diane richardson

victoria robinson

fifth edition

introducing

gender and women's

studies

INTRODUCING GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

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Fifth Edition

EDITED BY DIANE RICHARDSON
VICTORIA ROBINSON

*In memory of my mother and father,
and my grandmother Fannie Hinchliffe*

Diane Richardson

*For my mother, Sandra Robinson, my nana,
Nellie Robinson, and in memory of my grandmother,
Winifred Thompson, for their strength and dignity*

Victoria Robinson

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INTRODUCTION

Victoria Robinson and Diane Richardson

The first edition of this book was published in 1993. That the book has been in print so long is a testimony to the continued relevance of gender and women's studies and to students' perennial interest in feminism and both these areas. And yet a lot has happened in that time in relation to gender and women's studies worldwide due to the political, economic, social and cultural changes that have taken place. The different editions of the books mirror these changes. They also reflect a changing theoretical as well as political landscape that has seen the emergence of new work on the body, queer theory, the concept of gender itself, an increasing focus on sexuality, masculinity, intersectionality, postcolonial and decolonial studies, globalisation, as well as new developments in feminist theory, gender politics and international/transnational feminist activism. That said, it is clear from even a cursory glance that many of the troubling issues underpinning gendered power relations and inequalities over the last three decades – violence, sexual and economic injustice, reproductive rights, to name but a few – are ones that continue to be relevant to future research and activism. This new fifth edition takes up this trajectory, highlighting 'old issues' for gender and women's studies, albeit ones that may manifest in newer guises, as well as contemporary debates that are emerging in the current context in women's and men's everyday lives as well as online and across cultures, both locally and across the Global South and North.

These are indeed vital times to be studying gender and women's studies. Since 2015, when the last edition of this book was published, there has been a re-emergence of traditionalism in many parts of the world, and an increasing public articulation of illiberalism and forms of nationalism. We are living through major upheavals of Brexit in Europe, the Trump administration in the USA, austerity and increasing poverty and inequality, so-called populism, global patterns of forced migration and displacement, environmental crises, 'far' right mobilisation – the list goes on. It is in these contexts that we have seen a backlash against feminism and renewed discourses of anti-genderism, opposition to sexual equality and racism.

Alongside these developments, but also related to them in some ways, there has emerged a discourse of success that gender equality has been achieved in many parts of the world, which has led to claims that many of the issues that feminists have highlighted are no longer relevant. There are a number of intersecting reasons for this. In relation to sexual politics, for example, neoliberalism has had a major influence on the shifts in the political organising of LGBT movements that have occurred over the last two decades in many parts of the world (Duggan, 2003; Binnie, 2014; Richardson, 2005, 2017). Similarly, feminist movements and forms of activism directed at challenging gender inequalities and injustice have also been profoundly shaped by neoliberal policies, discourses and practices (see Evans, 2017; Jackson, 2017). As various

writers have argued, the individualistic assumptions that underpin neoliberalism undermine collective organisation and action and lead to a de-politicisation of social issues, which can make it appear as if activism is no longer needed or relevant (Gill and Scharff, 2011; Stringer, 2014; Budgeon, 2015; Richardson, 2017). What this means is that not only are the histories of earlier feminist struggles at risk of being erased but so, too, are understandings of the mechanisms of power that cause gender inequalities, and understandings of the role of social institutions that sustain forms of gender privilege and reproduce gendered social worlds (Brown, 2015). In addition to the effects of neoliberalism, one could also argue that the discourse of success is symbolic of the transformations that have taken place over the last few decades in relation to gender regimes and shifts in meanings of masculinity and femininity, including a more recent and increasing emphasis on the fluidity of gender. This is the suggestion that, paradoxically, the successes of feminism have contributed to the perception that gender equality is a 'done deal'.

The development of women's and gender studies

Apart from feminist successes, the success of gender and women's studies in the academy is also significant. To place this in historical context, the institutionalisation of women's studies began at the same time as (and in part grew out from) what has been termed *second wave feminism* during the 1970s and the early 1980s (see Charles in this volume). It was primarily women academics who fought to set up the first women's studies courses, and then the gender studies courses, and it was mainly women students who took these classes. By the 1990s, undergraduate and postgraduate women's studies/gender studies courses had been established in many universities and higher-education institutions. The old debate about whether women's studies/gender studies should enter the 'malestream/mainstream' no longer existed and, in general, their establishment in higher-education systems was seen as a positive move, bringing feminist theoretical ideas and pedagogical practices to a wider audience, transforming the disciplines and the academy more generally from 'within'.

An important change since the 1990s has been the increasing use of the term *gender studies* rather than *women's studies*, which is reflected in the naming of research centres and academic degrees. Although this shift has caused much debate, without doubt it can be argued that gender has now fundamentally informed many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, most prominently in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Western and Eastern Europe, as well as in other countries (Berger, 2013; Jackson, 2016, 2017; Robinson, 2017). However, as Jackson (2016) argues, in practice, there is little that definitively differentiates women's studies from gender studies in what is actually taught.

More students than ever, both men and women, are taking courses that have feminist content and deal with gender issues. The reason is that over the last decade there has been a shift towards mainstreaming gender/women's studies as a core part of the teaching of traditional disciplines such as sociology, education, history and English. In this sense we can say that over the last 40 years women's/gender studies have changed the established canon of the social sciences, and arts and humanities disciplines, as well as the teaching of research methods, and have done so by becoming assimilated

into the traditional disciplines, often as a compulsory element. Gender issues are therefore a key aspect of many undergraduate and postgraduate students' education. So, whilst work and research on gender are widespread, and feminist research is extensive, they are no longer necessarily associated with degrees in women's or gender studies.

Given the continued demand around the world for material on feminism and gender, it is clear that (despite variations in different countries) women's and gender studies, either as separate fields or integrated into the disciplines, continues to be a vibrant, dynamic, innovative and influential area of study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Furthermore, looking at women's and gender studies in historical, contemporary and global contexts (as this volume does) serves as a reminder that these fields have always strived, and still do, to problematise the relationship of the academy to the evolving and shifting world 'outside' (Robinson, 2017). (For example, recent collections and texts on gender and women's studies include Davis et al., 2006; Smith, 2013; Evans et al., 2014; Marchbank and Letherby, 2014; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2016; Braithwaite and Orr, 2017; McCann and Seung-Kyung, 2017; Saraswati et al., 2017; Launius and Hassel, 2018; Gillis and Jacobs, 2019; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, 2019; Wade and Ferree, 2019.) It is encouraging that such a diversity of books on research on gender and women is available, especially as no one book can do justice to the variety of concepts and ideas which make up the field of gender and women's studies.

These shifts are not, however, without criticism. For example, another important development since the 1990s was the rapid institutional growth of queer theory, associated with postmodernism. One of the implications this has had for research and teaching on both gender and sexuality is that there was a shift in content, a new focus on cultural practices rather than on material inequalities. This is something that many feminists have been critical of (see, for example, Hennessey, 2012; Richardson et al., 2012; Hines, in this volume), which is reflected in the shift in attention back towards issues of materiality. The move to theorising masculinities, too, has not been without criticism (Bridges, 2019; Robinson, 2019), nor has the embracing of 'postfeminism' by some.

As this present book attests, while there have undoubtedly been important advances in women's position in society, it is also clear that gender inequality persists. We are surrounded on a daily basis with examples that testify to the fact that gender is a key issue the world over. This can be seen from the continued struggles over girls' access to education, to the violence towards, and rape of, women in India, to high-profile inquiries into the sexual abuse of women and children that has led to worldwide campaigns such as #IBelieveYou and the #MeToo movement, to the gendered consequences, especially for rural women, of extreme weather caused by climate change, to attacks on women's reproductive rights and on access to health care in the United States and many other parts of the world, to the gender pay gap and the gendered effects of the financial crisis and the impacts of austerity policy measures, and to the proliferation of the trafficking in women and children on a global scale. The shift to considering gender and gender relations has also entailed a more focused theoretical and policy lens on men as gendered beings who still wield power but who also have to live up to ideals of masculinity, which includes dealing with how notions of

hegemonic and toxic masculinity inform their identities and practices in the digital era. Research in countries such as Africa, for example, has shown how race and class affect men's sexual lives and health and how prevalently men are subject to violence from other men (see Robinson in this volume). In all of these examples, and more, we are presented with both new and old issues for feminism, issues that demand our attention and analysis, as gender studies and women's studies scholars and activists challenging gendered forms of social inequality and injustice.

Therefore, it is in a shifting gendered global landscape that this fifth edition of *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies* has been published. We continue to argue that this volume remains unique in terms of the subjects covered, in the mix of contributing authors (which includes established theorists and those newer to the field), and the more comprehensive and up-to-date nature of the collection, as well as its accessibility, which is still vitally important if a new and evolving generation of scholars is to be inspired and excited by debates in gender and women's studies. Indeed, a new chapter on gender and migration shows the need to ensure that feminist theories and gender and women's studies continue to be informed by contemporary concerns. Further, like the previous editions, this edition of *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies* contains chapters by experts who give an overview of key themes and issues. Each chapter highlights differences between writers, gives a summary of debates in particular areas, and includes relevant critiques. The chapters themselves contain updated text boxes and bulleted lists to enable key points to be highlighted for ease of reading, and each has questions to provoke student discussion and broader engagement with the topic. The suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter recommend both classic and updated texts that are useful overviews or summaries and allow the reader to follow up, in more depth, debates raised in the chapter.

Challenging futures?

Given the diversity of theories and scholarship on gender, the question of what new directions in gender and women' studies might emerge is not an easy one to answer from one edition of this book to the next. It is very clear, looking back, how much more integral intersectionality has become, even since the last edition. As the chapters illustrate, intersectional analyses have highlighted how meanings to the categories of 'women' and 'men' are themselves constituted through their intersections with other forms of social differentiation – such as race, age, dis/ability, sexuality and class – demonstrating how gender inequalities are related to other relations of power – such as class inequalities, racism, ageism and social divisions associated with sexuality and dis/ability (see, for example, Kerner, 2012, for a discussion of intersectionality in terms of German gender studies). This attention to intersectionality also underpins new areas of work such as critical femininity studies. Typically, femininity has been conceptualised as a 'pressure to conform' and as a 'singular concept … with very little discussion on the relations *between* femininities.' (Dahl and Sundén, 2018: 2). This undertheorisation, it is argued, has failed to adequately account for the ways in which femininities are marked not only by gender but also by race, class, ethnicity and sexuality, demanding a critical rethink of dominant constructions of femininity This need to continually acknowledge difference is also vital to consider in relationship to the

feminist classroom and pedagogic practices. Tsao (2017) argues that we must explore 'feminist teaching' and how differences can be communicated within a supportive learning environment. Important to note here is her view that the gender and women's studies classroom should be one that is located in and extended to both public and global contexts – and, importantly, take into account the complexity and fluidity of 'identity'.

We are aware, still, that those engaged in teaching and researching in gender and women's studies do so in very different political and economic contexts. Since the fourth edition was published, there still remains east and west and south and north differences in terms of how established such programmes are in the academy, including wide variation in terms of the economic resources available to develop gender and women's studies. We are also mindful of current issues that can undermine any progress or productive dialogue across countries, signified by feminist concerns with a neoliberalism agenda, cuts in institutional funding for gender programmes and, for some countries still, a lack of institutionalisation of gender and women's studies courses.

In a European context, Sveva Magaraggia and Mariagrazia Leone (2010) argue that in Italy, since 2004, women's studies has been growing despite institutional constraints, but its future is uncertain. Whilst Chiara Saraceno (2010) also acknowledges the institutional framework and the weak position Italian women academics have had within it, she goes on to argue that, notwithstanding these issues, Italian women academics have been able to innovatively use institutional resources. Other recent debates in the European context have highlighted how feminists are continuing to effect change. Mia Liinason and Sabine Grenz (2016: 79) argue for 'the potential for collective forms of resistance against the neoliberalisation of universities, against the framing of productivity as the key goal in academia, and against the view on gender equality and diversity as "covered" (as goals that have been reached) in today's academic landscapes'. Whilst in the Croatian context, Biljana Kašić states that in relation to feminist scholarship, we need to open and extend possibilities 'for challenging our so-called comfort zones' (2016: 136). Thus, the imaginative strategies that earlier feminists used to establish gender and women's studies in the first place are being re-imagined in new ways, although in uncertain and changed contexts.

Indeed, in many countries in Europe, in Latin America and other parts of the world we are witnessing growing opposition to both feminism and gender and women's studies. In 2018 in Hungary, the government under President Viktor Orban withdrew the accreditation of MA and PhD programmes in gender studies. The election of President Bolsonara in Brazil has resulted in similar attacks on the legitimacy of gender studies, with his call for a bill to prohibit inclusion of gender issues in elementary schools. Elsewhere, in India in 2019, there are worries for the future of gender studies as a result of drastic cuts to funding to gender and women's studies centres at public universities (Roy, 2019). These challenges are often 'justified' by presenting gender and women's studies as a waste of public money and by claims that gender and women's studies is 'ideological' and not 'scientific' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018).

The construction of gender studies in this way has been used to mobilise people against gender equality issues and policies in what have been termed *anti-gender campaigns* that claim 'gender ideology' is endangering society and 'democracy'. These new

waves of resistance to so-called gender ideology or gender theory have spread in countries as different as Poland, Italy, France, Germany, Slovakia and Russia and are associated with upholding and strengthening traditional gender norms and family values. (For a comparative account of recent anti-gender mobilisations in eleven European countries, including Russia, see Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017.) This includes opposition to LGBT rights, including civil partnership and same-sex marriage legislation and familial rights, reproductive rights especially in relation to abortion, 'progressive' sex education in schools, post-binary definitions of gender and social constructionist approaches, as well as gender studies itself. These recent trends pose an important challenge to gender scholars and struggles for gender and racial equality (Rodríguez et al., 2018). What are the implications, both for the production of knowledge and understandings of gender and achieving gender equality, of this closing down of gender and women's studies departments and courses and attacks on gender scholarship? These are important questions for, after all, these are struggles over the right to know, struggles over the legitimacy of knowledge production and access to knowledge, and struggles over the tools to challenge and confront intersectional forms of social injustice. This book is part of meeting that challenge.

Conclusion

The important contribution that gender and women's studies has made is increasingly undeniable. Indeed, one of the most important successes of gender and women's studies has been the new approaches to knowledge it has brought to the traditional disciplines. In so doing, gender and women's studies have fissured and blurred not only the established boundaries between academia and academics and civic and political society but also those who construct knowledge 'outside' formal institutions and in their everyday lives (Robinson, 2017). Although, as Rita Bencivenga et al. (2014) argue, the importance of developing international associations for gender and women's studies, as well as the need to ensure that they will benefit from supranational alliances and increased interdisciplinary exchanges, are reminders of the need to think globally.

Gender and women's studies continue to provide students with knowledge of the social processes that produce gender discrimination and inequality in their own countries and elsewhere in the world. Analysing different gender cultures, or 'regimes', has helped to broaden students' thinking and open up questions about social change and how to develop strategies to deal with gender inequalities, as well as to offer a better understanding of social diversity more generally. As the different editions of this volume have demonstrated, there is still a need to pay close attention to diverse critiques of Western, white and middle-class women's and gender studies. In fact, we would argue, as have many others, that this remains a theoretical, moral and political necessity. Such debates, with their uneven and continuous revisions and re-conceptualisations, reveal the field's determined capacity for self-reflection, even if seen in retrospect. However, feminist activism within the academy, if taken as but one aspect of the need to think across barriers between the academy and 'the outside world', takes place in diverse economic and political global contexts (Robinson, 2017).

In this way, the feminist and gendered academy can be seen as connected, both to our understandings of the world and to the possibilities for changing it. Though we,

as editors, remain convinced of this potentiality, in these times of change, with a global recession, the emergence of new waves of resistance to gender equality and gender studies, and with competition for institutional and research resources, we would ask the following key question. How do we ensure that the (sometimes different) pressing issues we face as scholars of feminist/gender/women's studies are recognised? And how do we make certain that the different theoretical and conceptual frameworks we work within are acknowledged by feminist initiatives that include the diversity of countries engaged in gender and women's studies? Crucially, the pressing need to both retain and further develop feminism's 'critical edge' and, we contend, to re-imagine feminist scholarship and its connection to both epistemological and social change has never been greater. We hope the chapters in this volume contribute to this endeavour and continue to enable students to critically navigate the ever-shifting and fluid terrain of gender and women's studies.

1 CONCEPTUALISING GENDER

Diane Richardson

Introduction

The other day I noticed a cartoon depicting two young children – a girl and a boy – playing together in a sandpit. One turns to the other and says, *What do you want to be when you grow up? Boy or girl?* Why is this humorous? At one level it is funny because of the assumptions we hold about gender – for instance, the idea that gender is constant makes this question seem ridiculous. At another more satirical level, it is humorous because it highlights how contemporary ideas about gender are changing, medically, socially and legally, in complex ways, leading to greater recognition that people can grow up to become the gender they would like to be. It suggests that what matters most is not so much gender as a biological category based on a person's anatomy and physiology, but their subjectivity and how they identify themselves.

Are you the gender you say you are? The answer to this question varies depending on the legal, medical and social definitions of gender that exist in any given culture and historical period, and the relative authority accorded these. Currently, this question is a contested issue for policy makers. In the USA, the Trump administration, for instance, considered defining gender in a narrow sense, as an *immutable* characteristic determined on a biological basis. In some countries, however, the law determines legal gender on the basis of self-identification. In Portugal, for example, a law on gender identity, which received parliamentary approval in 2018, allows adults to change their legal gender without any requirement, simply on the basis of their self-identification as a man or a woman. In this case you are the gender you say you are.

