have critiqued ecofeminism and scholars that have defended it have often fallen short of addressing Oyewumi’s point.

## Intersectionality in Environmental Studies

### Conceptualizing intersectionality in environmental studies

A diligent commitment to intersectional scholarship can help to avoid the above shortcomings. Intersectionality acts as a theoretical lens and a heuristic tool for social justice activism in that multiple social categories (such as race, class, and gender) are recognized not as *separate* but as dynamically intersecting in ways that are mutually transformative. To illustrate, Oyewumi’s analysis of gender does not theorize it as an isolated variable, as was common from the white Western feminist perspective, but rather she looks to how in her culture it intersects with age in ways that actually reduce its saliency. As such she recognizes that “the most important critique of feminist [Anglophone/American and white women’s politics in the United States] articulations of gender is the one made by a host of African American scholars who insist that in the United States there is no way that gender can be considered outside of race and class” (Oyewumi 2002, p. 1); hence the need for intersectionality. Ecofeminist Kings (2017) takes a similar stance when it comes to climate change, asserting that “Climate change is a ‘wicked problem’ in the sense that it cannot be successfully understood in any way which is not intersectional” (p. 74). Hence, we seek to take threads from ecofeminism and indigenous cultural perspectives to recognize that constructions and intersections of the environment must also be included in any intersectional analysis (see Gaard 1993a; Godfrey and Torres 2016). In using intersectionality in relation to environmental studies, we are building on the work of Godfrey and Torres, who, in seeking to “honor intersectionality’s lenses as being ground by struggle in body and mind” on the part of primarily women of color, included in their discussion “the physical places and spaces that their bodies inhabit as salient for analysis” (p. 6). However, intersectionality and its proposed ability to expand “theoretical boundaries” (Carbado et al. 2013, p. 841) does not only apply to the bodies and minds, hence experiences of women of color, but to all aspects of the social and natural worlds. Therefore, as Godfrey and Torres argue, building on

indigenous scholarship (Cajete 2000), “regardless of the topic under examination, humans *are* [*italics* in original] nature and are inseparable from the environment and therefore such an intersection [including the environment] should ideally always be taken into account” (p. 4). This becomes all the more pertinent when looking more specifically at the ways social and environmental oppressions have been and remain inseparable, including in relation to the global environmental crises.

### Connection through oppression

The historical roots linking the oppression of women, non-white Westerners, indigenous people, and nature/the environment have, as discussed, been recognized by many ecofeminists, as well as other non-Western and indigenous scholars. Within the Western roots of sexism/colonialism/imperialism/racism/classism/ etc., proximity to nature (including minimally clothed bodies, engaging in hunting and gathering for food, collective-communal resource uses, direct use of earth/wood/animal skins for shelters, forms of spiritual animism, etc) has historically been perceived and used as the ultimate evidence of savagery, perversion, barbarity, idiocy, and inferiority (Merchant 1980). Additionally, such pejorative claims have reinforced the justification for colonization, enslavement, exploitation, Christianization, and genocide. Likewise, central to Western notions of “hegemonic masculinities” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) that are inseparable from white racism, are the views of all women as being closer to “nature” than white men, with women of color, poor women, and indigenous women being the closest, and therefore all being to varying degrees irrational, inferior, and highly exploitable (Gaard 1993b). In other words, that which ultimately was (and is) used to justify the oppressions of such intersecting and overlapping groups are their perceived “essential” natural attributes, as opposed to the upper-class white Western males’ “civilized” self. Given these entwined and tenacious roots, it is understandable that any analyses evoking “essential” connections between all women (and all non-white Western others including indigenous people) and nature – such as those that emerged from some expressions of ecofeminism – might be feared, policed (Mallory 2018), and silenced (Mann 2006) by those feminists and others seeking theoretical reconceptualization, as well as actual liberation.

However, it is important to remember that not all peoples have lost their culturally perceived connections to nature and not all fear them; some in fact see this connection as a means of vital cultural expression, including their expressions through political/social /environmental struggles (Wilson 2005; also see Godfrey 2005). Failing to recognize this again erases cultural variations, as well as the realities of the corresponding inequalities and injustices and in itself becomes a form of essentialism. Yet this tendency to culturally homogenize and thereby fail to recognize distinct cultural variations, including the extreme corresponding global inequalities (Sturgeon 1997), remains deeply embedded, even when authors are intent on doing the opposite. To illustrate, near the end of Mallory’s article, she puts forth what she sees as the “elephant in the living room” in relation to “one of the reasons” why she thinks “ecofeminism remains ignored in much feminist theory” (Mallory 2018, p. 28). Her reason: “that humans are reluctant to give up our position of species-privilege, since doing so will require a radical rethinking of ways of thinking and acting; and shake

to the core our understanding of who we are, what kind of beings we are” (Mallory 2018, p. 28). And yet, for us this is of course the ultimate form of essentializing; after all, all humans do *not* share the same cultural perspectives and do not see themselves in the same ways, all humans do *not* hold a position of “species-privilege” – and finally all humans do *not* contribute equally to the denigration and exploitation of natural resources that is ultimately resulting in global climate change. In fact, it is Western culture that has held this position of cultural-privilege in relation to those cultures and peoples it has colonized /committed genocide against and continues to exploit, as well as other species. Hence, given the importance and yet the insidious obfuscation of this final point, in the rest of this chapter we seek to authentically engage with intersectionality in order to avoid essentializing humans and human cultures in any capacity.

### **Applying intersectionality to environmental studies**

Under the vast umbrella of environmental studies, the environmental justice movement concerns itself with social and environmental inequalities experienced primarily by people of color and other marginalized groups. Unlike ecofeminism, which began and has remained mostly identified with white middle-class women, environmental justice originated from and has largely focused on racial inequities in environmental experience. In 1991, delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit drafted the Principles of Environmental Justice (Mares and Peña 2011); in 1994 President Clinton directed US federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions (Houston 2018). One driving concern within environmental justice is “how the social and health costs of environmental contamination have been disproportionately borne by racial minorities” (Mann 2011). These costs include exposure to air pollution, unsafe housing, poor water quality, hazardous waste, and a lack of access to nutritious food options (Gracia and Koh 2011). Another key highlight is attention to decision-making abilities, and who holds the power when it comes to shaping environmental outcomes (Mares and Peña 2011; Darby and Atchison 2014). Yet when it comes to discourse around GCC, it is commonly referred to as anthropogenic (human caused), as opposed to natural. However, such a term makes it seem as if it the fault of all humans, as if every human on earth bears equal culpability. This is, of course, not the case, as an intersectional lens that highlights issues of geographic location will show. For example, as the Oxfam Media Briefing, “Extreme Carbon Inequality” (2015) illustrates:

Around 50% of these emissions meanwhile can be attributed to the richest 10% of people around the world, who have average carbon footprints 11 times as high as the poorest half of the population, and 60 times as high as the poorest 10%. The average footprint of the richest 1% of people globally could be 175 times that of the poorest 10%.

Yet, even this is not the full picture. When the variable of gender is applied, additional disparities emerge. Godoy (2011), examining multiple European countries, found that “Men consume between 70 and 80 percent more energy than women in



Germany and Norway, 100 percent more in Sweden, and up to 350 percent more in Greece” (Godoy, 2011). Of course, from an intersectional perspective what we’d like to see would be further research on how the additional categories of class, race, and geographic location intersect to further interrogate the impression that all humans are contributing equally to carbon emissions.

Another focal point for discussions of the intersections between gender, race, and class within environmental studies is the ongoing debate over human population growth and population control. Soulé and Press (1998) identify population growth as a sticking point between “humanistic and ecocentric environmentalists,” noting that divisions among scholars in the discipline reveal themselves here. These authors argue that ecologists tend to view population growth as “the major driving force of biotic attrition and habitat destruction worldwide” while more socially minded scholars have argued that it “is a consequence of misguided economic and social policies ... more an effect of poverty and injustice than an independent forcing variable” (Soulé and Press 1998). This distinction is important, because the viewpoint one holds will greatly influence the practical measures one believes should be implemented, which themselves have great impacts upon people’s lives and reproductive choices.

Feminist scholar Jade Sasser discusses the tendency to blame global environmental issues on population growth and a lack of family planning among poor women of color, especially in the Global South. Zhao Baige, the Vice Minister of the National Population and Family Planning Commission at the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP 17) in Copenhagen, asserted that “dealing with climate change is not simply an issue of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction but a comprehensive challenge involving political, economic, social, cultural and ecological issues, and the population concern fits right into the picture” (Sasser 2016, p. 57). Sasser argues that placing the burden on population growth creates a “blueprint development” narrative to simplify complex environmental problems. Western development and environmental agencies promote population control and family planning among women in the Global South as a strategy for reducing environmental degradation, while avoiding the more substantial issues of resource consumption and the development of polluting technologies in the Global North (Sasser 2016) (also see Oxfam Media Briefing 2015). George Monbiot, writer for *The Guardian*, supports Sasser’s claims. He argues that through population control, policy-makers are essentially denying women control over their wombs and therefore reinforcing the gendered binary where the patriarchy is in power while all else is devalued (Monbiot 2015). The majority of women being denied agency in this scenario, in particular, are women of color in the global South and therefore along with the gender binary are of course the intersections of race and class. In this view, problems like overconsumption and polluting technology – created by the hands of the powerful, as evident in the extreme carbon inequality based on geographic location and gender – are not addressed.

### **Perceptions of womanhood and environmental activism**

In the face of vast environmental problems, many people have taken up activism individually and collectively, seeking to share their concerns with decision-makers and ultimately effect change. Activism is ultimately a social endeavor, and social

power dynamics are ever-present. In the aftermath of *Silent Spring*'s publication, chemical companies and their advocates sought to discredit Carson's conclusions, often making their attacks in very gendered ways. Critics called the book emotional and alarmist, painting Carson as hysterical and highlighting her unmarried status and love of cats (Beyl 1992). These charges of hysteria harken back to the diagnostic use of the term in nineteenth-century medicine, when women's physical symptoms were sometimes attributed to their imaginations and thus considered dismissible (Killingsworth and Palmer 1995). Carson's supporters were portrayed in cartoons and chemical trade publications as shrill housewives or witches opposed to technology, with very little mention made of Carson's own training as a biologist (Hazlett 2004). Nor was this a phenomenon limited only to Carson. Lois Gibbs, founder of the Love Canal Homeowners' Association of Niagara Falls and a key figure in the fight to clean up toxic sites in the United States, remembered being treated as if she must not understand the science behind her activism, saying "They ask the boys to talk about the details, the technical stuff. They never ask me for the brain stuff ... They always ask me for the emotional stuff" (Livesey 2003). More recently, activists seeking to address the environmental risk factors of breast cancer have found that, when meeting with scientists to discuss their case, "the assumption often is that activists are going to be hysterical women" (Zavestoski, McCormick, and Brown 2004). These gender-based obstacles stand in the way of environmental activism, and ultimately in the way of effecting change.

Although these examples demonstrate the challenges to perceived objectivity and knowledge that female scientists and activists often face, certain other activists have found that their emotionally charged social positions can have powerful strategic value. These are the women who use the status of motherhood – often in combination with a cultural identity – to bolster their political involvement and further their activist movements. In California, the Chicana grassroots group Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) formed in 1985 to oppose a planned prison and toxic waste incinerator in their neighborhood, and then worked more broadly to fight environmental racism, framing their activism as an extension of their maternal instincts (Platt 1997). MELA handbills and business cards depict the Madonna and child, and founding MELA member Aurora Castillo proclaimed that "the Hispanic mother will fight like a lioness" for the sake of children at risk (Platt 1997). Mothers Out Front, a climate justice activism group in Cambridge, Massachusetts, places similar emphasis on children at risk in their mission statement to "build our power as mothers to ensure a livable climate for all children" (Mothers Out Front 2018). Lois Gibbs of Love Canal, when asked where she got her courage, attributed it all to her concern for her children (Livesey 2003).

In Central Appalachia, Bell and Braun (2010) interviewed women who opposed coal-mining, noting the strong link that these interviewees drew between motherhood and the duty to protect. The mother activists living in the coalfield region felt that this duty extended beyond their own children to also include protecting the endangered regional identity of Appalachia, based heavily upon the land around them and their lengthy generational history in the area (Bell and Braun 2010). Likewise, Naples (1992), interviewing Latina and African American women community workers in low-income New York and Philadelphia neighborhoods, noted that the understanding of "mothering" as referring strictly to biological/legal

children was not adequate. To more accurately describe the work of these Latina and African American community workers, which included struggles against racial discrimination, substandard housing, and poor educational opportunities, Naples instead uses the term “activist mothering”:

Activist mothering not only involves nurturing work for those outside one’s kinship group but also encompasses a broad definition of actual mothering practices. The community workers defined good mothering to comprise all actions, including social activism, that addressed the needs of their children and communities.

(Naples 1992)

Motherhood in these examples provides grounding for strong personal identities and communal action, but is not without its tensions. Bell and Braun (2010) raise the possibility that the welfare of the women would not be seen as of legitimate concern without the children also at stake. In other words, women breathing in toxic air from an incinerator (or a coalfield, or a moldy apartment) would not by itself be enough to generate the social and political will for change; their activism must be for others, not themselves, to achieve “moral legitimacy” (Bell and Braun 2010). The common emphasis on maternal instinct also runs the risk of equating womanhood with motherhood and essentializing all women as maternal.

## Climate Change

### On the front lines of climate change

Whether women activists encounter gender-based obstacles in their activism or turn their identity into a strategic leverage point, there is no shortage of reasons for collective action on a variety of environmental fronts. In a world of increasing climate change, in which climate impacts are not distributed uniformly but affected by both biophysical phenomena and existing sociopolitical power gradients, women are often more vulnerable to food insecurity (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] et al. 2018), extreme weather events (Cannon 2002), water shortages (Buechler 2009), and other tangible consequences of environmental change.

Social expectations of household labor responsibilities put many women around the world in a precarious position in a future of climate change, particularly in rural and/or impoverished areas in developing countries. Collecting water is a time-consuming, physically demanding task that falls to women in 8 out of every 10 households in which water is not located on the premises (WHO/UNICEF 2017). The energy and time spent on procuring water, often hours per day, result in a high opportunity cost for women and girls in these households who miss out on potential education and employment (Kher et al. 2015; Yadav and Lal 2018). These on-foot journeys are not without risk either, as many women and girls are also subject to harassment and violence while out gathering water and fuel for their families (Yadav and Lal 2018). Climate change is likely to result in droughts and heat waves in many already-arid areas, making the task of procuring water even harder as these women will have to travel further in their search (Kher et al. 2015).

Women often also bear responsibility for obtaining and preparing food, particularly in households with children. In Guanajuato, Mexico, women play a primary role in safeguarding the maize crop, culturally essential and critical to household food security, as well as harvesting edible weeds for emergency sustenance; these practices may be imperiled by adverse climate conditions (Bee 2014). In Bangladesh, rural women gather seeds, tend to seedlings, raise animals for meat and milk, and catch shrimp fry, often in areas with poor infrastructure and little protection from extreme climate events (Parvin and Ahsan 2013). In Nunavut, Canada, where changes in ice conditions have resulted in fewer wildlife food sources like walrus and caribou, and temperature changes have impacted women's traditional berry-picking practices, Inuit women report frequently being the last to eat and going without food so that their children have enough (Beaumier and Ford 2010; Bunce et al. 2016). These existing social and gender dynamics, coupled with the uncertainty of future climate change, pose threats to food security, the burden of which disproportionately lands on women.

As ever, it is important to avoid overgeneralizing. Returning again to intersectionality, women are not a homogenous group and gender is not the only factor impacting climate vulnerability and resilience. Huynh and Resurreccion (2014) examined differential vulnerability among rural Vietnamese women, finding that factors such as marital status, economic status, age, education, and access to credit – all factors of importance in their specific cultural and economic context – influenced the available pathways or obstacles to adopting climate adaptation measures. Friedman et al. (2018) likewise looked for variations in vulnerability among women cocoa farmers in Ghana, noting how differential access to land ownership affected women farmers' degree of exposure to climate-related changes and ability to adapt. Van Aelst and Holvoet (2016) analyzed how marital status affected farm management and livelihood choices in rural Tanzania, finding that distinguishing among married, unmarried, divorced, and widowed women and men in their analysis led to a deeper understanding of the challenges facing each group of farmers and the resources available to them. These authors stress the need to tailor development goals and intervention strategies to the specific nuances of an area and population, in order to avoid neglecting or exacerbating existing inequalities.

### Climate policy and patriarchal solutions

An analysis of current international climate policy shows that policy efforts often fall short of the nuanced, flexible, intersectional approach called for by the previous authors and our own analysis. Since the 1990s, there have been several milestone agreements that have resulted in great enthusiasm for world change. However, agreements like the Kyoto Protocol 1997, Copenhagen 2009, and Paris 2012 have offered very little progress, as evidenced from the latest IPCC report (IPCC 2018). Today, our world is still struggling to make substantial change toward mitigating the reliance of the Global North on fossil fuels and changing the current trajectory toward reaching a point of no return. While climate change is most commonly spoken about as a scientific problem requiring STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) solutions, there is rarely a discussion about transforming ideologies and economies of domination and exploitation (Gaard 2015).

To highlight this disconnect, Gaard (2015) draws particular attention to the Women's Agenda 21. This agenda was formed by the Women's Environment and Development Organization's (WEDO) World Women's Conferences, comprising more than 1,500 women from 83 countries in 1991 (Gaard 2015; WEDO n.d.). The Women's Agenda 21 discussed creating systemic change through recognizing the Global North's consumption habits and historic exploitation. The following year the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) released a document which did not include the same recommendations (United Nations Sustainable Development 1992). Instead, the UNCED Agenda 21 emphasized maintaining economic growth while increasing technology and controlling population growth. More than 25 years later, media coverage of the ongoing climate negotiations and publications suggest that women's voices continue to be undervalued in the process even now, both as report authors and as scientific experts (Arkin 2018; Yeo 2018).

This disconnect points to the continuing dominance of Western masculine structures in climate change and climate change solutions. As Jane Caputi (2016) writes in her chapter "Mother Earth meets the Anthropocene: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis," "The White Man" is a phrase used to describe the metonymy for what is considered civilized or rational – in this case, the dominating perspective for how to solve environmental issues. The "Dark Mother," on the other hand, represents what is devalued: "the emotions, the body, the passions, animality, necessity" (Plumwood 1993, p.19). Despite the narrative told by The White Man (Caputi 2016), gender has everything to do with the failure to reach sustainable change and environmental justice (Bacon 2016). The notion that all humans are innately ecodestructive stems from the masculine, dominating Western view which assumes normalcy, homogenizing all humans under its ubiquitously colonizing cultural banner. Yet for example, as Efirtha Chauraya (2012) argues, in Africa, despite the immense cultural variety, there nevertheless exists a unifying worldview wherein, "the highest value of life lies in the interpersonal relationship between humans" and as a result, "there is oneness between humans and nature". Contrastingly, "in the Eurocentric worldview there is separateness between nature and humans" (p. 254), which contributes to the false belief that climate change can be addressed by merely focusing on STEM-related solutions, while maintaining the current social constructions of race, gender, class, and the environment. Hence, by not directly addressing gender equity and the gendered binary, the Western ideology that reinforces the Edenic separation between masculine "civilized" white humans and the feminine "chaotic" dark environment will remain intact and unchanged. Assuming that all humans are equally the cause of environmental destruction, and that human nature is inevitably destructive, makes it nearly impossible to create sustainable change, and this can in many ways be seen as structurally intentional. It is thus imperative that a heavy weight is placed not only on gender in climate policy, but on using an intersectional analysis in order to "formulate more effective intersectional *solutions* to environmental inequity" (Malin & Ryder, 2018, 2).

## Conclusion

Human understandings of the world around them cannot be wholly detached from their understandings of themselves and each other, as we have tried to show through

our chosen examples. Environmental benefits, hazards, and uncertainties are often experienced by people along the lines of social stratifications already existing within their culture. For this reason, social categories like gender cannot be ignored when examining the history of environmental studies and thought, nor can the environment be left out of discussions on gendered vulnerabilities and action. In this chapter we have tried to introduce the reader to this intersection, with the ever-present reminder that this alone is not enough and there are many other intersections that need attention in order to build an equitable and sustainable future.

We have traced history and have seen both how far we have come and how much remains to be done. We have outlined the growing challenges of the present, even as increased complexity of analysis brings both increased clarity and obsfucation. However, as scholars, writers, and activists, we cannot wait for these muddy waters to clear, because they won't; clear waters suggest a universal solution for everyone, as if there were one way to be a woman, one way to look at a tree, or one way to address climate change and metaphorically save the planet. Nevertheless, in the face of a very real planetary crisis – and if there is one universal truth to be found here, it is that no humans, regardless how advanced their technologies may be, can live without the Earth – solutions are needed more urgently than ever. Unity is needed for effective action, yet without intersectional analysis recognizing individual and collective differences and disparities this action is likely to perpetuate the dominant Western culture that brought the planet to this brink in the first place. Mastering this balancing act will be difficult and nebulous, but we cannot afford anything less.

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# Part VI

## Social Movements

# Gender and Collective Action

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## Introduction

Gender imbues all aspects of the social world and, as scholars have shown, collective action is no different. Feminist scholars define and analyze gender in a variety of ways including as an institution, structure, and process that organizes everyday life (Acker 1990; Lorber 1994; Risman 2004) and that is constantly being performed and constructed through social relations, interpretations, and cultural expectations (Connell 1987; West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender goes beyond the heterosexual masculine and feminine dichotomy, encompassing the experiences of people who identify as queer and trans. Influenced by the important work of black feminist scholars, much contemporary research on gender emphasizes the ways in which the social construction and experience of gender cannot be separated from one's race, class, sexuality, religion, and other identities (Crenshaw 1989). Therefore, experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and violence, some important motivations for collective action, must be understood in a complex way without focusing exclusively on binary gender identity.

*Collective action* involves the process of concerted efforts exerted by challenge groups toward specific and nonspecific targets, which often include formal governments, private enterprise, and other power holders. These collective processes range from subtle to more overt and direct tactics of defiance, and are shaped by opportunity structures, available resources, and the material, familial, and political lived experiences of people who collectively respond to grievances (Auyero 2003; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Guigni 2014). The goals of collective action encompass a variety of political, social, ideological, symbolic, and material change. Examples of collective action include protests, local community organizing, public actions, occupancy of housing, boycotts, strikes, large-scale rebellions, but also everyday forms of resistance in the form of foot-dragging, passive noncompliance, collective slowdowns, and

virtual communities (Castells 2012; Herrera-Gutierrez et al. 2017; Kimmel 2013; Scott 1990; Tarrow 2013). Although there exists a dialectical relationship between social movements and collective efforts, including community organizing (DeFelippis et al. 2010), collective action does not need to manifest into a movement in order for it to be important and meaningful.

In this chapter, we highlight the dynamics of local, regional and transnational collective action. We also show the social, economic, and symbolic interconnectivity of collective action efforts across different parts of the world and at different levels of scale from local to transnational activism. We review research on gender and collective action that is by no means exhaustive, but it provides a starting point for understanding three main areas of overlapping studies: first, the gendered conditions that ignite collective action; second, gendered collective processes and participant experiences; and third, the gendered results of collective action. Our focus draws heavily on popular forms of collective action or on mobilization that occurs “from below” (Eckstein 2001, p. 2), which often brings about results far beyond the initial goals.

### Collective action in a global society

Collective struggles across the world are connected in their fight against similar injustices. Many of these battles contest neoliberal policies, oppressive regimes, and private corporations that financially benefit a small percentage of the population while many accumulate disadvantages. People across the globe are usually not alone in their multiple struggles for change despite mass differences in their social, political, and or economic circumstances. Angela Davis (2016) draws parallels between the militarization of police in Ferguson and Palestine, between imprisonment in South Africa and prison-like schools in the US, and between the Jim Crow south and Israeli apartheid – many of these being connected to the “state’s inability and refusal to address the most pressing social problems” (p. 25). Davis (2016) argues that the struggle for freedom is multifaceted, complex, and interconnected. The struggle of black people is connected to the struggles against gender inequalities, racist immigration policies, and homophobia (Davis 2016). All of these struggles similarly combat forms of discrimination that are embedded within rules and norms of a society (Collins 2017) that leave certain groups particularly vulnerable to violence.