This chapter examines different ways of understanding gender and outlines how the concept of gender has developed over the last fifty or so years, especially within feminist theory and gender and women's studies. As later chapters go on to illustrate, gender is a key organizing concept of institutions, relationships and practices in culture and society. However, concepts of gender differ. In considering different ways of thinking about gender, this chapter focuses on three main areas: gender as a social construction; the relationship between sex and gender; and how gender is linked to sexuality.

The idea of gender

What do we mean by gender? The meaning of the terms *sex* and *gender*, and the ways that writers have theorised the relationship between the two, have changed considerably over the years. Prior to the 1960s, gender referred primarily to what is coded in language as masculine or feminine. Gender has subsequently been variously theorised as personality traits and behaviours that are specifically associated either with women

or men (for example, women are caring; men are aggressive); to any social construction having to do with the female–male distinction, including those which distinguish female bodies from male bodies; to being thought of as the existence of two different social groups, 'women' and 'men', which are the product of unequal relationships (Connell and Pearse, 2014). In this latter sense, gender is understood as a hierarchy that exists in society, wherein one group of people (men) have power and privilege over another group of people (women) (Delphy, 1993, 2016). More recent postmodern approaches, associated in particular with the work of Judith Butler ([1990] 2006, 2011), developed the theory of gender as *performativity*, where gender is understood as continuously produced through everyday practices and social interactions.

We need to understand these theoretical changes around the concept of gender not only in a historical sense but also in terms of cultural context. In other words, it is important that we ask whether, in different countries and cultures, gender, as a concept, translates in a manner that is analytically useful. For instance, in Slavic languages and in Scandinavia, there are no separate words that map onto the sex/gender distinction; the same word is used for both terms (Robinson, 2006). So we need to develop understandings of gender that allow us to theorise both cultural variation *and* historical changes in understanding gender and gender relations. Historically, theories from the Global North, in particular North America and Europe, have dominated approaches to understanding gender. This has led to criticisms that theories largely based on Western understandings have colonised ideas about gender, insofar as they are extended to non-Western contexts in ways that erase local understandings and cultural meanings. Raewyn Connell (2007a, 2007b) makes this point in arguing for the need to recognise social theory from societies in the Global South, which are often ignored or marginalised. Gurminder Bhambra (2014) outlines a similar argument in her work, drawing on postcolonial studies and decoloniality (see also Kapoor in this volume).

The Global South is a relational concept that emphasises unequal forms of power relations, both historically (colonial regimes, for example) and contemporaneously, between the North (the West) and South (the 'rest'). In this binary way of thinking, the Global South can be understood as an umbrella term comprising a given set of countries or continents, typically many countries in Africa, Central and Latin America, and parts of Asia. However, as Connell (2007a, 2007b) suggests, such a binary North/South view is overly simplistic, and therefore we need to think critically about the use of the term Global South if we are to avoid the dangers of over-generalisation and of reproducing Western-centredness in analyses of genders and sexualities (see also Richardson, 2017 and Buckingham in this volume).

This chapter outlines the major changes that have taken place since the second part of the twentieth century in how we define gender. It begins with an examination of the use of the terms *sex* and *gender* and the distinction made between them, what is commonly called the sex/gender binary. The chapter then goes on to discuss the development of theories of gender within gender and women's studies, in particular the contribution made by feminist and queer theory. In this section, I will look at how different theoretical approaches have led to different understandings of gender. The final section of the chapter examines the relationship between gender and sexuality. This is important because, as I shall demonstrate, our understandings of gender are closely connected with the concept of sexuality as well as sex.

The sex/gender binary

During the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the theories put forward by biologists, medical researchers and psychologists dominated understandings of gender. These early accounts were mainly concerned with establishing 'natural' or 'biological' explanations for human behaviour. Researchers sought to discover underlying 'sex differences' which they believed produced different psychological and behavioural dispositions in males and females. They spoke of sex, not gender, and did not distinguish between the two as we often do today. Within these *naturalistic* approaches, sex is conceptualised in terms of *binaries*: male/female; man/woman; masculine/feminine. In this binary thinking, male and female are understood as 'opposites' that, despite their differences, complement one another. This pairing of 'opposite sexes' is seen as natural. Gender here is understood to be a biological 'fact', a person's 'sex', which is pre-given and located in the body. This is an *essentialist* approach: a way of understanding the human self as having a timeless, universal biological 'essence' that exists beyond the bounds of social life. Although, as I shall go on to discuss, the precise location of 'sex' in the body, for example ovaries/testes, chromosomes, or nerve centres in the brain, has been the subject of considerable debate.

Few within the social sciences questioned these 'scientific' theories about sexual difference. Classical sociology both drew on and contributed to understandings of sex, gender and sexuality as binary categories ordained by nature. However, this was to change dramatically in the second part of the twentieth century as debates about how we conceptualise gender steadily grew. In the 1960s and 1970s, a new way of thinking about gender began to emerge that critiqued earlier 'essentialist' frameworks, signalling a shift away from biologically based accounts of gender and towards social analysis. This shift from naturalising to *social constructionist* accounts, although not necessarily denying the role of biology, emphasised the importance of social and cultural factors in defining gender.

At the same time that social scientists and historians were beginning to challenge the assumption that gender was rooted in 'nature', more and more people were beginning to question dominant ideas about gender roles. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of both women's and gay and lesbian liberation movements in the United States and Europe (D'Emilio, 1998; D'Emilio and Freedman, 2012; Stein, 2012; Stulberg, 2018; see also Charles in this volume). An important contribution to the study of gender at that time was the distinction between the terms sex and gender that many of those involved in sexual politics – along with some sociologists, psychiatrists and psychologists – sought to make. The term 'sex' referred to the biological differences between females and males, differences defined in terms of the anatomy and physiology of the body; *gender* referred to the social meanings and value attached to being female or male in any given society, expressed in terms of the concepts femininity and masculinity. This distinction between sex (biological) and gender (cultural) is what is termed the *sex/gender binary*. A number of key assumptions associated with the sex/gender binary are summarised as follows (Box 1.1).

Studies of transsexuality were very important to the differentiation of sex and gender. The sex/gender binary made it possible to imagine that people could feel themselves to be a particular gender trapped in the 'wrong' sex: for instance, people who felt themselves to be a woman and feminine (their gender identity), but who had a male body (their

> **Box 1.1 – The sex/gender binary**
>
> - A distinction can be made between sex (biology) and gender (culture).
> - Sex is biologically given and universal.
> - Gender is historically and culturally variable.
> - Sex consists of two – and only two – types of human being.
> - This two-sex model of sexual difference (the distinction between females and males) is a natural 'fact of life'.
> - Individual bodies only have one sex, male or female.
> - Identities develop as either one or other of these two sexes/genders.

sex). This was difficult to account for without allowing for a separation of body (sex) and gender (identity) (see Repo, 2016, and also Hines and Woodward in this volume.)

The sex/gender binary was also an important aspect of early feminist work and provided an important foundation for much feminist theory and politics. Feminists have used the sex/gender binary to argue for social change on the grounds that although there may exist certain biological differences between females and males, societies superimpose different norms of personality and behaviour that produce 'women' and 'men' as social categories. It is this reasoning – that sex is not the same as gender – that led the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in the feminist classic *The Second Sex* ([1949] 1953) to famously remark, 'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman'. We cannot, de Beauvoir argues, understand womanhood or manhood as fixed by nature; rather, this is something that is acquired through the social process of *becoming gendered.*

During the late 1960s and early 1970s many feminist writers expressed similar views in developing the idea of the sex/gender binary. The British sociologist Ann Oakley, for instance, argued that it was important to distinguish between two separate processes that she claimed were, at that time, often confused. That is:

> the tendency to differentiate by sex, and the tendency to differentiate in a particular way by sex. The first is genuinely a ***constant*** feature of human society but the second is not, and its inconstancy marks the division between 'sex' and 'gender': sex differences may be 'natural', but gender differences have their source in culture, not nature.
>
> <div align="right">(Oakley, [1972] 2016: 189, emphasis added)</div>

Oakley takes sex for granted in assuming that we all 'have a sex', that sex is not something we acquire; rather, it is a *constant*, a natural part of being human. Gender, by contrast, she understands to be the cultural interpretation of our biologically given sex. It is important to acknowledge that, at the time, this distinction between sex and gender was hailed as a conceptual breakthrough and became one of the most fundamental assumptions in feminist gender theory. It was also very important to feminist politics, as it supported the argument that the social roles men and women occupy are not fixed by nature and are open to change.

Anthropological work has also contributed significantly to these debates, highlighting the cultural variability of gender roles in different societies in different parts of the world. Of particular importance was Margaret Mead's work on gender which, although it was first published in the 1930s, was reprinted and gained considerable attention in the 1960s (Mead, [1935] 1963). In her book *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, Mead described contrasting gender roles on Papua, New Guinea, among the Arapesh, the Mundugumor and the Tchambuli. What was seen as particularly significant was that Mead claimed that, among the Tchambuli people, gender roles were in stark contrast to those in the United States at that time, with women occupying dominant positions. Although her work has since been subject to critique (for a review see Shankman, 2009), it was a major source for the emerging women's movement and the development of theories of gender that emphasised the social construction of gender roles.

Sex as a social construction

Since the 1990s, a different understanding of sex and its relationship to gender has emerged. The distinction between sex and gender has been challenged by arguments that sex is just as much a social construction as gender. Rather than thinking about sex and gender as separate from each other (sex being the foundation upon which gender is superimposed), gender has increasingly been used to refer to any social construction having to do with the female/male binary, including male and female bodies. This has led to debates about whether it is useful any more to differentiate between sex and gender.

For example, both Christine Delphy ([1984] 2016) and Judith Butler ([1990] 2006) have argued that the body is not free from social interpretation but is itself a socially constructed phenomenon (see also Woodward in this volume). It is through understandings of gender that we interpret and establish meanings for bodily differences that are termed sexual difference (Butler, 2011). In this model, sex is not something that one 'has' or a description of what someone is. Without the concept of gender, it is argued, we could not make sense of bodies as differently sexed. It is gender that provides the categories of meaning for us to interpret how a body appears to us as 'sexed'. In other words, gender creates sex rather than the other way around.

Historical research supports the argument that understandings of the body are socially constructed. In *Making Sex*, for example, Thomas Laqueur (1992) argues that the idea that human bodies divide into two different sexes – male and female – only became commonplace during the nineteenth century. Prior to then, it was thought that male and female bodies developed out of one type of body. The idea of two distinct biological sexes is associated with the development of science and medicine (Colebrook, 2004). Historical studies also show that the biological 'facts' determining sex have been the subject of much debate. Chromosomes, hormones, gonads (ovaries/testes), internal reproductive structures and genitalia have variously been seen as the basis for defining a person's sex. For instance, studies of medical responses to cases of 'doubtful sex' – people who in the past were often referred to as the third sex, or hermaphrodites, or nowadays, intersex – suggest that definitions of what constitutes the male and the female body have changed. People born with a mixture of sexual markers – for example, with both an ovary and a testis present in their body – challenge the idea that there is one 'true sex'

in every human body and often resulted in disagreements between doctors over whether someone was 'truly' a male or a female (Dreger, 2000; Reis, 2012).

Gender 'verification' testing in sport has also highlighted the complexity of gender and the fact that 'many people, more than we imagine, do not conform neatly to the clear genetic and physical criteria that the regulatory bodies of sport deploy' (Woodward, 2011: 34; 2012; see also her chapter in this volume).

Studies of the medical management of intersexuality demonstrate how definitions of 'sex' have changed over time. What they also highlight is that the meanings of bodies and the assumptions made about the relationship between gender, identity and the body have varied from one historical period to the next (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, 2012; Karkazis, 2008). During the nineteenth century, for instance, doctors believed reproductive capacity – the presence in the body of ovaries or testes – characterised the sex of a person. This led in some cases to individuals being diagnosed as of a different sex from the one they felt themselves to be. For example, in one case, a woman who had lived all her life as female was 'diagnosed' as male because of the discovery of testes in the abdomen (Dreger, 2000). Here, the truth of a person's character is sought in the body, not in terms of how the person identifies.

This is in stark contrast with medical opinion from the mid-twentieth century, as illustrated by studies of children diagnosed as intersex, such as those carried out by John Money and Anke Erhardt ([1972] 1996), who put forward a theory of 'psychosexual neutrality'. This approach emphasised the role of gender assignment and gender of rearing rather than biological 'sex' in determining gender development. Studies of transsexuality – what we would refer to now as transgender or trans studies – by Robert Stoller (1968) and others also demonstrated how biological 'sex' and gender were not always one and the same. (The term *cisgender* is also now used to refer to people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned as at birth. For example, a cisgender woman is someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned as female at birth.) These studies were not only supportive of the development of the sex/gender (body/identity) binary, they also led to a privileging of identity over body in defining gender.

Medical treatment, including surgery and hormonal treatments, to 'correct' bodies so they fit binary notions of male and female has long been the response to people born with intersex characteristics. The continuing concern to resolve bodily ambiguity in cases of 'doubtful sex', despite the fact that medical knowledge has demonstrated that there are many variations of sex and human bodies are not fully dimorphic (always one thing or the other), demonstrates the *social* importance of sex/gender. It suggests that there are strong reasons for wanting to sort people into two different groups and to maintain the idea of two separate sexes/genders. It is important to ask, then, why doctors have been so concerned to 'resolve' cases of 'doubtful sex'. If intersex people lived in a world where sex/gender was not socially important, then, arguably, being of 'doubtful sex' would not matter in the way it does. In recent years an intersex political movement has emerged (Preves, 2005). Intersex activism includes those who object to the idea that human bodies should have to be defined as male or female, as well as campaigns to end unwanted genital surgeries for those considered to be intersex (Karkazis, 2008; Davis, 2015).

There may, then, be two sexes but this is not a naturally occurring 'fact of life' but, rather, a socially produced binary that exists because of the significance placed on

defining bodies to be either male or female. This is what has been termed the 'medical invention of sex', whereby bodies are literally shaped (operated upon) to fit the categories of sex and gender (Dreger, 2000; Karkazis, 2008; Repo, 2016). By doing this, medicine constructs a single believable sex for each ambiguous body, removing any challenge to prevailing ideas about what constitutes an 'appropriate' male or female body/sex.

In addition to people born with a mixture of 'sex' characteristics, trans studies have also been important in continuing to problematise the gender binary system (Monro, 2010; see also Hines and Woodward in this volume). As I have discussed, earlier trans studies were used as evidence to support a sex/gender binary. Some more recent trans accounts, however, espouse embodying 'doubleness' rather than a mind (gender) and body(sex) split. This includes approaches to theorising gender diversity as an *expansion of gender categories* beyond a simple binary of 'male'/'female'. Anthropological studies of gender have documented such gender diversity in different cultures, where there are long histories of 'third gender' categories (Herdt, 2003) such as, for example, the hijras in India (Nanda, 1998; Monro, 2010). In some parts of the world legal recognition of non-binary gender has been introduced to encompass 'third gender' recognition, including in India and Nepal. In addition, several countries, including Germany, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, have introduced legislation recognizing the rights of intersex (and non-binary) people to legally identify themselves as such on official documents, including passports, by choosing a different category to 'male' and 'female'.

The contemporary assertion of gender fluidity is a further challenge to binary understandings of gender. A much more fundamental challenge that goes beyond gender fluidity is to question the use of gender categories at all in moving towards a post-gender world (Davis, 2017). This includes people who identify as non-binary and 'gender free' (Richards et al., 2017).

In this section, I have described how understandings of the relationship between sex and gender have gone through a number of important phases over the last fifty or so years.

- First, it was assumed that sex (male/female) defines gender (masculine/feminine).

- Second, a distinction was made between sex and gender (the sex/gender binary), where gender is understood as a social construct determined by culture, and sex is assumed to be a biological given.

- Third, like gender, sex is also viewed as a social construction (gender creates sex) with terms such as *sexgender* thought to be more useful than distinguishing between the two.

I will now go on to consider theories of gender and the specific contribution made by feminist writers, showing how the idea of gender has also undergone significant change.

Feminist gender theory

Feminists have critiqued essentialist understandings of gender and sex and have played an important role in establishing a body of research and theory that supports social constructionist approaches. However, the main concern in feminist theories of gender

is not simply to describe the ways in which gender is socially and culturally defined in any given society – for instance, whether 'being a woman' is associated with having the responsibility of childcare or whether 'being a man' is associated with being the principle breadwinner in a family structure. It is to develop understandings of how gender is connected to social, economic and cultural status and power in society. In this sense, *gender is theorised, not merely as difference, but as a social division.* Traditionally, the term social division was used in relation to class hierarchies in society. However, it is now used more broadly to refer to social, economic and cultural differentiation of groups in society on the basis of other criteria besides class, including gender, race and ethnicity. To theorise *gender as social division*, therefore, is to examine how the social reproduction of gender difference in society is connected to social structures and institutions that create inequalities between men and women (Abbott, 2013). Gender differentiation is, therefore, not a neutral process; it involves the attribution of differences in *value and power* attached to growing up girl or boy.

Gender roles

The main focus of work on gender carried out during the 1970s and 1980s was on exploring the production of masculinity and femininity. Many feminist writers, as I stated in the previous section, argued that gender is culturally determined and that we become differently gendered through socialisation into gender roles or, as it was often termed then, 'sex roles'. Gender role theory, drawing on the principles of social learning theory, claimed that through various learning processes (for example, observation, imitation, modelling, differential reinforcement) and agencies of socialisation (for example parents, teachers, peers, the media) children learn the social meanings, values, norms and expectations associated with 'being a girl' or 'being a boy' and to develop ways of behaving and personality characteristics considered appropriate (or not) for a woman or man (Rahman and Jackson, 2010). Gender is here defined as the learning of culturally and historically specific social roles associated with women and men and used to describe someone as masculine or feminine. This is what we might refer to nowadays as the process of *becoming gendered*, involving learning specific ideas, practices and values associated with gender (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2 – Becoming gendered involves

■ Gender labelling:
  Attributing gendered terms like boy, girl, woman, man to self and others.

■ Acquisition of gender knowledge:
  Learning historically and culturally specific knowledge about gender.

■ Universality of gender:
  The idea that all human beings 'have' a gender.

■ Gender constancy:
  The idea that gender is unchanging.

As Connell (2009, 2014) points out, a great deal of research by social psychologists and anthropologists in particular has examined the mechanisms of acquisition and the key sites of learning gender roles, as well as documenting variation in gender roles in different cultures. However, feminist theories of gender, as I indicated previously, are not interested in simply describing how girls and boys grow up differently and become gendered, but how a key aspect of that difference is understanding that girls and boys, women and men, have different social status and value. This focus on *gender inequality* is on how gender-role expectations convey value and privilege to boys over girls in ways that constrain girls as they grow up, especially in terms of educational and employment 'choices' (see Irving and C. Jackson in this volume).

Gender as hierarchy

These early socialisation theories of gender appear to us now as rather naïve and far too simplistic. From thinking about gender roles in terms of *either* masculinity *or* femininity, we now recognise that there are multiple genders and many patterns of masculinities and femininities – what some refer to as gender pluralism or gender diversity (Monro, 2005). At the time, feminists were among those who critiqued gender role theory, in particular pointing out that it was a highly mechanistic and static account of gender that attributed little agency to subjects who were assumed to acquire a certain gender role by simply internalising what they had been taught. Feminists argued that such theories of gender were oversimplified as many young people reject social norms and cultural assumptions about gendered roles (Rahman and Jackson, 2010). This was clearly in keeping with the feminist political goal of challenging gender-role expectations and norms that were seen as restricting women's lives.

By the end of the 1970s, theories of gender were becoming increasingly more sophisticated. Some writers took Oakley's and other feminist critiques of essentialist understandings of gender a step further by questioning the existence of the category of gender itself. The development of such an analysis of gender is particularly associated with the work of materialist feminists, such as Christine Delphy ([1984] 2016) and Monique Wittig (1981, 1992). Although Delphy and Wittig recognised the importance of demonstrating that the *meaning* of 'gender' is historically and culturally specific, they questioned the idea that gender is a universal category that can be assumed will always exist in some form or other in all times and places. Instead, they defined gender as a *socially constructed product* of patriarchal hierarchies. Gender, here, is understood to be the result of gendered power differences. For example, in her paper *One Is Not Born a Woman*, echoing Simone de Beauvoir, Wittig (1981, 1992) argues that gender is an imaginary foundation, the outcome of a social hierarchy in which one class of people (men) have power and privilege over another class of people (women). The categories 'woman' and 'man' are relative, defined by a specific social and economic position in society. Gender is commonly thought to be the cause of one's social and economic position (a). In Wittig's analysis gender derives from one's place in the social hierarchies that exist in society (b). In other words, gender is the mark of one's subordination as a woman rather than its basis.

 (a) One's gender as 'woman' leads to social subordination.

(b) Patriarchal hierarchies define one as a 'woman'.

From this perspective, the political goal of challenging gendered power differences will, as a consequence, lead to the elimination of the idea of gender. Gender categories would not exist if social divisions did not exist. This idea of a world without gender can be found in more recent feminist work that is not only concerned with social transformations towards ending gender inequality but that seeks a *de-gendering* of society, which some writers refer to as 'undoing gender' (Lorber, 2005; Deutsch, 2007). This approach argues for moving towards a non-gendered social order based on equality without the need for gender categorisation. More recently, there have been interesting trans contributions to this debate (see, for example, Davis, 2017).

In the 1990s, new conceptualisations of gender associated with postmodernism and the rise of queer theory emerged, shifting the emphasis away from definitions of gender as fixed, coherent and stable, towards seeing gender categories as plural, provisional and situated. Postmodern models of power, influenced by Michel Foucault's work, demanded a more complex account of gender as hierarchy. Foucault's (1981) account of power moved away from the 'old' idea of power as something possessed and wielded by social institutions and particular groups in society, claiming that 'power is everywhere', diffuse rather than concentrated and enacted through *discourses*. These new conceptualisations of gendered power relations were also connected with the partial shift in feminist thinking in the 1980s away from a primary focus on divisions between women and men, to theorising differences among women (in particular, of class, race, ethnicity and sexuality) and, associated with this, the problematisation of the category 'woman'.

Second wave feminism (see Charles in this volume) was based primarily on white, Western, middle-class, young women's experiences, which led to the criticism that it had failed to take account of differences among women and, in particular, that it did not sufficiently recognise the interests of black, older and working-class women. Such criticisms also included the development of post-colonial feminism, which highlighted the ethnocentricity of much of second wave feminism for its lack of attention to differences arising from a legacy of colonialism. A key contributor to these debates was Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in her now classic work critiquing Western feminism for its homogeneous construction of 'Third World women' (Mohanty, 1988; see also Bhavnani, 1997; as well as the chapters by Hines and Kapoor in this volume). What these developments highlighted was the need for theoretical approaches that recognised the complexity of social hierarchies and attempted to theorise, through an *intersectionality* framework, the intersections of gender with other social inequalities.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality has its roots in anti-racist feminism in the United States. The term has been attributed to Kimberle Crenshaw, quoted above, but work of other black feminists – such as Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) and bell hooks in her book *Ain't I a Woman* ([1981] 2015) – raised similar issues about the need to understand how gender intersects with race, even before the term intersectionality was coined. Indeed, the fact that hooks entitled her book after an 1851 speech given by the African American abolitionist and women's-rights activist, Sojourner Truth, at a women's rights convention in Ohio, demonstrates the even greater historical legacy of these concerns.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, studies of intersectionality have proliferated across a wide range of contexts. There is no singular definition of intersectionality but, rather, there is a great deal of variation in the way it is now theorised and applied. This is exemplified in the later works of Collins, who expanded her earlier critiques in applying the concept of intersectionality to include all women (Collins, 2000; Collins and Bilge, 2016), and of Crenshaw (2019): see also Jennifer Nash's (2019) critical analysis of black feminism's engagement with the concept of intersectionality.

Broadly speaking, intersectionality provides a way of understanding the interaction of different forms of disadvantage and inequality, focusing in particular on the linkages between categories such as race and gender. Intersectionality means more than the sum of the parts, such as the notion that black women are 'doubly disadvantaged' as a consequence of racism and sexism. It represents a move towards more complex models of understanding of how different forms of inequality are 'routed through one other' (Grabham et al., 2009: 1). For instance, this might involve an exploration of how categories such as race, sexuality and gender are co-constituted – that is, the social processes through which these categories inform and shape each other. One of the criticisms that has been made of intersectionality theory is that there was a tendency to focus on race and gender to the exclusion of other social categories (see Kapoor in this volume). More recent work has addressed this – for example, looking at the intersections between gender and other categories, including class, migration and sexuality (e.g. Taylor et al., 2010; Richardson and Monro, 2012; Romero, 2017). For a broader discussion of some of the other ways in which the concept of intersectionality has been problematised within feminist theory, see, for instance, Nira Yuval-Davis (2006a) and Floya Anthias (2012). The theme of intersectionality is one that is woven throughout this book, but see in particular the chapters by Hines, Picq and Rahman, Kapoor and Robinson for further discussion.

Postmodern theories of gender

The work of Judith Butler ([1990] 2006, 2011) in particular is associated with postmodern theories of gender. Her book *Gender Trouble*, first published in 1990, has been enormously influential in conceptualizing gender and the development of queer theory. In this work Butler:

- proposes a new understanding of gender as performativity;

- questions the usefulness of the sex/gender binary; and

- suggests heterosexuality is an effect of gender.

Butler argues that gender is *performatively* enacted. In her early work she used drag to convey what she means by this. Typically, drag is understood as impersonation: a drag queen is a 'real' man giving a performance as a woman. Butler argues that there are parallels between drag and the performance of gender in everyday life: gender is a kind of impersonation that passes for real. Gender is constituted out of attempts to compel belief in others that we are 'really' a woman or a man. For Butler, there is no 'real' gender of which drag is an impersonation. She claims that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender', arguing instead that identity is constituted by 'the

very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler, [1990] 2006: 25). What she means by this is that we assume a person performs in a certain way *because* that person is a man or a woman. In this sense Butler's notion of gender performance is different from how the term *performance* is usually used – that is, to refer to a subject (the doer) who is formed prior to the acts s/he chooses to perform (do). For Butler, performances are *performative* in that they bring into being gendered subjects. The act of performance is productive of, rather than expressive of, gender. It is through 'doing gender' that we produce the effect that there was some gendered person who preceded the performance: 'the doer'. This, for Butler, is a continual process. So, while it might seem certain that a person is a woman or a man, Butler is suggesting that this is not fixed or stable. Gender, it is argued, is a process of continuous construction that produces the effect (an illusion) of being natural and stable through gender performances that make us 'women' and 'men'. A person might seem to have a particular identity, but this is only because we keep doing things that maintain the appearance of us 'being the same'. Theories of performativity, then, challenge the idea that gender identities are simply 'always there', and claim instead we are constantly *becoming gendered*, through performances that constitute us as 'women' or 'men'.

Butler also questions the idea that heterosexuality is natural. She argues that heterosexuality is 'unstable', dependent on ongoing, continuous and repeated performances of normative gender identities, which produce the illusion of stability. There is no 'real' or 'natural' sexuality to be copied or imitated: heterosexuality is itself continually in the process of being reproduced. As well as *denaturalising* gender and heterosexuality, Butler also questions biological understandings of 'sex' in arguing that sex is as culturally constructed as gender. As a consequence, as I discussed earlier in the chapter, she questions the usefulness of making a distinction between sex and gender.

One of the criticisms made of Butler's work is that, like other poststructuralist/ postmodern accounts of gender, it is an individualized approach that is rather abstracted from the day-to-day material problems facing women in many parts of the world (Hennessey, 2012). This is seen as having important consequences for feminist politics that are concerned to bring about social changes that challenge gender inequalities (for further discussion see Hines in this volume).

I have so far described how the concept of gender has developed in a number of important respects. Theories of gender have problematised the gender binary system that divides people into the categories 'male' and 'female' in ways that allow for more complex understandings of gender. A number of approaches have been identified: *expanding gender categories* by adding more genders (for example, 'third gender'); *moving beyond gender* towards a society without gender categories (for example, people who identify as 'non-gendered') and, arising out of poststructural theories that understand gender as fluid and plural, *gender pluralism*, where gender is conceptualised as an intersecting range along a continuum that includes, for example, people who feel multi-gendered (Monro, 2010).

The first part of this chapter looked at how understandings of gender rely on particular understandings of the relationship sex has to gender. In the final section, I go on to examine the question of how concepts of gender are also connected to ideas about sexuality.

Gender and sexuality: feminist and queer theories

As I discussed earlier, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century naturalist approaches dominated understandings of gender (or sex as was the term used then) and sexuality. The relationship between these was understood as an expression of something natural, a universal order that was *heterosexual* and where 'it is assumed that sex-gender-sexuality relate in a hierarchical, congruent and coherent manner' (Richardson, 2007: 460). For instance, using this principle, it was expected that a biological female should naturally grow up to experience herself as a female and have a feminine gender identity, and that her sexual practices and sexual identity would be heterosexual. This is what is meant by the principle of sexual and gender coherence. This helps us to understand why 'cross-gender identity' (for example, feminine men or masculine women) has historically been central to theories of homosexuality (Butler, 2011). Within this approach, sexuality is understood to be a property of gender, a gender that is pre-given and located in the gendered/sexed body.

Feminist writers, as I discussed earlier, were among the first to challenge essentialist frameworks for understanding gender and sexuality. However, what they did not do, in the main, was suggest that these two concepts should be de-coupled from each other. Instead their interconnection was highlighted in analyses of sexuality as one of the key mechanisms by which gender and gender inequalities are (re)produced (Jackson and Scott, 2010).

Feminist theories of gender offer two broad approaches to understanding the relationship between gender and sexuality.

- *Gender is prioritised over sexuality.* In most feminist accounts it is assumed that gender and sexuality need to be examined together and, also, that gender takes precedence over sexuality. That is, concepts of sexuality are understood to be largely founded upon notions of gender. This tradition is associated with feminist writers, such as Wittig (1981, 1992) and Delphy ([1984] 2016), whose work I discussed previously, as well as more recent feminist work. For example, Stevi Jackson (2012) argues for the logical priority of gender over sexuality, pointing out that our understanding of sexual categories like 'gay' or 'straight' depend on knowing the gender of a person.

- *Sexuality is prioritised over gender.* Traditionally this is an underlying assumption in psychoanalytic accounts and also informs the work of some feminists. For example, in a 'classic' article, Catherine MacKinnon (1982) suggested that it is through the experience of sexuality, as it is currently constructed, that women learn about gender, learn what 'being a woman' means. MacKinnon argued that, as well as constituting our gendered subjectivies, (hetero) sexuality is the cause of gender inequality. Some more recent feminist work has extended a similar argument that gender is an effect of (hetero) sexuality (see, for example, Ingraham 1996, 2005).

The assumption that gender and sexuality need to be examined together remained relatively unchallenged until the emergence of queer theory in the 1990s. The distinction between sexuality and gender has been at the heart of debates about queer theory and its relationship to feminist thought. Queer theory is associated with poststructuralist/postmodern approaches to sexuality and gender and a critique of feminist theories of sexuality that are seen as limited by an emphasis on gender (Warner, 1993a,

1993b; Hall and Jagose, 2012) although, more recently, writers have examined the intersections between feminist and queer theory (for example, Richardson et al., 2012). It rejects the idea of stable and unified gender and sexual categories and emphasises the fluidity, instability and fragmentation of identities and a multiplicity of sexuality and gender categories. Queer theory also questions the assumption that there are specific connections between sex, gender and sexuality, what I referred to earlier as the principle of sexual and gender 'coherence' (see also Hines in this volume). In queer accounts, the relationship between sexuality and gender is not seen as fixed and static but as highly complex and unstable.

Various writers associated with queer theory have put forward arguments for theorising sexuality independently from gender. Gayle Rubin's work has been influential in the development of such arguments. In the early 1980s, Rubin argued that, although connected, gender and sexuality 'are not the same thing' (Rubin, 1984: 308). Opposed to the view that sexuality can be adequately understood as causing gender, Rubin offered instead an account of what she termed a 'sex/gender system' in which she separates out sexuality and gender. Queer writers have subsequently drawn on these ideas in developing their theories of gender. For example, in what has become a queer 'classic', Eve Sedgwick, in *Epistemology of the Closet* ([1990] 2008), made the case for a radical separation of gender and sexuality. Doing this, Sedgwick argues, opens up our understandings of gender and sexuality, as well as the links between them, allowing more complex and diverse understandings. For instance, it allows the possibility to think about 'sexualities without genders' where sexual desires, practices and identities do not depend on a person's gender for their meaning. Similarly, it enables recognition of the existence of multiple genders as illustrated by, for example, studies of female masculinities (Halberstam, 2018a) and transgender (Monro, 2005; Hines, 2007; Stryker, 2017; Halberstam 2018b).

As I have discusssed, modernist understandings of gender and sexuality as fixed, coherent and stable have been challenged by queer/feminist, postmodern and post-structuralist accounts that conceptualise these categories as plural, provisional and situated. And, if there are multiple genders and multiple sexualities, then it is also likely that there will be multiple relationships between these categories. A challenge for future theories of gender and sexuality, therefore, is to develop frameworks that allow more complex accounts of how gender and sexuality are related to each other (see Picq and Rahman in this volume).

To achieve this, we need to consider the question of the relationship of gender and sexuality at a number of levels. This opens up the possibility that, rather than thinking of gender and sexuality as separate areas of analysis, as do many queer theorists, or as interrelated, as do many feminist writers, they can be conceptualised as *both*, depending on the level of analysis and the social context. Jackson (2012) identifies four levels of social construction of the relations between gender and sexuality:

- the structural
- the level of social and cultural meaning
- the level of everyday interactions and routine practices
- the level of subjectivity

At any one of these intersecting levels the relationship between gender and sexuality may be different. In other words, we need to conceptualise gender at different levels to enable 'new ways of articulating and understanding the diversity of contemporary gender and sexual categories and the complexities of their relationship with one another' (Richardson, 2007: 458).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of some of the different ways in which we can theorise gender. The references it contains and the suggestions for further reading given below will help to develop your understanding and recognition of the complexities of many of the ideas I have touched on. Examining theories of gender is important not only in an academic sense, but also because by looking at different ways of theorizing we are able to understand how people become divided into gender categories. This is a *social* process of categorisation that, as the remainder of this book will demonstrate, has important social, economic and personal implications for the lives we lead and kind of relationships and identities we develop. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that the theories we use to make sense of gender are part of this process and of the meanings that derive from gender categorisation. Theories of gender are not simply descriptions of 'what is'; they actively structure the social worlds we inhabit. In the past, theories that assumed biology had a determining role in how we develop as women and men were used not merely to explain 'sex differences' but also to justify certain social arrangements as being natural. For instance, the idea that it was natural for women to want to have children and to care for them, and unnatural for men to feel the same, has often been used to both explain *and* justify why women have primary responsibility for childcare. Theorising gender we are, then, actively engaged in a political process, an assumption that is central to the project of feminist theory and practice – that is, the pursuit of knowledge not just for its own sake, but for social change. It is this that has inspired much of the research presented in this book and that continues to motivate teachers and students of gender and women's studies.