Violence against women is often connected to oppressive circumstances and unequal power dynamics (Villalon 2010; Whittier 2016). Within the Battered Women’s Movement in the US, advocates argued that domestic violence was a result of intersecting issues including gender, trans and same-sex inequality, social, economic, and political forces, and the vulnerability of immigrants (Whittier 2016). For example, advocates highlighted how marginalized groups faced compounding challenges and fears and were hesitant to seek support as survivors of violence. This disconnect from social services, along with their financial instability, left them increasingly subject to further partner violence. However, the most impactful legislation around the issue of domestic violence in the US, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), adopted a mainly punitive approach as a solution, ignoring and exacerbating the overlapping social ills that contribute to violence against women (Whittier 2016). VAWA increased prosecution for domestic violence and sexual assault, service organizations became extensions of the punitive state, which

disproportionately target women, people of color, and immigrants (Bierria 2007; Richie 2012; Spade 2011, all as cited in Whittier 2016), and mandatory arrest policies often took away agency from survivors of domestic violence (Whittier 2016). Furthermore, Roberta Villalon (2010) argues that the VAWA-created pathways to citizenship often excluded extremely poor women with little formal education and women who did not fit within prescribed gendered and sexual norms.

### *Economic restructuring and globalization*

Since the 1970s, national political economies have been on a global path of convergence. This process of political, economic, social and cultural convergence, understood as globalization, has removed many barriers between nation-states. International financial institutions with strong political ties to the Global North, have shaped the economies of the Global South through neoliberal policy. Their policies, have deregulated markets, reduced social safety nets, encouraged urban renewal, and destabilized labor unions. These forms of economic structuring have led to deindustrialization in the North and have had profound impacts on the lives of society's most vulnerable. Such shifts in production have reduced wages and consumption possibilities that have had a disproportionately negative and overlapping effect on the lives of women and children (Eisenstein 2009; Lind 2005; Alvarez 1999). Simultaneously, globalization and advances in technology allow for relatively inexpensive transnational communication and transportation. In turn, this helps to build and sustain transnational communities, including those organizing against "hegemonic globalization," which privileges corporations at the expense of materially poor communities (Evans 2000, p. 230).

As the forces of globalization continue to bring global movements closer together, the local context of collective action is becoming intertwined with movements that transcend nation-state boundaries. Transnational feminist groups shape and respond to policies and simultaneously serve as a source of and means to collective action (Moghadam 2000). Despite being geographically disconnected, non-governmental organizations support a variety of local activist organizations across the globe (Sikkink 2011). Transnational feminist networks contribute valuable resources and exchanges to support antiglobalization solidarities and local efforts that advance gender equality (Conway 2012; Mogadahm 2005). Across the world, more socio-economically privileged feminists communicate through associations, annual meetings, and publications, and in some cases they serve as consultants to the United Nations. Simultaneously, women from more economically and socially marginalized communities also participate in connected forms of "on the ground" collective action (Feldman and Stall 2004; Pardo 1998).

### *Global solidarities*

Transnational struggles may form virtual and tangible solidarities to strengthen and expand visibility and they also use similar forms of new technology. The US and Central America Peace Movement used religious narratives to bridge ethnic, class, ideological, and cultural difference gaps (Nepstad 2001). The Indignadas movement in Spain and the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US used similar forms of communication through Facebook and YouTube, while a global network of occupying movements known as United for Global Change brought hundreds of thousands of

people together from nearly 1,000 cities and 82 countries (Castells 2012). More recently, the 2017 Women's March became the largest protest in US history. Together with several million people across the world, people came together around a range of political, social, and economic issues that disproportionately impact women and people of color.

Transnational ties have become increasingly important in collective efforts around gender violence, bringing attention to and create pressure for policies that address the gender-based violence that is often socially ignored. In the case of Argentina, the "Ni Una Menos" (Not One Less) movement responded to state inaction and social media commentary about the rise of the murder of women across the country. The combination of highly public acts of violence against women and the perceived lack of political will to address the violence, galvanized women across the nation and world to demand action from the state (Cabral and Acacio 2016). Similarly, women have organized marches across Latin America to show support for the movement in Argentina while also manifesting their own local concerns of violence. The Ni Una Menos movement continues to work to transcend national borders through social media and local meetings to organize pressure on governments. These actions have emerged in Guatemala, Chile, and Peru in support of those in Argentina and have connected with other activist groups within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) movement (Friedman and Tabbush 2016). The women from the Ni Una Menos movement are refusing to cede to the status quo, opting to construct frames based on hope and a refusal to relinquish a desire for another, more just, way forward.

## **Gendered Relations that Ignite Collective Action**

### **Gendered identities**

The goals of collective action often extend beyond material demands and include rights and identity recognition. Groups that articulate demands for social recognition organize around specific gendered identities and challenge multiple sources of power (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Bernstein 2005). For different gendered groups who experience marginalization, social recognition and rights are at the core of their activities and are crucial components to the study of collective action (Polletta 1994). The fight for recognition involves the construction of identities, which are often negotiated through collective action. For example, Ruth Milkman and Victoria Terriquez (2012) show how women's leadership within the broader immigrant rights movement in Los Angeles, articulates a feminist consciousness that stands apart from the demands of the broader movement. Likewise, Mary Bernstein (2005) shows how within the LGBTQ movement identity was negotiated through interactions with the state, allies, and countermovement entities to produce a "fluid" identity that propelled the movement forward.

### **Mothering and caregiving**

Global economic restructuring policies have led to particularly devastating effects on the lives of poor women (Babb 2005) and have shaped migration patterns. In Latin



America's Andean region, neoliberal structural adjustment policies have encouraged investments in rural communities that have damaged the land that people depend on for their livelihoods. These larger political economies negatively impact agricultural production possibilities and the hardships created shape people's decisions to migrate to cities, settling instead in economically marginal neighborhoods located on urban peripheries (Auyero 2012; Woolley 2017). In this context, gendered collective action emerges in response to the precarious living conditions that rural to urban migrants encounter in their newly established social environment. Given that rural migrants can no longer rely on agricultural activities for sustenance (Dietz 1998), women are often essential for the creation of survival networks to provide resources capable of supporting entire communities, as is the case of community kitchens in Peru and Chile (Anderson 2007; Jenkins 2009). In this case, economic conditions shape the kinds of organizing that mothers engage in to meet the basic needs of families. Scholars have examined how the mothering role shapes gendered collective action and acts as a powerful form of activism (Conradsen 2016).

The collective action of mothers may challenge or conform to dominant gendered ideology of motherhood. It may also extend or redefine mothering identities that are shaped by sociopolitical and economic circumstances. For instance, the reduction of the welfare state has increased pressures on women to take on additional labor at home and in the paid labor force to provide for the health and welfare of their families (Fraser 2013). Water provisioning is a particularly gendered activity in the Global South and the subject of great hardship for the women and girls who are expected to provide it for family consumption (Devault 2014; 1991). Nikhil Anand's (2017) study of hydraulic citizenship in Mumbai shows how water scarcity resulting from crumbling infrastructures across poor neighborhoods creates expectations for women to collectively pressure engineers at the city water utility to address government failings to provide more reliable forms of water. Sylvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine (2016) argue that women tend to be the leaders of efforts to access water and sewage infrastructure systems because they do most of the household activities associated with water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Feminist care theory suggests that maternal activists define their care and labor for the entire community as a social responsibility which contributes to economic growth and social betterment (Tucker 2004). In a study of community workers during the War on Poverty, Nancy Naples (1998) shows how women's daily activism is inseparable from their motherwork and paid community work. Naples (1998) coined the term "activist mothering" or the gendered understanding of collective action and mothering as a struggle against racism, sexism, and poverty. Moreover, Mary Pardo's (1998) study of Mexican American women activists in East Los Angeles elucidates how women worked to improve their communities, churches, and neighborhoods – activities they rarely regarded as "political" but rather an extension of their identities as mothers (p. 298).

In the case of the postpartum depression movement in the 1980s, Verta Taylor (1999) argues that the unequal division of caregiving in the household and gendered organizations that privileged masculinity motivated women to collectively organize. Through their work, these women emphasized an ethic of caring and self-expression and they spoke out publicly to tell their stories through writings, radio, and TV, which in turn helped to validate the experiences of other mothers. Moreover, the

frames collective action participants used to outline their grievances drew links between postpartum illness and the gendered division of parenting, the cultural expectations of motherhood, and gender bias in the medical field (Taylor 1999).

### Grassroots responses to racism

Racial violence is tightly linked to other forms of oppression like class exploitation and sexism. As Patricia Hill Collins (2017) argues, “violence is the conceptual glue that binds intersecting systems of power together” (p. 1465), which then requires a transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997), one imbued with flexible solidarity. The concept of flexible solidarity, which Collins (2017) attributes to black women’s collective action involves “compromise and contestation” and the act of “sustaining political vigilance in the face of racism” (p. 1469). Black women cannot separate themselves from racism, sexism, and classism and consequently face more barriers within their efforts to contest these forms of oppression. Recent grassroots responses to violence has attempted to highlight how intersecting systems of power obscure the racism and sexism inherent within our social structures. For example, the #BlackLivesMatter movement website maintains an “intersectional description of their mission” that not only acknowledges the killing of black people by police, but also the unjust marginalization of women, trans people, the undocumented, and people with criminal records (Collins 2017, p. 1471).

Although the #BlackLivesMatter movement’s mission acknowledges intersecting oppressions, critics have argued that the movement’s focus has overwhelmingly been on the violence against black men. As a result, the #SayHerName movement emerged to call attention to the police violence toward black women. Brown et al. (2017) argue that “the erasure of Black women in #BlackLivesMatter indicates that intersectional activism comes with challenges as some find it difficult to envision more than a monolithic identity such as race or gender compared to race and gender” (p. 1834). Thus, despite the initial intentions of movements to highlight multiple forms of oppressions, contentious politics and activism must remain intentionally intersectional (i.e. discussing race, class, gender, trans discrimination) in its approach to combat political domination and state sponsored violence (Collins 2017).

### Mobilizing participant identities

Scholars argue that people participate in collective action based on the way they understand their gender identities, which are indivisible from race, class, sexuality, and other “structural locations” (Bailey and Stallings 2017). McCammon et al. (2017) observe that “scholarship on women’s collective action examines the social movement participants as well as their organizations, their collective identities, their modes of action, and the often far-reaching influence of their actions” (p. 2). Maura Kelly (2015) argues that women and men’s varying feminist identities shape the type and extent of collective action they participate in, ranging from everyday forms of resistance like knitting or speaking their mind, to participating in electoral or interest group politics, to grassroots activism and protests. Amanda Shaw’s (2016) study of activists against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Hawaii reveals that, while gender may not be an explicit focus of the movement, it nevertheless “does

important work which both challenges and reinforces normative dimensions of femininities and masculinities” (p. 64). Furthermore, Shaw’s (2016) study argues agribusinesses, targeted by anti-GMO activists, are seen as colonizers to which a traditional masculine-warrior identity is invoked as a form of resistance but at the same time maintaining normative gender identities.

Research shows how gendered identities contribute, nonexclusively, to collective action aimed at the state and other targets. In a study of contentious politics in Argentina, Javier Auyero (2003) shows how activist’s individual biographies act as a mobilizing force for change despite a backdrop of years of injury and oppression. One activist’s experience of gender-based violence in her past, propelled her to lead a movement against the state when other movement leaders attempted to belittle her role in the movement based on her gender. Tamar Carroll (2017) describes how engagement in the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s Liberation movement, and white ethnic and neighborhood movements led Janice Peterson, the founder of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, to develop an intersectional understanding of identity and to apply this understanding within ongoing cross-identity coalitions for progressive change. Mary Bernstein (2005) argues that women’s collective action in LGBTQ movements extend beyond the concept of identity politics and include both cultural and material claims on the state and other institutions. Jocelyn Viterna (2006) shows how biographies, networks and individual circumstances allows for multiple paths to activism among women revolutionaries in El Salvador and also argues that collective action occurs at multiple levels and is not merely directed at the state in a narrow sense. It is important to note that beyond to the power of identity and biography to motivate collective action, people also engage in collective endeavors to protect their privileged identities.

### Securing privilege and redefining masculinities

Studies have shown that some men participate in collective action to contest or reclaim gender order (Hodapp 2017; Kimmel 2013). Christa Hodapp (2017) writes that the contemporary men’s rights movement is mainly an online movement that claims that men are oppressed by feminism and changing gender norms within parenting and employment, for instance. Hodapp (2017) posits that “men feel as if they have been cheated, lied to, and mislead creating backlash directed towards the perceived sources of this loss – women, feminism, and minorities” (p. 15). Similarly, Michael Kimmel (2013) writes about why white men join white supremacy, counter-Wall Street, and anti-immigrant groups. The “angry white men” Kimmel describes are by no means monolithic and include men who are proponents of white fathers’ rights, who enact extreme rage against women and their coworkers, and men who participate in Tea Party, neo-Nazi white supremacists, Minutemen, and right-wing groups.

Kimmel (2013) argues these “angry white men” participate in gendered movements as a result of social forces that threaten their privilege, what he theorizes as “aggrieved entitlement” (p. 18). Because their power and the hegemonic ideology of masculinity inherited from their forefathers is being threatened, these white men feel powerlessness and humiliated. They feel that benefits have been snatched away by undeserving groups, often blaming immigrants, women, and programs like affirmative action set up to reduce inequality, as the cause of their social and

economic grievances. Thus for these men, participation in extremist far-right collective action validates their masculinity, allows them to blame someone else, and reasserts their claim to power (Kimmel 2013).

Other scholarship recognizes that the privilege that men carry in society is mitigated by their overlapping identities. Michael Messner (1997) argues that men's privileges, costs, and differences or what he calls the "politics of masculinity," shape the collective action of men within the mythopoetic, gay male liberation, and men's rights movements, and other organized responses to the gender order. Promise Keepers, comprising born-again Christians aimed to reestablish male dominance and spiritual leadership in the family (Messner 1997). Melanie Heath (2003) shows how within the Promise Keepers movement, men embraced more expressive masculinity while simultaneously reinforcing the gender and racial privilege of white men. Also ignoring gender privilege, Men's rights participants argued they experienced harm because of stricter sexual and domestic violence and prostitution laws, divorce settlements, and the sexist media (Messner 1997). However, gay liberationists joined feminist women to challenge rape, rape culture, and homophobia (Messner 1997). Similar to how feminist theorists of color argued that the women's movement privileged white middle-class heterosexual women (hooks 1981; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981), Judith Newton (2005) argues that black and gay men were largely excluded from the men's movement. As such, black and gay men grappled with masculinity through other collective efforts including the Black Panthers movement, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Circle of Loving Companions (Newton 2005).

Men's collective action has also revolved around developing ideals of manhood based on care and connection with others (Newton 2005). A recent edited volume of profeminist men across the globe shares the histories of men who acknowledge privilege, participate in childrearing, are involved in redefining masculinity, and who are working to end violence against women (Okun 2014). Proponents of these men's profeminist movements suggest that "gender and sexual equality are fundamental democratic goals and that women and men should each have the same rights and opportunities" (Okun 2014, p. 3). Similar to women's movements, movements dominated by men engage in transnational connections, as evidenced by an alliance called MenEngage, which promotes healthy masculinity for men and boys and operates on every continent (Okun 2014). Within the political arena, gender identities constructed through collective action, are one way that gender becomes a powerful resource for those acting together, often in a contentiously political context.

### **Gendered Collective Processes and Experiences**

Gendered collective action challenges the separation between actors and overlapping forms of oppressions (and privileges) and the dichotomies of gendered power. In addition, gendered collective action creates political spaces of participation for women and other gender minorities. Social meanings of gender are invoked by collective actors and their opponents through a variety of processes to address grievances, whether they are material, such as changes in policy or law, or if they are cultural, such as recognition of excluded groups. These collective processes whether

conscious of it or not, are gendered, as are the identities and expectations that guide how social actors form strategies to achieve their goals.

The division of labor is often gendered within collective efforts, assigning tasks to participants based on their actual or assumed association with femininities, masculinities, and other identities (Einwohner, Hollander, and Olson 2000; Whittier 2013). Collective action participants deploy gendered propaganda, symbols, and language to garner support for their collective efforts. Conversely, opposition groups may use gender to undermine the collective contestation of groups whose actions fall outside of normative gender expectations (Marshall 1985). Nonetheless, collective action has the propensity to shape, bend, and redefine gender regardless of whether participants explicitly work towards social, political, or economic gender change (Einwohner, Hollander, and Olson 2000; Taylor 1999).

### Women creating new ways to contest political exclusion

Although women have long participated in strikes and other forms of social contestation, much of women's participation in collective action has been constrained, but not stopped, by social structures that aim to exclude them. Early accounts of gendered-based collective action in the US go back as far as Harriet Hanson Robinson's (1898) published work *Loom and Spindle: Or Life Among the Early Mill Girls*, which recounts how girls working in textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, formed the Factory Girls' Association. They participated in strikes in 1836 that are thought to have been pioneering moments in the industrial labor movement of the nineteenth century (McCammon et al. 2017).

For decades before gaining the right to vote in the US, women were involved in politics through informal groups. Elisabeth Clemens (1993) argues women used organizational repertoires – or culturally available models for interpreting or acting on a situation – to strategically circumvent their voting restrictions. Women organized via interest groups, lobbying, and educational arenas and, although they were excluded from voting or holding public office, they reworked the tools they had to impact the political system they wanted to change (Clemens 1993, p. 792).

Years later, the US women's suffrage movement created "gendered opportunity structures" that activists in the Women's Jurist Movement were able to use as cultural frames which successfully convinced some states to allow women to participate as jurors at a period after the suffragist movement but prior to second-wave activism of the 1970s and 1980s (McCammon et al. 2007; McCammon et al. 2001). This study shows how collective action organizations use cultural discourses attached to changing public orientation toward gender and politics as a way of obtaining policy change (McCammon et al. 2007, p. 745). Aside from the policy change, collective action in this case also shaped women's role in society as fully participating citizens in the eyes of the state. Similarly, Verta Taylor's (1999) study of the self-help postpartum depression movement also shows how opportunity structures are gendered given that the movement occurred during a time when psychological studies began to acknowledge gendered bias within medical diagnosis and the federal government began issuing official guidelines for creating support groups across the country in place of allocating funds towards mental health services. Notably, Taylor (1999) argues that although the self-help postpartum movement challenged gender inequality in the

family, medicine, and the law, its strategies and frames also reinforced gender differences and the white, middle-class, heterosexual femininity that scholars like bell hooks (1981), Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (1981) and others have highlighted as being class and race biased.

Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum's (2012) study of women's peace activism in Israel acknowledges that the "sets of opportunities and constraints are different for men than for women" (p. 294). By observing activists reporting on their individual interactions between the Israeli military and Palestinians at border security checkpoints, Kutz-Flamenbaum (2012) shows how the all-women activist group took advantage of a gendered political opportunity structure to cross the border and intervene directly, which "shows how women's peace groups are consciously negotiating gender ideologies to take advantage of stereotypes and assumptions about women and leverage those assumptions in order to promote peace" (p. 309). This example highlights how collective action's gendered component allows for a political participation and contestation that would not otherwise be possible in such a volatile environment.

Other research documents the invaluable participation of women during the Civil Rights movement, the Chicano movement, and unionization efforts. For instance, African American women played an important, but often unrecognized role as "bridge leaders" within the Civil Rights movement (Robnett 1997, p. 19). Beyond recruiting people to join in the fight for racial equality, bridge leaders connected the movement's predominantly male religious leadership team to the wider African American community, thus strengthening collective efforts towards racial equality (Barnett 1993; Robnett 1997). Likewise, Marisela Chavez (2000) finds that women involved in the Chicano movement completed the "backbone" work of fundraising and grassroots mobilizing – although publicly men dominated the decision-making leadership roles. Karen Brodtkin Sacks' (1988) study of Duke Medical Center hospital workers in their attempts to unionize, shows how women often took a backstage but important role as organizers, instead of public leaders, a position left almost exclusively for men. Instead, "centerwomen" as Sacks calls them, engaged with people one-on-one and created relationships with people that moved their collective efforts forward (Sacks 1988, p.67).

### Gendered performances and resources

The gendered recruitment, tactics, activities, and responses within collective action contour the diverse experiences of contestation (Whittier 2013; Martin 2002; Perry 2005; Einwohner, Hollander, and Olson 2000; Robnett 1997). White's (1999) research shows how black women in the anti-rape movement shared songs, poems, and testimonies in all-women gatherings which paid homage to black women ancestors – and how these rituals produced feelings conducive to protest and activism (Taylor and Whittier 1995 as cited in White 1999). Michael Messner (1997) describes how mainly white middle-class men who participated in the mythopoetic movement performed rituals to "heal and reconstruct" their "masculine bonds" with other men who felt oppressed by feminist movements.

Gender, as it intersects with race, age, and other identities, has served as a powerful rhetorical and symbolic tool for gaining support for collective action. Heather

McKee Hurwitz and Verta Taylor (2012) posit that, “women’s cultures,” which center on reproductive, emotional, and labor expectations placed on women, have been key in political protest and social change (p. 808). Gender often acts as a “cultural resource” within collective action (Williams 1995), that, as Einhwohner, Hollander, and Olson (2000) suggest “must be negotiated within a specific context” (p. 684) to frame social issues. For instance, the US Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MAAD) campaign leaned on a motherly appeal for safety as a way to lobby for safer roads and tougher DUI (driving under the influence) laws, persuasively influencing policy changes (Einhwohner, Hollander, and Olson 2000).

Moreover, gender performances can build support of collective action. For instance, gender has been conducive to establishing support for right-wing political agendas (Johnson 2015; Oliviero 2011; Romero 2008). Women’s involvement in nativist movements can be traced back to the nineteenth century, where white women holding guns epitomized fertility and the protection of a “racially strong nation” during eugenics movements that pushed the ideology of white superiority (Browder 2006, as cited by Oliviero 2011). Katie Oliviero (2011) argues that “armed femininity,” or a women’s use of guns to enter a masculine sphere of power, crossed gendered boundaries while simultaneously maintaining them.

### Immigration patterns and social contestation

A growing body of literature examines how immigration shapes collective action. Women who are left behind in sending countries after men migrate to the US often “fill in” politically within their communities (Menjívar and Agadjanian 2007). In other cases, when women return from the US, their experiences abroad shape their propensity to engage in collective action in their native land (Andrews 2014). Abigail Andrews (2014) argues that women’s political engagement in the Mixtec village of San Miguel, Oaxaca, Mexico, was a response to their undocumented experiences in the US and the economic crisis in the Mexican countryside. Women who migrated to the US often returned to Mexico seeking to rid themselves of racist experiences, their undocumented status, political exclusion, and economic exploitation. Although women have historically been absent from formal community politics in San Miguel, immigration patterns created openings for women to participate in voting and committee meetings, and to have leadership positions starting in the 1990s (Andrews 2014). To avoid having to migrate again, these women sought to structurally improve their hometown by fighting political elites for government development funds, and they did so by breaking gendered political and social norms. Their gender-bending practices did not happen without pushback, as several voices of opposition accused women of being “degenerates” and “prostitutes” for their work in the community. Nonetheless, the increased political presence of women helped them to gain greater self-esteem, to increasingly report domestic violence, and to feel stronger knowing that they not only improved their power at home and in the community, but they also avoided the necessity to migrate to the US again.

Shedding light on a recent anti-immigrant movement, Jennifer Johnson (2015) writes about grandmothers who participate in the nationalist project of the minutemen to police the US-Mexico border and how they underscore racial and ethnic divides. Johnson finds that women in the minutemen camps primarily contributed as

cooks, clerical workers, and hostesses. However, the public presence of grandmothers as physically guarding the border on behalf of families across the country, was orchestrated for the media as a strategy to fuel the moral panic on immigration. These gendered “border grannies” helped to shape the rhetoric of securing families from “dangerous” immigrants (Johnson 2015). Similarly, Mary Romero’s (2008) writings on Mothers Against Illegal Aliens, shows how the group framed anti-immigrant rhetoric as a mother’s duty to protect her family from the social results of unfit immigrant mothers, who through no fault of their own, did not live up to an idealized white middle-class motherhood.

### **Collective reaction to state intervention in gendered education policy**

Larger global shifts toward gender equality that disrupt a prescribed gendered order have been met with local collective action as well. In Peru, for example, a recent proposal by the Ministry of Education to implement a curriculum designed to teach gender equality has been met with strong resistance from a religiously conservative backed movement know as “Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas” (Do Not Mess with my Children) or CMHNTM, a resistance movement that rejects the implementation of what its participants call a “gender ideology.” This educational policy is being resisted because it is thought to challenge a more traditional understanding of gender roles that are often based on conservative interpretations of Christianity (Bello 2017). A collection of men and women who identify as conservative religious Christians are mobilizing out of concern for how gender will be taught to their children in public schools. Participants use traditional gender roles as a “cultural resource” (Williams 1995) that when deployed, are able to mobilize thousands. This is different from some of the other cases that we have examined because both men and women are participating in social movement activities out of a common concern for gender-based teaching. As Maxine Molyneux observes, “people try to establish a moral panic and the idea that the family is dissolving” (as cited in Bello 2017, 31). Movement participants are advocating for a policy outcome that aligns with the movement’s values, while seeking to maintain cultural beliefs that the group holds as sacred.

Gender is an important factor that extends analyses and understandings of how and why collective action in the Global South occurs. The CMHNTM movement brings together church institutions, school officials, and parents to contest the Peruvian Ministry of Education, which in this case, acts as a proxy for the state. Thus, gender ideology and concern for how it can be changed gives rise to a multi-institutional coalition concerned with resisting both material and symbolic changes to education in Peru. A multi-institutional approach (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008) to gender and collective action opens research agendas to consider additional institutional challenges and identities, all of which reveal important cultural as well as material implications for activists (Wulff, Bernstein, and Taylor 2015).

### **Gendered Results of Collective Action**

Scholars have raised important questions concerning the social results of collective action. Studies show that collective action, regardless of the intended outcome of



collective action, shapes participants' biographies and identities. Research shows that through collective resistance, social and gendered change is a possible and ongoing process. However, other analysts find that collective efforts to increase social protections and to challenge power structures can also reproduce gender inequalities and or coopt attempts for increased autonomy.

### Shaped identities and biographies

Collective action helps participants to embrace or redefine intersecting identities, and shapes participant's biographies (Perry 2016; McAdam 1989). Joane Nagel's (1995) study of ethnic renewal between the 1960s and 1990s suggests that political activism in the Red Power Movement encouraged participants to either embrace a new Native American identity or to reaffirm their ethnic pride by reconstructing the meaning behind their Native American identity. More recently, Victoria Terriquez's (2015) study of LGBTQ undocumented youth participants of the immigration movement illustrates how participation in the movement helped undocumented participants to embrace sexual identities that they had otherwise hidden from family and friends for fear of not being included in their communities. Anna-Britt Coe's (2015) research, which focuses on youth gender justice activism in Peru and Ecuador, argues that gender and age intersect to produce "new feminisms" and a new generation of activism. Moreover, studies show that student participants of collective efforts in the 1960s, continued to have leftist points of view well into adulthood with some continuing their activist efforts or engaging in other forms of political action (Frendrich 1977; Marwell, Aiken, and Demerath 1987; Jennings and Niemi 1981; for a review see Guigni 2004). Doug McAdam's (1988) study also indicates how participation in Freedom Summer impacted the future political involvement, child-bearing decisions, and occupational choices of activists.

### Gender parity and justice

Collective action helps to achieve women's "practical" and "strategic" interests (Molyneux 2001, p. 43). Practical interests arise from precarious social and economic conditions that shape family life in marginal urban settlements in the Global South. These conditions can include a lack of access to basic services such as piped water and sewage and can be the basis for women's collective action (Woolley 2017). Strategic interests are those that would bring about the increased rights of women including the right to vote or be elected and for women to make decisions about their own bodies. Molyneux (2001) suggests we should not assume that all women have the same interests, for instance, that they all want to or are able to participate in public leadership. We can see an example of this in the case of indigenous women in Yatzachi, Oaxaca, Mexico who did not want to be involved in formal politics because it would add to their labor. Holly Worthen (2015) finds that indigenous women contested a state mandate ordering women to be part of the town's governing council because the division of labor did not offer viable options for them to be involved in political participation without increasing the already heavy burdens of reproductive labor.

Across the globe, collective action has brought monetary and sociocultural recognition, and strength for women. In terms of closing the gender income gap,

Maria Akchurin and Cheol-Sung Lee (2013) examine the influence of women's activism in 51 countries and find that collective action tends to increase women's earnings, particularly among women allied with labor unions, leftist political parties, and organizations that have ties with other organizations. Keisha-Khan Perry's (2013) study of black women's activism against urban revitalization in Brazil shows how women's leadership and grassroots participation is at the heart of the movement, which gives increased visibility to black women as political actors in Brazil. Cossyleon (2018) shows how for lower-income black and Latina community organizers, whom she calls "motherleaders," participation in family-focused community organizing reshaped gendered relationships and helped women to "come out of their shells" to contest their social and structural marginalization in and outside of their households.

Other studies describe how collective action shapes gendered divisions of labor by bending certain norms, even if only temporarily. For example, in El Salvador during attempts to overthrow an elite-sponsored state, women in guerilla camps participated in what Jocelyn Viterna (2013) calls "gender-bending" politics (p. 9) by exercising both traditional "feminine" caring duties and more "masculine" duties of political involvement and combat. Although the involvement of Salvadoran women in the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) helped to increase women's political skills, these strategies arguably did not impact gender equality, legislative representation of women, or the workplace and reproductive rights of women (Viterna and Fallon 2008).

In Argentina, right-wing military dictatorships unleashed waves of violence repression ranging from torture to the disappearing of suspected insurgents and political opponents. As a response, mothers who came to be known as the Madres de Plaza Mayo (Mothers of the Plaza Mayo), gathered in public spaces to render visible the state violence that led to the disappearance of their children and their suffering (Feijoo, Nari, and Fierro 1994). Marching in front of the presidential palace demanding answers, mothers brought national attention to the violent military regime that is responsible for an estimated 30,000 deaths. Collective action and gender often intersect and not only highlight a specific concern, in this case a mother's anguish over the loss of a child, but also raise questions about issues that hold implications for a broader public and challenge other power structures within society that are based on class and racialized hierarchies (Coe 2015). As mothers of missing children, the Madres de Plaza Mayo used their platform to fight for justice and decentralized power. They also underscored the plight of human rights in the country in general (Ray and Korteweg 1999) and helped to propel the women's movement in Argentina and worldwide forward (Viterna and Fallon 2008). Argentina later created quota laws within political representation at the national level, founded the National Council of Women to promote gender equality, and shut down an attempt to make abortion illegal under any circumstance (Viterna and Fallon 2008).

In Peru, mobilization around the involuntary sterilization of Peruvian women during the Fujimori administration in the 1990s became politicized during the 2011 elections for president. The coercive sterilization program was aimed at indigenous women across rural communities in the Andean region where state healthcare workers told women that they were to receive routine health treatments, when in reality they received highly invasive procedures that left them unable to have

children (Ewig 2012). The program impacted 300,000 women, many of whom were not informed of their rights (Boesten 2012). Collective action by survivors and allies continue to seek justice through prosecution of those responsible for the program and have met a slow response from the state (Serra 2017). However, during the 2011 presidential race, mobilization around this issue become coopted by political opportunists to serve their needs, while not addressing the policy claims that the movement advocated. Ultimately, the presidential candidate not associated with the program, used the case to his advantage, winning the election (Ewig 2012). As Serra (2017) and Coe (2012) show, the narrative of indigenous survivors swayed campaign outcomes but did not produce a policy response from the state that favored those who had been unjustly targeted and harmed by the program.

### Political economy and the NGOization of collective action

In Latin America, the gendered interests of poor women have been “instrumentalized by political forces” to organize women around the collective rights of water and the education of children, although in some cases simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal ideologies (Molyneux 2001, p. 157). As the state has continued to withdraw social protections, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) fill the void, providing services to the neediest. The expansion of the role of NGOs in relation to the reduction of state capacities, has seen the growth of many development projects that are created to address the material needs of the poorest of the poor, often targeting indigenous women in rural and urban communities. Typically, projects such as day-care centers, soup kitchens, and community health projects employ local “participants” as the indispensable laborers in these projects and at the same time, take women’s work for granted (Lind 2002, p. 233). As these “neoliberal inspired” projects become institutionalized, through “state women’s agencies or women’s NGOs,” the women that are “targeted” as workers are considered volunteer, cheap labor because the work they do for the organization is an extension of what they would already do as care workers (Lind 2002, p. 223). As a result, more work is created for women who participate in these projects, while at the same time, women do not receive fair economic compensation for their efforts.

For example, during the 1980s and 1990s rural to urban migrant communities established neighborhood associations to meet their needs. In particular, the women who settled Lima’s marginal spaces organized popular kitchens as a way of meeting the nutritional needs of their families (Jenkins 2009), which are tied to modes of domestic production (Lind 2002). The Peruvian state continues to provide resources to women’s organizations to support their free labor efforts and benefit in increased political capital, while investing minimal material resources. Furthermore, women lend political support to state-sponsored political activities because they depend on the material resources that state sponsored programs provide. This patron–client system in effect uses grassroots women’s organizations for its political ambitions, thus coopting collective efforts to challenge the state and the status quo.

Local community struggles can be filtered through a third party and disguised as “empowerment,” a trend that is common across Latin America (Connell and Dados 2014; Garretton 2003; Lind 2002;). The NGOs are held up as model projects that efficiently employ community-based resources and keep donors happy. Yet there is a

disconnect between the workers, the managers of the NGO, and the donors. Much of this disconnect is also a result of class differences as well as varied racialized experiences and geographic locations. The environmental reality of the women who live where the projects are initiated is drastically different from those who work in the state agencies and NGO offices, which creates marked differences in lived, material, and political experiences. Women's work, seen as a free or cheap commodity, as described in Amy Lind's (2002, p. 238) study of a day-care center project in Ecuador initiated by a women's NGO and a state agency that provides "small salaries but generally assumed that women's volunteerism is 'extra' or a 'second salary' and does not require compensation as other forms of 'male' employment do." For example, the local men employed to build the structure, were paid in full for their labor; however, if the same ideology for the work women do at the center was applied to the men, they would have received little compensation for their effort because building the center would have been understood as helping the community. The project arguably institutionalized poverty and women's struggle for social and economic autonomy. However, the state and the NGO saw that the project contributed to community solidarity, improved health and economic productivity in day-care centers, which allowed women to enter the market and earn a wage. These types of quasi-privatized projects also exploit the fact that the community does not have direct access to agents of the state and can only access the state through the NGO.

## Conclusion

Collective action enables groups to mobilize around common interests, grievances, and concerns in order to bring about change or prevent it from occurring. These collective processes are inextricably shaped by and shaping gender relations, which highlight intersecting oppressions and privileges. Some groups are coming together to demand new recognitions, policy changes, or access to resources to meet even the most basic of needs. Others are rejecting gender-based violence, or defending their rights, land, environment, and family. Thus, groups that seek to gain access to the polity despite their exclusion, those looking to preserve what they understand as a "traditional status quo," and those fighting for survival, all do so through collective action that is both gendered and gendering.

We have shown how gender across the globe is both a subtle and essential component of transnationally connected mobilization. Gender not only ignites collective action, it also shapes the activities and experiences of participants, and the social outcomes of collective efforts that often transcend intended and or material gains. It is important that scholars continue to consider the multifaceted ways collective action brings about social change beyond the tangible goals of organizations and groups. It is our hope that future research examines how gendered collective action mobilizes around a sense of hope and the rejection of asymmetric systems of power. We believe that gender's centrality to the study of collective action will continue to unfold, revealing the potential for transformative scholarship. Particularly, there must be a focus on grassroots level collective action in order to render visible the local groups who raise their voices to call for a more equitable world where collectivism and the common good are paramount.

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## Women's Movements

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In 2017, women's fight against inequality was acknowledged worldwide and has since been referred to as the "Year of the Woman." A brief collection of articles from various newspapers confirms that recognition: *Newsweek*, on December 12, explored "Here's Why 'Feminism' Is the Word of the Year." *The Washington Post*, on December 28, described 2017 as "The Unexpected (and inspiring) Year of the Woman"; while *The Independent's* "Review of the year" on the same date, highlighted "the female groundbreakers of 2017."

Despite this global recognition in 2017 of women's and feminists' campaigns, as reflected in those headlines, women have been fighting, proposing changes, and mobilizing together for many years, against all odds and all over the world. A non-comprehensive classification of women's movements and mobilizations would include the following actions:

1. Women as creators of life: movements struggling for sexual rights and reproductive health, for food sovereignty, against poverty and extractive mining.
2. Women as defenders of life: women against gender-based violence and sexual harassment, against war and in pro-peace women's movements, mothers against drugs, against guns, women contributing to giving voice to marginalized communities such as Dalit women or women living with HIV; women's health movements.
3. Women as improvers of life: standing up for social equity and social services, for women's employment and the betterment of employment conditions (domestic workers; migrant workers; against the gender pay gap); caring and housing.
4. Women against authoritarianism: women condemning authoritarian regimes but also demanding more effective democracy in democratic regimes through more inclusive legal reforms and political participation (peacebuilding, human rights).

Decades of diverse and plural women's movements and theoretical analyses have allowed us to recognize those actions more comprehensively. A study by Ferree and Mueller (2004), for example, has made a significant contribution by defining women's movements and their relationship with feminism, positing that women's movements are not necessarily synonymous with organized feminism. Their work also opened a discussion about how particular social movement theories approach women's movements, from the analysis of opportunity structure to the questioning of the alleged "newness" of these movements. Crenshaw (1989), for example, established the need of demarginalizing "Black women in feminist theory and antiracist politics" by accurately reflecting "the intersection of sex and race"; in her words, "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism" (1989, p. 140). Basu (2000) analyzes transnational activism and posits that the relationships between local and global networks are woven between women's and feminist movements from both the South and the North, and Fadaee advocates that "recognizing the prevalent characteristics of Southern social movements is a prerequisite for a more radical break with the Northern-centric nature of social movement studies" (2017, pp. 46–47). While Beckwith (2000), on the other hand, offers a precise and detailed analysis of the problems faced when considering the comparative analysis of women's movements and, additionally, critically reviews a wide array of national analyses from all over the world.

As this brief overview illustrates, this body of literature introduces some of the fundamentals that enrich the theoretical discussion about women's movements. Those fundamentals refer to the process of collective identity construction that take place in the interdependent relationship between local and global experiences and in the intersection of sex, race, class, and nation. As Wulff, Bernstein, and Taylor (2015) advocate, studies of women, gender, and sexuality movements have contributed to the consideration of power in a more complex way than the state-centric definition of the dominant theoretical approaches to the study of social movements. Therefore, domination is organized around myriad institutions (from workplaces to religion or science) and culture also constitutes domination.

This chapter uses these relevant analyses as points of departure to establish specific issues in the onward discussion. It reviews examples of activism and women's movements from all over the world, focusing on the less visible, less publicized movements in non-Western countries that are largely ignored by Western studies. It requires, as proposed by Fadaee, "'inverting the order of things' (Comaroff 2012) by developing theory based on empirical studies of the Global South" (Fadaee 2017, p. 47). Analyzing those experiences allows us to introduce a discussion about women's movements as part of social movement approaches.

The analysis of women's activism beyond borders (both theoretical and material) reveals biases when referring to women's movements and certain hegemonic "myopia" in the definition of actors, actions, and subjects. Transnational feminist analysis challenges binary conceptions of politics, economics, geopolitics, and international relations – formal/informal, public/private, global/local, and central/peripheral – and focuses on the forms of circulation of power, identity, and subjectivity through space. It is no longer a matter of addressing gender or geographical position, but a proposal to address the dimensions of power and identity that contribute to the constitution of people and places as subjects (Hyndman 2004).

Moreover, our transnational approach helps us to understand social movements beyond internationalization to capture the relevance of multisituated networks and alliances of contemporary social action and, above all, women's movements (Naples 2002; Jelin 2003; Moghadam 2005; MacDonald 2005; Conway 2007; Domínguez 2014; Marchand 2014).

A large amount of research has been devoted to the study of (mainly Western) women's movements, making it practically impossible to take all of it into consideration. When defining a women's movement, the first task is to insist on the plurality of these global phenomena. Plurality assumes diverse, conflictual, even antagonistic ways of understanding actions led by women.

Based on these points, we will focus on the topics that we argue better represent the onward discussions. We start with the theoretical problem of defining the term "women's movement" by considering, firstly, the construction of collective identities and, secondly, the way the actors organize. In the third part of this chapter, the introduction of the transnational approach reframes the discussion through the consideration of space and the dialectic relationship of local and global networks. Finally, we will suggest some aspects for further research to provide more gender-inclusive approaches to the study of social movements.

### **Who are the Actors? What are Their Identities and Interests?**

As Beckwith proposed, to find agreement among scholars when defining women's movements, we must focus on three components: "(1) who the actors are; (2) what the actors present as their identities and interests; and (3) how the actors organize" (Beckwith 2013, p. 412). This requires splitting the analysis into two parts: the collective identity – *women's* movements (components 1 and 2); and the action – women's *movements* (component 3).

Ferree and Mueller (2004, p. 579) have provided a simple and complete answer for who the actors are: "women [who] mobilize as women." Drawing upon Crenshaw's work, (1989), we argue for the need for intersectionality when talking about women. Beckwith introduces a position for women that defines those movements as "where women are the major actors and leaders" (Beckwith 2013, p. 412). With this definition as a basis, the focal point in the analysis of "women's movements" differs from that in the study of "women in movements," which would include the participation of women in any other form of (primarily, male-led) movements. In this chapter, we center our discussion only on the former.

If, following Ferree and Mueller (2004, p. 577), we define women's movements as "mobilizations based on appeals to women as a *constituency* and thus as an organizational strategy," the question about collective identity would present women as both the subject and target of the actions. The concept of women's movements includes any mobilization, any action, which lays down a demand for change in the situation affecting women, that is, economic, social, political, legal, cultural, and sexual conditions and rights.

However, this definition can be taken one step further to attend to the fact that women do not only mobilize to demand equal rights all over the world, but "women also mobilize to confront authoritarian rules [...], to demand peace [...], to call for

handgun control [...], and to address a variety of social problems across their communities” (Ferree and Mueller 2004, p. 578). Thus, women’s movements seek to challenge “inequalities and injustice” between women and men (Horn 2013, p. 15), and “focus their attention on problems that women face distinctively or to a greater degree than men” (Ferree and Mueller 2004, p. 578). Even if we exclude the idea of “women’s interests” – as there will always be a context in which every women’s mobilization will be anchored and situated – the definition of the collective identity of every women’s group will derive from shared and common interests, experiences, and solidarity.

“Collective identities,” on the other hand, incorporates the idea of heterogeneity, as it avoids the risks of essentialism, reification, and universalization that are present when identity means “generating boundaries between groups by homogenizing and conflating individual and collective identities” (Lim 2016, p. 74). Melucci’s work on the construction of collective identity in social movements establishes that, the “production” of the collective identity requires “the interaction, the negotiation, and the opposition of different orientations” (those relating to the ends, to the means, and, finally, to relationships with the environment) (1988a, pp. 332–333). So, collective identities are not a given, but imply a continual and dynamic process of composition and recomposition.

Hugely different visions could be united under women’s, gender, and feminist identities, and each movement is constructed to broaden awareness and forge paths for social action. Behind the desire to choose “women,” “gender,” or “feminist” appellation, there is a sense of politics that varies according to the interest, trajectories, and projection of each movement. For instance, during the past decade, the symbolic and material negotiations and conflicts among three Latin American networks exemplify the progressive redefinition of collective identity, almost in a discursive manner. The changes in goals and repertoires of these women’s networks show the cross-fertilization that operated in regional terms and the plasticity of gender as an analytic concept to facilitate the transformation of the framework in each case (Cabezas 2014).

The patterns in which women’s movements use the concepts of woman/women, gender and/or feminism to define themselves provides space for research on the intersections among power, ideas, and unequal relationships, and between places and people (Desai 2002). The study of Latin American women’s networks during the Free Trade American Agreement negotiations (Cabezas 2008) established a continuum between the self-definition of movements as women’s or feminist movements, although the use of “women” or “feminist” could also be understood as part of the discussion on “representation versus distribution” in contemporary political thought.<sup>1</sup> It seems that women’s collective identity is often built around their sense of sisterhood in terms of group solidarity. By contrast, “feminism” implies an explicit reference to attributing certain situations to problems derived from the position and the performance of women in societies, which are shaped by patterns that have legitimized the subordination, exclusion, and marginalization of women.

Women have versatile identities, making their movements highly diversified and difficult to define coherently. Sometimes, the construction of collective identities might be contentious and engender divisions, including cases where disputes might lead to the exclusion of certain groups and members, which have consequences in

the way that resources and power are distributed (Wulff, Bernstein, and Taylor 2015). This was the case, for instance, when the IX Lesbian Feminist Latin American Encounter (2012) decided to exclude trans individuals from participating, which led to the eventual breakaway from this Encounter. As a response to this conflict, a separated Encounter was organized: the LesBiTransInter Feminist Encounter (Ramírez and Castellanos 2013).

Moreover, the persistence of ethnocentric foci from North to South and from West to East could exclude women's movements that do not fit with the classic traditions of a 'feminist agenda'. This was the case, for example, of mobilizations in former socialist countries during the 1990s democratic transitions. Women did not need to mobilize around pro-choice (because abortion was legal, and sometimes dissident women were hardly noticed because they were not formally organized). Einhorn and Sever have argued that existing women's movements under state socialism have been obscured on two levels (Einhorn and Sever 2003, cited by Waylen 2007, p. 63). Firstly women's movements mobilized in opposition to state socialism in Poland with Solidarity and in the former Czechoslovakia with Charter 77, but the most successful movement primarily organized as a women's movement was the women's peace movement in East Germany in 1982 (Waylen 2007, p. 66).

### **How do the Actors Organize? Women's Movements and Non-Movements**

In order to address the way women's movements organize, we need to identify the characteristics that comprise a social movement, in its broader and more consensual sense, as defined by social movement researchers (Diani 1992; Revilla 1996; Tarrow 2011; Della Porta 2003; Banaszak, 2006; Della Porta and Diani 2006; Beckwith 2013). The movement process is characterized by:

1. A shared collective identity.
2. Identified grievances.
3. Mixed organizational structures, both formal and informal, containing social networks, formal organizations, and grassroots groupings.
4. A variety of methods, from conventional ways of participation to more transgressive or contentious means.

As discussed above, women's movements share woman, gender and/or feminist collective identities (neither universalist, nor essentialist) and they seek to address a range of grievances that include oppression, subordination and/or injustice. Women's movements incorporate issues that are important for the comprehension of social movements in general: face-to-face relationships, emotions, solidarity beyond persons and, as posed to describe social movements, the politicization of everyday life. Melucci described social movements as a submerged, dispersed, fragmented network of relationships that underlies collective actions (Melucci 1988b) and this type of network constitutes – in all social movements in general and in women's movements more specifically – the grassroots of any kind of social, political or cultural mobilization.

When analyzing the Italian women's movements and the Left, Della Porta (2003, p. 56) establishes the importance of the "style of consciousness-raising" for "bringing out the social bases of oppression through a revisitation of daily life with other women." We refer to the way identities transform themselves through interactions and different scenarios by time and place. In the same way, displacements can also be produced from the micro-level (individual activists and their interactions) to the meso-level (groups and institutions and their interactions) and the macro-level (the coherent whole) (Banaszak 2006, p. 3), as well as from private to public spheres.

However, studies about women's movements are usually set aside from theoretical social movement discussion, being just another particular case. Waterman, for example, explains that the illustrative references to women's groups and conferences, to feminism and the concept of gender, do not do away with the impression that global civil society is only inhabited by men (Waterman 2003). For example, the lack of visibility of women in relation to struggles over land and indigenous territories in Latin America (Radcliffe and Pequeno 2010), and the absence of a gendered analysis is increasingly recognized as a significant gap in the extensive literature on resource extraction (Bebbington, Bornschlegel, and Johnson 2013, p. 5).

The Western study of social movements, even beyond structuralism, seems to be class-conflict based, which relegates women's movements to cultural spheres (Jasper 2010) or to postmaterialist conflicts (as in the case of approaches to "new social movements"). The issues raised by women's movements relate to: living-conditions, the division of work and labor between women and men, access to land property, acknowledgment of women's individual rights, the vindication of rights over territories, and so on. Neither are women's movements "new" social movements (Ferree and Mueller 2004, pp. 582–584); and nor do they only mobilize cultural identities.

The analyses of women's movements contribute to understanding the dynamics of social movements, including gender dynamics. Ferree and Mueller (2004, p. 590) argue for the recognition of three major contributions: (i) the relationship between gender and political opportunity, which may distribute various and variable advantages between women and men in mobilizing; (ii) the influence these opportunities may have in terms of the long-term leadership and organization and, (iii) the analysis of how changes in gendered opportunities affect action throughout the whole process. Furthermore, research on gender and sexuality movements claims to recognize that the target of these movements includes state and nonstate institutions, which, as Wulff, Bernstein, and Taylor (2015, pp. 114–115) argue, has forced theorists to place social movements in a multi-institutional context and to rethink key issues around activists, activism, mobilization, strategies, and outcomes.

Even so, when considering the experiences of non-Western women's movements, some issues emerge as specific to these movements. For instance, Fadaee (2017) establishes the link between social movements in the South with identity and material issues. Tripp (2003), on the other hand, explores women's mobilization in Africa after the 1990s and identifies a specific pattern in the size of African movements and their inclusiveness, which cross lines of conflict, and link personal and political aspects with the use of motherhood as a political resource.