Further reading

H. Bradley (2012) *Gender*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Polity. This is an accessible introduction to the concept of gender and the different theoretical approaches that have developed within gender and women's studies. It explores contemporary relations of masculinity and femininity and highlights how our thinking about gender is influenced by changing political contexts.

R. W. Connell and R. Pearse (2014) *Gender*, 3rd edn. Oxford: Polity. This is a good introduction to the sociological study of gender, written in a highly readable and accessible style. The authors trace the history of Western ideas about gender, discuss the processes by which individuals become gendered and review studies on gender differences. The book examines gender inequalities and patterns in modern society and offers a contemporary framework for understanding gender in a global context, drawing on empirical research from all over the world.

S. Hines (2018) *Is Gender Fluid? A Primer for the 21st Century*. New York: Thames and Hudson. This short introduction is designed to provide a basic overview of the subject, covering the relationship

between sex and gender, gender as a social construct, gender diversity and gender activism. With many illustrations and photographs, it is designed in such a way that it can be dipped into or read more comprehensively.

K. Lennon and R. Alsop (2020) *Gender Theory in Troubled Times.* Cambridge: Polity. This book explores gender theories in contemporary times where we are witnessing both challenges to, and a renewed emphasis on, traditional gender norms. It includes chapters on materialist and intersectional perspectives, as well as performative theories of gender.

H. M. Lips (2018) *Gender: The Basics*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge. This introductory text takes a global and intersectional perspective to examine current and classic theories about how and why gender categories and identities are developed, and how societal power relationships are gendered, drawing on illustrative examples and case studies from a variety of contexts. The second edition includes increased coverage of trans activism, LGBTQ studies, critical masculinity studies and links between gender and economic well-being.

K. Woodward (2011) *The Short Guide to Gender*. Bristol: The Policy Press. A good overview of debates over the concept of gender and their implications, including the connections between sex and gender. Written in a clear and accessible manner, it draws on interesting case study examples to illustrate key concepts.

❓ QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How can it be argued that gender is a social construct?

2. What is meant by the sex/gender binary? What criticisms have been made of the differentiation of sex from gender?

3. Critically outline Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity.

4. Discuss the claim that we are moving towards a post-gender world.

2 FEMINIST AND GENDER THEORIES

Sally Hines

Introduction

The development of feminist theory in the West went hand-in-hand with the emergence of feminism as a political movement in the late 1960s. Feminist theorising has, then, always been a political act, which has sought to problematise the subordinate position of women in society. There has, however, never been one feminist model for understanding the source of, or the answer to, women's lack of power. Different feminist perspectives have thus continued to offer different analyses and distinct solutions. Within early feminist theorising women were perceived as an oppressed class, whether that be because of patriarchy (radical feminism), capitalism (Marxist feminism) or lack of legal parity and inequality in the home and the workplace (liberal feminism). A unified category of women soon became problematised by women of colour, working class women, lesbians, disabled women and trans women, all who have argued that their distinct experiences of womanhood, and their particular needs as women, were unaccounted for within feminism. Correspondingly, branches of feminist theory have continued to develop in order to account for these specific subject positions. While some strains of feminist theory sought to deconstruct the perceived natural link between the categories of sex and gender in order to articulate gender diverse identities, others articulated the importance of analysing the intersecting social characteristics of discrimination in order to bring to light the ways in which women may be negatively positioned because of, for example, their gender *and* their race, or their gender *and* their race *and* their class. As well as stressing the need to account for intersectional concerns, post-colonial and trans feminism offer an additional demand; to critique the legacies of feminism that have produced feminism itself as a project of colonialism and cis-normativity. The emphasis here is not merely one of inclusion but on the productivity of difference. These developments indicate the continued vibrancy of feminist theory as it continues to advance in the twenty-first century.

This chapter examines key perspectives and theoretical shifts within feminist theory. It takes a broadly chronological approach; charting dominant ways of theorising from the inception of feminist theory in the 1970s through the 1980s, exploring key challenges to these understandings as they emerged through the 1990s, and considering theoretical and political interventions over the last two decades. The chapter begins by outlining four approaches central to early feminist theorising of gender inequality: radical feminism, Marxist feminism, dual systems, or socialist feminism, and liberal feminism.

It moves on to reflect on the significant challenges to these over-arching theories of gender inequality brought first by the deconstructionist approaches of post-structuralist theory and queer theory, and subsequently from post-colonial and inter-sectional feminist activists and writers. The final part of the chapter draws on debates between feminism and transgender as a case study through which to hone in on these varied feminist approaches.

Early feminist perspectives: radical, Marxist, dual systems theory and liberal feminism

From a feminist perspective, gender is a socially and culturally constructed concept, which gives rise to distinct gendered experiences and gender roles. Feminist theory thus poses a direct challenge to a biological approach to gender difference (see Richardson in this volume). Feminist scholars have variously analysed the operation of power between men and women at both a macro and micro level in order to investigate the ways in which gender inequalities emerge at these different levels. For example, in relation to gendered power dynamics in institutions and public arenas, or in terms of gendered power relations in the family.

While the theorisation of power disparities run across all feminist approaches, distinct perspectives have foregrounded particular social sites as central to the construction, maintenance and reproduction of gender inequalities. Feminist perspectives, then, have accounted for gender inequalities in different ways and, subsequently, have offered competing solutions to unequal gendered power relations. During the decades of early Western feminist theory and activism in the 1970s and 1980s, feminist perspectives can be loosely summarised as falling within four schools of thought: radical, Marxist, dual systems theory (also known as socialist) and liberal. The central points of argument of each are outlined in Box 2.1.

Box 2.1 – Early feminist perspectives

Radical Feminism

The concept of 'patriarchy', which denotes the systematic male dominance of women by men, lay at the heart of radical feminism. Patriarchy was seen to be universal in that it existed across all cultures and historical periods, though taking different forms according to time and place. The family and reproduction were highlighted as key sites of women's oppression. Women, it was argued, were exploited by virtue of their sex through, for example, unpaid domestic labour in the home, which, in turn, restricted their ability to gain positions of power in society. Reproduction was identified as central to these processes of inequality as through reproductive practices, women become materially and emotionally dependent upon men. Shulamith Firestone (1971), for example, argued that the abolition of the family was intrinsic to women's liberation. Male sexual violence towards women was also stressed as a major source of women's oppression and, here, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment and pornography were

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positioned as integral to patriarchy's systematic subjugation of women. From a radical feminist perspective, women's liberation is only achievable if patriarchy is overthrown.

Marxist Feminism

While radical feminism positioned patriarchy as an overarching structure of women's oppression, Marxist feminists argued that the system of capitalism structured gender inequality. From this perspective, economic class relations lay at the root of the subordination of women. Power imbalances within this perspective are maintained as a result of women's unequal position in the labour market, and the subordinated role of domestic labour. Gender inequality is therefore a system of class inequality, which is maintained to serve the interests of the ruling class. From a Marxist feminist perspective, women's oppression is only achievable if capitalism is overthrown.

Dual Systems Feminist Theory

Alternatively known as 'socialist feminism', this approach points to the ways in which women are disadvantaged as a result of their dual roles in the home and the workplace. Employers, it is argued, exploit women by paying them lower wages than men, while women are additionally exploited at home through the unpaid labour attached to childcare and housework. From a dual systems, or socialist, feminist perspective, women's oppression is only achievable if these two variables are mutually addressed.

Liberal Feminism

Rather than focus upon an overriding cause of women's inequality (for example, patriarchy or capitalism), liberal feminists tended to highlight issues such as cultural gender stereotyping, and gender divisions in the home and employment. These aspects of gender inequality, liberal feminists argued, can be erased through equal opportunities legislation and other democratic measures. From a liberal feminist perspective, women's oppression is only achievable through processes of social, policy and legal reform. Catherine Rottenberg (2017) has recently explored the resurgence of what she critically terms 'neo-liberal' feminism, which centres on individual rights and foregrounds notions of 'choice'. Neo-liberal feminism, Rottenberg argues, represents a current strain of popular feminism, which is reproduced through the media and is evident in the high-profile campaigns of politicians such as Hilary Clinton. Though this perspective shows the millennium appeal of feminist values such as autonomy and choice, it is, argues Rottenberg, overly individualistic and without a deeper political critique of women's oppression.

It is important to note, however, that the divisions between these feminist perspectives were not wholly demarcated. Though each offered distinctive models to account for gender inequality – and offered particular models through which to achieve parity – there were many overlapping concerns. For example, radical feminism emerged

in the 1970s in the USA alongside the civil rights movements and, in addition to socialist feminists, many radical feminist activists had been involved in working-class politics and anti-racism campaigns. Further, both radical and liberal feminists in the UK and the USA sought to change laws to outlaw pornography.

During feminism's second decade of the 1980s, each of the key schools of feminist thought were subject to critique from other feminist scholars and activists who positioned these movements as hierarchical and exclusive. In particular, criticisms were levelled at these branches of feminism for neglecting the positioning and experience of non-white, non-middle class, non-heterosexual women. Black, working-class and lesbian feminists thus argued that feminism had largely centred on the interests of middle-class, white, heterosexual women. As Victoria Robinson noted:

> Reflecting debates and divisions within the women's movement, the most fundamental dilemma of Women's Studies has concerned the marginalisation of Black, working-class and lesbian perspectives amongst others, and often in opposition, it has been argued, to the prioritising of the needs and experiences of white, middle-class Western women.
>
> (Robinson, 1997a: 18)

Radical feminism's positioning of patriarchy as universal consequently attracted much criticism from black feminists who argued that the concept of patriarchy, and its application, did not give adequate attention to cultural and historical specificities. The notion of patriarchy itself was therefore challenged for its lack of capacity to account for the ways in which race and ethnicity impact upon women's experiences. On the contrary, it was argued that the politics of culture were fundamental. For bell hooks (1981), for example, radical feminism centred on white women's experience as the norm and thus failed to recognise the distinct experiences of non-white women. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's important essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) broadened this to argue that Western political and philosophical thought more widely has orientated from a coloniser's perspective, which fails to pay attention to the subject positions of minority people, or, in Spivak's words, the 'subaltern' (Spivak, 1988).

Spivak's essay is considered a seminal text in post-colonial thought, which seeks to theorise and politicise relations of power and authority emerging from legacies of colonialism. Similar points of argument have been levelled at the notion of patriarchy for negating how social class intersects with gender relations and processes of power. (These issues will be addressed later in the chapter when it considers post-colonial and intersectional feminist theory.) By the close of the 1980s, both feminist thought and activism had diversified beyond the four key approaches of radical, Marxist, dual systems and liberal feminism considered here.

The recognition of difference: deconstructionist feminist approaches

The recognition of 'difference', for example, in relation to race, class, sexuality, age and embodiment, led to the development of more complex models of feminist analysis throughout the 1990s, which argued that working from the premise that there was a

common feminist subject was untenable. Accordingly, as the category of 'woman' came unstuck within the broader politics of feminism, so feminist theory diversified. Whilst, politically, it became appropriate to talk about a diversity of feminism*s*, within the academy, feminist perspectives developed in increasingly extensive and interdisciplinary ways (see Richardson, in this volume, for a discussion of how feminist theory has diversified in relation to theorising gender; Robinson, in this volume, for a discussion of the incorporation of masculinity into feminist theory; and Kapoor, in this volume, for a discussion of developments in feminist theory in relation to race and ethnicity). Moreover, work fitting under the broad church of 'feminist theory' spread within and across academic disciplines and the need for 'Women's Studies', and later 'Gender Studies', as a discrete field was questioned (see Robinson's chapter in the 1993 and 1997 editions for further reflection on these debates). The chapter will now turn to address how developments within post-structuralist and queer theory reflected a broadening of feminist concerns at conceptual and substantive levels. This section will look at the productive challenges to existing feminist theory brought by these areas of thought; central critiques of these approaches; and possibilities of bringing these perspectives together.

Post-structuralist and queer feminist theories

The development of the deconstructionist analyses of post-structuralism and queer theory presented significant challenges to feminist theory during the 1990s. Further, debates within these areas remain important to the ways in which feminist theory continues to be rethought. Central to these theoretical developments is the sex/gender distinction and the troubling of unitary gender categories. Early feminist writers differentiated between the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'. Within this framework, 'sex' referred to the biological body and 'gender' to the social roles and cultural understandings that were attached to male or female bodies. Separating the two concepts had been politically significant for feminism as it followed that gender roles were socially and culturally, rather than 'naturally', constructed, and thus could be reshaped. The distinction between the categories of sex and gender became problematised, however, as post-structuralist, queer and trans feminist scholars developed alternative ways of theorising the relationship between sex and gender. Significantly, sex became to be seen as socially and culturally constructed, as was gender (see Richardson in this volume).

Judith Butler's (1990) work was pivotal to feminist theory that moved beyond distinguishing between sex and gender. Butler argued that feminists should be wary of seeing 'sex' as a purely biological characteristic; rather, 'sex' is also socially and culturally determined. This insight, Butler suggested, provided feminism with greater analytical potential to understand gender as diverse. An understanding of gender as separate from sex thus holds the potential for a greater diversity of masculinities and femininities, which, in turn, allows for the recognition of *differently* embodied gendered identities and expressions, or of different ways of being women and men (Hines, 2007).

In its focus on sexuality, as well as gender and sex, queer theory argued that it was also unfeasible to understand sexual identity categories as authentic. Moreover, like

post-structuralist feminism, queer approaches moved beyond a macro or structural analysis to emphasise how gender and sexual identities are constructed and localised in the everyday. A micro analysis of identity formations sheds light upon the factors that interweave within and between identity categories. This brought greater attention to the ways in which under-theorised facets of identity, such as race and ethnicity (for example, Anzaldúa, 1999); geographical and cultural location (for example, Bell and Binnie, 2000) and gender variance (for example, Halberstam, 2005; Hines, 2007), intersect with gender and sexuality to impact upon power relations and subjective identifications. Further, a queer analysis illuminated the ways in which the cultural, as well as the social, realm acts as a site of identity construction and resistance.

Through challenging the idea of unified identity categories (for example, of 'woman' or 'man') deconstructionist approaches problematised the notion of shared identity, experience and embodiment. Apparent here, then, is the further fracturing of feminism as both a movement and a theory. Yet the rejection of common experience appeared as politically divisive to some feminists, and the deconstructionist approaches of post-structuralist and queer theory were controversial within broader feminist politics and theory.

Criticisms of deconstructionism

The arguments of feminist writers who were critical of deconstructionist approaches can be summarised as follows:

- Deconstructionist accounts conflict with a politics of identity that is central to feminist politics.

From this perspective Seyla Benhabib stated that such approaches '[...] thought through to their conclusions may not only eliminate the specificity of feminist theory but place into question the very emancipatory ideals of the women's movements altogether.' (Benhabib, 1994: 78–9). Christine Di Stefano (1990) was also concerned about how feminism can articulate and organise around the interests of women if the identity category of 'woman' itself is abandoned.

- Deconstructionist accounts neglect the material, which is central to women's experiences.

Reflecting this argument, scholars such as Sylvia Walby (1997) suggested that a focus on the discursive formations of gender is at the expense of a structural analysis necessary to examine the material forces that affect the lived experiences of gender – for example, that of poverty. Current cultures of austerity thus have different material impacts in relation to class, age and geography. Julie MacLeavy's (2016) research, for example, shows that, in the UK, young poor women are hit the hardest by austerity measures through cuts to welfare; while research by The European Women's Lobby (2012) maps out differing impacts of austerity cultures across Europe. Imogen Tyler's (2013) work is also important here in examining how neo-liberalism constructs particular social groups (the working class, the migrant, the young mother) as 'abject' (see also Tyler and Slater, 2018). In each of these works, an intersectional approach, as discussed below, is important for exploring how the factors of gender, class, nationality, and age work together to structure inequality.

- Deconstructionist accounts fail to articulate a subject position.

Steven Seidman's (1993) critique of queer theory's rejection of identity illustrates this point, in arguing that the deconstruction of identity may, paradoxically, lead to the denial of difference. As with post-structuralist analyses, then, queer theory presents the dilemma of how to deconstruct identity categories and positively account for difference, without losing sight of the subjective experiences that constitute difference and gendered inequalities.

One of the central critiques by feminist scholars of post-structuralist and queer theory is that cultural analyses of gender and sexual transgressions have been developed at the expense of political theories (Fraser, 1997; Jackson, 1999; Hennessy, 2012). Yet, a number of writers began to stress the importance of bringing a social analysis to the deconstruction of gender. In doing so, these writers provided methods through which to navigate the analytical dilemmas for feminism of post-structuralist and queer theory. These developments will be outlined below.