Regarding scale, the largest proportion of human rights organizations in Africa were women's rights organizations in countries like Tanzania, Mali, and Kenya. Additionally, women have played a central role in the Arab Spring movements since



2011 across the Middle East and North African countries – the MENA region (Gamal Shash and Forde 2016; Johansson-Nogués 2013; Karolak 2012). Moreover, the scale of women's mobilization against the abortion ban in Poland and that of the "Ni Una Menos" mobilization in Argentina against gender-based violence (both in 2016), allows us to extend to other world regions some features in contemporary women's mobilizations that Tripp has identified in Africa.

Characteristics of African women's movements, such as the heterogeneity of the women's movement, the focus on autonomy, the emphasis on political strategies, and the cross-cutting conflicts, are present in other world regions as well. For example, women are organized across 'enemy lines' to find bases for peace, and form coalitions and networks that help to build new bases for solidarity in war areas in the Congo, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Sudan, and Rwanda (Tripp 2003, p. 241). This pattern was identified in the Palestine/Israel case (Yuval-Davis 2006) and is present in the Colombian Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres (Ibarra Melo 2011), and in the Bhopal survivors' movement against Dow Chemicals and the Indian state (Motta and Nilsen 2011).

The narrative of these non-Western women's movements sometimes seems to suggest that Western women are beyond materialism and/or motherhood when the reality looks very different. As Ferree and Mueller advocate, "women's movements address their constituents as women, mothers, sisters, daughters" (2004, p. 577). This is exemplified by the Canadian-initiated World March of Women, a global network connecting grassroots groups and organizations, which seeks to eliminate poverty and violence against women all over the world, not only poverty in impoverished countries.

Nevertheless, there are at least four premises in Western social movement studies that need to be considered for a global understanding of women's movements. The first issue to be reconsidered is the individualistic approach. For some specific women's movements, as in the case of indigenous women in Latin America or black women's movements in Sub-Saharan Africa, the subject of the action is not the individual but the community. Women's rights only make sense in terms of the imagined communities within which people live and, through their embeddedness in local social relations and cultural norms (Ong 1996). Therefore, as a second issue, the distinction between public and private spheres (RoSa-Factsheets, 2004) is not a universal way of structuring the society and makes it difficult to understand the spheres of action in which women might play a role. Moreover, women's actions and mobilizations typically place private issues in the public eye and mix both spheres through the politicization of everyday life.

Thirdly, the western distinctions between formal and informal politics (Fadaee 2017) and economy (RoSa-Factsheets 2004) appear to be questioned. The preoccupation with 'big' political issues – the power mechanisms of formal political institutions at global or national level – obscures the power of the home, community, neighborhood, or school as micro-environments of global reach, where women become key actors (Vega Solis and Gil 2001; Dowler and Sharp 2001). Finally, Fallon has argued that the sequence of gaining rights for women is that first, political rights are won, and then civil and economic rights. She specifies that this has been the sequence in the US and Western Europe, but establishes a different sequence for women's movements in the context of democratic transitions, where, women might

focus primarily on improving their economic well-being – such as in Ghana (Fallon 2003). As established by the critique of developmentalism, the historical sequence of gaining rights cannot be taken as a model pattern to be fulfilled.

Giving visibility to actions led by women around the world might require stepping aside from the limits of the theoretical concept of a “social movement.” When studying the way that Iranian women resisted the authoritarian Islamic regime post-revolution, which had imposed veiling and gender segregation, and had revoked the prerevolutionary laws that favored women, Bayat establishes the existence of Women’s Non-Movements, because they derive from individual actions, without organizations or collective claimers. In this, he highlights women’s public involvement in everyday tasks, “such as working, playing sports, studying, [...] or running for political offices. Imposing themselves as public players, women managed to make some significant shift in gender dynamics, empowering themselves” (Bayat 2007, p. 161). Even if there is no collective action or social movement to take account of, there is a theoretical problem (are there social movements without collective identities or organizations?) that could not be skipped without privileging one form of struggle over others (Bayat 2007, p. 169).

The sterile discussion about the existence (or not) of social movements, which seek to adjust to the standards of academic debates about the term, may lead to the denial of efforts made by individuals and groups to confront exclusion and oppression. This limited approach has been questioned in other times and places, for example, in the reluctance to accept the label “social movement” to recognize the actions and mobilizations which took place in South America in the 1970s and 1980s under various dictatorships. These actions confronted the authoritarian regimes and initiated fights for human rights (mostly, mothers’ movements, not only in Argentina, but also in Chile) and produced the “collectivization of reproductive tasks in popular [mostly, women’s] grassroots organizations and community action” (Jelin and Pereyra 1990, p. 23).

The term “women’s non-movements” favors the recognition of women’s actions by “deploying *the power of presence*, the assertion of collective will in spite of all odds, by refusing to exit, circumventing the constraints, and discovering new spaces of freedom to make oneself heard, seen, and felt” (emphasis added; Bayat 2007, p. 161). The proposal resonates with the concept of presence used by Sassen to discuss the practices of migrant women workers in the circuits of global capital. The women who clean up in the city of London, for example, who are usually seen as disempowered, have a social impact in the global city and beyond, because their remittances not only financially support their families, but also keep their states afloat (Sassen 2000).

Women organize to translate daily life, bodies, homes, family, care, and the right to occupy the public space into politics through a wide range of actions. Women’s mobilization is as diverse as women are. Women share a feeling of oppression and injustice simply because they are women. Even though they are not identical to any other woman, they join strategically in sisterhood (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). So the strategical sisterhood appears to link local and global actions but there is no single international sisterhood but many possible, negotiable, and partial collaborations between women in different countries (Ong, 1996), because “local sites are also highly contested places where members redefine their identities and strategies in the

context of ever-changing community dynamics and international relations” (Naples 2002, p. 265). Our proposal, therefore, is to approach this issue from a transnational and spatial framework to account for “modes of organizing locally, regionally, and nationally that borrow from and in turn produce transnational feminist frames” (Desai 2015, p. 125).

### **Social Movement beyond Internationalism: The Transnational Approach**

The 2017 Royal Geographic Society Conference raised the question of how the universal claims to knowledge associated with the West continue to marginalize and discount places, people and knowledge across the globe (Radcliffe 2017). The topic is particularly relevant when we research women’s movements around the world. As Yu noted, it is necessary to go beyond the dualism of global/local and theory/practice in the study of women’s movements to understand the experience of young Asian women who are activists in economically developed societies such as Japan, Korea, Hong-Kong, and Taiwan. During *The Women’s World 2005* Conference in Seoul, for example, the participants analyzed pseudo-universal terms like “woman” and “wom-anhood” to incorporate race, class, community, or nation into their analytical frameworks (Yu 2009).

Studying women’s movements from a geographical perspective means taking into account how the dynamics of contentious politics are closely bound up with space, place, and scale (Martin and Miller 2003), and how place informs social activism (Panelli 2007). Salen’s study on Egypt (2017) shows that both the rise and fall of the Egyptian women’s movement must be contextualized geopolitically and transnationally and, Basu (2010) reminds us to consider the regional context in which these movements are working, while Álvarez et al. (2003) highlights the impact of women’s mobilizations on regional circumstances. Moreover, looking at local women’s movements from a global perspective allows us to view the experiences of women more broadly than is possible in localized situations, while at the same time it allows us to recognize the limitations of a global perspective that tends to homogenize experience and mask historical specificity.

Feminist geographies and geopolitics should also be taken into account if a rigid alignment between identity and places is to be avoided (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2004; Staeheli et al. 2004; Sharp 2005). For example, this can occur when the Global South is treated as a unified space, as it obscures significant differences between women’s movements across various countries, as well as within them (Motta and Nilsen 2011). To some extent, women from the Global South tend to be represented by more diverse, and sometimes bigger problems, agendas, and repertoires than women’s movements in the North (McEwan 2003). Roberts, for example, argues that:

By virtue of the colonialist cognitive habit of ascribing characteristics to great swaths of global space and all those who inhabit those spaces, the global south and the global north stand in quite different relation to these binaries. *Critical scholars of imperialism, colonialism, and development have pointed out how the global south was, and still is,*

*often described and treated in ways that imply its feminization, pathologization, and infantilization* (Fabian 1983; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Visvanathan 1988). These attributes are territorialized and, in the process, differences within each global zone thus designated are denied in favor of emphasizing differences between global zones (Ling 2000; Spivak 1996; Roberts et al. 2003).”

(emphasis added; Roberts 2004, p. 129)

The discussion does not need to be limited to regional or even national politics because other scales such as bodies, homes, neighborhoods, and communities are intrinsically connected to each other. For example, the legacy of imperialism can be found in strategies of cultural domination rather than in the economic strategies of exploitation and control (Larner and Walters 2002), and its connection to women’s movements and cultures, because women are considered to be the reservoirs of communities’ essences, so women’s bodies often become a target for repression and violence all over the world (Johansson-Nogués 2013; Hafez 2014), often to simply define political borders. Moreover, sometimes women’s movements face the dilemma between proceeding with specific demands of women and the struggle for one’s own country or culture in a global context.

When the situation in Palestine, for example, led Egyptian women toward Arab feminism as a space to build solidarity, MENA women realized that they had to contend with both patriarchal and colonial systems of power (Badran 1996). In this sense, we can see the challenges of African women facing “double activism” devoted to women’s rights and supporting autonomous states. Their difficult task is to find “an activism that turns the existing gender hierarchy into something that is at the same time liberating for women and offers a valid political alternative” (RoSa-factsheets 2004, p. 2).

The eurocentrism that supports imperialism in its various manifestations over time are at the center of issues that Western feminists are not comfortable confronting. A study by Radcliffe and Pequeno (2010, p. 985) in Tsachila, Ecuador, criticizes the lack of connection between gender and development policy and liberal multiculturalism, arguing that indigenous women are invisible as *indigenous* in the former, and invisible as *women* in the latter. “Transformative gender and development work needs to support these aims wholeheartedly, wherever and whenever possible” (Sweetman 2013, p. 228).

The geopolitical identification between place and people has established the status of women in society as an indicator of Westernization and liberalization (Sjoberg and Whooley 2015, in Volpi and Jasper 2018), whether that is framed as good or bad. The “woman question” becomes “an important, indeed privileged, site where the imaginings and pursuit of nationhood were elaborated” (Seth 2013, p. 274). As in the sense of the War on Terror, the need to save others and to maintain our own liberty is still at stake; this becomes clear when analyzing the manipulation of Afghan women as victims to justify the invasion of their country and then targeting them as suspects in Western countries (Fluri and Lehr 2010; Hussein, 2016). Therefore, we need to “stop saving women” from the South and to stop criminalizing them for their cultural marks (Sharp 2005; Mogadham 2005).

Cox et al. (2017, p. 15) move beyond the concepts of Global South and Global North to define a “South within the North” and a “North within the South”; or a variety of Souths within Northern states, and many Norths within Southern ones.

There is a huge array of possibilities in combining the history of colonialism, slavery, ethnic and racial domination, and the oppression of indigenous and nomad populations. Nyhagen (2012) shows that different articulations by countries is attentive to ethnoracial diversity. In the UK, women's movements have developed several institutional spaces for joint mobilization and claim-making across racial and ethnic boundaries. In Norway, indigenous and ethnic minority women work in mixed organizations and the antiracist movement while Roma women in Spain mobilized both as women and within mixed organizations (Nyhagen, 2012).

The social and political mobilization of women on a transnational scale is not a new phenomenon (Nijhawan 2017), but the extent to which transnational perspectives are responsive to local and global relations between Southern and Northern women's movements remains a key question in the analysis of transnational social action. Horn (2013) shows how contemporary fundamentalist movements across the world tend to construct their agendas around a defense of traditional gender norms, maintaining patriarchal control over the family, sexuality and reproduction, and gendered social roles. By contrast, the political practices of women's movements surpass the universalist pretensions to adopt contemporary forms of "strategic sisterhood" (Grewal and Kaplan 1994), in a critical form of transnationalism with notorious implications from local to global (Basu 2000; Swarr and Nagar 2010), as the "comfort women" movement in Asian-Pacific countries has demonstrated (Chai 1993). Desai's (2015) revision of the transnational feminist debate marked by reflective and transversal solidarities notions stresses the difficulties in building transnational solidarities by imbalance on women's power and voice.

In another vein, women's networks have been the first to promote regional organizations and strategies of action (Chen 2004; Marchand 2014; Ferree and Tripp 2006), such as the Islamic movements over the past decade (Mogadham 2005). However, women's transnational mobilization has been relatively poorly addressed in regionalism literature (Cabezas 2014) and, for example, there was little interest in women's transnational organizing against free trade negotiation (Domínguez 2014). As England (2003) explains, a large proportion of Canada's foreign domestic workers come from the former Third World, and the legacy of colonialism and the subsequent geographies of underdevelopment and poverty help to generate the international supply of domestic workers willing to move to Canada. The global care chains formed to maintain daily life are in place all over the world, comprising households which transfer their caregiving tasks from one to another based on gender, ethnicity, social class, and place of origin (Orozco 2010). Writing on the connections between western and Asian women, Darraj argues that:

The third wave is a global wave, but it must sweep through and carry back messages from women all over the world – and those messages should, in their own words, articulate their visions, their concerns, and their histories.

(Darraj 2003, 203 cited in Yu 2009, p. 9)

Here, the power-geometries (Massey 2004), the topographies of globalization (Katz 2001) and, the geopolitics of migration and mobility (Hyndman 2012) are useful feminist contributions to understand transnational spatialities. Moreover, the relevance of class and race relationships and the pressure faced by women working

in transnational NGOs in terms of resistance versus cooptation and, the relationships between transnational feminism and other parts of the global justice movement (Brenner 2003) alert us to be cautious when studying women's transnational activism.

### **Conclusions: Women's Movements in Social Movements Studies**

The debates on social movements need to integrate diverse issues concerning the study of women's movements. Not only is there a concern about rendering women's movements and participation invisible, but the possibility of thinking about social movements in a more inclusive way. It also provides a way "to avoid a ghettoization of the experiences and concerns of women" (Fairhurst et al. 2004, p. 208) – in both movements and in academia – by introducing them into the central core of social movement theories.

Social movement theories and debates are male-led and they show their masculinist focus in their central premises and conclusions. Social movement scholars can no longer proceed as if their theories were gender-neutral or as if insurgency were not gendered (Kuumba 2001), because social movements have gendered composition, goals, tactics, identities, and attributions (Einhwoner et al. 2000). We argue that there are at least five issues in which gender and transnational approaches can feed into and enrich social movement theories:

- Political opportunity structures (POS) are gendered and are situated.
- Repertoires of contention and frameworks also prove to be gendered.
- The role women play as activists is different from the role men play.
- There are different forms of mobilization and organizational types.
- The relation between local/national/international, formal/informal, private/public informs these different forms of mobilization and organizations.

Therefore, two tasks appear to require further development. On the one hand, considering the "gender dynamics that shape mobilization" (Ferree and Mueller 2004, p. 598) will contribute to the core debates in social movement theories and to the comprehension of their central role, particularly of women's movements, in onward social changes. On the other hand, Rivera Cusicanqui's call for an actively "decolonizing practice" (2012, p. 100) in academic work will go deeper than mere vocabulary. This process would require a decolonization of both knowledge and the university as an institution (Mbembe 2016, p. 11), and this is not possible without decolonizing knowledge from *maleness* in its production. So, both the maleness of thought and social movement studies, and maleness in the production of knowledge in academia, need to be identified and addressed.

The critiques of the Global South and Global North and the relevance of spatial context to overcome ethnocentric and myopic biases are still needed. For example, when the connections between social movements and the democratization process in the South are emphasized (Fadaee 2017), it is essential to consider the relevance of the phenomena in the North. Democratization is a process related to deepening democracy, which is distinct from the transition to democracy. And as noted in the

last cycle of world mobilizations – from Spain's 15M to the US Occupy Wall Street and Turkish Gezy Park protests – democracy is always in process and women's movements are one of its principal actors.

The 2016 world mobilization against gender-based violence, from the Mexican #*niunamas* (2011–2015) to the accelerated internationalization and externalization of the Argentinian #*niunamenos* protest (2015), demonstrates the relevance of the transnational mobilization of women. We can speculate on the existence of transnational women's movements (Mogadhan 2005) or attempt to understand the significance of women's mobilization under the construction of transnational solidarities (Dufour et al. 2010), advocating for a goal-oriented (the former) or for an identity (the latter) approach in the study of these movements.

In our view, it might be too soon to end the debate because transnationality is not a level of activity but a scale constructed to understand movement processes. The recent United States #MeToo movement and the proliferation of the #MosqueMeToo mobilization among Muslim women have contributed to our understanding of why 2017 was a “blockbuster year for women and girls worldwide” (*Newsdeeply*, December 22, 2017). This is not the past, but the future. As Marcela Lagarde, a Mexican feminist and anthropologist has suggested when analyzing the success of the recent feminist strike: “This 8-M has kicked off the century of women”<sup>2</sup> (*Diario Sur*, March 10, 2018).

### Notes

- 1 The debate between Nancy Fraser and Judith Butler in several issues of the *New Left Review* is the best representation of this discussion (Fraser 1995, 1998; Butler 1998).
- 2 Translation from Spanish original quotation: “Este 8-M ha comenzado el siglo de las mujeres”.

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# Right-Wing Women's Movements

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## Introduction

Right-wing women's movements are not a new phenomenon. Rather, they have been established around the world, emerging often in reaction to feminist movements. For example, in the US, many female anti-suffragists organized during the nineteenth century to fight against other women's efforts to secure the right to vote (Aslanian 2013; Marshall 1991, 1985). Further, these movements are not rare, with right-wing and conservative women<sup>1</sup> organizing across the globe for the advancement of economic, social, and political goals. Despite their long-lasting and widespread presence, until recently right-wing women's movements have received little attention in the academic literature. Instead, the literature has primarily focused on left-leaning movements, analyzing activism from a liberal, feminist perspective, arguing that "throughout history and in all regions of the world, the women's movement has mobilized to challenge gender inequality, one of the most fundamental relations of power" (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005, p. 48). Right-wing women's movements, according to this account, represents a conundrum as they do not promote liberal values, and appear to act against the interests of women. As a result, many researchers tend to ignore the agency of women in right-wing movements, arguing that the participation of women in these movements is a result of the influence of others – namely, men – rather than their own internal desire to act (Blee 2013; Kelly 2012; Klatch 1988; Power 2004; Schreiber 2012).

This chapter examines some of the literature on right-wing women's movements from around the globe, and highlights three main aspects that addresses their unique nature: (i) the activists' motivation for creating and participating in such movements, (ii) the movements' focal areas, and (iii) their relations – if any – to feminism. Despite the variations present among right-wing women's movements, this analysis reveals that they share a number of similarities. First, in opposition to the commonly held

assumption surrounding right-wing women's activism, the actions and engagement of women in these movements are seldom coerced or performed without a comprehensive understanding of the stated aims and implications of their action. The review of movements, both contemporary and historical, demonstrates that the participation of women in right-wing movements is often a result of their own choice and agency. Second, while a number of movements reviewed here are decidedly anti-feminist, there are a significant number of right-wing women's movements utilizing feminist practices, with some even declaring themselves to be feminists. This use of feminist practices is more commonly employed in the contemporary age, in part due to the strategic adoption of tactics and rhetoric that reflects broader societal or cultural norms. Thus, the complex political ideologies that structure these movements illustrate the inadequacy of theoretical frameworks that examine groups as either feminist or anti-feminist. Rather, the analysis highlights the complexities of women's lives and experiences, which then inform these diverse political approaches.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section examines the primary motivations for establishing right-wing women's movements, including the decision to be active in a right-wing women's movement as opposed to engaging in right-wing activism more generally. The second section introduces the three main issues that right-wing women's movements most often focus on: fiscal conservatism, nationalism, or traditional gender roles. The third section examines the relationship of these movements to feminism, highlighting the complex array of feminist actions possible. Before introducing these accounts, we define the two main concepts at the center of this analysis: women's movements and right-wing movements.

In this chapter, we adopt Ferree and Mueller's definition of women's movements, which is "all organizing of women explicitly as women to make any sort of social change as 'women's movements' regardless of the specific targets of their change efforts at any particular time" (2004, p. 577). This definition is based on the assumption that in some cases, women organize in movements that are exclusively for women, for the promotion of issues not primarily related to gender. In these cases, the decision to organize as women might be a strategic choice. As such, it may be based on the assumption that an organization of women will enjoy greater public legitimacy and acceptance than organizations that include men in their membership. In this case, the movement recognizes the unique role and agency of women as a constituency, and they choose to emphasize their gendered identity – i.e. their position as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters – as a way to justify their political involvement. For example, women's movements that oppose women's suffrage or the right to abortion often enjoy higher public acceptance than movements composed primarily of men, allowing them to better promote their political and social goals (Klatch 1988; Scriber 2012). This strategic choice is especially powerful in cases involving oppressive regimes, in which women are often less supervised by the state, in large part due to their limited role outside the household (Ferree and Mueller 2004). By emphasizing their gender – rather than their status as citizens, for example – the activists can achieve greater legitimacy among the public as well as the regime. Finally, as the decision to organize in a women's movement may be a result of a strategic or practical consideration, we do not presume that all women's movements, by default, are necessarily feminist or focused on issues that are considered women's interests (Molyneux 1985).

As for the concept right-wing movements, scholars have not agreed on a single definition (Blee and Creasap 2010). Since the 1950s and until recently, many social scientists argued that right-wing activism is necessarily linked to radical extremism, declaring these movements to be outside the democratic system (Diamond 1995). In an effort to avoid grouping radical-extremist groups with right-wing movements that use legitimate pressure tactic such as voting and lobbying, some theorists have categorized these movements according to their focus (Blee and Creasap 2010; Diamond 1995). Following the latter approach, this chapter defines right-wing movements as those focused on one or more of three central conservative issue areas. First, are those addressing fiscal conservatism, promoting free enterprise capitalism and anti-collectivist economic policies. The second category includes movements that center on the importance of the nation-state within the current global context. These groups most often oppose international institutions and immigration, and thus support stronger borders and the military. The third category of right-wing women's movements includes those that advocate for a desired moral order, including traditional family values and binary gender roles.

### **Motivation for Right-Wing Women's Movements**

The study of social movements has traditionally focused on the way these movements promote progressive and liberal goals, thus only limited attention has been given to right-wing movements (Blee 2008; Blee and Creasap 2010; McAdams et al. 2005). As such, advocacy by right-wing movements for a return to a traditional moral and gender order contradicts the common analytical framework that defines social movements as predicated on the "claim making by disadvantaged minorities" (McAdam et al. 2005, p. 2). Further, the focus of some right-wing movements on nationalism and national identity contradicts transnational trends in social movement theory (Ayres et al. 2002; Bandy and Smith 2005). This difficulty in the study of right-wing movements is compounded when considering women's participation in such movements; right-wing movements are quite often highly masculinized, with all-male leadership and a strong culture of male dominance that tends to be exclusionary to women (Anahita 2006; Blee and Creasap 2010; Ferber 2000; Hamm 2002; Kimmel and Ferber 2000; Vertigans 2007). Further, in some cases, these organizations are shaped by a religious belief system, which can also restrict or limit women's involvement and leadership within these organizations (Haq 2007; Klatch 1988; Schreiber 2012).

Additionally, the rhetoric of right-wing supporters "commonly depicts women as non-political, as mothers and wives who support activist men and nurture their families, nations, and race" (Blee and Creasap 2010, p. 278). This language pervades many right-wing movements, particularly those advocating for traditional gender roles and women's place in the home. Nevertheless, women are active in these movements; their presence in these groups creates an inevitable tension, specifically because their involvement necessitates activism within the public sphere (Klatch 1988; Marshall 1985). This conflict is most clearly seen in activists who "spend their lives travelling, speaking in public and vying for public power as they instruct others to make domesticity and the private sphere their first priority" (Gordon 1987,

p. 104). Given this unique set of conditions, scholars have often ignored or discredited the participation of women in right-wing movements.

Despite all these factors, which should have limited the spread of right-wing women's movements, they are active in many countries around the world, including the United States (Aslanian 2013; Blee 2013, 2008; Diamond 1995; Haugeberg 2017; Kelly 2012; Klatch 1988; Marshall 1991, 1985; Schreiber 2012, 2010), the UK and the Republic of Ireland (Bacchetta and Power 2013), continental Europe (Bacchetta and Power 2013; Koonz 2013; Kottig et al. 2017), Canada and Australia (Bacchetta and Power 2013), Israel and the Middle East (Berko and Erez 2006; Brunner 2007; Issacharoff 2006; Mahmood 2001), Southeast Asia (Bacchetta and Power 2013; Bedi 2013; Derichs and Fennert 2014; Haq 2007; Sehgal 2007), and Latin American nations such as Chile (Power 2004, 2002). Thus, there remains a gap between theory, which does not fully explain women's activism in right-wing movements, and the breadth of this activism in practice. One outcome of this is that the literature that analyzes right-wing women's movements often focuses on the questions of how and why these movements exist, examining the theoretical complexities their existence introduces (Blee and Creasap 2010; Ferree and Mueller 2004; Hawkesworth 2012; Henderson and Jeydel 2010; Jetter et al 1997; Staggenborg and Taylor 2005).<sup>2</sup> In the attempt to address this tension, we examine two different types of motivation that contribute to the establishment of right-wing women's movements. First, we examine why women join right-wing movements, and second, we examine why conservative women choose to organize movements that limit membership to women.