Building common ground

- *Material queer studies and the turn to affect.* In response to criticisms that deconstructionist accounts focus on culture at the expense of the material, feminist scholars brought a social analysis to deconstructive gender theory. Nancy Fraser (1998), for example, critiqued second-wave feminism for over-focusing on issues of identity at the expense of developing an analysis of the relationship between gender inequality and capitalism. In reply, to Fraser, Judith Butler (1998) underscored the politics of identity work; arguing that the cultural and the material cannot be separated. Similarly, Iris Marion Young's work (1990) pointed to the inter-relationship of cultural and material realms. In my work on a 'politics of difference' (Hines, 2013), I have built on Young to theorise the intersections of the material and cultural in analysing gender diversity. Here I argue that difference is a key concept in more fully accounting for the intersections of material and cultural politics. Rosemary Hennessey (2012) has termed the convergence of material feminism and queer theory as 'material queer studies', and feminist empirical scholarship is increasingly exploring materiality. In theorising sexuality and social class, Yvette Taylor (2012), for example, explored women's material positioning alongside their subjective identifications, while Liz McDermott's (2014) empirical research focused upon the impacts of social class and gender on mental health. Work on 'affect' – that is the study of bodily experiences, emotions or feelings – also reflected the bridging of the discursive and material. Sara Ahmed's (2004) work, for example, considered the cultural construction and the everyday effects of emotions such as fear and shame; while Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) and Sally Munt (2008) also examined both the debilitating and productive effects of shame; positioning shame in the realm of both the cultural and the political.

- *Queer Sociology.* Writers such as Steven Seidman (1996), Sasha Roseneil (2000) and myself (Hines, 2007) have called for a 'queer sociology' in order to bring together a cultural and material analysis. Queer sociology examines how power is produced and resisted in relation to both discursive *and* material factors. A queer sociology

enables feminism to overcome the disparities between social theories of identity and post-structuralism by signalling a 'transformative project of social theory, in which theory functions as an agent of change in the everyday world' (Namaste, 2000: 33). A queer sociological approach is helpful in allowing feminism to positively recognise gendered differences, whilst exploring the lived experiences and competing narratives of difference. This model also develops deconstructive approaches to gender by grounding analyses of gender plurality within a social framework.

- *Intersections of Feminism and Queer Theory.* Michael Warner (1993a, 1993b) and Diane Richardson (2000, 2012) have stressed the ways in which feminism has been instrumental in the development of queer theory. Warner argues that '[…] feminism has made gender a primary category of the social in a way that makes queer social theory newly imaginable' (Warner, 1993b: viii). For Warner, feminism as a method of analysis has much to offer queer theory in relation to developing further distinctions between the categories of gender and sexuality. In turn, this would enable a more detailed analysis of the ways in which sexuality is gendered. Richardson et al. (2012: 11) suggest that the juncture between feminist and queer theory reflects 'the wish to bring global and local dynamics together and the role a fusion of queer and feminist ideas can play within this, revolves around a desire to see material and cultural issues examined together.' In attempting to forge stronger links between feminism and queer theory, Richardson (2012) identifies a number of ways in which queer theory can enhance feminist theory; as shown in Box 2.2.

Box 2.2 – Possibilities of queer theory for feminism

- Queer theory is helpful in focusing attention upon how sexuality affects social relations.
- Queer theory has been important in developing critiques of normative assumptions about gender and sexuality.
- Queer theory has the potential to offer feminism further tools through which to theorise the relationship between gender and sexuality.
- Queer theory's emphasis on 'difference' may enable feminist theory to analyse power across and between identity categories.
- Queer theory offers feminism theoretical tools through which to understand the sex/gender binary.

The theoretical developments within feminist theory discussed so far have further complicated conceptualisations of unitary gender categories and have facilitated a more nuanced theorisation of the sex/ gender distinction. These tendencies have also been evident through the development of transgender feminism, which the chapter will now move on to explore.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality has a long history within feminist theory and politics. Theoretical developments around intersectionality were closely linked with black feminist critiques of (white) feminist thought and politics. Arising from black feminist scholarship and activism, the notion of intersectionality emerged in the 1980s to critique the silence around race and ethnicity within the women's movement and feminist theory (see hooks, 1984; Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1990). The absence of race theorising, it was argued, constituted white middle class women as *the* feminist subject. Conceptually, intersectional analysis has long been productively applied in feminist, and particularly, post-colonialist feminist, literature to theorise social divisions of gender and race.

The premise of intersectionality is that traditional singular models of theorizing oppression, such as those based on race *or* gender, fail to account for the ways in which forms of inequality interrelate (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Intersectional studies have been important in illustrating how modes of inequality do not just rub up against each other, but systematically interweave to give shape to one another (Hines, 2010). Thus inequality is not created through individual structures. Rather, structures connect to create distinct patterns and experiences of injustice. This differs from an additive approach in which categories of 'difference' are described or listed, yet remain outside of a critical analysis of power relations and a politics of redistribution (see Erel et al., 2010).

Intersectionality has been important in showing how the category of 'gender' does not create universal inequalities but, rather, overlaps with other categories (such as race, class or sexuality) in particular ways. Indeed, Leslie McCall (2005) talked about intersectionality as one of the most significant developments in feminist theory. Subsequently, intersectional analyses have been used to variously theorise the ways in which gender is cut through with – and cuts through – different constituents. Feminist scholars have thus looked at the intersections of gender and race (Collins, [1990] 2008; Matsuada, 1996) gender and social class (Taylor, 2010; McDermott, 2011), and gender and sexuality (Richardson, 2007; Taylor et al., 2010; Richardson and Monro, 2012); as well at the intersections across multiple categories. For example, Audre Lorde (1996) and Gloria Anzaldua (2009) examine the ways in which the categories of race, gender and sexuality interweave; Susan Hogan and Lorna Warren (2012) address the links between gender and age; and Jasbir Puar (2012) traces the intersections of gender, race and disability.

Leslie McCall (2005) distinguished between three distinct intersectional approaches, which differ in their relation to social categories. These are summarised below:

- *Anticategorical*: This approach is critical of the very nature of categories. It is the approach most associated with the deconstructionist perspectives outlined above. It argues for the ending of the use of social categories.

- *Intracategorical*: This approach is critical of the ways in which categories work to marginalise social groups. It focuses on 'particular social groups at neglected points of intersection' (McCall, 2005: 1174) and hones in on groups at the intersection of

categories (for example, woman and black). McCall argues that this approach does not offer a broad enough analysis. Thus it fails to analyse further intersecting categories (for example, woman and black and working-class).

- *Intercategorical*: This approach is the one that McCall aligns with her own research. It sees categories as useful modes of analysis to look at the extent to which inequalities exist across and between different social groups. Thus it provides comparison between multiple social groups.

Nira Yuval-Davis's (2011) work is important in thinking through the methodological application of intersectionality in ways that avoid simply 'adding in' categories of difference. Yuval-Davis argues that an additive approach fails to account for distinct subject positions within categories such as 'black' or 'woman': 'being oppressed,' for example, as 'a Black person', is always constructed and intermeshed in other social divisions (for example, gender, social class, disability status, sexuality, age, nationality, immigration status, geography, etc.)' (2011: 195). This critique also chimes with a post-structuralist and queer deconstruction of categorisation as discussed above. From this premise, the very category of gender itself eludes differences between women. Central to the development, and the continued application, of intersectionality, then, was a critique of universalism. That is, the rejection of the use of any one category or subject position as the default of, and for, feminism. As the chapter goes on to explore, a critique of universalism developed through post-colonial feminist writing is important to debates about local and global feminism, especially within the context of an increasingly globalised world.

Global and post-colonial feminisms

In 1984 US feminist activist and writer Robin Morgan declared that sisterhood is global, and since the 1980s much debate has ensued about the meaning of feminism in a global context. More recently, Charlotte Bunch (2001) defined global feminism as the spread of feminism around the globe. Global feminism moves for women's rights on a meta level; exploring areas of connection between women's inequality across the globe. It is argued that while women in different countries may face different challenges, the cause of inequality is the same: that of patriarchy. Here 'patriarchy' is employed as a concept to indicate male domination as a universal practice, albeit taking different forms in different parts of the world. Key issues include marriage, domestic violence and sexual harassment laws and practices, the role of women in education and the workplace; trafficking; and environmental activism. Global feminism is evident in the development of transnational organisations such as the United Nations Women's organisation UN Women. UN Women emerged in 2011 following the merging of four key international women's organisations: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW). Eliminating violence against women is a priority campaigning issue.

Advocating for women's rights on a global scale, has, however, proved difficult. As Shweta Singh describes:

> This is both because society is collectivist, and because women themselves identify with group concerns of family and community and not solely with womanhood or sisterhood. Additionally, many women in less developed countries must contend with the transfer of resources and meeting basic necessities, thus making it difficult for them to consider gender-based inequalities their primary concern.
>
> (Singh, 2012: 2)

The possibility, and desirability, of advocating on a global scale, has thus been subject to much feminist debate, and post-colonial feminist work has been significant in articulating the specific ways in which race, ethnicity, faith and national identity impact upon gendered experience. Post-colonial work argues that a universal approach to women's issues is based on theories from the Global North and neglects the specificities of local context and experience. In other words, because women's experiences and priorities are very different across the world, an over-arching feminist solution to inequality is unintelligible. Moreover, feminist campaigns, it is argued, need to also be contextualised within global economic inequalities (Nussbaum, 2001).

As tensions emerged around universalism within feminist theory and politics in the West, feminists outside the West have critiqued feminism for being Western-centric; that is, for over-focusing on issues which are relevant to only Western women (Connell, 2007a, 2007b). Further, Western feminism has been challenged for imposing Western values and ideologies. Central issues here relate to religious practices and cultural customs including the wearing of the veil, marriage customs, sex work and practices of genital cutting. The current campaign, "STOP FGM NOW!", headed by Waris Dirie, for example, organises as an international movement against female genital cutting, or, as it terms such practices, female genital mutilation. Other feminists outside the West, however, argue for the need to understand local experience of faith and tradition, and for campaigns to be led by local women themselves.

Similarly, while some Western feminists position the veil as a symbol of patriarchy's control over women's bodies (Bindel, 2003), from a post-colonial feminist position, veil wearing is an autonomous decision and a form of resistance to Western values. Here the veil signifies cultural pride and resistance rather than universal male power; a position which is increasingly articulated by young women, such as Hanna Yusuf, who use social media to articulate their identities as hijab-wearing feminists.

Lata Mani's concept 'temporalities of struggle' (1992: 309) is productive here in analysing how women's experiences across the globe may converge but also diverge. Against a global feminist perspective, she argues that:

> The way forward, therefore, appears to depend upon understanding the intersections where contradictory priorities meet; exploring the commonalities between different resistances to oppression; and developing an understanding of women's different experiences and contexts from both a local and a global perspective.
>
> (Mani, 1992: 309)

The work of Mohanty is also significant in drawing attention to the specificities of the local. Mohanty (1991, 2003) has critiqued Western feminism for constructing a homogenous category of 'third world' women. This category, she argues, by-passes the differences amongst and between women from the Global South and thus fails to give a voice to women facing different struggles emerging around history, geography and culture. Mohanty (2003) stresses the importance of redefining power relations between feminists in the global North and South in order to build stronger political alliances (see also discussions of black feminism in Kapoor's chapter in this book).

Here, links are apparent between deconstructions of the universal category of 'woman', arguments for the importance of intersectional feminist analysis and calls for feminist campaigns that take account of bodily autonomy and agency. In the final section of the chapter, I take transgender feminism as a case study through which to further articulate these connecting themes in twenty-first century feminist theory and activism.

Transgender feminism

Transgender relates to a diversity of practices that call into question traditional ways of seeing gender and its relationship with sex and sexuality. The concept of transgender is extensive – it may refer to individuals who have undergone hormone treatment or surgery to reconstruct their bodies or to those who identify across, between or outside of the gender categories of male and female without hormonal or surgical interventions, or in less binary ways. As well as strong alliances between feminist and trans groups, there has also been much contest, which, over the last five years, has resurfaced and intensified. The origins of an anti-trans feminist position can be traced back to the publication of Janice Raymond's book *The Transsexual Empire* in 1980. There are two central strands to Raymond's argument (Raymond, 1980), which I will address in turn. First, Raymond argues that it is impossible to separate 'sex' and 'gender':

- 'Sex' is chromosomally and/or hormonally dependent and thus secured at birth.
- 'Gender' is the coherent expression of 'sex'.
- The categories of 'sex' and 'gender' are inherently co-dependent.

The second strand of Raymond's argument is that trans practices are oppositional to the values and politics of feminism:

- Trans women are men who reinforce a stereotypical model of femininity
- Trans men are women who seek to acquire male power and privilege.

Raymond's arguments highlight a particular strand of radical feminism which, as discussed at the start of the chapter, positions sex as biologically determined and gender as its coherent expression. Trans activist and scholars such as Sandy Stone (1991), Jason Cromwell (1999), Susan Stryker (2006, 2013) and Julia Serano (2007, 2013, 2016), amongst others, have passionately spoken out against Raymond's perspective.

In this way, anti-trans radical feminist writing is considered to be 'transphobic' and linked to the symbolic and material violence committed against trans women in society.

The tenants of this position have been rearticulated in recent years in what is termed a 'gender critical' or a 'trans-exclusionary radical feminist' analysis. Raymond's first argument is apparent in recent denouncements of the identities of trans women by some contemporary feminist activists and writers who claim that identity cannot be separated from sex as assigned at birth. Moreover, Raymond's second argument is evident in recent campaigns by some feminist activists who argue that trans women are seeking to co-opt feminism and dominate women's spaces. These arguments have been made in relation to proposed administrative changes to simplify the process for gender recognition in the UK. A vocal feminist minority currently argue that trans women pose a potential threat (as biological men) to (cis) women in public spaces such as toilets and changing rooms, though most feminists are unconcerned and reply that trans women have always been part of women spaces (as women) with no problematic consequences.

Rather than insisting on the separation of sex/gender, other feminist writers and trans scholars seek to collapse the sex/gender binary, arguing that sex as well as gender is culturally and historically contested, and subject to variation (Butler, [1990] 2006; Fausto-Sterling, 1992, 2000; Kessler, 1998; Roughgarden, 2004; Hines, 2019; see also Woodward in this volume). Moreover, the claim that the term 'woman' denotes a particular group of women – in this case, those that are assigned as female at birth – is critiqued on the basis that chromosomal and hormonal make-up is complex and largely unknown, while both primary and secondary sexual characteristics are subject to much natural variation (Fine, 2017). Writers have also stressed both the connections between feminist and trans projects, focusing particularly on bodily autonomy as a central connecting theme (Hale, 1996; Rubin, 1996; Hines, 2019). The arguments put forward here echo the deconstructive and intersectional feminist approaches that seek to deconstruct universal categories as previously discussed.

For those writing from a trans feminist perspective (Koyama, 2003; Stone, 2014; Garriga-Lopez 2016; Stryker and Bettcher, 2016; Halberstam, 2018a, 2018b) it is crucial to move beyond Western feminism's cis-normativity – that is, the perspective that takes a non-trans woman's experience as the default experience. This argument resonates with the post-colonial feminist perspectives as previously discussed.

The continued deconstruction of the sex/gender binary is important if feminism is to fully account for the complexities of bodies and gendered identities and experiences. Making visible the connections, and the differences, within the category of woman is necessary if feminism is to productively agitate for all women as we move further through the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

This chapter has charted a number of different feminist perspectives from the first decade of feminist theory and activism in the late 1970s and 1980s, though to the present day. These discussions highlight how the diversification of feminist knowledge and politics has continually enacted challenges for feminist theory. Key issues at stake

concern feminist understandings of sex and gender, and their relationship to each other, and the constitution of gender categories. As the latter part of the chapter has indicated, these questions are no less contentious today than they were fifty years ago. In particular, the sex/gender distinction stands as a crucial issue for feminist theory in the mid twenty-first century.

The chapter has attempted to think through some of the most troublesome questions of feminist theory in two ways. First, by reflecting upon the challenges deconstructive approaches brought to feminist theory that stressed a coherent and unitary category of woman, and, second, in considering how common ground between different feminist positions may be mapped out. Deconstructive approaches, I propose, provide an understanding of gender that is able to account for a diverse range of identities and practices. Moreover, these approaches present an analysis of divergent gender expressions that are unfixed to the 'sexed' body. In their celebration of 'difference', these perspectives encourage feminism to move beyond a singular and essential conceptualisation of 'woman'.

Yet, as I have discussed, some aspects of these schools of thought have proved problematic for feminist theorising. In particular, there has been a tendency to neglect material positioning and conditions, and the importance of everyday interactions in constructing understandings and experiences of gender. However, as the chapter discussed, more recent developments indicate the emergence of a deconstructive framework that situates the material alongside the cultural and is attentive to meaning making at the level of the micro. This provides a model through which to analyse how social structures impact upon distinct gender identity formations. Such a line of enquiry is valuable in its understanding of gender as socially relational *and* performatively constructed. These developments convey useful tools for feminist theory to account for diversity and difference.

In addressing debates between feminism and queer theory, I have again attempted to map out the areas of intersection and to consider what queer theory may offer contemporary feminist theory. Queer theorists have challenged the correlation of sex and gender and have sought to untie these features. I have suggested that this detracts from essentialising hierarchies, which marginalise those who, through factors of structure or agency, inhabit gender borderlands. Yet, I have argued that queer theory has had a tendency to neglect material and embodied structures. This limitation is being overcome, however, by a queer sociological framework, and through material queer studies, which examine how gender and sexuality are constructed through both discourse and social structures.