### Women's motivation in joining right-wing movements

The literature on women's activism in right-wing movements recognizes that women have multiple and complex motivations for creating and joining these movements. The first explanation often assumes that women's participation in right-wing movements is merely a reflection of existing power relations in society (Blee 2013; Kelly 2012; Klatch 1988; Power 2004; Schreiber 2012); right-wing women, according to this account, "lack independent initiative and were merely pawns in the male-dominated political game" (Power 2004, pp. 138–139). This explanation is reinforced by the assumption, that is often found to be accurate, that women are more likely to hold liberal values and beliefs (Koch 2002, 1999; Lawless 2004; Newport 2009). One response to the skepticism concerning women's motivation is that of women joining movements regardless of – or even against – the will of their male partners. For example, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK), which emerged in the US in the 1920s, greatly expanded in size despite members' husbands discouragement to join. Instead of attributing the participation of women of the WKKK to male coercion or influence, studies reveal that in some instances women's involvement led to separation, and in rare instances, divorce, because of their activism (Blee 2008, 1991).<sup>3</sup>

The second explanation for women's participation in right-wing movements focuses on women's own ideology as the motivation for such activism. While women tend to be more liberal than men, their ideological beliefs are influenced by more than their gender; since women "are positioned within their societies through a



variety of different means – among them, class, ethnicity, and gender – their interests ... are similarly shaped in complex and sometimes conflicting ways” (Molyneux 1985, p. 232). In the US, for example, many members of right-wing women’s movements are suburban and Evangelical stay-at-home mothers. As a result of their socioeconomic and religious associations, their interests may be more closely aligned with traditional gender roles and values rather than gender equality (Klatch 1988).

The debate between these two understandings of the motivation for women’s activism in right-wing movements – a result of coercion by men versus a result of women’s own ideological beliefs and values – shapes much of the literature on women’s activism in these movements. One example of this particular debate can be found in the literature on women’s involvement in nationalist terrorist movements. In the last two decades, there has been an increase in the involvement of women in terrorism, and thus a corresponding increase in the research that examines their involvement (Jacques and Taylor 2009). Some of the literature argues that the inclusion of women in terrorist organizations “is another type of oppression and a cynical exploitation of women who become victims and tools of male Palestinian society” (Berko and Erez 2006, p. 3). Such accounts, Brunner (2007) criticizes, often focus either on the innocence of the women involved in such groups, or frame issues such as sexual abuse and rape as the impetus for their activism. This approach is especially prevalent when examining terrorism in Muslim or Arab societies, often due to stereotypical and oppressive assumptions about this region and Islamic culture. In these societies, the literature argues, women are expected to sacrifice for others – men – so their involvement in terrorist organizations is understood as part of this sacrifice (Berko and Erez 2006). The result of this approach is that while men’s motivations for being involved in nationalistic struggles are presumed to be political, women’s motivations are seen as personal or social (Brunner 2007).

In opposition to the research that sees women’s participation in right-wing women’s movements as irrational and in opposition to their own interests, some of the current research on the involvement of women in terrorist movements emphasizes their leadership, agency, and dedication to the cause. In his analysis of the involvement of Palestinian women in terrorist acts against the Israeli occupation, Issacharoff (2006) finds a difference between news coverage between Western and Arab media; while Western media often portrays the women involved as victims of chauvinistic societies, Arab media focuses more on their ideological support of the mission, portraying them as full partners in the struggle. This case reflects a broader trend in the scholarship of women’s activism, namely that ethnographic analysis of women’s involvement in terrorist or extremist movements often concludes that women are no less aggressive or ideologically motivated than men in these struggles. Further, women do not experience any less empowerment and agency from their actions (Friedman 2007; Jacques and Taylor 2009).<sup>4</sup>

### **Women’s motivation in forming right-wing women’s movements**

While it is clear from the previous account that women are active in right-wing movements and in the promotion of right-wing ideology, this does not yet clarify why some women decide to form and participate in right-wing movements dedicated to women. This decision, based upon our review of the literature, is influenced by

three main factors, of which one is unique to right-wing ideology. First, some of the literature on women's movements recognizes that the decision to establish a movement – rather than engage in movements with both women and men – is influenced by the patriarchal structure. This structure leads to the marginalization of women in all social movements, including liberal, progressive, and mixed movements (Blee 2008; Molyneux 1985; Sasson-Levi 1992; Sasson-Levi and Rapoport 2003). This motivation for a women's movement also plays a role in some right-wing women's movements. Women of the Ku Klux Klan, for example, was created by women who realized they had limited avenues for political expression within the masculine culture of the broader political arena. The formation of a women's movement, while utilizing the foundation of a previously established movement, allowed them to advance their own political goals and interests in ways previously barred to them (Blee 1991). Therefore, women's movements – conservative or otherwise – offer a space for activists that may be less exclusionary than mixed-gender movements.

Second, the existing literature on women's movements argues that forming a movement that is dedicated to women can also be a strategic choice, as the stereotypical role of mothers and wives may lend greater legitimacy to certain types of political activism or issue-areas. For example, multiple accounts of left-leaning women's movements that aim to promote peace examine the way these movements use stereotypical concepts of motherhood and gender to legitimize their political, and even military, demands.<sup>5</sup> This motivation also explains the existence of some right-wing women's movements, which use gender and stereotypical gender roles strategically, for the promotion of their ideology and goals. In Pakistan, for example, women “have often strongly resisted the recruitment of their sons and brothers into jihadi organizations” (Haq 2007, p. 1028). Women's movements, such as the Pakistani women's movement *Lashkar-i-Tayyabia*, are able to counter their recruitment and promote resistance.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, women's activism in the anti-abortion movement is often framed around their role as mothers, and abortion as an attempt to harm women. Daphne Clair de Jong, the founder of *Feminists for Life* in New Zealand, writes:

The womb is not the be-all and end-all of women's existence. But it is the physical center of her sexual identity, which is an important aspect of her self-image and personality. To reject this function, or to regard it as a handicap, a danger or nuisance, is to reject a vital part of her own personhood. Every woman need not be a mother, but unless every woman can identify with the potential motherhood of all women, no equality is possible. (1995, pp. 171–172)

In addition to these two motivating factors, which are shared with left-leaning women's movements, right-wing women's movements also have a third motivation unique to their ideological leaning. In general, the scholarly literature, as well as public attention, often discusses women's activism with respect to the promotion of liberal or progressive goals. As a result, conservative women feel as if the public discourse on women, their ideologies and needs, does not represent them and their interests. In light of this reality, right-wing women's movements aim to provide “an alternative women's voice” (Hardisty 2000, p. 72). This voice is framed as the answer

for conservative women to feminists who “promote abortion, divorce, lesbianism, and, of course, the sexual revolution” (Hardisty 2000, p. 71). In the case of Concerned Women for America (CWA), for example, Beverly LaHaye states that she had launched the movement in the early 1970s after seeing an interview with Betty Friedan, founder of the feminist organization National Organization for Women (NOW). LaHaye, believing that Friedan was asserting to speak for all women in America, organized the CWA arguing that “the feminists’ anti-God, anti-family rhetoric did not represent her beliefs or those of the vast majority of women” (Schreiber 2012). Founders of both the CWA and Eagle Forum argue that they represent the voices of conservative, religious, and pro-family women whose “opinions deserved recognition and respect” (Concerned Women for America 2017).

### **The Focus of Right-Wing Women’s Movements**

The preceding section examined the primary motivations that drive women to join or create right-wing women’s movement. The following section turns to an analysis of these movements according to their primary focus. Based on the existing literature regarding right-wing movements today (Blee and Creasap 2010; Dunn and Woodward 2003), we classify right-wing women’s movement according to three primary issue-areas: economic conservatism, aiming to promote free-market capitalism; nationalism, which emphasizes preserving national borders, and; social conservatism, which aims to restore and protect traditional gender roles.

#### **Economic conservatism**

Right-wing women’s movements which focus on economic conservatism are particularly prevalent in countries that are part of the Global North, such as the US, the UK, and Canada. These groups most often focus their activism on the promotion of conservative economic ideology, calling for minimal government interference in the economy as a way to promote greater individual freedom, liberty, and autonomy for individuals and families. These movements, however, rarely identify gender as the central issue uniting female activists. Women’s Freedom Network, Independent Women’s Forum, and Feminists for Liberty are some of the groups currently operating in the United States which share this approach.

In general, right-wing women’s movements that focus on economic conservatism introduce less of a challenge to scholars, as their primary interest does not concern gender or the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. In their focus on fiscal conservatism, these groups are often not opposed to women’s engagement in the public sphere, including women’s pursuit of higher education or a career. Since these groups are rarely concerned with the promotion of traditional gender roles, they are better able to avoid the tension that arises with the call for women’s activism on the one hand, and the maintenance of traditional gender roles, and in particular, women’s role in the private sphere, on the other hand.

At the same time, however, while traditional gender roles are often not part of the agenda of these movements, the issue of gender is often central to their ideology. Often, the discussion of gender is tied to the need for economic conservatism, and as

a response to liberal radicals who desire government handouts for past injustices (Network of Enlightened Women 2017). For example, the Independent Women's Forum highlights the connection between economic conservatism and gender when stating that they aim to expand the conservative coalition, "by increasing the number of women who understand and value the benefits of limited government, personal liberty, and free markets." The participation of women in conservative movements, they argue, is important because of their need to counter "those who seek to ever-expand government in the name of protecting women" (Independent Women's Forum [IWF] 2013). Therefore, you can further women's interests even without using the term feminism; "you don't have to wear the 'feminist' label to do that and those who call themselves feminist aren't necessarily improving economic mobility and freedom for other women" (Onwuka 2017a).

Following the ideology of economic conservatism, some organizations maintain that the majority of problems facing women today stem from unnecessary regulation and restrictions on individual liberty by the government. For example, the Independent Women's Forum, seeks to discredit the notion that women are in need of government protections:

The disproportionate number of women who take time out of the work place to raise children, care for elderly parents or opt for lower-paying, more-flexible and fulfilling jobs has more to do with preferences and choice than unequal opportunities".

(IWF 2017)

As such, lack of political representation does not necessarily reflect discrimination; as Schlafly claims, "the small number of women in Congress proves only that most women do not want to do the things that must be done to win elections" (cited in Klatch, p. 50). Further, it is liberal public policies purportedly designed to protect women that are in fact harming them. For example, Onwuka argues against the Obama Administration guidelines for combating sexual harassment on campuses, arguing that in her generation, sex with an intoxicated student "was never considered assault. It was considered, 'I was stupid and I got embarrassed.'" (Onwuka 2017b). Thus, for the activists, the call for economic conservatism is not separate from their gendered interests. Instead, their identity as women – together with their socioeconomic status – shapes their conservative ideology and call for limiting regulations.

### Nation-state in a global context

The second topic that right-wing women's movements focus on is the nation-state, specifically calling for increased nationalism and the rejection of international institutions and immigration. The groups included in this category vary greatly; some are from more conflict-prone regions such as the Women in Green of Israel, while others emerged as a result of an uprising or inter-ethnic conflict such as Ireland's Cumann na mBan or the Hindu Mahila Aghadi. The Israeli movement Women in Green, for example, focuses on the preservation of Israel from internal and external threats within the "G-d given Biblical homeland," (Women in Green 2017) a territory which includes what is known as the West Bank in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

(OPT).<sup>7</sup> In an attempt to promote the annexation of the OPT by Israel, the movement promotes “the sovereignty revolution,” through various activities such as planting trees, demonstrations, and the establishment of a nature preserve, all in the effort to reclaim the OPT as an Israeli territory (Women in Green 2017).

One subcategory of these nationalistic movements is that of women’s paramilitary organizations. These groups are often analyzed as maintaining traditional gender roles. For example, the analysis of right-wing militias in the US emphasizes that the women who participate in these groups are often wives of male members involved in the movement. Thus their activism is analyzed as an act that reinforces traditional gender roles. Specifically, the research argues that the women involved in these movements do not take part in military training and other activities considered masculine, instead engaging only in online activity, other forms of nonviolent action, or traditional, feminine tasks (Blee 2013; Kimmel and Ferber 2000). Thus, the activism of women in these instances works to reinforce the gendered structure of society, since it maintains traditional gendered divisions of labor (Sasson-Levy and Rapoport 2003).

In practice, however, some of these groups, while almost always affiliated with a male paramilitary organization, nevertheless possess a substantial degree of autonomy and independence. One example is Cumann na mBan, or the Irish Women’s Council, a paramilitary women’s group that first organized in the early 1900s, and is most known for its activism during the 1910s.<sup>8</sup> The organization, an auxiliary of the Irish Volunteers, still exists today, although its focus and activities have changed as the nature of the struggle in Ireland has changed. The primary aim of the group has been “to advance the cause of Irish liberty and to organize Irish women in the furtherance of this object” (RTE 2014). During the Easter Rising, the first direct engagement they faced, many women acted as insurgents, while others served as combatants in the Citizen Army. Although many of the women involved in the cause of Irish nationalism and state-building were not involved in combat-related activities, the women who were involved were not relegated to the rear of combat. A number of these women were arrested for their involvement in the Easter Rising, and imprisoned in Richmond Barracks (Richmond Barracks 2016).

Another example of a women’s paramilitary organization is Mahila Aghadi, the all-female wing of the Hindu nationalist party, Shiv Sena. This movement, which began in 1966 as a populist movement in western India, is composed of middle- and lower-class women. Their engagement has been explained as a response to the limited financial circumstances of their brothers and fathers. With regard to gender, their activism is quite complex; the movement engages in stereotypically masculine behaviors, including the use of masculinized personal networks in order to “get things done,” while also engaging in hitting and attacking. These practices allow the activists to experience a certain degree of autonomy and agency uncommon for the women of this class. At the same time, however, they do so to reassert traditional gender roles, defining themselves as “social workers with a difference.” As a result, the women involved exert their own, unique form of power (Bedi 2013).<sup>9</sup>

While right-wing women’s movements that target nationalism do not focus primarily on issues of gender, they nevertheless often use their gendered identity for the promotion of their political goals. One such example is the Border Grannies on the US–Mexico border, which include women who patrol the border in the attempt to

limit immigrants from crossing. By defining themselves as grandmothers, the activists frame their actions as part of their duty to protect their families. Since the government is failing in its responsibility to protect its citizens, the grandmothers are forced to fill the gap in order to secure their own families. At the same time, however, their identity as “grannies” is used to position themselves as powerless against the immigrants crossing the border; it “made a spectacle of the cowardliness of their enemies – ‘macho types’ conspiring to subvert the sovereignty of the United States by violating its ‘territorial borders’” (Bickham Mendez 2014, p. 45). The gender of the activists thus creates public legitimacy for their activism, while also reinforcing the negative image of immigrants. As such, this movement – like other movements that focus on nationalism – promote conservative goals through the use of traditional gender roles and stereotypes, particularly the concept of women as mothers and powerless citizens.

### Traditional gender roles

The third topic that right-wing women’s movements focus on is the return to traditional gender roles, and specifically, the importance of women’s role within the home, as mothers and caregivers. Some of these movements are explicitly interested in promoting the rights of mothers, most often stay-at-home mothers. These groups argue that the rise in employment of women, cohabitation, and birth control prevents men from fulfilling the roles they traditionally had. The result is an increase in the sexual exploitation of women, out-of-wedlock births, and child poverty (Concerned Women for America 2017). Further, these societal changes, and in particular the employment of mothers outside the home, have resulted in the degradation of motherhood, as well as the special place that women hold in the social order. Therefore, these movements are working to establish respect, support, and protections for the role of mothers in the family.

This type of argument raises the strongest theoretical and practical challenge for right-wing women’s movements, since the actions the activists adopt are seen to contradict the traditional conceptions of womanhood they aim to protect. Many of these groups recognize the tension their activism provokes, but argue that it can be resolved. Some movements frame their political involvement as a product of their position as mothers, thus defining their activism as an extension of their role within the family, and a way to protect their children. For example, in Chile between the 1970s and the 1990s, women framed their support of the military dictatorship of Pinochet as part of their role as “patriotic mothers,” whose responsibility is to take care of the nation (Power 2004, p. 141). In other cases, the activism is structured around activities women stereotypically engage in, such as prayer circles, in-home small-group meetings, or “quiet campaigns,” which focus on education rather than direct political involvement (Hardisty 2000; Marshall 1985). Since these activities correspond with traditional conceptions of feminine behavior, they appear to answer the conflict between the women’s activism and their stated support for women’s role in the home.

The most prominent examples of movements in the US that aim to restore this traditional social order are Concerned Women for America (CWA) and Eagle Forum, both created in the early 1970s in response to the Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>10</sup> Instead

of calling for equal rights, these organizations aim to bring awareness to the importance of women's separate role and place in the home. This activism, these movements argue, is important in light of the legal and social changes that have diminished and devalued the work that women do. These types of groups are also common in the UK, and include, among others, Mothers at Home Matter and Mothers Union. Mothers at Home Matter, for example, emphasizes the importance of stay-at-home mothers for proper childhood development. In addition to calling for mothers to stay at home and care for their children, the movement lobbies for government policies to secure this possibility for more women. Their work is based upon the belief that "most mothers have a very strong preference to care at home," and it is social pressure that leads them to seek employment, and in turn, childcare outside the home (Mothers at Home Matter 2017). The group Mothers Union – also based in the UK – advocates for women to maintain their traditional role within heterosexual marriages, highlighting the religious aspect of this preferred social order. As a Christian organization, they articulate a religiously informed understanding of marriage, which in turn promotes the building of a Christian community of families (Mothers Union 2017).

While mobilizing as women and mothers may align with feminist aims and practices, these organizations are often critical of feminism (Klatch 1988; Schreiber 2012). Specifically, feminism is viewed as divisive, and is believed to encourage a false understanding of gender, race, and class, for the promotion of excessive government involvement in the protection of women, racial minorities, and others, including the lesbian, bisexual, gay, trans, and queer/questioning (LBGTQ) community and transgender population (Blee and Creasap 2010; Klatch 1988; Schreiber 2012). This version of feminism, these movements argue, has been co-opted by liberal radicals, namely lesbians, who demand a complete change of society. This includes:

abortion on demand throughout nine months of pregnancy, quota hiring for women and minorities, the entire homosexual agenda including the privileges to teach in the classroom, federally financed and regulated daycares, and the forcing of businesses to promote women to executive positions.

(Schafly 1991)

Therefore, these movements often explicitly reject feminism and the call for gender equality, maintaining that the goal is the proper separation of the sexes as per the natural order.

While some right-wing women's movements focus on more than one issue area, the distinction between the three issue areas reveals different approaches to the issue of gender and activism. The movements that focus on economic conservatism do not focus on gender as the main target of their activism, but instead approach this issue as a case that further exemplifies the way in which regulations and government involvement limits freedom and opportunity. Movements that focus on nationalism also do not emphasize gender as their main target. Rather, these movements often use gender as a tool for the promotion of a strong nation-state, through the image of women who fight for their sons and daughters. These movements, however, differ in the way they perceive and present the existing gender order; while movements that call for economic conservatism often define gender and discrimination as a problem

of the past, movements that focus on nationalistic goals tend to further the image that participation of women in the public sphere should emphasize their identity as mothers and wives rather than citizens. Movements that focus on the third issue area – the promotion of traditional gender roles and family structure – use their own gender, often in a stereotypical feminine way, for the promotion a conservative gender order.

### **Feminism and Right-Wing Women's Movements**

The analysis of right-wing women's movements calls for an investigation of the relations between these movements and feminism. While liberal, left-leaning women's movements are often created for the promotion of feminist goals (Ferree and Mueller 2004; Hawkesworth 2012; Henderson and Jeydel 2010), right-wing women's movements hold a much more tenuous relationship to feminism. Very few of these movements identify themselves as feminist, although some outliers – such as the movement, *Feminists for Life* – do exist. In other cases, the relationship of right-wing movements with feminism has evolved over time, influenced by changing contextual factors as well as changes in the concept of feminism itself. For example, in the case of Chile, at the beginning of the twentieth century some right-wing women's movements and activists defined themselves and their struggle as a feminist struggle; it was feminism, they argued, that gave them the power and public legitimacy to fight in the public sphere for their beliefs. In the 1980s, however, the feminist movement in Chile was associated with anti-Pinochet's forces, and was known for its opposition to the understanding of womanhood as tied to motherhood. In light of this approach to feminism, right-wing activists who supported Pinochet distanced themselves from the feminist movement, declaring themselves as anti-feminists (Power 2004).

While the relations of these movements to feminism changes according to context, in general, right-wing women's movements adopt two different approaches toward feminism (Hardisty 2000). First, some groups explicitly express their opposition to feminism. These movements often belong to the third focus area described above, fighting for the preservation of traditional family and gender values. In some cases – such as in the case of CWA and Eagle Forum in the US – the movements justify their opposition to feminism as rooted in their understanding of the Bible and Christian religion. Feminism, they argue, aims to replace the traditional view of marriage and proper gender roles with new ideas that contradict these religious foundations.

Second, some right-wing movements – mainly non-religious organizations – label themselves as “equality feminists.” These movements, like Women's Freedom Network and Independent Women's Forum, argue that women are no longer oppressed. Women, according to this account, can be successful or find agency when given the freedom to do so (Network of Enlightened Women 2017). As in the case of sexual assault or rape on college campuses, the proposed solution is for women to follow a few simple rules: “don't get drunk and go home with a stranger, reject the hook-up culture, and be confident” (Hays 2017). Therefore, instead of promoting the image of women as victims, there is a need for movements that are post-feminist,



and do not focus on historical injustices or the belief that major inequities still exist. Using Gordon's (1987) definition of feminism – "movements whose common denominator is their belief that women are improperly subordinated and disrespected, and that something can and should be done about it" (p. 101) – it seems the movements that adopt either one of these approaches are not feminist movements.

At the same time, however, Gordon's definition does highlight the possibility of right-wing women's movements addressing some issues that are of concern for feminism and feminist activists. For example, feminism recognizes the challenges women encounter while participating in the public sphere, given the expectation that they still remain responsible for the majority of household work and child care. Some conservative activists have expressed concern regarding the additional challenges introduced by the new expectations for women who also work outside the home, while still shouldering the burden of the household duties (Klatch 1988; Schreiber 2012). This dual responsibility, they argue, is wrought by feminist ideals and may result in the undermining and further undervaluing of women's work in the private sphere. In noting the conflicted feelings and additional hardships many women face in trying to balance work and family, many of the Western, right-wing women's groups emphasize the importance – for women and children – of traditional gender roles. Thus, they promote the idea of the naturalness of mothers staying at home to raise their children (Schreiber 2012). While the solution they offer is criticized by many feminists, their concerns are nevertheless a reflection of feminist challenges.

For example, REAL Women of Canada emphasizes the importance of women staying in the home, while also aiming to fight against the societal pressures that encourage women to work outside the home. This group claims that feminists have worked to denigrate motherhood and to convince women that their desire for a family life is "merely socially constructed" through "intense pressure by feminists, social engineers, economists and population controllers, and totalitarian governments." Instead, they conclude that "Nature made women, not men, the prime tutor and nurturer of love and it is this love that drives women to make their children and families their priority in life" (REAL Women of Canada 2017). The US anti-suffragist movement from the early twentieth century also used a similar argument. Movement activists claimed that the protection of women requires a clear distinction between the two spheres; the home, they argue, is not only "'women's own kingdom' from which she derived her power, but also as a peaceful refuge from the harshness and vulgarity of the male domain of the industrial marketplace" (Marshall 1985, p. 350). Similarly, the 1970s American movement STOP-ERA used this discourse and framed it as a means to protect women's interests. Schlafly, for example, promoted the concept of a "Positive Woman," who "understands that men and women are different, and that these differences provide the key to her success as a person, and fulfillment as a woman" (cited in Marshall 1985, p. 356).

From this account, it is clear that some of these movements recognize the challenges that women face in light of the increasing expectations to participate in the public sphere, while still being responsible for most of the housework and childcare (Altinas and Sullivan 2016). Further, these movements also claim that these changes have been undermining respect for women as mothers; thus they work to reinforce the importance of women staying at home and raising children. While these claims may correspond with some feminist concerns regarding the social acceptance of stay-at-home

mothers, this recognition does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that these movements are feminist. Specifically, these movements fail to recognize the social and economic conditions that force women – single mothers as well as those in two-parent households – to work outside the home, regardless of personal preferences. Further, these movements aim to limit women’s ability to choose their preferred path by emphasizing the innate naturalness of motherhood and the unnaturalness of women’s participation in the public sphere. It thus might be more accurate to conclude that some right-wing women’s movements use strategies and discourses that appear feminist in nature, without promoting women’s equality or fighting their oppression.

## Conclusion

The analysis of existing studies of right-wing women’s movements uncovers a number of important findings about women’s movements, the issues they focus on, and their relations to feminism. In scholarship and amongst the general public, it is commonly understood that conservative women – and in particular conservative, activist women – are exceedingly rare. Our analysis reveals, however, a long history of women taking part in conservative causes, including for the promotion of traditional family and gender roles. Further, it is clear from this account that the formation of women’s right-wing movements is not merely the product of efforts by others to organize women. Rather, in many instances, women are the ones who form and promote right-wing women’s movements around the world. While some of these movements oppose – either explicitly or implicitly – feminism, they are necessarily anti-feminist in nature; some of the movements promote women’s activism in the public sphere, sometimes in ways that challenge or contradict traditional assumptions about gender behavior and norms. Further, other groups address concerns that many women experience today, even if their suggested solution does not necessarily follow feminist assumptions about choice and empowerment. In light of this account, the analysis of the relations between right-wing women’s movements and feminism is helpful not only in better understanding right-wing women’s movements, their motivations and goals, but also in understanding the concept of feminism, including the boundaries of what is – and what is not – feminism today.

## Notes

- 1 In this chapter, we use the terms right-wing and conservative interchangeably in reference to groups that aim to promote fiscal conservatism, nationalism, and/or social conservatism. This approach is different than the one adopted by some social movement scholars (Blee and Creasap 2010), who use the term right-wing for groups with extremist, radical, and violent tendencies.
- 2 We recognize that this is not a complete, comprehensive listing of all scholarly works on right-wing women’s movements. Yet, this list illustrates the complexity and range of literature on this subject.
- 3 Women’s support of conservative goals extends also to radical and extremist ideologies, as in the case of Nazi Germany, where women’s belief in the ideology was not merely influenced or coerced by men, but was also a reflection of their own ideological belief (Koonz 2013).

- 4 A similar analysis of women's involvement appears also in the analysis of left-leaning terrorist organizations such as of Baader-Meinhof, a Marxist revolutionary guerilla faction organized in West Germany, and active in the 1960s and 1970s. Its leadership, composed of two women and one man, was one of the driving forces that led to an increased presence of women in the organization (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011). Despite being the leaders, some analysis argues that Meinhof and Esselin, the two women serving in leadership roles, were in fact "followers" who "became revolutionaries merely for the sake of love – a classic feminine behavior" (Morgan 1989). However more recent scholarship reveals that Meinhof and Esselin were actually the true leaders of the organization, rallying members to the group, being the one's well versed in Marxist ideology, and thus providing the identity and drive of the group (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011).
- 5 See, for example, analyses of *The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina under the military rule (such as Arditti 2002; Howe 2006; Taylor 1997), the women's peace movements in Israel (Mansbach 2012; Sasson-Levi and Rapoport 2003), and El-Salvador during its civil war (Stephen 1997).
- 6 The use of motherhood for the promotion of military goals is widespread. For example, some research on American mothers points out that they "were encouraged to send their sons to fight with 'a smile on their lips and a prayer in their hearts' and to receive the news of the death of their sons with silent 'solemn pride' softened with 'cherished memories'" (Haq 2007, pp. 1037–1038). In some of these cases, however, the call for women to promote these military goals comes from above, as a demand that is framed by political leaders as part of the duty of women to the nation.
- 7 The *Women in Green* refer to this area as "liberated territories" (Jacoby 2005) or as Judea and Samaria, using the Biblical names of the area to argue for the historical right of Israel over the West Bank.
- 8 The organization was active in the fight for Irish liberation from the British Empire.
- 9 In cases involving traditional societies, women's organizations afford women a certain degree of independence that is not possible in other arenas of their life. For example, in the case of Pakistan, their involvement in Islamist movements "enable middle- to lower-middle-class women from traditional families to become politically active and even pursue a career since their purdah and affiliation with the Islamists make their lives in public more acceptable to their families" (Haq 2007, p. 1033).
- 10 The Equal Rights Amendment, which passed in Congress in 1972, was meant to ensure equal legal protection regardless of sex. The amendment was submitted to the states for ratification, a process that has not yet been completed.

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# Men's Movements

CLIFF LEEK AND MARKUS GERKE

## Introduction

Men and notions of masculinity have played significant roles in numerous social movements, but throughout that engagement men's gender identities have gone mostly unexamined. Since the mid- to late-twentieth century, many men have begun to explicitly and consciously mobilize around gender and politicize masculinity as a concept. What is commonly referred to as the "men's movement" in Western countries arose in the 1960s and 1970s as a growing women's movement led many men to see themselves as gendered beings for the first time.

As several scholars of men and masculinity have noted, there are many reasons to be critical of referring to mobilizations of men around gender as a "movement." These reasons include that much of the organizing focuses on self-improvement rather than political gains (as typical social movements would be) and that groups politicizing masculinity pursue a wide range of often contradictory goals (Flood 2007; Messner 1997, 1998; Newton 2004). These mobilizations often, though not always, exist on a spectrum ranging between aligning with feminist analyses, drawing on insights from gender studies and pursuing goals of gender equality on the one hand, and being rooted in antifeminism and attempts to protect the men's superordinate social position on the other.

Men self-consciously organizing as men around their gendered identity is a relatively recent phenomenon, paradoxically enabled by and a backlash against arguments of second wave feminism. As feminists problematized the female "gender role" and argued for understanding gender as socially constructed, men started to apply these insights to the male "gender role" and the way it constricted them as men. Feminist or profeminist men's movements stress that while most men do experience harm and restrictions from conforming to notions of masculinity, masculinity is fundamentally tied to power and oppression of women. This organizing frequently



acknowledges the importance of differences among (and power relationships between) men in race, class, and sexuality and a call for intersectionality has been present within the profeminist men's movement since its outset (Christian 1994).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the antifeminist men's rights movement rejects analyses of gendered power dynamics, denies institutional power and privilege of men and instead centers the concept of the male "gender role" in order to argue that men as a group suffer to the same or even greater degree as women because of their gender, or to frame men as the victims of a gender order that allegedly benefits women over men.

Here we explore the organizing, or "movements," that have taken place along the ideological spectrum between the feminist/profeminist pole and the antifeminist pole as well as some mobilizations that are implicitly, rather than explicitly, organized around and politicize men and masculinities.

### **Feminist or Profeminist Men's Organizing**

Over the last 40 years men have increasingly organized to stand beside women as allies in the struggle for gender equality (Flood and Howson 2015; Messner, Greenberg, and Peretz 2015). Much of this organizing began with individual men who had personal and political connections to feminist women and embraced the critique of the gender order that feminist women offered (Clatterbaugh 2007). From this origin point of engaging with and accepting feminist theory, men began to organize. Much of the initial mobilization took the form of small self-help groups, akin to feminist women's consciousness-raising groups of the time. Over time men began to develop more formal organizations, often in partnership with existing women's rights organizations.

Some of the men involved in this organizing refer to themselves as feminists while others have preferred the moniker of "profeminist." Many consider the qualifier "pro" to be in recognition that they, as men, can be allies to feminist women but, by virtue of being men, they cannot or should not claim to be insiders in the feminist movement. In the minds of some who identify as profeminist, it is not enough to share feminist values and engage in feminist activism – one must experience patriarchal oppression in order to identify as feminist (Sterba 2007). These beliefs are not held by all men who engage in antipatriarchal organizing. Many men do identify as feminists and contend that identifying as such lends further support to feminist movements. Another argument for men calling themselves feminist without "pro" is that the ally role that "pro" implies does not adequately capture that men can and should also have a personal investment in dismantling patriarchy.

For many men, organized engagement in feminism began with efforts to address the epidemic of men's violence against women that feminist organizing around the world has brought into the spotlight of public discourse. Men who were early participants in feminist and profeminist organizing commonly report showing up to support antiviolence events such as "Take Back the Night" marches and rallies and being encouraged by feminist women to focus their energies instead on changing the hearts and minds of other men.

Since then work to address men's violence against women has gradually shifted from grassroots movement-building toward professionalized organizations. Messner,

Greenberg, and Peretz's book *Some Men* chronicles this history and the complexities of men's engagement in violence prevention work from a North American perspective. They describe three waves of men's feminist and profeminist organizing: an initial surge of mobilization in support of second-wave feminism in the 1970s and 1980s; a "bridge" wave of gradual professionalization during the antifeminist backlash of the 1980s and 1990s; and, finally, the currently ongoing period of professionally institutionalized activism (Messner et al. 2015).

Throughout all these waves, men's activism has taken many forms including local community-based organizing, programming in educational settings, and large-scale campaigns. Across all these arenas of activism, a common thread is a shift from understanding men and cultural notions of masculinity as only part of the problem when it comes to the issue of violence against women to a more nuanced understanding of how men can be a part of the solution. Being part of the solution has come to mean many things but in practice is generally operationalized in two ways: training men to intervene in cases of imminent sexual or domestic violence and working to address the root cultural forces enabling and encouraging men's perpetration of violence.

Recently, scholarship on profeminist men's activism has started to shift from explicitly focusing on organizations led by white, mostly heterosexual men – and from implicitly assuming the pathways into profeminist organizing follow the models extrapolated from such research – and has made visible the engagement of marginalized men with feminist activism (Alcalde 2014; Peretz 2017, 2018; White 2006; White and Peretz 2010). First, this research shows that some of the more mainstream initiatives working with men to end violence against women tend to be not well-equipped to engage men from marginalized communities due to both absence of culturally relevant features in the programming of such organizations as well as the presence of other features that may ostracize or fall flat in these communities (Peretz 2018). Second, as Peretz (2017, p. 539) points out, pathways into (broadly defined) profeminist activism rely on "intersecting gendered, religious, ethnic, racial, familial, and sexual identities" and while "masculine, heterosexual, and familial privilege interact with racial, ethnic, and religious marginalization" may serve as such a pathway for many men, privilege is not a given for all men engaged in such activism. In contrast, his case study of an activist group comprised of queer African American men shows that for them it is precisely experiences of exclusion and marginalization (along the lines of race, sexuality, and gender performance) that serve as the basis for their alignment with feminist goals. Rather than relating to profeminism from positions of privilege, for these men feminism provided an analytical tool and vocabulary to conceptualize their own subordination (in addition to challenging sexist attitudes in their own community).

Arguably the most high-profile organization in the field of engaging men to end violence against women is the Canada-based White Ribbon Campaign (WRC). WRC was founded in 1991 in the aftermath of a mass killing of 14 women by a man in Montreal. The killing inspired a small group of men to recognize that they can contribute to the movement to end violence against women by raising awareness among other men. Since 1991 WRC has expanded to dozens of countries and engages in activities such as running small- and large-scale awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, fundraising for women's groups, and both creating and implementing curriculum for men and boys on issues of gender equality (Kaufman 2001).

While ending violence against women was and continues to be a central element of feminist and profeminist men's organizing, men's involvement has since broadened to a wider range of gender justice issues including care work, workplace gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (Greig, Kimmel, and Lang 2000). Feminists have long argued, and evidence has shown, that gender imbalances in parental caregiving and housework contribute to workplace inequalities. Together these dynamics lead to women doing a disproportionate amount of unpaid labor and being underpaid in the paid workforce (Ridgeway 2011; Williams 2001). These matters are another area where men have begun to mobilize and engage in feminist or profeminist organizing. For example, a collaboration of organizations led by Promundo and Sonke, gender justice organizations founded in Brazil and South Africa respectively, launched a campaign called MenCare in 2011 which aims to increase and improve men's involvement as fathers and caregivers. One element of that campaign is the release of *State of the World's Fathers* reports. Some of the reports speak to global fatherhood and caregiving trends such as the movement toward a growing number of fathers wanting to be more engaged at home and have more parental and caregiving responsibilities (Levtov, Van Der Gaag, Greene, et al. 2015). Other reports target specific countries or regions and address the realities of fatherhood and caregiving in those areas (Rimashevskaya, Malysheva, Piskakova-Parker et al. 2016; van Bemmelen, Soesman, Noya et al. 2015; van den Berg and Makusha 2018).

In the paid workforce, programs like Men Advocating Real Change (MARC) work to engage men who are leaders in the workplace to act as agents of change for greater equality (Bilen-Green, Green, McGeorge et al. 2013; de Vries 2015). Efforts to transform workplaces are taking place on a truly global scale with a United Nations-led program, HeForShe, specifically recruiting 10 men who are CEOs of some of the world's largest companies to serve as champions for change on the issue of gender inequality in the workplace (Flood 2017). A growing body of literature evaluates the efficacy and impact of programs engaging men on gender justice issues with promising, but mixed, results (Barker, Ricardo, and Nascimento 2007; Barker, Ricardo, Nascimento et al. 2010; Ricardo, Eads, and Barker 2011). And, while most of the existing literature focuses on programming carried out in the Global North, a literature is beginning to emerge which examines the extensive programming occurring in the Global South as well (Das et al. 2012; Ghanotakis et al. 2017; Gilbertson 2018; Stern, Heise, and McLean 2017; Van den Berg et al. 2013).

Men's feminist/profeminist organizing has also become a global force in the realm of human rights and international development. Gender has been a part of human rights and development discourse since World War II but the ways in which it has been included in that discourse have evolved over time. A number of large non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work almost exclusively with men and boys were founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These NGOs implemented programming targeted at men and boys often with the goal of transforming cultural notions and practices of masculinity for the sake of greater gender equality. Until around 2005, programming targeting men and masculinities remained modest in size and scope, but the decade spanning 2005–2015 was marked by exponential growth in both funding and political space for these efforts (Leek 2017). Perhaps the greatest examples of this movement-building are the formation of the MenEngage Alliance

and the rapid growth of conferences and symposia on the topic of engaging men and boys in gender justice work.

The MenEngage Alliance, a coalition of hundreds of NGOs around the world that advocates for the engagement of men and boys on issues of gender justice, formed in 2004. This alliance has successfully advocated for the inclusion of efforts to engage men in gender justice work as a part of the agendas of international development agencies and the United Nations. Indeed, in 2013 an article in the *Journal of International Affairs* proclaimed that work to engage men and boys may be a “new transformative development agenda” (Hendra, FitzGerald, and Seymour 2013).

To date The MenEngage Alliance has organized two global symposia centered on the topic of engaging men and boys in efforts to achieve gender equality. The first, a conference that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2009, was small but broad-reaching. It brought together 439 delegates from 77 countries (Atkin 2009). The second took place in New Delhi in 2014 and drew over 1,200 people from 94 countries (MenEngage 2014). The significant growth in attendance from the first symposium to the second is emblematic of larger shifts in the field of international development toward greater emphasis on men and boys. At both of these conferences activists from all over the world worked together to develop platforms for action which served to simultaneously state the issues most important to men's organizing and to guide men's organizing moving forward (MenEngage 2009, 2014). These documents set priorities for men's engagement for the years that followed.

The priorities set forth in the Delhi Declaration and Call to Action included references to a need for men's activism to move from engaging individual men through programming to efforts to shape policies and institutions, a call for greater emphasis on engaging men on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and a need to engage men on the issue of armed conflict (MenEngage 2014). In recent years all of these issues have become central topics of campaigns to engage men around the world.

Feminist/profeminist organizing by men has not been without issues and controversies. There have been criticism from both feminist women and antifeminists from the outset. The antifeminist criticism has been of the predictable sort – that men who engage in feminist/profeminist activism are gender traitors, feminized, or homosexual. Criticism from feminist women has been far more substantive and nuanced. These concerns that feminist women have expressed include that men engaging in feminist/profeminist organizing receive disproportionate funding and praise for their work, often engage in behaviors that are counter to their stated politics, and reinforce the very inequalities that they profess to be addressing (Flood and Howson 2015; Leek 2017; Macomber 2015; McKenzie 2014; Messner et al. 2015).

### **Antifeminist Men's Organizing**

On the other end of the spectrum of men's movements is the growing presence of antifeminist men's organizing. Antifeminist views are especially appealing to some men in the present historical moment because of actual transformations of the “gender formations” (Messner 2016) over the past three decades. First, actual gains by the feminist movement and the subsequent institutionalization of feminism is

often met with a postfeminist sensibility that imagines fights for gender equality as an issue of the past and that frames unequal gender distributions as matters of individual choice. Second, a post-Fordist, neoliberal phase of capitalism has increasingly destabilized economic opportunities for working-class men and men of color (Messner 2016). Relative loss in privilege (compared with more privileged men, previous generations of men as well as some women) is thus reinterpreted by anti-feminist men as subordination of men vis-à-vis women. As Blais and Dupuis-Déri argue in their study of “masculinism” in Quebec, men’s rights groups are “a counter-movement in the service of patriarchy and of men as a class” (Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2012, p. 31) that reacts to and seeks to undo the gains made by the feminist movement. At the same time, in a country like Poland where antifeminism is deeply engrained in institutionalized politics and the mainstream media, men’s rights groups – while still a reaction to the feminist organizing – function as allies and supporters of institutionalized antifeminism rather than as a counter-movement in the classic sense (Wojnicka 2016).

Today, the antifeminist men’s rights movement is comprised of a variety of groups with different and at times contradictory ideologies, agendas, and strategies that exist on a continuum between relatively moderate groups that (re)center men as the alleged primary victims of gender relations to overtly misogynist groups that openly embrace gender inequality, and from groups more inwardly focused on self-improvement to actively political movements that coalesce around the notion of “men’s rights” as well as to groups lacking precise political goals but firmly rooted in ideologies and affects of resentment and hostility toward women.

One of the more prominent currents of early antifeminist movements is the mythopoetic men’s movement of the 1980s. The movement focused on male self-help in the form of men-only groups, retreats and initiation rituals for boys and young men, and was rooted in culturally appropriate and esoteric traditions, Jungian psychoanalysis, and mythology (Bonnert 1996; Mechling and Mechling 1994). It argued that men had collectively lost their inherent nature and purpose as a result of changes in modern society such as industrialization and the feminist movement. While not overtly political in its activities and ostensibly not openly anti-feminist in its outlook, the movement encouraged members to (re)discover mythologically charged versions of traditional masculinity, thereby embracing unequal gender relations (Messner 1997). To this day, the ideology of the mythopoetic men’s project lives on, for instance, in the outlooks of some men-centered gender initiatives such as the global nonprofit organization ‘ManKind Project’ that offers “personal development training” for men across North America, Europe, South Africa, and Oceania (Fox 2004).

A similar focus on men’s self-improvement and the idea of a male crisis in society that needs remedies can be found in faith-based men’s movements as well, most prominently exhibited in the evangelical ‘Promise Keepers’. While this Christian men’s organization does not portray itself as overtly political or antifeminist in nature, the ways in which it conceptualizes masculinity, and by implication gender relations, are in fact highly political and rooted in traditional ideas and assumptions of gender – including heteronormativity. While the role of women is seldom explicitly discussed in writings by the Promise Keepers, this absence as well as the ways in which men are presented as both the cause (through their deviance from certain

versions of masculinity) and the solution (through their rediscovery and recommitment to said masculinity) to an alleged moral crisis in society reveals an ultimate commitment to gender inequality and male superiority. Christian men are explicitly called upon to be the active agents in their families, churches, and society as a whole, while the role and value of women is ultimately dependent on and derivative of their husbands (Eldén 2002; Hardisty 2000; Kimmel 1997).

In contrast to such self-improvement-focused – albeit implicitly ideological – currents, the explicitly political men's rights movement is concerned with achieving concrete policy changes that favor men and that are designed to roll back gains made by the feminist movement such as protections won by advocates of those affected by sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Men's rights activists (MRAs) have framed men as experiencing discrimination because of their gender in various areas of society, including most prominently child custody cases, domestic violence, health, education, and increasingly the issue of sexualized violence (Dragiewicz 2011; Maddison 1999).

The most prominent and impactful subgroup within the wider men's rights movement has typically been the so-called Fathers' Rights movement, with some scholars identifying fathers' rights as the main recruiting areas for the MRM overall (Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2012). In many industrialized countries – from the US and Canada to Australia, the UK, the Nordic countries, and beyond – political groups have formed that focus on men as fathers and that demand a stronger influence of fathers in the lives of their children – particularly after divorce; they allege that family law favors mothers and victimizes fathers (Collier and Sheldon 2006). The tendency of family courts to award child custody to mothers rather than fathers is interpreted by fathers' rights groups as a case of discrimination against men due to the absence of any analysis of gender formations in society and their relationships. While gendered divisions of labor and care and the “lack of involvement *before separation*” in their children's lives (Flood 2007, p. 203) is what ultimately obstructs fathers' ability to be involved with them after divorce, fathers' rights groups portray custody laws as biased in favor of women. Moreover, as Flood argues, despite their language of involved fatherhood, some Fathers' Rights groups “seem more concerned with re-establishing paternal authority and fathers' decision-making related to their children's and ex-partners' lives” (Flood 2007, p. 202) rather than actual relationships with their children and “have done little to foster fathers' positive involvement in children's lives” (Flood 2007, p. 202); instead they tend to inculcate men with anger, hostility and resentment.

In addition to fathers' rights issues, MRAs have also agitated around the issue of domestic violence and lobbied to revoke protections for women affected by intimate partner violence. By falsely insinuating that domestic violence affects men and women equally and depoliticizing the topic, MRAs ultimately rely on discursive frames “of denial, minimization, justification, and excuse” that are used by batterers' themselves (Dragiewicz 2011, p. 62) and that define intimate partner violence in language of individual deviance – thereby also contributing to the invisibility of ordinary men as perpetrators – rather than systemic gender formations. Related strategies have recently also been identified by Gotell and Dutton (2016) for MRAs taking up the issue of sexualized violence: in response to current public debates about the ubiquity of harassment and sexualized violence affecting, primarily, women and girls,

particularly young MRAs have begun to deny the extent of sexualized violence in society and have asserted – against all empirical evidence (Kimmel 2002) – that men are affected by sexualized violence in almost identical numbers as are women. Lacking any analysis of gender formations and the role of gender in sexual assault particularly, these MRAs “accuse feminists of erasing the victimization of men, and to paint the feminist concept of rape culture as a moral panic”, thereby exploiting “young men’s anxieties about shifting consent standards and changing sexual and gender norms” (Gotell and Dutton 2016, p. 76).

While young MRAs thus shift their attention to new political issues with the same rhetorical vehemence employed by earlier groups, scholars also observe more established MRAs pivoting from explicitly antifeminist rhetoric to seemingly more moderate versions of recentering men in debates about gender inequality. For instance, in Australia, large MRA organizations have pivoted from talking about “men’s rights” toward “men’s needs,” thereby making their agendas more widely agreeable, a strategy that has gained them access to policy makers and has resulted in their positions becoming dominant within the field of “men’s health,” where they openly or subtly reframe health issues affecting them as caused by feminism or the erosion of traditional notions of masculinity (Salter 2016). As Messner argues, a contemporary, more moderate rhetoric by men’s rights activists is highly compatible with neoliberal and postfeminist discourses of individual choice and responsibility but nevertheless undermines feminist gains and efforts towards greater gender equality. By obscuring notions of structural power and inequality and by discrediting public and political responses to inequities, this neoliberal version of men’s rights advocacy provide “already-privileged men a language through which they can position themselves not as atavistic backlashers, but as modern ‘new’ men who are supportive of equal choices for women and men, unfettered by state policies” (Messner 2016, p. 16), thereby hiding differences in power and opportunity between men and women as well as between differently situated men.