Subsequent parts of the chapter addressed debates within feminism around intersectionality and its application at the levels of the global and the local. Intersectional feminist writers have stressed the importance of developing modes of analysis that take account of the inter-related nature of gendered inequality. Intersectionality thus provides feminist theory with productive tools for considering the politics of gender across and between social categories. Post-colonialist feminist writers, who argue for the value of culturally specific feminism, also bring significant challenges to the notion that 'woman' is a universal category. Rather, feminist theory and political organisation needs to pay close attention to the issues that inform gendered understandings and experience at local levels.

In the final section of the chapter, the relationship between feminism and trans was utilised as a case study through which to further examine different understandings within feminist theory of sex and gender. Moreover, as well as honing in on the diversity of different feminist positions, the case study indicated the ways in which deconstructive, intersectional, post-colonial and trans feminism are productively articulated to argue for a future feminism that is both attuned to, and inclusive of, difference.

Each of the developments in feminist theory and politics considered in this chapter have provided a space through which to develop new understandings and more nuanced analyses of contemporary gender formations and identifications. Dialogues within and between these theoretical fields indicate how understandings of sex, gender, sexuality and embodiment continue to be reconfigured. Moreover, the intersections between these fields enable an arena in which gender difference and diversity can be productively re-theorised across the next decade.

Further reading

S. Hines (2013) *Gender Diversity, Recognition and Citizenship: Towards a Politics of Difference.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. The question of 'recognition' motivates a range of contemporary social movements and forms the backdrop to legal and policy change, and theoretical and political debate. This book draws on original research to examine the meanings and significance of, and contestations around, recognition in relation to the aptly named UK Gender Recognition Act. The book considers changing UK law and policy around gender diversity within the context of broader social, cultural, legal, political, theoretical, and policy shifts concerning gender and sexuality.

H. Mirza and C. Joseph (eds) (2012) *Black and Postcolonial Feminisms in New Times.* London and New York: Routledge. This edited collection explores the intersections of race, gender and class in higher education. Authored by black and postcolonial feminists, chapters address racism in the media, multi-culturalism in schools and the exclusion of pupils in higher education. Across the chapters, the book examines female identity and agency from a post-colonial and trans-global perspective.

D. Richardson, J. McLaughlin and M. E. Casey (eds) (2012) *Intersections Between Feminist and Queer Theory.* 2nd edn. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. This collection discusses both the areas of disagreement and connection between feminist and queer theory. As well as illustrating the ways in which queer theory has been influenced by feminism, the book considers how a queer feminist approach may be developed. Rather than existing in opposition, this book points to the number of ways in which feminist theory and queer theory intersect and complement each other. With chapters on early feminist theories, women and the labour market, same-sex partnerships, and debates around transgender, this book brings together cultural and material concerns to provide an interdisciplinary overview of the dialogue between feminism and queer.

K. Scott-Dizon (2016) *Trans/Forming Feminisms: Transfeminist Voices Speak Out.* Toronto: Sumach Press. This edited collection explores the relationship between feminism and trans; arguing for greater alliances between feminist and trans groups and tracing common goals. Chapters are written by trans feminist writers and focus on questions around identity construction and language and substantive issues such as segregated spaces and education.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How did developments in deconstructive analyses through the 1990s challenge the earlier models of feminist theorising?

2. In what ways have feminist writers been critical of deconstructionist approaches and how may these criticisms be addressed?

3. How may feminism and queer theory converge?

4. In what ways have postcolonial feminist critiques been important for highlighting the problematic of universal feminism?

5. In what context has trans feminism developed over recent years?

3 GENDER, POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Nickie Charles

Introduction

In the last few years gender politics has been hard to miss. There have been unprecedented numbers of women taking part in women's marches around the world (Moreau, 2018); the #MeToo movement has brought the issue of sexual harassment to the forefront of public consciousness internationally (Gill and Orgad, 2018: 1317); and women have taken to social media to call out sexual harassment and challenge rape culture. At the same time, misogyny has become increasingly visible: in the form of trolling and death threats to feminists on social media and to women politicians; in the killing of women who are political representatives or who wish to be (Graff et al., 2019); in the rise to power of men who embrace sexism and 'traditional gender discourses' (Lukose, 2018; Dogangun, 2019); and in 'anti-gender' movements worldwide (Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Korolczuk and Graff, 2018; Kovats, 2018; Graff et al., 2019). These developments starkly illustrate how central gender is to politics, something that feminist scholars have been at pains to point out for many decades. In this chapter I explore how these arguments have developed and the different forms taken by feminist activism. I begin with a discussion of feminist social movements, arguing that they have both political and cultural aspects. I then explore the different manifestations of feminist politics and how they have been understood by feminist scholars before looking at formal political processes, their gendering, and how the increase in women political representatives globally is changing how politics is done.

Feminist social movements

In Europe and North America, what is often known as first wave feminism emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century. It is best remembered for its concern with women's suffrage, but it also addressed equal access to education, peace, equal pay, temperance and social welfare issues (Banks, 1986; Chafetz and Dworkin, 1986). There were suffrage movements in many parts of the world including China and Japan and the right to vote was a major issue transnationally. Women in New Zealand (1893) and Australia (1902) were the first to be granted the right to vote, while Finnish women were the first in Europe (1906). First wave feminism declined in many Western countries once the vote had been won, but women's organisations in other parts of the world continued to press the League of Nations to support women's rights (Tripp, 2006).

With the ending of the second world war in 1945, 'a new wave of international gender-based mobilisation took off as women became active in efforts to secure

independence for their countries and resist colonisation' (Tripp, 2006: 59). In 1945 the UN Commission on the Status of Women was set up, which provided a focus for international women's organisations campaigning for women's rights. And in the late 1960s and 1970s, women's liberation movements (WLMs) emerged in Europe and North America and campaigned on issues of equal pay, equal opportunities, violence against women, sexuality, discrimination in the social security and tax systems and fertility control. These movements became known as second wave feminism (Weinman Lear, 1968); they mobilised hundreds of thousands of women and were associated with significant cultural shifts and policy change (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1 – The demands of the women's liberation movements

- equal pay
- equal education and job opportunities
- free contraception and abortion on demand
- free 24-hour nurseries
- financial and legal independence
- an end to all discrimination against lesbians and a woman's right to define her own sexuality
- freedom from intimidation by threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status
- an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women

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Towards the end of the 1970s, differences between women in Western WLMs emerged and they began to fragment. Black women, lesbians, disabled women, older women and working-class women argued that the women's movement was based on a specific identity – that of young, white, middle-class, highly educated women – that it excluded women who did not share this identity and that there could be no automatic assumption that all women had the same political interests (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). Although this marked the end of a particular manifestation of second wave feminism, the fragmentation of the movement meant that its ideas and practices spread much more widely throughout society. The UN Decade for Women (1975–85), for instance, which was inaugurated at the 'first-ever global conference on women' in Mexico City in 1975 (Snyder, 2006: 32), raised the issue of women's integration into the development process, triggering 'the formation of thousands of women's organisations' on a global scale (Inglehart and Norris, 2003: 3) and leading to the formation, in 1979, of CEDAW (the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), 'the first human rights treaty for women' (Snyder, 2006: 34) and an extremely useful tool for feminist activists all over the world.

The birth of women's and gender studies

Many women who had been active in WLMs took their activism into higher education and, during the 1970s and 1980s, women's studies courses and programmes were set up in universities. Feminists argued both that gender was central to disciplines such as sociology, history and English and that there ought to be a particular area of study called women's studies. This movement within education was spearheaded in the USA but feminists in higher education elsewhere were soon involved and the number of women's studies courses and degree programmes increased. This eventually resulted in women's studies being recognised as an interdisciplinary area of study in its own right and, subsequently, departments and centres of women's studies were established in many institutions of higher education. This development can be seen as an important outcome of the women's movement and gender is now a central part of the curriculum in many arts and social science disciplines. In the latter part of the 1980s, scholars recognised that men as well as women were gendered and constrained by the expectations of a patriarchal gender order (Hearn and Morgan, [1990] 2015) and, in the 1990s, men's studies and the critical study of masculinities was established in both the UK and the USA (see Robinson's chapter in this volume). This was accompanied by a shift from women's to gender studies (Richardson and Robinson, 1994). In the early years of the twenty-first century, many undergraduate gender studies programmes were closed down in UK universities, but at the MA and PhD level, women's and gender studies still remain vibrant and, as we shall see, are important resources for young women's activism (Redfern and Aune, 2010). Ominously, however, in the autumn of 2018, gender studies was banned in Hungary, on the basis that it was ideological rather than scientific and that gender was biologically based rather than socially constructed (Oppenheim, 2018).

There are two aspects to feminists' engagement with the academy: knowledge production (epistemology) and feminist politics with the relationship between them being 'unstable' and 'productive' (Lukose, 2018: 34; see also Pereira, 2017). The epistemological aspect arises from the fact that social movements generate new ways of understanding the world by creating 'epistemological communities' made up of people who share the same values and understand the world in the same way (Yuval-Davis, 2006b: 284). These new ways of understanding the world challenge the established canon through their framing of problems and their cognitive practice (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991).

The political aspect arises from what is perhaps the best-known slogan of the WLM, 'the personal is political'. For feminists, it was not only the personal that was political but also every aspect of their lives including their academic practice. This is an uncomfortable position to take as it raises questions about the nature of academic practice and the possibility of objectivity in social research (Harding, 1986). It has given rise to a critique of methodology and has also led women to try to break down the power relations which structure academic enquiry; initiatives such as Athena SWAN, which supports gender equality in universities, can be seen as part of this (Tzanakou and Pearce, 2019; https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/).

Politics was not exempt from this critique and feminists challenged 'the very basis of politics and interrogated the conventions of knowing and studying political life' (Mackay, 2004: 99). They pointed out that politics was studied as if it concerned only men and that political processes are profoundly gendered. Politics is not only about

who people vote for in general elections and who our political representatives are, but also about the distribution of resources and power in society (distribution) and about cultural meanings and values (recognition) (Fraser, 2004).

Feminists developed a critique of the way the political is theorised, focussing particularly on the division between the public and the private. This division is crucial to Western political thought and structures not only the way politics is defined but also the way gendered differences in political participation are explained. Feminists pointed out that the distinction between public and private was gendered, men being associated with the public and women with the private. Moreover, the public world of politics rests on a sexual contract which is prior to the social contract binding free (male) individuals to the state (Pateman, [1989] 2018). And it is a sexual contract, one based on gender and sexuality, that subordinates women to men within the domestic sphere and gives men power over them. The public world of politics is also based on a 'racial contract' which underpinned the development of liberal democracy (Murray, 1997). Thus, 'the story of the original social contract in the modern world excludes Blacks and women from political obligation, from the rights of negative liberty, and therefore from the rights of citizenship' (Bogues, 2001: 268).

New social movements

The WLM was one of a wave of social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s – others include the civil rights movement in the USA, the peace movement, the students' movement and the environmental movement – and in all of them women's participation was relatively high (Stephenson, 1998; Gallego, 2007; Long, 2012). These social movements have been conceptualised as 'new social movements' because of their engagement in the cultural as well as the political realm and because they are seen as moving away from the class-based politics which had hitherto characterised advanced Western societies. They are contrasted with 'old' social movements such as the labour movement.

- New social movements aim primarily to bring about cultural change;
- 'Old' social movements aim to bring about political and economic change.

The distinction between new and old social movements has, however, been contested, particularly in the light of WLMs which aimed to transform both the structures underpinning gender inequalities and the cultural valuation of women (Roseneil, 1995; Charles, 2000; Fraser, 2004). Sasha Roseneil's analysis of the 1980s Greenham Common peace camp in the UK, for instance, questioned the characterisation of 'new' social movements as cultural or social rather than political (Roseneil, 1995). The women's peace camp operated symbolically as well as politically. It challenged conventional politics as well as transgressing gender boundaries and confronted the militarism of the state; in the process it created new cultural meanings, consciousness and identity. Thus, the division that is made within new social movement theory between cultural movements concerned with meaning and identity and political movements concerned with issues of distribution and justice is shown to be inapplicable to a movement such as Greenham.

Cultural politics

In the wake of the fragmentation of WLMs in Europe and North America, Black feminist critiques of their basis in identity politics, and the poststructuralist deconstruction of the category 'woman', the cultural politics of feminism drew the attention of feminist scholars. During the 1990s and 2000s in the USA, this cultural politics took the form of Grrrl Power which emerged as a feminist response to the male-dominated music scene and took its inspiration from Punk and DIY activism. It reclaimed many terms which had been rejected as sexist and derogatory by second wave feminism, such as *girl*, *slut* and *bitch*, and used them ironically to shock (Monem, 2007). This form of politics is performative, doing gender in ways that destabilise what Butler terms the *heterosexual matrix* with its normative definitions of femininity and masculinity (Butler, [1990] 2006). Grrrls produced zines, made their own music and challenged sexist cultural practices, particularly within the music industry. At the same time, there was a backlash against feminism and the alleged emergence of a new, post-feminist era (Faludi, 1992; McRobbie, 2009). It was in this context in 1992 that a young, African American woman, Rebecca Walker, launched a call for action, differentiating herself from post-feminism and announcing herself as the third wave in the pages of *Ms Magazine,* thereby contesting the cultural hegemony of post-feminism (Walker, 2001; Gillis et al., 2007; Aune and Holyoak, 2018).

The temporality of feminist activism

Thus far, I have used the terms *first* and *second wave* feminism unproblematically as referring to periods of upsurge in feminist activism. This terminology is part of a particular narrative which has been glossed as 'a teleological unfolding of a singular conception of the feminist movement' (Lukose, 2018: 42). Within this narrative, the feminist cultural politics of the 1990s and early 2000s is often referred to as the third wave and there are many who claim that we are now witnessing a fourth wave of feminism. These terms are contested and their meanings unclear. Third wave feminism, for instance, can refer to: a generational difference between young feminist activists and older feminists who were active in the second wave; a political critique of second wave feminism and a distancing from it; or an upsurge of feminist activism in a particular place and time (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006; Snyder, 2006; Gillis et al., 2007; Budgeon, 2011; Aune and Holyoak, 2018). Furthermore, they are culturally specific with both of them, as with the idea of the second wave, originating in the USA, often in journalistic accounts (Solomon, 2009; Leupold, 2010; Retallack et al., 2016; Aune and Holyoak, 2018). In Rebecca Walker's original formulation, the third wave appeared to signal a distancing from post-feminism while the fourth wave often refers to the basis of much current feminist activism in the Internet and social media (Cochrane, 2013; Munro, 2013).

Much analysis of third wave feminism focuses on texts rather than exploring what feminist activism looks like (Aune and Holyoak, 2018; although see Mendes, 2015; Retallack et al., 2016; Mendes et al., 2018). Alongside this there has been a conflation of the temporality of US and UK feminist activism which, Aune and Holyoak argue, leads to a misunderstanding of feminist activism in the UK. In their view, the current upsurge of feminist activism in the UK can be understood in terms of a third wave

(cf. Charles and Wadia, 2018) rather than a fourth wave, as some suggest (Chamberlain, 2017; Rivers, 2017). There are two points to be made here: firstly, the temporal confusion arising from ideas about the third and fourth waves is evident in the fact that feminist scholars are analysing the same phenomenon – the current upsurge in digital feminist activism – in terms of both third and fourth wave. Thus, Mendes argues that a key characteristic of third wave feminism 'is its engagement with digital, do-it-yourself media' (Mendes, 2015: 25) then, in a later article, feminist digital activism is named as fourth wave (Mendes et al., 2018). Moreover, online activism and intersectional feminism, which are said to characterise the fourth wave, have also been 'linked with prior waves' (Rivers, 2017: 5). These confusions support Jonathan Dean's claim that the term *third wave*, and perhaps *fourth wave* as well, is an empty signifier which can be used to mean whatever you want it to mean (Dean, 2010).

Furthermore, a critique of the wave metaphor itself has emerged. It has been argued that the wave metaphor is part of a white Western narrative of feminist activism which ignores the different temporalities of Black women's activism and of feminists in different social and political contexts (Woodhull, 2003; Mackay, 2011; Charles et al., 2018; Lukose, 2018). This narrative seems to have arisen from 'journalistic histories' which have been taken up by feminist scholars (McRobbie, 2009), but its homogenising tendency renders invisible different and multiple forms of feminist activism and their histories which are context specific and shaped by their political, social and cultural locations (Jayawardena, 1986; Lukose, 2018).

Case study one: young women's feminist activism in the UK

There is no doubt that there has been an upsurge in feminist activism in the last few years, after a period during the 'post-feminist' 1990s when feminist activism was not very much in evidence (Banyard, 2010; Dean, 2010; Redfern and Aune, 2010). Julia Long charts the 'new wave of anti-porn activism' which began to emerge during the first decade of the twenty-first century (2012: 5), while Kat Banyard observes that in 2009 'the green shoots of a feminist movement were starting to emerge, if you looked carefully enough' but 'fast-forward twelve months, and we [were] witnessing a scale of feminist organising not seen in over a decade' (Banyard, 2010: 241).

The Internet and, latterly, social media have played an important part in this upsurge which has been linked to the establishment of The F-Word website in 2001, aimed specifically at younger women in their teens, 20s and 30s (Dean, 2010: 130). According to Jonathan Dean, The F-Word 'reflects and has facilitated the growing emergence of forms of activism such as Reclaim the Night, Million Women Rise, Ladyfest, Feminist Fightback, Feminist Activist Forum, Object and several others' (Dean, 2010: 162). It was launched to provide a focal point for feminists and to reclaim 'feminism' for younger women (Redfern and Aune, 2010). During the first decade of the twenty-first century feminist activists used the Internet to great effect with the number of feminist websites increasing rapidly. Many campaigns began from just one woman setting up a website, opening a Twitter account and launching an Internet petition. The Everyday Sexism Project (http://everydaysexism.com/) is one example and No More Page 3 (http://nomorepage3.org/) another (Bates, 2014); both were launched

in 2012. Schoolgirls have been involved in feminist activism through the No More Lads Mags campaign (Charles and Wadia, 2018) and by engaging with social media to oppose what they see as sexist practices (Retallack et al., 2016; Mendes et al., 2019).

Since 2010, the use of social media has become a new way of doing politics. It provides a safe space for women to engage with feminism, despite the misogynist and racist trolling that is also part of the social media environment, and has attracted much scholarly attention. Digital feminist activism, it is argued, shows a 'willingness to engage with resistance and challenges to sexism, patriarchy and other forms of oppression' (Mendes et al., 2018: 236–37) and digital feminist activists 'feel very strongly that digital "calling out" practices are a critical part of instigating social change' (Mendes et al., 2018: 241). At the same time, forms of protest familiar from earlier feminist waves are also in evidence. Thus, in 2004, Finn Mackay set up the London Women's Network and re-established the Reclaim the Night marches (Mackay, 2011) and, in 2005, the first of a series of national feminist conferences was organised in Sheffield (http://www.femconferences.org.uk/). Moreover, young feminist activists in the UK acknowledge 'their debt to older feminists' (Redfern and Aune, 2010: xi) and, rather than seeing themselves as third wavers, they address many of the issues that were central to second wave feminism (Mackay, 2011; Long, 2012; Evans and Chamberlain, 2015; Kempson, 2015; Mackay, 2015).

Young women become active in feminist politics for a variety of reasons, including: experience of domestic or sexual violence, being introduced to feminist writing at school or university and discovering that it explained how they had 'always felt' (Redfern and Aune, 2010: 209), or being brought up in an environment where they had a feminist mother or a role model of a 'strong woman' (see also Mackay, 2011; Long, 2012). Affect and emotion are central to young women's activism. One study found that young feminist activists:

> felt angry that they were unable to do everything boys could do at school, they raged at male perpetrators of violence and colluding mothers, and were frustrated at the lack of power they felt in relation to street harassment. … Feminism allowed them to channel their anger by providing both an explanation for their experiences and a legitimate way of fighting against the injustices that angered them.
>
> (Charles et al., 2018: 27)

Young men are also involved in feminist activism with new feminist organisations varying in their policies towards the inclusion of men (Baily, 2012). UK Feminista, established in 2010, sees men as crucial to the campaign against sexism: 'Gender inequality forces [men] into a mould of dominance, aggression and control' (Banyard, 2010: 233) which fuels violence against women and is destructive for men themselves. To achieve gender equality, we need 'to redefine what it means to be a "man"' (Banyard, 2010: 229). At the same time, it recognises the importance of women-only space. Other feminist organisations, such as the London Women's Network, are women-only (Mackay, 2011).

UK Feminista, as well as including men, incorporates an intersectional analysis into its political practice. On the platform at the 2013 summer school there were

representatives from DPAC (Disabled People Against the Cuts), Black and minority ethnic women and white women, older and younger women, organisations like Southall Black Sisters which had emerged from second wave feminism and an Egyptian woman to internationalise the platform. Moreover, intersectionality and how to integrate it into political practice was one of the major topics of conversation and debate. This was not always successful and some participants 'experienced UK Feminista events as being excessively white and middle class' (Charles and Wadia, 2018: 176), which suggests that being intellectually committed to intersectionality does not necessarily translate into political practice.

Furthermore, a focus on feminist activism, particularly its digital form, in which many young, middle-class women are involved, renders invisible more long-standing ways in which women, particularly minority ethnic and working-class women, engage politically. Community activism, engagement with the local state and involvement in voluntary sector organisations has long characterised women's activism (Cockburn, 1977; Mayo, 1977). Thus, miners' wives, during the miners' strike of 1984–5 in the UK, set up women's support groups which fulfilled a welfare function in mining communities (Waddington et al., 1991; Spence and Stephenson, 2007). Similarly, Muslim and minority women in Britain and France are active at community level, engaging in politics and fighting for survival in the context of austerity (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017; Joly and Wadia, 2017). These forms of activism are not necessarily claimed as feminist by others or by the women involved, or even as activism, because they do 'not fit with the hegemonic definitions of what "politics" and "activism" are supposed to be' (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017: 96). Nevertheless, they challenge patriarchal relations of authority within both the home and the community and, as such, are political (Joly and Wadia, 2017).

Case study two: #MeToo and hashtag feminism

Social media and the Internet are, nonetheless, important 'sites of activism' (Mendes, 2015: 44) creating 'new affective ties and solidarities' (Gill and Orgad, 2018: 1314). Much digital activism is centrally focussed on 'rape culture', 'a term coined by feminist activists in the 1970s. … [and] one in which sexual assault is not only seen as *inevitable* in some contexts, but *desirable* and *excusable* as well' (Keller et al., 2018: 23). One form of digital activism is 'hashtag feminism' and probably the most well-known example of it is the #MeToo movement. #MeToo exploded into public consciousness in 2017, when the actress Alyssa Milano tweeted about her treatment by Harvey Weinstein, a powerful Hollywood film magnate. #MeToo began trending on 24 January 2017 and was used 12 million times in the first 24 hours (Gill and Orgad, 2018; Mendes et al., 2018). It had in fact been started in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a Black community activist in the USA, in order to provide support to young Black women who, like her, had experienced sexual abuse (Brockes, 2018). She was caught by surprise when #MeToo started trending. The explosion of #MeToo in 2017, rather than 2006, has been linked to several factors: it was a well-known, white actress who tweeted in 2017; it was taken up by the mainstream media; and it emerged in the wake of the election of 'pussy grabbing' Donald Trump as President of the USA, which had ignited feminist rage around the world (Lukose, 2018; Pellegrini, 2018).

#MeToo, like SlutWalk before it, has been criticised for being exclusionary and marginalising the voices of 'women of color, queer folks, differently abled folks and other marginalized communities' (Burke, 2017; see also Mendes, 2015; Gill and Orgad, 2018; Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). These criticisms arise from the use of the hashtag by celebrities and elite women and the subsequent mainstream media attention they attracted. Similar issues raised by Black women, even when they are celebrities, do not attract such massive public attention (Emejulu, 2018) and are often seen in racialised terms rather than as experiences of sexual harassment (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). Such problems are commonplace within Western feminist social movements and reflect their overwhelmingly white and middle-class composition.

#MeToo is a particularly consequential form of hashtag feminism. There are many other websites and hashtags that preceded #MeToo and are linked to feminist activism, such as the Everyday Sexism Project, Hollaback!, #BeenRapedNeverReported, #YesAllWomen, #MaybeHeDoesn'tHitYou, #WhyIStayed#WhyILeft and #NotOkay (Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018; PettyJohn et al., 2018). They enable women to experience solidarity, create feminist networks and lead to the development of a feminist consciousness (Mendes et al., 2018). Hash tags have also emerged in the wake of #MeToo to raise money to support women fighting sexual harassment in the workplace, such as #TimesUp (https://www.timesupnow.com/history), or to involve men in supporting women, such as #HowIWillChange (PettyJohn et al., 2018).

#MeToo focuses attention on the workplace; it is concerned with 'the relationship between sex and power [which] is being newly scrutinised and acted upon' (Lukose, 2018: 35; see also Gill and Orgad, 2018), and political institutions have not been immune to its reverberations. In the 2017 general election in the UK, more women than ever before were elected to Westminster (Childs, 2018) and in the autumn of that year a scandal erupted in the wake of #MeToo. This revealed the sexual harassment that was endemic in political institutions (Childs, 2018; Krook, 2018). Since then, attention has also focussed on the disturbing levels of violence and sexual harassment experienced by women politicians, particularly minority ethnic women, globally (Amnesty International, 2017; Krook, 2018; Kuperberg, 2018). This sexual violence and harassment, both within and without political institutions, can deter women from running for office, thereby affecting attempts to increase women's political representation.

Feminism and political institutions

Contemporary feminist activism is not as focussed on the state, as were the first and second waves, although activists, particularly in the UK, recognise the importance of engaging with the realm of formal politics to bring about policy change (Evans, 2017: 146). Neither are they very concerned with women's participation as political representatives, often seeing it as the preserve of white, middle-class women (Evans, 2017). But just as second wave feminists in universities set up women's studies courses, so also did they engage with political parties and trade unions, and significant changes have been wrought to processes of political representation as a result. States and political parties around the world are committed to a strategy of increasing women's political representation (Squires, 2007; Evans, 2008), gender

mainstreaming is high on the international policy agenda and women's rights are recognised as human rights. Gender equality is now accepted as the 'key to good governance' (Squires, 2007: 1) (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 – Anti-gender movements

The influence of feminists on international policy agendas has not, however, gone unopposed and 'anti-gender' movements have emerged on a global scale (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017a). These movements are critical of what they call *gender ideology*. This term has epistemological and political dimensions including, on the one hand, feminist knowledge production, specifically gender studies, and, on the other hand, policy developments such as gender mainstreaming and measures to promote gender and sexual equality and reproductive rights. They see these as attempts to undermine the heteronormative family, the biological basis of gender and the 'complementarity' of women and men (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017a; Corredor, 2019). The critique of gender ideology emerged in the mid 1990s; it was initially developed by the Catholic Church and has been taken up by anti-gender movements in many different countries as well as by religious authorities and the state in places like Russia and Poland (Moss, 2017; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017b; Graff et al., 2019). Since 2012, anti-gender movements have been on the rise and intersect with the resurgence of right wing populism (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017a). Feminists and gender ideology are seen as part of the global elite, supporting cultural imperialism and imposing alien ideas of gender, sexual equality and women's/human rights on nations where more 'traditional' (patriarchal) gender relations are the cultural norm (Korolczuk and Graff, 2018; Kovats, 2018; Graff et al., 2019).

Furthermore, gender can be seen as the 'symbolic glue' enabling anti-gender movements and right-wing populism to come together around issues such as relationship education in schools, which they see not only as undermining 'the family' but also damaging 'the child' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017b; Kovats, 2018; Corredor, 2019). Many of these movements are characterised by a 'strong man' masculinity and a 'muscular' femininity (Kottig et al., 2017; Graff et al., 2019). Cynthia Enloe suggests that right wing movements, as well as being racist and xenophobic, are 'highly masculinised' (Enloe et al., 2019: 827), but that if they are to win votes, they need to appeal to women. They often do this through 'some idealised notion of the family that's combined with a demonised notion of ... feminists' which leads women to fear feminists because they undermine the 'traditional' family (Enloe et al., 2019: 827). Women are active in these movements and, in some cases, lead them; Marine Le Pen of Rassemblement National in France is an example. They can also experience empowerment through their involvement (Graff et al., 2019; Luerhmann, 2019; Mason, 2019; Sen, 2019). Right wing commentators also associate feminism with neo-liberalism and extreme individualism, claiming that all the ills of modern society can be linked to the way 'a feminist outlook' shapes policy and practice (Williams, 2018). In Cynthia Enloe's words: this sort of analysis and politics makes 'feminists look more influential than they are' (Enloe et al., 2019: 826).

Globally, however, politics is still dominated by men and, in most legislatures around the world, women representatives are in a minority. This is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Regional averages of women in national parliaments

Region	Single House or Lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	**42.3%**	–	–
Americas	**30.3%**	31.0%	30.4%
Europe – OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	**27.0%**	27.2%	27.7%
Europe – OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	**26.5%**	27.2%	26.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	**23.8%**	22.3%	23.6%
Asia	**19.7%**	17.7%	19.5%
Arab States	**18.7%**	12.6%	17.8%
Pacific	**15.5%**	37.1%	17.9%
Regions are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the Lower or Single House			

Source: www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm consulted 16 February, 2019

Increasing women's political representation has been a central concern of social movement organisations of the first and second waves, such as the Fawcett Society in the UK and NOW (the National Organisation of Women) in the USA (Evans, 2017) and one of the ways of doing this has been through quotas (Dahlerup and Friedenval, 2005; Krook and Squires, 2006; Franceschet et al., 2012). The introduction of quotas has resulted in 'women's national legislative representation more than doubling in the last 20 years' (Childs and Hughes, 2018: 282).

The theoretical basis for a gender balance amongst political representatives rests on a range of principles which are taken up in different ways by those advocating for an increase in women's representation (Phillips, 1991, 1998; Childs and Cowley, 2010; Krook and O'Brien, 2010). These include the following ideas:

- Women politicians provide a role model.

- It is unjust for men to monopolise representation.

- If there are no women representatives, then 'women's interests' will not be taken into account.

- An increase in women's representation would contribute to a revitalisation of democracy.

- The presence of women is symbolically important as it gives legitimacy to the political system.

The argument that an imbalance in the gender of political representatives is unjust is based on the idea that, all things being equal, you would expect political representatives to be drawn randomly from the population and to reflect its composition in terms

of gender, ethnicity and other bases of differentiation. That this is not the case suggests that there are barriers being put in the way of women and minority groups which, in the name of justice, should be removed. These barriers deny women and ethnic minority groups the right to political participation. This desire that the proportion of women and minority representatives should somehow mirror their distribution in the general population has come to be known as the *politics of presence* (Phillips, 1998).

The second major argument is that if women are not present as political representatives, their interests will not be represented adequately. This argument begs the question of whether we can talk in terms of women's interests. Given the post-modern deconstruction of woman as subject and the recognition of differences between women, it is no longer possible to assume that all women share interests simply because of their gender. Other identities cross-cut that of gender and fracture the idea of a unitary set of interests arising from women's common experiences. However, Phillips counters this by arguing that the more varied and the harder to define are women's interests, the more important is it to have a variety of women as representatives (Phillips, 1998: 235).

These two dimensions of representation – (a) reflecting the distribution of women and other minority groups in the population and (b) representing their (varied) interests – are referred to respectively as *descriptive* and *substantive* representation (Pitkin, 1967).

There are, however, difficulties in increasing women's representation, or reducing (some) men's over-representation, which lie in the male domination of political institutions. Indeed, 'the lack of parity in politics is rooted in elite men's desire to maintain the political power and privilege that they have historically held on the basis of their gendered, raced and classed positions' (Childs and Hughes, 2018: 286; see also Murray, 2014).

The 'masculine blueprint'

Within women's and gender studies it has long been recognised that organisational structures and cultures are gendered and that this operates to the disadvantage of women (Acker, 1990). This has been taken up by feminist students of politics where it is known as feminist institutionalism (Mackay and Kenny, 2009; Mackay, Monro and Waylen, 2009) in recognition of the fact that political institutions, like other organisations, are structured at every level by gender. This ranges 'from the symbolic level to the "seemingly trivial" level of interpersonal day-to-day interactions' (Mackay and Kenny, 2009: 274) and means that 'practising politics' can be understood as a way of 'doing gender' (Charles, 2014). As Gatea and Gaweda point out, 'political practices are rarely modelled on the normative lives of women … but, rather, are shaped around male norms and masculine codes of behaviour'; they name this the 'masculine blueprint' (Galea and Gaweda, 2018: 277).

Feminist political scientists have explored different aspects of this masculine blueprint in order to explain women's under-representation. Much research has focussed on the barriers to women becoming political representatives. Now, however, students of politics are exploring how political institutions operate to maintain male privilege and legitimate 'men's place as parliamentarians' (Galea and Gaweda, 2018: 277).

Such an analysis has been mobilised to explore the processes internal to political parties which militate against the selection of women as candidates (Murray, 2010; Bjarnegard, 2013). These studies highlight the gendered expectations 'inherent in different informal rules for recruitment' (Murray, 2015: 750), the failure to make selection criteria explicit (Murray, 2014), and the masculinist cultures of political parties which militate against the selection of women (Lovenduski, 2005a). Norris and Lovenduski (1995) suggest that the lack of women is due to supply factors (i.e. women not putting themselves forward) and/or to demand factors (even when they put themselves forward they are not selected). The under-representation of women has also been explained in terms of men's sense of entitlement to exercise power, and this entitlement being seen as legitimate by party selectors. Most women do not share this sense of entitlement, though an exception can be found amongst elite women whose class position (and the cultural capital and habitus associated with it) gives them a sense of entitlement that can overcome the gender deficit they experience as women (Liddle and Michielsens, 2000, 2007). Recruitment of candidates is therefore based on a 'masculine blueprint' that sees men of a particular ethnicity and class as the ideal political representative.

Quotas

In order to overcome this, political parties and governments have adopted quota systems to increase the political representation of women. In the 1970s political parties in Norway adopted quotas, and since then, their use has spread, growing particularly rapidly during the 1990s (Franceschet et al., 2012). By 2018 there were over 130 countries around the world where quotas had been introduced (Childs and Hughes, 2018: 282). These included not only countries like Norway, France and Britain but also Mexico, Nicaragua and South Africa (Stokes, 2005) (Box 3.3).

Box 3.3 – What are quotas?

'Political quotas are regulations that a certain number or proportion of women (in this case) must be present in a representative forum or institution. They may operate at different stages of the selection process, with political parties, at the nomination stage, or as a requirement for the composition of a legislature, assembly, council or government' (Lovenduski, 2005a: 93–4).