Yet, while institutionalized men’s rights organizations have made their rhetoric more compatible with mainstream discourse, a radicalization of men’s rights discourse has been taking place as well, primarily in cyberspace, albeit with real-world effects. In a loose transnational network of online communities, websites, blogs, social media accounts, and message boards often referred to as the “manosphere,” antifeminist ideas are discussed, and political action as well as online harassment of perceived political opponents (women, feminists, progressives) is planned and carried out (Ging 2017; Gotell and Dutton 2016). While subsections of the manosphere seemingly subscribe to contradictory gender ideologies – some openly embrace forms of hegemonic masculinity while others see themselves as subordinated “beta males” who resent (sexually) successful men – they are united in their commitment to a so-called “red pill” ideology that is inherently antifeminist and misogynist in nature. The motif of the red pill is drawn from the science fiction movie *The Matrix* in which the protagonist is offered the choice between a blue pill, which would allow himself to continue living in the delusion that the world is as it appears, and a red pill, which provides him with the knowledge that reality is but an illusion created by powers ruling in the background. For the inhabitants of the manosphere, taking the red pill means subscribing to an ideology loosely based on selective arguments drawn from evolutionary psychology that imagines women as

naturally irrational, inferior, and in need of domination by men, yet as seductive, scheming, and exploitative. Moreover, gender relations in society are portrayed as benefiting women at the expense of men due to a supposed feminist conspiracy dominating society. As Ging (Ging 2017, p. 8) argues, the “rapid propagation of Red Pill ‘philosophy’ across multiple platforms demonstrates how a compelling cultural motif has succeeded in balancing emotion and ideology to generate consensus and belonging among the manosphere’s divergent elements,” as the ways in which red pill ideology is interpreted and applied varies among the manosphere’s constituents. Schmitz and Kazyak (2016) classify online MRA spaces as existing on a spectrum between “Cyber Lads in Search of Masculinity” and “Virtual Victims in Search of Equality” with the former expressing themselves in openly misogynistic ways – sometimes to the point of advocating violence against women – and explicitly embracing men’s claim to superiority, while the latter draw on social movement rhetoric, self-describe as being victimized, and frame their language concepts of equality. However, both ends of the spectrum are united in their mischaracterization of feminism as harming men and stripping men of certain rights to the benefit of women. In addition to more conventional antifeminist men’s currents such as men rights’ activists, fathers’ rights activists and Christian conservative men, new subcommunities such as PickupArtists (PUAs), Incels (Involuntary Celibates) and Men Going their Own Way (MGTOW) have emerged on popular message boards reddit and 4chan and their ideologies and tactics have come to permeate antifeminist activities online and beyond.

For adherents of MGTOW ideas, the belief that women are naturally predisposed to be exploitative and are dominating society leads to the conclusion of rejecting any relationships with women, since heterosexual relationships are imagined as being structurally set up to benefit women at the expense of men. Especially in these spaces – as in parts of the manosphere more broadly – some antifeminist ideologues exhibit positivity toward (particular versions of) gay male sexuality, as homophobia is seen as a pushback against men trying to live independent of the rule of women. As Ging argues, this development shows that not all versions of antifeminism and misogyny need to be tied to homophobia but that instead positivity toward gay men can serve to “unite white, middle-class men, irrespective of sexual orientation, against feminism and other forms of ‘political correctness’ that are perceived as threats to freedom of expression and, ultimately, to their social privilege” (2017, p. 15).

Rather than rejecting interactions with women altogether like MGTOWs do, PUAs and their followers use their red pill characterization of women as irrational, inferior, and in need of domination by men as legitimization for their embrace of alpha masculinity and sexually exploitative and manipulative behavior toward women. Based on essentialist conceptions of gender relations influenced by evolutionary psychology, PUAs posit that they have developed precise scripts by way of which women can be seduced or manipulated into sexual intercourse. While PUAs revolve around a commercial industry of seduction trainings and self-help books – and not all producers and consumers of such material share in the more radical rhetoric of the online PUA community – the belief that inherent differences between men and women can be “gamed” for men to be sexually successful lies at the core of PUA ideology. Moreover, many of the key red pill terms and concepts (e.g. “cuck”, “alpha vs. beta males”, “friendzoning”) initially originated in PUA online



communities and from there spread to the wider manosphere and into society at large (Ging 2017). For disciples of PUA ideology then, men need to embrace alpha masculinity in order to attract women, achieve sexual success, and ultimately gain status (Almog and Kaplan 2017; O'Neill 2017).

Incels, who at first glance seem antithetical to PUAs, are mostly young men who self-identify as “involuntary celibate.” They claim to reject PUAs and do not aspire to achieve “alpha masculinity.” However, rather than disavowing the ideology permeating the manosphere, they, in fact, share its fundamental ideas and have developed some of the most toxic, misogynist, and harmful rhetoric. Their opposition to PUAs – as already evident in the name of their original reddit community *r/PUAhate* – stems not from a rejection of their fundamental beliefs about gender relations but from a disillusionment with the practical seduction advice of PUAs, their own self-perception as being destined to “beta male” status, and a resentment towards both alleged alpha males and women in general. As their self-chosen moniker suggests, Incels coalesce around self-pity and resentment and imagine themselves as being incapable of attracting women. Thus, their ideology rests on a form of “aggrieved entitlement” (Kimmel 2017), namely the idea that men are owed access to women’s bodies and that women illegitimately withhold sex from them. Unlike believers in PUA ideology, Incels see no path towards achieving alpha male status – which in turn is thought to be prerequisite for any sexual success – and instead resent more successful men, women in general – and sexually active women in particular – as well as society as a whole. Incels thus manage to simultaneously buy into “male supremacy” and their own collective victimization by women and alpha males, resulting in both an ideological fatalism and vicious online activism and harassment of women and profeminist men. As Ging (2017, p. 14), drawing on Bridges and Pascoe’s (2014) concept of “hybrid masculinity” puts it, “Incels’ “self-positioning as victims of feminism and political correctness enables them to strategically distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity, while simultaneously compounding existing hierarchies of power.” Moreover, the fatalism, misogyny and misanthropy inherent in Incel ideology has likely contributed to mass killings of civilians in California (2014), Oregon (2015) and Toronto, Canada (2018), as in each case the perpetrators explicitly identified as Incels, had been participants in online Incel culture or made reference to Incel slogans like “Incel Rebellion” or “beta uprising.”

Unlike typical men rights groups which engage in political activism, lobbying, and strategizing to achieve set goals, online activists populating the manosphere engage in “politics of sentiment” (Ging 2017) and resort to personal attacks against individual women – especially highly visible feminists engaging with online, gamer, and geek culture – that include concerted campaigns of harassment, death and rape threats, hacking, and publishing private information about their targets; the #Gamergate harassment campaign targeted at women in the gaming industry in 2014 serves as the most prominent example of such harassment campaigns. Overall, in addition to serving as a potential misogynist echo chamber and potential site of radicalization and recruitment into both radical misogyny and right-wing extremism – as a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC 2018) suggests – online antifeminism also impacts the atmosphere of online spaces more broadly, as the threat of harassment severely restricts the ability of women to participate in online communities and speak out in online publics (Ging 2017; Jane 2016).

## Implicitly Gendered Organizing

In addition to men's organizing which fits neatly at one end of the feminist/antifeminist binary or the other, there are also movements of/by men that are gendered without being explicitly about gender or that defy easy categorization in a binary model. The international rise of the far right is one example of such a movement as its strategies target young white men for radicalization (Davey and Ebner 2017; Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman 2009; Kimmel 2003, 2017; Kimmel and Ferber 2000). In the US and parts of Europe, the "alt-right" has risen as a powerful political movement which is intensely gendered without necessarily being primarily *about gender*. The alt-right is a heavily male-dominated social movement that includes many antifeminist elements but gender politics are rarely the explicit driving force behind their organizing. Yet, ideas about the supremacy of white and Western men and constructions of (white) women as in need of protection from men of color (e.g. African Americans or Muslims) often feature prominently in alt-right thought. Thus, a discussion of men's movements would be remiss to overlook the ways in which ideologies of masculinity intersect with race and class to contribute to men's participation in this far-right organizing (Kelly 2017; Kimmel 2017; Kimmel and Ferber 2000). But, it is not only participation in the far right that is fueled by ideologies of masculinity. Militant social movements across the political spectrum target men's notions of what it means to be a man to recruit and mobilize men (Christensen 2011; Christensen and Jensen 2011; Fangen 1999; Oxlund 2011).

Other examples of organizing that defy binary categorization between the feminist and antifeminist poles are the movements that have arisen around International Men's Day and Movember. Both International Men's Day and Movember, sometimes categorized together as part of the international men's health movement, seek to center the ways in which men are harmed by contemporary gender dynamics in order to improve the lives of men and boys (Baker 2001). These efforts simultaneously draw attention to the reality that gender norms, to varying degrees and in different ways, are harmful to us all, but also tend to recenter men and boys as the primary victims of the gender order at the expense of women and girls. Indeed, proponents of these movements often even blame women, and feminists in particular, for the gendered injuries men and boys experience (Thompson 2010).

## Conclusion

Taken together, we hoped to demonstrate the complexity of putting bounds around what is considered to be a "men's movement." While many men have consciously mobilized around gender and politicized masculinity since the 1960s and 1970s, men's movements, if we are too call them that, have been consistently at odds with one another in a tension between feminist and antifeminist politics. Beyond the contentions over feminist and antifeminist politics, men's notions of their own masculinity have been instrumentalized in numerous movements seeking to recruit and mobilize men. At the same time, some recent social movements have been able to mobilize around the specific intersectional oppressions faced by specific groups of men without falling into the trap of incorporating antifeminist arguments. For instance,

the Black Lives Matter movement does not only prominently featured black women in leadership positions – despite often being perceived as a movement in response to the racist killings of black men – and emphasizes its inclusivity towards the (black) LGBTQ community and other marginalized black individuals; it also crucially employs intersectional analyses of the violence experienced by black men in arguing that specific forms of *gendered* racism toward men of color are the root of police violence against African American men, while groups within the black community are impacted differently by the intersections of various systems of oppression. Examples such as Black Lives Matter – as well as subsections of the profeminist movement – show the potential of intersectional approaches of analysis and mobilization for social movements to address the often contradictory ways in which gender, race, class, sexuality, and other categories of identity are positioned in systems of subordination and superordination in society.

### Note

- 1 Some of the most important theorizing on masculinities and their respective situatedness in relations ranging from hegemony and complicity to marginalization and subordination prominently incorporates the differences among men in sexuality and racialization (Connell 1995). Yet, the field of men's studies in general has until recently failed to adequately engage with the concept of whiteness consistently (Leek & Gerke 2017) while research on profeminist mobilization of men in particular has tended to ignore intersectionality unless in cases where studies are specifically about one particular marginalized subgroup (Peretz 2017).

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# Transgender Movements

SALVADOR VIDAL-ORTIZ

## Introduction

In her 2010 book *Bodies in Crisis: Culture, Violence, and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina*, sociologist Barbara Sutton argues for a better understanding of the work of what it means “to put the body on the line (p. 161),” from activism, social movements, all the way to the mobilizations against the State. “To put the body on the line” (in Spanish, *poner el cuerpo*) is what Argentinians have called embodying social change for decades now; others in Latin America have used it in a similar fashion. For the author, this is not just an activist practice, but there is an idiom behind it, fueling the practice, that moves this activism beyond feminist spaces, into what is often called in Argentina a militant feminist praxis (or *militancia feminista* in Spanish). Feminism in this context is about taking up public space, inundating it with their bodies, assembling not just *in*, but *as* resistance. Central to Sutton’s research are cisgender women from different social movements and different times in contemporary Argentina – women who are part of a movement and circles of resistance against neoliberalism – and a plethora of positions on various issues, to be sure, which makes the movements strong. In this, and other feminist spaces and movements, there is certainly ample space for tensions, disagreements, as well as coalitional possibilities across class, gender, gender identity, sexuality, political engagement, racialization experiences, and the like. In Sutton’s book, the militant feminist praxis also has certain limits – among its challenges are the internal struggles between women who only want to work in (or be a part of) cisgender, straight spaces and marches, versus activists wishing to work across class groups, or groups intending to incorporate cisgender men, and/or trans men and trans women (and not as different from cisgender women, but as women). Yet in the book, trans women are not within the gaze, since Sutton’s focus was to problematize the emblematic maleness and masculinity assumed to be the key aspect of protest in Argentina. Sutton



noted that she participated in social movement spaces in which *travestis* – most notably and specifically Lohana Berkins,<sup>1</sup> was present (sometimes in central roles, sometimes as just another *compañera* militante). While Sutton does not delve more specifically into the meaning of *poner el cuerpo* for *travesti/trans* women, she narrates how Berkins herself was throwing her body on the line with the other (cisgender) women. And indeed, in personal exchanges, Lohana would voice that access to abortion was the next battle to fight on the streets (*poniendo el cuerpo*), after the gender identity law was passed in Argentina (this approval took place in 2012, while access to abortion and other reproductive rights are not yet guaranteed in the country).

Meanwhile, in the US–Mexico border, Jennicet Eva Gutiérrez<sup>2</sup> fiercely advocates for transgender Latina women (those detained in the South West corridor, who are mostly from Central America and Mexico) to be offered better conditions in these detention centers, namely to be recognized for their self-identification, to have access to services other women receive, and to be allowed to present in ways that reference their gender identity. As a founding member, Jennicet has worked with *La Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement*, a group that organizes queer Latinx activists to rally, conduct demonstrations, and conversations and forums aimed at the recognition, advocacy, and that seek an eventual liberation of undocumented trans women of color, who are facing unsafe environments in detention centers, and whose struggles are often ignored by the media. In these facilities, trans women are dead-named,<sup>3</sup> their documents assumed unintelligible, and their gender identity omitted from the record; their everyday experience is removed from any trace that recognizes their actual identification. Jennicet mobilizes trans Latinas to participate in marches, protests, and make visible these issues for their communities. She produces a “say her name” narrative in her social media and peer-reviewed publications, alongside activists and academics (Gutiérrez et. al. 2018; Gutiérrez and Portillo 2018), insisting that a newer horizon is possible for those who might be minoritized on more than a sexual orientation or gender identity account. Gutiérrez, who is famously known for her confrontation of President Obama, at a White House reception in 2015,<sup>4</sup> interrupted President Obama to publicly demand that he free undocumented immigrants in general, and specifically, undocumented lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) immigrants detained in US detention centers. (As should be evident to readers, Obama has been noted – as of this chapter’s writing – as the US past-President with the highest deportation record.) At this 2015 reception, a rift was marked by those who supported Gutiérrez – radical and progressive queers – and those who did not – mostly cisgender gay men and lesbian women whose battle for same-sex marriage seemed to take precedence over their battle for rights (including, of course, the support and endorsement of the *Human Rights Campaign* machine, and the like).

I open the chapter with these two examples, because there is a relational aspect to a project of thinking transgender movements, since the projects in both of these cases do not stand alone: in the first one, thought riddled with internal tensions, we see a feminist set of movements, a praxis, that seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures impacting cis *and* transgender women; in the second, a selective homonormative movement that throws a label of homophobic on anybody who is not interested in supporting that single-issue narrative (Duggan 2004). A variety of efforts to make

trans issues visible are multiplying in the US and other contexts, and these efforts help sustain a better engagement with transgender needs and challenges, as well as the successes resulting in community mobilization. Moreover, trans-led activism and social movement advocacy is less known in part because of the multiple layers of mobilization where trans people are often involved, as noted in Lohana Berkins's and Jennicet Gutiérrez's cases. Thus, as part of a larger collaborative, activist, and research set of projects,<sup>5</sup> I seek to illustrate, not the mere participation (in advocacy, or mobilization) of transgender people, but the challenges, successes, troubled affiliations, and partial affinities between various groups of people whose engagement with social movements impacts, either directly or indirectly, transgender people, focusing most directly on processes and projects that center trans bodies, experiences, and issues (or a "politics" of thinking trans). However, for the purposes of the chapter (and because of space limitations), here I focus on the movements and implementations of social change strategies (activist, artistic, academic, and the like) where "transgender" is centered, or at the very least, considered intelligible enough to be accounted for (which, it must be said, does not always, or often, happen in LGBT movements). With this chapter, my goal is to inform notions of transgender movements, and of transing and theorizing trans, in the US, with non-US vocal activists, artists, and thinkers, and their individual and collective expressions of using either trans, transgender, or some other categories,<sup>6</sup> in order to partake in informal and structured activism and responses to the religious right's efforts to challenge their right to exist.<sup>7</sup>

Transgender movement (be it academic work, activist organizing, or artistic and performance aspects) often gets erased when included in LGBT umbrella-based interventions, thus requiring this and other forums to document the scope of the work that has taken place. Put another way, little has been said to place these two terms – "transgender" and "movements" – together, which foregrounds the importance of initiatives where we move scholarship beyond the trans subject that offers light to gendered systems and gendered knowledge, to all, and where we see trans movements for what they do and as they center trans lives and experiences. Thus, this chapter operates less under a claim that "transgender movements" has not been written about before, and more to activate important Global South work seldom known in the Global North that has powerful implications for how we must think "transgender movements" (and "trans movements" altogether).

### Organization of the chapter

I begin with a short introduction of terms in order to tease out the meaning of some of the trans-specific categories, by themselves and in relation to movement (and, whenever it becomes relevant as used by scholars, migration). The second part serves to briefly situate transgender history and contemporary social movements in order to move to the cases that I have chosen to illustrate the types of work conducted, mostly by and for trans people, in various Latin American countries, and in the US and Canada. The third part is the main section of the chapter, where I present examples, and engage with community and collaborative projects, as well as research projects with various trans communities, where it is primarily trans leaders who move either individual or collective projects forward. There, I elaborate on the multiplicity

of meanings these cultural workers, activists, artists, and thinkers give, and how they materialize transgender movements through their various locations. This section also addresses how movements are complex and multilayered;<sup>8</sup> and it shows how not all movements<sup>9</sup> necessarily result in, or mean, progress. The last section of the chapter is a discussion and conclusion, providing a series of next steps to thinking about transgender studies in relation to movements.

### Important Concepts

A chapter on transgender movements depends on a certain synergy between these two terms, and in many ways, the role of explaining the connection is easier, yet difficult: to some, transgender as movement and change might seem redundant, yet to others, a simple transposition from transition and a change in identity (with public recognition) to movement and social change might seem like a reductionism of the processes trans people go through. Since transitions and identification with a gender that renders one in “alignment” with one’s sense of self is the historical way of assessing the sociomedical category of transsexuality, and transgender as a category is more inclusive than such framework, trans-as-movement becomes less redundant and more productive as a sense of what the movement, or vibrancy of change, might be, and for whom: nowadays, trans\* categories and experiences overflow so-called mainstream spaces and challenge the notion of a minoritized and abnormal reading – so common in the twentieth century. Thus, this section on important concepts becomes vital in showing the potentiality and vibrancy of these two terms in conversation with one another.

Transgender (Valentine 2007), trans- (Stryker, Currah & Moore 2008), and trans\* (Stryker 2017),<sup>10</sup> are late-twentieth, and early twenty-first-century concepts encapsulating a series of experiences, and discursive deployments of varied identities of what we call transgender people, history, arts, politics, and studies.<sup>11</sup> Those experiences and discourses materialize in everyday life, in activism, in the arts, and in the impact of social inequality (such as housing, education, employment, and identity recognition) for transgender people individually, as well as collectively. Trans\* has been used to explore myriad ways in which people and acts challenge heteronormative forms of regulation. Prince (2005) in 1978 referred to it with the verb *transcendent*, to evoke a movement across, but it also supports a sense of disrupting a sense of gender altogether. Since then, trans\* has become a very complex term that alludes to an identity, a set of transgressions to gender, a critical lens to think through gender normativity, and even masculinity and femininity themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Transgender as a category certainly crystallizes flow and movement; thus, a chapter focused on transgender movements can imply, certainly a redundant, yet productive, move (nonetheless an important one).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, and in light of that inherent connection, it becomes important to show how trans, as a category, has moved, evolved, reorganized, and gained resignification historically – it is in constant shift and redefinition, expanding from the sociomedical category of transsexuality, to transgender, to trans\* – where trans may mean gender-nonconforming, gender-expansive, gender-queer, or nonbinary; a social location with multiple identity categories and experiences within that umbrella. And, given the activist-driven genealogies

of what the term “transgender” has become today, to think “transgender movements” signals a motion, and a repositioning from a gender construct to another (again, as in the twentieth century sociomedically charged term, transsexuality) – as scholars have noted, and then to surpass the notion of this binary, and the cisgenderness/centrality it produces.<sup>14</sup> Put another way, there is nothing still *in* or *about* trans, trans\*, transgender, and nowadays *even* transsexual – and that is less about the presumed fantastic readings of anything trans, including an oversimplified notion of fluidity, as it is about the engine of social action, of activity, of mobility and movement, both in terms of achievements as well as challenges (movement as in migration, forced migration, displacement, and violence). I thus speak of transgender as movement and motion, and transgender as incredibly grounded in social movements.

Transgender as a category has now been deployed internationally – with mixed results (Towle & Morgan 2002); we know that indigenous or local categories were present in other countries before such internationalization and it is also crucial to acknowledge that many gendered and sexual categories confront our understanding of both gay and trans, in the geopolitics common of Western centric spaces (such as the US and Europe). Less has been said about how the category itself is used differently in community organizing/political sites – not so much what it means, but how various agents – politicians, activists, scholars, transmen and transwomen themselves – discuss, engage, and articulate their lived experience through it. Attention to the category transgender *as it is deployed on the ground* is crucial, as the uses of trans, *travesti*,<sup>15</sup> *transgenerista*, and transsexual<sup>16</sup> as categories used are intercepted based on aspects such as class, access to various linguistic repertoires, age and generation, and – as categories of identity. But here, even more crucial is to recognize that trans (and its derivatives or variants) may also serve as temporal terms to embody a gender-fluid experience often not neatly contained within the category transgender alone – and that these ebbs and flows of usage are followed, contested, and negotiated by the political and social service attempts to make visible constituents of a larger spectrum. Such terminology is constantly being evoked, neutralized, and reinterpreted by policy settings, government agencies, outgoing/incoming politicians and their changing agendas, social service providers, and activists themselves. Thus, to think “transgender” (as a category), and link it to “movements” is to invoke a set of relations illustrating the geopolitics that connect both terms, and their specific deployment as productive in settings outside the US and Europe. But in order to understand such deployment, a brief exploration of histories of trans mobilizations is necessary – the focus of the next section.

### **Trans Movements and Mobilizations**

To help the unfamiliar reader understand the history and formation of trans movements before contemporary examples, it is important to offer some historical context (most of which is documented, and in some ways originates, in the United States).<sup>17</sup> The current scholarship documenting transgender and transsexual history, and revolutionary activists, has incorporated historians such as Joanne Meyerowitz and Susan Stryker, but also activists such as Reina Gossett, along with Eric. A. Stanley and Johanna Burton (2017). Documentation of trans women in particular

reaches back to the late-nineteenth century, in terms of “cross-dressing,” and a common narrative of desire to transition solidifying during the first half of the twentieth century (Meyerowitz 2002; Sears 2015; Stryker 2017). Thus, depending on the concept of trans\* held by the activists, artists, and scholars (from sexological and psychological to social scientific and to humanities-based scholarship), the terms and meanings of trans\* in history are contested.

Transgender history is connected to bodies and subjects in the US that were always already external to its core: José Sarria, Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson - in the 1960 battles like that of Compton’s Cafeteria, and the Stonewall riots.<sup>18</sup> These US efforts become the baseline, a starting point of sorts –which also could be seen as a triggering point – from which to explore the transferring of categories like transgender to other contexts, but as noted earlier, we still need to uncover histories and trajectories in other parts of the world in order to understand how foundational these may or may not be. At the same time, as the examples in this chapter will show, current efforts and successful engagements are not only nor primarily produced in the United States, but in other areas of the hemisphere, as well as the globe. The fact that trans experience and mobilization has often been made visible by non-white pioneers in the United States speaks to activisms that recognize multiple axes of inequality often erased in single-issue movements such as “trans rights” nowadays.

In 1961, Virginia Prince, as mentioned, brought together cross-dressing members in an informal founding of a trans\* community (Stryker 2017). Around the same time, José Sarria<sup>19</sup> was becoming more visible in the Bay Area. Sarria’s intent to participate in San Francisco electoral politics created an important point of departure for trans mobilization (see Retzliff 2007). Sarria, whose gender and sexual transgressions limited his labor engagements to performing drag, ran for San Francisco office years before Harvey Milk, yet is often unrecognized for this pioneering and daring act. Subsequently, and as shown in Susan Stryker’s work on the Compton’s Cafeteria (also in San Francisco in 1966), we witnessed the radicalization of trans\* people who were fed up with police harassment and sought to fight back. Likewise, Sylvia Rivera<sup>20</sup> along with Marsha P. Johnson,<sup>21</sup> resisted the police in New York City a few years later, in what became the Stonewall riots (in 1969). After such riots, the notion of trans slowly began to take shape beyond the notions of cross-dressing and transvestite as *behaviors*, as well as other sexual minority embodiments that were not yet based on gender and gender identity as a sole, or pure and distinctive, marker, turning more toward their recognition as *identities*.

The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s brought together trans people whose experiences ran the gamut, in both a gender as well as a sexuality spectrum. The impact of AIDS resulted in the loss of trans men and women, including Lou Sullivan, a trans man and leader who began to complicate the idea that trans men were heterosexually identified; his leadership resulted in what is now known as FTM International, a key organization focused on trans men, their families, and their allies, and the largest one globally (Stryker 2017). The 1990s revolved around increasing visibility of trans men and women, the advancement of organizations, and advocacy on the cultural terrain of acceptance and visibility – an agenda that continues today.

At the present time, civil rights struggles to shift that sociocultural understanding of identity, of the relationship between sex and gender, and of gender identity and expression result in the struggle, first to gain access to rights based on gender identity

separate from sexual orientation (key states like California and New York achieve certain rights), but then to shift the focus to the backlash that such activism ignites – for instance, on the defeat of bathroom bills and the removal of trans people, and the formal trans exclusion from the military.

With extensive and systematic exclusions of trans people from the legal arena, from religion and family – which oftentimes results in challenges to education and health – and from other institutions, the challenges that remain for trans communities necessitate an approach to mobilization on as many fronts as possible, which is the focus of the next, and main, section.

### **Trans Social Change Through the Work of Trans Activists, Artists, and Scholars**

This section provides a brief hemispheric survey of projects and experiences that foreground trans experience and leadership, at various levels. There are multiple ways to explore the crossing of movement and mobilization and trans\* populations; here, I focus on several examples or illustrations that instill forms of mobilization centering transgender people in the process of both documenting aspects of their lived experience, as well as aiming to change them.

The section specifically focuses on the various levels of impact in the lives of trans people in terms of mobility, safety, access to health, housing, education (and eventual employment outside the informal economy of sex work), and their quest to achieve recognition within a human rights framework that does not reduce them to erotic labor. I begin with embodiment and carnal situations, moving to community and educational ones, which eventually leads to housing and incarceration issues – all as examples of the types of issues faced by trans people. This is not intended to be an exhaustive set of examples, but a recognition of the larger set of issues faced by trans communities. It aims to serve as a mapping of the kinds of trans movements taking place in the hemisphere (as noted earlier, where I conduct most of my collaborative work, some activism, and research) that merit notice, particularly in the Global North.

### **Bodi/ly regulation and recognition: Management, surveillance, and identity validation**

Several specific instances of the maneuvering of bodily readings of trans as a challenge to various systems of norms take effect in ways that police and regulate the behaviors of trans people, in particular trans women.<sup>22</sup> In these, and other hemispheric instances, the body and carnality are utilized as a form of understanding movement and migration, either through transition and acceptance, or through the displaced experiences of trans people. Movement and belonging are thus interconnected in the ways they produce a sense of community, of action and mobilization, or in the ways they show the need to better connect community members. Franklyn Hernández Gil (2013) writes about the regulation that transgender women face at gay pride in Bogotá, Colombia, when, enacting an agentic self that intentionally marks their bodies for

pleasure and sexual labor, they become the bodies that get hypervisible at the marches. And because of how respectability politics operate, oftentimes, cisgender gay men and lesbian women resist transgender women's own representations in public settings, for the sake of achieving legal rights (rights that rarely extend to those trans women and men). This is a single, but representative example of how normative gay and lesbian organizing has inherently invisibilized transgender men, and excluded transgender women, because of, for trans men, an unintelligibility as queer in LGBT spaces, and ironically, for trans women, because of the centrality of embodiment and the imagery related to sex work and prostitution. This, as "mainstream" gay and lesbian organizations also have a hard time grappling with the implications of trans embodiment and desire, in the context of a political economy of the flesh that for the most part, only or primarily impacts trans women. (But it is part of a larger set of issues in the constant policing of social movement behavior among LGBT folks – there are, for example, very few cases where LGBT organizing makes intentional its participation in sex work mobilization and organizing, or pro-abortion advocacy.) The ignorance with which many associations and nonprofits assume that prostitution is a choice, with the subsequent demand that trans women find respectable jobs, and educate themselves, in order to make a change in their lives, fails to account for the structural challenges they face in merely being recognized as women.<sup>23</sup>

In Montreal, Canada, under the collaborative community research inspired by sociologist Viviane Namaste (2000, 2005, and 2015), a lot of work with migrant trans sex workers and health-related challenges (such as HIV, though not exclusively – other issues such as silicone implants are important matters that inform a health agenda beyond but including HIV, for trans women) become part of a community agenda where trans women are central to the decision-making and partake on communal research activities. Moreover, Namaste foregrounds feminist praxis in all of her work in order to challenge the perception of cisgender women's and transgender women's possibilities of working together, as well as a shared sense of experiencing gendering regulations (see the 2005 and 2015 volumes in particular). In these projects, Namaste has prioritized not her scholarly work, but the needs of constituents that thrive in market demands of the flesh that make many trans women – in particular, immigrant women – vulnerable to a range of issues connected to housing and health, to mention a few. Blurring the lines between traditional research (Namaste 2000), community-based research, and community leadership and collaborative work (Namaste 2005, 2015), Namaste foregrounds the needs of the communities, and in doing so, activates a sense of camaraderie that fosters the articulation of movement-building.<sup>24</sup>

### **Making community and knowledge-making**

As with the previous examples on the body, efforts of community mobilization that engage the arts, health, education, housing, and employment are forms of engagement that bring together community leaders and activists in collaborative efforts with academics and researchers. What is crucial here is that the efforts are not inherently or implicitly about advancing the careers of those academics involved, but to provide a baseline and recognition for trans people, where transgender people get to set the course of their lives.

In a similar vein as the examples focused on bodily regulation and recognition, this time in the San Francisco area, the nonprofit organization *El/la Trans Latina* (<http://ellaparatranslatinas.yolasite.com>) continues its work with transgender Latina women (whether immigrant or not). *El/la Trans Latina* is a project that expanded on the work that focused on trans people and HIV prevention from *Proyecto Contra SIDA Por Vida* (Project Against AIDS, For Life), one of four ethnoracial minority projects in the Bay Area supported by the now defunct *National Task Force on AIDS Prevention* in the early years of the epidemic.<sup>25</sup> Their services offer community strengthening, violence prevention, HIV prevention, leadership development, and advocacy, and their focus on spirituality and the arts, among others, support a holistic experience for trans Latina women from the Bay Area (who are often Central American immigrant women). Marcia Ochoa, an anthropology professor at University of California – Santa Cruz, has supported *El/la Trans Latina* in multiple ways, from infrastructure to programmatic work. The project is led and sustained by trans Latina women, who continue to connect to local needs, and advocate for services, safe spaces, and community leadership as a means of survival. Circular migration does take place, as trans scholars and activists return to Mexico and continue their studies and work across borders.

In Argentina, Martínez and Vidal-Ortiz (2018) coordinated efforts to document the educational experiences of students and faculty at three different institutions: the *Bachillerato Popular Trans Mocha Celis* (at the high school level); the *Universidad Nacional de la Avellaneda* (at the high school to community college level); and the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata* in its relationship to OTRANS Argentina (at the college and graduate school level). Dozens of first-person narratives resulted in the authoring of a book by the trans men and women who participated, turning a process of traditionally subjecting participants to become objects of study into producing knowledge from their own experience and in their own terms. Importantly, these educational efforts also bring visibility to the need for employment and access to jobs in the formal economy, a matter that trans activists and allies have taken up in Buenos Aires (while the gender identity law was passed in Argentina in 2012, there are loopholes through which trans women are not accessing employment, even in the minimal cases when they have completed a high school education; this has initiated a mobilization for government and city council voted “quotas” so that 1% of the jobs at governmental agencies are secured for trans people, yet the connection between access to education, completion of a degree, and insertion in the formal employment economy is not yet sustainable).

What a lot of these projects – including Ochoa’s and Namaste’s engagement at the community level, and Martínez and Vidal-Ortiz at the educational level – provide, is a challenge to epistemological ways of producing knowledge on the experiences of trans men and women, and in particular, by centering trans people in the process.

### Housing, migration and incarceration

In Washington DC, Rudy Corado, a transgender immigrant woman from El Salvador, has been foundational to the launching of *Casa Ruby* (<https://casaruby.org>), a space that offers short-term housing, healthcare services, violence prevention and intervention, as well as educational access and networking opportunities, to LGBTQ people,



and specifically black and Latina/o/x queer and gender-nonconforming people, often times transgender. Ruby Corado is a fearless leader who advocates for her constituents, providing access to food, shelter, and community. Her community-based housing spaces are built on a notion of belonging, and she asserts the needs of queer and trans youth of color in the nation's capital in her everyday advocacy. As a bilingual house, Casa Ruby is connecting black and brown queer folks in ways often missed in 9–5 non-governmental organization approaches; as importantly, it also provides immigration advocacy and access to legal services in order to meet the challenges of undocumented members of the community. Corado has also been central to recognizing the crisis (the US government crisis) of mismanaging the asylum claims of LGBTQI immigrants from Central America and Mexico, including a 2019 successful retrieval of over a dozen Central American LGBTQI immigrants to Washington, DC, and to Casa Ruby specifically.

In many places throughout Latin America, efforts to support trans women who are incarcerated, to advocate for the guarantee of their human rights, and that seek to provide basic identity recognition are under way, with the launching of an organization's first conference in Uruguay. *Corpora en Libertad* (<https://www.facebook.com/RedCorporaEnLibertad/>) seeks to establish a network of activists providing legal, emotional, and material support to trans women in prisons throughout Latin America. Activists have argued that harassment and stigma toward trans women in particular produce a domino effect, where police and authorities detain them and place them under arrest. Oftentimes, because many of them do not have proper identification, or have previous records, an arrest is made, and they go to jail. Sustaining a provision of services including lobbying for trans women is crucial in terms of supporting their long-term well-being, and reducing chances of violence and rates of suicide among them.

Like these last two examples, there are others that document advocacy efforts to mobilize and provide trans people, generally trans women, with the tools they may need to challenge some elements that disproportionately impact them. These are only a handful of places, efforts, and projects that seek to alter the structural aspects of discrimination enacted upon trans people.

### Arts and activism

There are multiple examples in and from Latin America, but space only allows for a couple, which is in many ways illustrative of the possibilities of art and activism among and by trans people – alone, or in collaboration with others.

In the United States, Latino leaders have documented the lives of trans Latina activists. As a case in point, George Ayala, Jaime Cortez, and Pato Hebert conceptualized, designed, and published the lived experience of Cuban trans woman Adela Vázquez, as part of the joint AIDS Project Los Angeles and Gay Men's Health Crisis initiative to give visibility of trans people as a tool for HIV prevention. Adela Vázquez's story is told in a Spanish/English flip text entitled *Sexile/Sexilio*, documenting her life as a *marielita* (a Cuban person who left the country in the early 1980s in a Mariel boatlift).<sup>26</sup>

Adela has been a very vocal activist for trans rights, and against the medicalization of transsexuality, since the late 1980s/early 1990s. She was also connected to

*Proyecto Contra SIDA Por Vida* in San Francisco and promoted the activism of trans women of color in the Bay Area for as long as she lived there (she recently moved). An avid health educator, Vázquez has insisted on producing materials and developing promos focused on trans lives and issues for decades. *Sexile/Sexilio* is but a tribute to her life-long body of work on foregrounding trans health and trans issues, while also seeking to educate parents, friends, and government officials about the issues trans people face.

In México City, Lía “La Novia” Sirena is a performer who has constantly politicized her bodily changes, but also love, feminist considerations, and politics around coalition and allies. She began her activism when she showcased her transition in a public “sweet 16” event, inside the central metro system of the capital. Sirena indicated that, given the private and shameful experience that is associated with transition, she wanted to use a ritual, a rite of passage, to be open about her transition – thus her very public “sweet sixteen” in Mexico City.

She constantly performs at events where she conspires with others to reconsider trans participation in the arts and in politics. Her engagement with academics and writings on her praxis as activist and artist circulates (La Novia 2016; see also Leibold 2015) within such circles, and she is very active in the Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México.

Lía “La Novia” Sirena provokes a series of affective responses to her transition, yes, but also to her radical politics of love, of feminism, and of corporality and the body. She also foregrounds geopolitical placement as a Global South trans woman, and as a woman invested in a politics of resistance. And her feminist politics are centered on trans inclusion, as much as her trans politics rooted on feminism. The impact of her performances has taken her to multiple countries in the Americas, and has made her work the topic of writing and theses about performances, in general, and of trans and feminist performance in particular.

Because of how art and artists that converge with academics (as is the case of *Sexile/Sexilio*) or are, like Lía, academics themselves, these texts produce a critical lens to the anthropological gaze of studying trans people from the outside. Lía La Novia Sirena’s work is just one example that demonstrates how to produce work from the experiences of trans women, in a way that can be heard by multiple, potential audiences.

## Conclusion

Through an illustration of multiple examples across the Western hemisphere, including with ethnoracial minorities in the US, this chapter has aimed to demonstrate the power of movement and transformation by trans artists, activists, and scholars in its multiple forms. Each example denotes an effort to effect social change through various means: from traditional advocacy/lobbying for a national gender identity law, and then education and employment in Argentina; to the community-led efforts to challenge academic discourses on trans lived experience, including the impact of death (Canada), and the use of activism through the arts (various places, from the United States, to Mexico, although it extends throughout Latin America). Some of the efforts I have explored in the chapter, such as the passing of the gender

identity law in Argentina, are perceived as successes; yet some efforts are not perceived as conventionally “successful” because they have not produced specific legal-economic-cultural-social desired outcomes, and yet they are transformative processes that ought to be valued equally.

All of these are processes that demonstrate the importance of coalitional politics, and the relational practices of feminist or LGBT work, while also recognizing the need for more trans-led activism, arts, and academic research. The trans-specific cases in particular aim to tackle the magnitude and potential reach that trans scholars, activists, and artists might achieve if supported in various ways. Like them, there are dozens of artists and performers, leaders of organizations and community groups focusing on trans survival and resistance and, increasingly, more trans people in academic settings writing by and for trans communities and issues.

At the time of this writing, transgender movements are at a crossroads in terms of the politics of working within difference among trans/*travesti* groups, LGBTQI groups, cisgender women’s movements, and larger social movement and advocacy work. Moreover, because of organized efforts by the religious right and the “gender ideology”<sup>27</sup> – a framework that works against, while collapsing (i) sexual education, (ii) recognition of sexual diversity and identity (including gender identity for transgender people), and (iii) fights against any rights for responsible and legal access to sexual and reproductive rights – trans people (in informal and organized movements) are facing a multitude of instances where they cannot control a narrative that intends to expel them from any citizenship rights. Although there is a general regional backlash in the region, these advancements occupy multiple settings and work across various levels, guaranteeing sustenance in at least some of these fronts.

The chapter has intended to produce, not just a lens to a series of realities well known to activists, artists, and scholars engaged with or living in Latin America, or among communities of color in Canada and the US, but more so, a centering of the voices of transgender people in their work on the ground, from whatever perspective they select to do so. Further work should connect the Americas to other regions, offering a comparative analysis of cases that may support a more robust sense of what the limits and possibilities of transgender movements are.

## Notes

- 1 Born in 1965 in Salvador Mazza (or Pocitos) in the province of Salta, Argentina, Lohana Berkins was a *referenta* (a leader) for many. Berkins founded the *Asociación de Lucha por la Identidad Travesti y Transexual* (ALITT) as well as the *Cooperativa Textil Nadia Echazú*. Importantly, Berkins’s death in 2016 left many cis, and trans and *travesti* women’s communities at a level of reorganization and seeking a compass, a new leader, who can bring these groups together.
- 2 Born in Mexico, Jennicet Eva Gutiérrez is a recognized transgender and immigrant rights activist whose work continues to center the lives of undocumented and unafraid trans women who are detained. She is key to the vibrancy of the work that *La Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement* is engaged in. Her activism’s main focus is on immigration and the detention industrial complex, and how trans women detained in the US are treated.

- 3 “Dead naming” is the practice, whether intentional or not, of utilizing the name assigned at birth to someone based on their genitalia. For many trans people, this is a vicious act of violence, in that it does not recognize or consider their gender identity, expression, and self-affirmation.
- 4 She was commonly referred to as a “heckler” by media outlets, and rarely given interview time to make her case.
- 5 I have previously written about the history and developments of the field (Vidal-Ortiz 2008); rooting some ethnographic early project in (what was then called by trans and non-trans activists and scholars alike) “female to male” transgender’s social movements (Vidal-Ortiz 2002); and in thinking about the place of transgender women, and trans women of color in particular, in sociology’s “doing gender” framework (Vidal-Ortiz 2009); this chapter takes a different turn in that I seek to map out more of a hemispheric aspect of cultural and social movements seldom considered in the US where trans people – trans women in particular – activate a series of reactions or responses to legal or cultural discrimination.
- 6 To be fair, while there is not a plethora of categories that challenge or disrupt the meanings of trans\* or transgender in US and European contexts, there are forms of speaking and identifying with varied trans identity and experience that illustrate other currents of social mobilization.
- 7 Both because of my own connection to Latin American LGBTQI (LGBTQ and Intersex) social movements, as a Puerto Rican queer man, and most centrally, because of knowledge of projects and social movement/mobilizations that signal the organized efforts of trans people in many countries of the region, I seek – influenced by but using it in a different context – to turn our gaze inwards, to both the trans movement histories produced in the US, as well as its current development, elsewhere, and more importantly, the perception that the US is the first and primary democracy involved in granting rights, space, and recognition to LGBTQI people, or, conversely, that there are no rights achieved elsewhere unless these are achieved in the US first. While the US continues to struggle around bathroom bills – with a fervent backlash – countries like Argentina and Uruguay have achieved a nation-based gender identity law, and concrete community efforts have been achieved for trans education – from primary, secondary, college, and graduate school – for trans people (for more on the latter, see Martínez and Vidal-Ortiz’s (2018) Introduction to *Travara el Saber: Educación de Personas Trans y Travesti en Argentina*). Of course, as a non-trans person, I foresee lacunae in my formulation of these ideas, and can only hope this work be expanded in the future by other scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
- 8 My engagement with transgender movements does not shy away from certain “troubles” linked to trans embodiment, namely sex work and erotic labor, central to transwomen’s narratives all over the world. Although limited in terms of space to provide examples for all of the following aspects, I also try to foreground the use of multiple transition narratives, whether explicit or implicit: the very specific corporeal ones (that cause so much anxiety in the popular imaginary of trans people), the medical and stigmatized ones (including embodying HIV), ruptures to the body (systemic/bodily rape, and other forms of violence), and in terms of the life course – including death, but in particular suicide, as a radical form of calling for an engagement with the multiple forms of violence many trans people experience.
- 9 In this regard, movements may also connect to mobility and thus disability. Although a crucial bridge between trans and disability studies is important, it falls outside the scope of this chapter.
- 10 Stryker highlights, in particular, several potential outcomes from the asterisk (\*) use, including potentially broader search engine results, as well as a crossing of trans people with other categories – human and nonhuman – including examples such as transspecies, or transracial.

- 11 Transsexual and transexual (with ones – see Wilchins 1997), cross-dresser, and transvestite are distinctively twentieth-century sociomedical (and sexological) categories that may suggest the organization of a set of experiences in that era, but looked upon (and typically, looked down upon), as not yet, nor necessarily, a valid identity. Mason-Schrock (1996) demonstrates how the 1990s showed the disdain in some of these categories that provided reference to clothing and erotic desire, but not transgender identity, in the formation of communal identity (and the struggles to form, sustain, and publicly recognize such as identity).
- 12 Of course movement itself becomes gendered – gestures, the use of heels to move (in this case, “switch”), and the sound this movement connotes, is inherently part of movement in a literal and bodily way of thinking trans. For more on this, see Salamon (2018), in particular, the chapter entitled “Movement”. My deepest thanks to Giancarlo Cornejo Salinas for his suggestion of such a reading in the context of this chapter’s formulation.
- 13 King (2003) discusses trans identity itself as movement, as a migration of sorts – as do the authors of the *Transgender Migrations* (Cotten 2012) book. In that same line, trans experiences too change as one migrates, as per the work of Schmidt (2010) focusing on the *fa’afafine*, and their regional migration across Australia, New Zealand, and [American] Samoa, as well as other examples that fall outside the scope/focus of the chapter.
- 14 A constant, valid, and central criticism of the category transsexuality is how it reconfigured gender to serve a binary of two sexes, two gendered expressions of identity, and heterosexuality as the norm – in and through the coupling of male and female. The socio-medical investment in “reforming” the perceived anomaly of transsexuality was indeed what produced this co-constitutiveness of sex/gender/desire in binary gendered ways in ways that it made “passing,” as in the concept put forth by Garfinkel (1967), something desirable (for trans women in particular). Nowadays, to speak of male and female (in social sciences, policy, activism, the arts, etc.) is to evoke a cisgenderness (through those very categories utilized).
- 15 *Travesti* (in Argentina) or *travesti* (in Brazil) are not easily translatable terms, and when these terms are translated, they resemble more the meaning of transgender (at times, even “tranny” – a very derogatory or stigmatizing term) than transvestite; however, most translations done in the Global North do not respect nuance and regional or local contexts, resorting to the synonymous, and early version of a type of cross-dresser. Yet you may open any journal focusing on gender in the US or the UK, and you will find that more often than not, the translation of *travesti* is misrepresented – the end result is that an identity that is ingrained in a Southern Cone or Brazilian context gets to be trivialized as a choice of clothing, or as erotic attire.
- 16 I intentionally exclude the term *transformista* (a term that references in some countries a performer such as a drag queen, and in others is equivalent to transgender), which is not used in the Colombian context as much, but it is central in neighboring Venezuela; for more on this, see Ochoa (2014).
- 17 It would be a disservice to label these US revolutions and militant practices of trans social movements as the origin of trans movements elsewhere, particularly since there is an emergent scholarship in the Americas that focuses on documenting the local formations of trans visibility and resistance.
- 18 More on this, in particular, in the twenty-first century, is explored in Jian Neo Chen’s (2019) book *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures and Technologies in Movement*, with Duke University Press.
- 19 Sarria, of Colombian heritage, moved as a child with his mother. Sarria’s run for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors was a critical first step to indicate sexual minorities’ intent

- to politicize their identity – Sarria was the first person to ever do so in the United States. Sarria lived a complex life that included military service, forming the Imperial Court System, and later participating in various social and political organizations. Sarria died in 2013.
- 20 Rivera was of Venezuelan and Puerto Rican heritage, and worked on the streets as a teenager. She lived in New York after her involvement in the Stonewall riots in 1969; in her later years, she lived with a trans female partner and, while ill from her battle with alcohol, supported efforts of a group of local activists in Brooklyn to sustain a local trans house that informally received homeless trans people. She died in 2002.
  - 21 Marsha P. Johnson was an African American gender-nonconforming drag queen (the P in her name stands for “pay it no mind” in reference to her gender expression and identity, moving across gay and transvestite or drag queen) who was present, and central, to the Stonewall riots. Johnson, along with Sylvia Rivera, founded the *Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries* shortly after Stonewall; Johnson was also involved in the *Gay Liberation Front*. She faced homelessness and mental health issues until her death (still unsolved) in 1992.
  - 22 A notable exception to this pattern of focus on trans women can be seen in the work by Blas Radi in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Radi focuses on what we generally call sexual and reproductive rights for women – which does not include trans men’s needs – for preventing contraception and the management and intervention of medical services (including access to abortion) because the framework presented focuses on women-identified bodies. For more on this, refer to a video presentation by Radi (2014), and papers authored by Radi (2018a, 2018b) – all in Spanish.
  - 23 As I have argued elsewhere (Vidal-Ortiz 2014), sex work is sometimes a venue where a strong sense of gender confirmation takes place for trans women; thus, erotic labor and sex work are complex political spaces that provide room for a mutual interplay of oppression and liberation, at least for some trans women.
  - 24 It is important for me to mention that Namaste has been research chair in HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute in Concordia University, Montreal, and that her work cuts across gender identity and expression, connecting the structural violence cisgender and transgender women experience.
  - 25 *The National Task Force on AIDS Prevention* was itself a project of the *National Association for Black and White Men Together*. The intertwined and complicated relationship between these two associations and the four local Bay Area projects is not the focus of this chapter, but requires attention (especially in terms of the relation to trans experience – a category not so evident in the early 1990s).
  - 26 I had the honor of interviewing Vázquez, who tells her story in an oral history format (the chapter is titled: “Finding a Home in Transgender Activism in San Francisco,” and is included in *Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism* (Vidal-Ortiz, Quesada, and Vázquez 2015).
  - 27 This “gender ideology” framework has been traced by scholar-activists like Sonia Correa in Brazil as a 1980s campaign developed by the Vatican and implemented first by the Catholic church, but later connecting (in a strange bedfellow sort of way) to Evangelical and other Protestant denominations, subsequently aligning themselves to conservative elected officials in many countries in the world. Evident in campaigns such as “*con mis hijos no te metas*” (“do not mess with my kids”), and “*las niñas nacen con vulva, los niños con pene, no dejes que te engañen*” (“girls are born with vaginas, boys with penises, do not let yourself be fooled”) and visible marches throughout countries where Catholic and Protestant denominations dominate, are efforts to rid democratic countries of essential rights for women and sexual minorities (including trans people). In the United States, the Trump–Pence presidency is but the closest of efforts resembling these activities to diminish such rights.

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