In Britain, women make up 32% of MPs and quotas have contributed to the increased representation of women. Quotas were used for the first time in a general election in 1997 as a result of which the number of women MPs doubled from 60 to 120 (Charles, 2002: 153). This was almost entirely due to the fact that the Labour Party had adopted quotas in the form of all-women shortlists which were used in half of the vacant and winnable seats. However, the idea of quotas received considerable and hostile press coverage in the UK once it began to be implemented. It was opposed on a number of grounds, among them being that women should fight on an even playing field. Such arguments, of course, fail to recognise that the playing field is not and never has been even and that it advantages men (Murray, 2014). All-women

shortlists were challenged by two 'wannabe' male candidates who used the Sex Discrimination Act to argue that all-women shortlists discriminated against them because they were being denied the right to be considered for employment. They were successful despite the fact that the Sex Discrimination Act was not applicable to political parties (Lovenduski, 1999: 205). This judgment was not contested by the Labour Party but, since then, the Sex Discrimination (Electoral Candidates) Act 2002 has been passed, which allows political parties to use positive discrimination in selecting candidates. As a result, all-women shortlists have been reintroduced, although not without opposition (see, for example, Lovenduski, 2005a; Cutts et al., 2008; Charles and Jones, 2013).

Despite the success of quotas in increasing the number of women political representatives, it has been argued that a focus on the under-representation of women reproduces the idea that male politicians are the norm. Attention should now be focussed on men's over-representation and quotas for men should be introduced to achieve a gender balance (Murray, 2014; Bjarnegard and Murray, 2018).

Changing politics

One of the assumptions underpinning arguments for gender parity in political representation is that women may practise politics differently from men and support different policy agendas. For women to be able to make a difference, however, they need to be present in relatively high proportions; if they are in a small minority they are unlikely to be effective in an overwhelmingly male environment. This idea is known as critical mass and derives from organisational theory (Mackay, 2004). It is widely accepted in the political sphere but is not without its critics (Childs and Krook, 2006; Dahlerup, 2006; Grey, 2006). For instance, it has been pointed out that the idea of critical acts and critical leaders as well as critical mass may be important for understanding the conditions under which women are able to act effectively as political representatives (Dahlerup, 1988; Threlfall et al., 2012; Arendt, 2018). Furthermore, there are two dimensions of making a difference which need to be explored separately. Thus, women can make a difference in terms of policy development and they can make a difference to the working environment of legislative assemblies (Dahlerup, 2006). Here, I look at these two aspects of women's political representation.

Policy change

Individual women in positions of power within parties and governments are sometimes critical in taking forward a progressive gender agenda. In Britain, this was apparent in Barbara Castle's support for equal pay legislation when she was Minister of Labour in 1968 and in Labour MP Clare Short's support for quotas in the 1990s (Short, 1996; Squires, 1996). It was also evident in the work of mostly Labour women MPs, in the 1970s, on the Select Committee on Violence in the Family and in opposing attempts to restrict the 1967 Abortion Act (Hills, 1981: 26). The presence of women in political elites, even in small numbers, means that the claims of women's organisations and feminist social movements are more likely to be heard. Now, however, the proportion of women representatives in Britain and in other parts of the

world, has increased significantly (Lovenduski, 2005b). It is therefore possible to investigate whether women's descriptive representation is linked to their substantive representation and to explore the difference they make to the working environment of political institutions.

There has been evidence for some time that women and men political representatives have different attitudes which are likely to be linked to different choices. In the USA, for example, research that looked at the attitudes of women and men in Congress between 1987 and 1992 found that Democrat women were the most liberal, Democrat men came next followed by Republican women, with Republican men being the least liberal (Burrell, 1994; see also Epstein et al., 2005). Amongst MPs in the UK, the attitudes of women are found to be more liberal than those of men, and women are 'consistently more strongly in favour of women's rights' (Norris, 1996: 95; see also Lovenduski, 2005a). And, at the European level, women representatives to the European Parliament tend to be more liberal on women's issues and 'male candidates may pay greater attention to women's interest issues the more they are exposed to female leadership' (McEvoy, 2016: 778). In sum:

> Women tend to give stronger support for issues of women's rights, they express greater concern about social policy issues, and they give higher priority to constituency casework. (Norris, 1996: 103)

Most women also appear to regard themselves as representing women and feel that it is important to maintain links with women's organisations in civil society. This is supported by evidence from a range of countries, including the Nordic countries and the USA (Stokes, 2005). At the same time, however, women understand themselves as representing the whole population within the geographical boundaries of a constituency (Threlfall et al., 2012). Moreover, women feel that they have a special responsibility to act on behalf of women, they have more contact with women's organisations than do men, and there is a connection between the election of women and the development of pro-women policies (Jones et al., 2009). There is also evidence that women representatives want the political agenda to change so that women's interests are mainstreamed, and they think that women's presence as political representatives is crucial to this happening (Threlfall et al., 2012).

Working environment

Women representatives may also have an impact on the working environment. One dimension of this is that they tend to have a different political style from men, being less adversarial and confrontational and more interested in a consensual style of politics (Stokes, 2005; Chaney et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2009). This is something that many women politicians claim for themselves. It is, however, easier to develop a new way of doing gender and practising politics in new political institutions such as the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and the South African Parliament than it is in those that have been established for hundreds of years like the UK House of Commons or local government (see, for example, Charles, 2014).

Women have been involved in attempts to introduce 'family-friendly' working hours. In Britain, the new devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales have operated 'family-friendly' hours since their inception in 1999; these are seen as having great symbolic significance by many women representatives but are continually under threat (Chaney et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2009). In contrast, attempts to modernise working practices at Westminster after 1997 met with considerable resistance and hostility from the media as well as from many politicians across the gender spectrum. Much of this hostility was directed against the new women Labour MPs who were accused of only being interested 'in improving their own working conditions' rather than with getting on with the tough and difficult job of being a representative (Lovenduski, 2005a: 170). Joni Lovenduski notes that 'women MPs were enjoined by reform advocates not to make their case in feminist terms' as this would court the danger of losing support (Lovenduski, 2005a: 173). These sorts of changes have an impact on the organisational culture of political institutions and the way politics is done, loosening the connection of politics with a competitive, aggressive masculinity and influencing the behaviour of all political representatives, men as well as women (see, for example, Charles, 2014; Murray, 2014: 523).

As well as affecting policy and the working environment, it is argued that women and ethnic minority representatives bring about cultural change in spaces which are defined as ethnically specific and masculine. Women and ethnic minority representatives entering the world of Westminster, for instance, are regarded as 'space invaders' – they are out of place and their legitimacy is questioned, even by themselves (Childs, 2004; Puwar, 2004). However, they make a difference simply by being in 'an institution that has for centuries been overwhelmingly male and white', and this is part of what is meant by the politics of presence (Puwar, 2004: 66). Their presence is symbolically important because it 'disrupts and highlights how this institution … is "built by men and shaped by men, in men's image"' (Puwar, 2004: 66). It is of course not only Westminster but the whole institution of politics that is 'shaped by men, in men's image' (Puwar, 2004: 66).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the demands raised by WLMs are now central to the global political agenda. This has come about by feminists working within and outside political parties to develop policies which address the demands of feminist movements, and within universities to create the knowledge on which these policies are based. There is a new generation of feminist activists within and without academia: within academia, they are setting up feminist student societies and renewing the feminist challenge to the continuing gender blindness of many disciplines (see, for example, WASS, 2007); without academia, they are practising a politics which recognises differences and the importance of men's involvement in bringing about gender equality and an end to sexism. There are also women active within their communities who may not be recognised as feminist activists, but whose political engagement is no less important; this sort of activism goes on all round the world taking different forms in different locations (Basu, 2017).

At the international level of the UN and that of national governments, feminist political engagement has had a major impact and it is now accepted that women's issues (however they are defined) are a political matter. In most countries of the world, however, political power still resides in the hands of men, progress towards gender parity is painfully slow, and there is organised opposition to feminist political agendas in the form of 'anti-gender' movements. We have seen how difficult it is to challenge the masculinisation of politics, and the violence and abuse that are directed at women who do. There is clearly still a long way to go before women and men enjoy equal access to political power and all women are freed from men's exercise of power over them in the most public and private areas of their lives.

Further reading

L. Bassel and A. Emejulu (2017) *Minority Women and Austerity: Survival and Resistance in France and Britain.* Bristol: Policy Press; and D. Joly and K. Wadia (2017) *Muslim Women and Power: Political and Civic Engagement in West European Societies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. These two books analyse ethnic minority women's political activism. Both compare Britain and France. *Minority Women and Activism* focuses on minority women in the two countries and their activism in the context of austerity; *Muslim Women and Power* challenges the stereotype of Muslim women as being disengaged from politics and shows that they are involved at both the community level and more formal political levels. Muslim women 'do politics' in a complex context shaped by religion, their national/ethnic origins and the political cultures of the societies in which they are located. In the process, they often challenge gendered power relations. Together, these two books provide an excellent analysis of how ethnic minority women's activism is shaped by the societies in which they live.

A. Basu (ed.) (2017) *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective.* London and New York: Routledge. This book explores feminist politics in different local contexts around the world. Each chapter is written by someone who is familiar with the feminist activism they are writing about and together they show not only how varied feminist activism is but also how much feminist activists have in common. A fascinating book that brings to attention the different forms taken by feminist activism and that Western feminism is one among many.

J. Lovenduski (2015) *Gendering Politics, Feminising Political Science*. Colchester: ECPR Press. This is a really useful book covering questions of gender and political representation, how political parties are gendered and how they might change, and how women have influenced the development of policies relating to women's reproductive rights and violence against women. It is based on an analysis of institutional politics in the UK and challenges the masculinist basis of political science. If you are interested in institutional politics and how women are changing it, then this is the book for you.

K. Mendes, J. Ringrose and J. Keller (2019) *Digital Feminist Activism: Girls and Women Fight Back Against Rape Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. This book provides a fascinating insight into digital feminist activism and how it facilitates the building of supportive networks and enables the development of a shared feminist consciousness. It is based on extensive original research, including an analysis of social media and how it is used as a tool by feminist activists. It includes discussions of the findings of an ethnographic study of Internet and hashtag feminism and of how engaging with social media provides support for women and affects their ability to challenge rape culture.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what senses can we understand politics as gendered?

2. What are the problems with understanding feminist activism in terms of the wave metaphor?

3. How is social media influencing feminist activism?

4. What would an intersectional approach to feminist activism and/or political representation look like?

4 GENDER-SENSITIVE METHOD/OLOGIES

Gayle Letherby

Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on the work of a number of feminists and other theorists to reflect on issues of method, methodology and epistemology with specific reference to research in the areas of gender and women's studies. Feminist methodologists have been influential in discussions about the relationship between the process and the product of research and how the knowledge researchers' produce should be translated into practice. Issues of responsibility and accountability are central to this. Sensitive to gender and to other aspects of difference and diversity, feminist and gender studies researchers (and others) have successfully challenged historical pronouncements of the best ways to do research and have highlighted the significance of politics, power and emotion within the entirety of the research process. Despite some enduring misunderstandings and challenges, feminist methodological work continues to influence mainstream research practice, which is also considered here.

Reflection on the *methods* (tools for data gathering – for example, questionnaires, interviews, conversational analysis), *methodology* (analysis of the methods used) relevant to each and any research endeavour are crucial if our work is to have *epistemological* (the theory of knowledge) value. This acknowledges the need for methodological reflection about the methods we use and means that reports of research need to include reference to both the 'doing of research' and the philosophy of research practice:

> It is important to provide accounts of the fieldwork involved in empirical research because as many researchers (including feminists) have shown, there is often divergence between how research has actually been done and what is reported in research accounts and in textbooks. The result is that methodological accounts often do not prepare researchers for the problems and satisfactions they are likely to encounter … So, our experiences of research should be written up for others to consider, reflect, agree with and reject.
>
> (Letherby, 2003: 159–60)

Feminists and gender-sensitive researchers have always embraced and championed new ways of working, and recently, creative-arts-based and internet methods have become popular. Along with the academic community's increasing focus on the impact of research, these methods are of epistemological interest to gender-sensitive researchers. Feminist methodological debate, alongside developments within feminist

politics and women's movements, have been central to the gender-sensitive feminist critique of the social sciences and humanities since the late 1970s (Stanley, 1984; Okley, 1992; Delamont, 2003; Wise and Stanley, 2003; Bennet and Pereira, 2013; Letherby and Davidson, 2015; Leavy, 2017), which has broader implications across the research community. With all this in mind, the aims of this chapter are to summarise and reflect on the importance of the concept of gender within research, to provide an overview of 'doing' feminist and gender-sensitive research and to consider the relationship between the research process and product and the possible influence and impact that research can have (Box 4.1).

> **Box 4.1 – Gender-sensitive research**
>
> Gender-sensitive research recognises gender as a significant (although not the only) variable. It pays attention to the differences and the similarities between women's and men's views and experiences. Additionally, this approach acknowledges that gender sensitivity should be an integral part of the research process with reference to the identities of, and relationships between, the researcher and the researched.

Taking gender seriously

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that women began to enter the academy in any great numbers. Historically, the focus of academic endeavour in the social sciences and humanities was men and male experience. Yet, not all men were represented, with white, middle-class and able-bodied men being seen as the norm and therefore the subjects for further study. Thus, in the physical and social sciences, the arts and humanities, 'the perspectives, concerns, and interests of only one sex and one class [were] represented as general' (Smith, 1988: 19–20). Additionally, and equally problematic, was the unquestioned adoption of the so-called 'scientific' method as the best way to study both the physical and the social world. Objectivity was desired and believed possible and the 'expert neutral knower' (the researcher) was expected to generalize from research to wider social and physical populations. From this perspective, reality (the truth) is out there and researchers can investigate and discover the 'truth' independent of observer effects (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Letherby, 2003). Researchers aiming for this 'scientific' approach to research argued that the research process was linear, orderly, 'hygienic' (see Stanley and Wise, 1993; Kelly et al., 1994; Hesse-Biber, 2011a, 2011b). This approach was generally known as *positivism* and associated with quantitative methods (but it is important to remember that not all quantitative researchers are aiming for positivism, a 'scientific' approach, and that the term is overused and misunderstood; see Oakley, 1999; Hesse-Biber, 2011a, 2011b; for further discussion).

The earliest critics of the 'scientific' approach were themselves male and although critical of the claims to objectivity, value-freedom and the search for the 'truth', their research still tended to focus on male experience and the sexist aspects of the approach were not challenged (Morley, 1996; Letherby, 2003). From the 1970s, feminist researchers began to criticise male-dominated knowledge production and the methodological claims made by so-called objective researchers:

Masculine ideologies are the creation of masculine subjectivity; they are neither objective nor value free nor inclusively 'human'. Feminism implies that we recognize fully the inadequacy for us, the distortion, of male-centred ideologies and that we proceed to think and act out of that recognition.

(Rich, 1986: 207 cited by Stanley and Wise, 1993: 59)

The feminist critique of this male-centred approach to research can be summarised thus: sexist in the selection of research topics; biased in terms of the (often) recruitment of only male respondents; faulty in its claims to objectivity (not least because of the overgeneralisation of findings to all men *and* to women) and exploitative in practice due to the unequal relationships between researcher and researched and within research teams. And yet, feminist approaches retain three elements of the 'scientific method':

(1) the possibility of being able to differentiate between better-grounded and worse-grounded stories of gendered social existence;
(2) a general commitment to reasoned argument (despite the problematic history of rationality);
(3) the need to justify knowledge claims.

(Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 165)

One significant difference between traditional and feminist approaches is the insistence that research should mean something to those being studied and should lead to change. Thus, as Judith Cook and Mary Fonow argued in 1990: '[f]eminist research is… not research about women but research for women to be used in transforming their sexist society' (Cook and Fonow, 1990: 80). Feminists also insist that a reflexive approach to research – from proposal writing to presentation of findings – recognising the significance and influence of the researcher is essential (for example, Okley, 1992; Letherby, 2003) (Box 4.2).

Box 4.2 – The feminist research process

Following on from the critique of traditional research processes, feminists were and are concerned to

- give continuous and reflexive attention to the significance of gender as an aspect of all social life and within research, and consider further the significance of other differences among women and the relevance of men's lives to a feminist understanding of the world;
- provide a challenge to the norm of 'objectivity' that assumes knowledge can be collected in a pure, uncontaminated way;
- value the personal and the private as worthy of study;
- develop non-exploitative relationships within research;
- value reflexivity and emotion as a source of insight as well as an essential part of the research process.

Early discussion concerned the possibility of a 'feminist method'. It was quickly agreed though that 'it is not by looking at research methods that one will be able to identify the distinctive features of the best feminist research' (Harding 1987: 3) (see also, for example, Roberts, [1981] 1990; Stanley, 1990; Reinharz, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Millen, 1997; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002; Letherby, 2003; Ramji, 2010; Hesse-Biber, 2011a, 2011b). Thus, there is no such thing as a feminist method. Rather, what is distinctive about feminist research is a sensitivity to the significance of gender within society and a critical approach to the research process. This implies, then, that rather than arguing for one particular tool to collect data, we should be concerned with the methodological reflection of the researcher(s) and with thinking methodologically about methods. Methodology, concerned as it is with the 'getting of knowledge', is key to understanding the relationship between knowledge and power (Wise and Stanley, 2008: 222) and is thus an essential part of the feminist project:

> Within feminism, the term 'feminist methodology' is also used to describe an ideal approach to doing research – one which is respectful of respondents and acknowledges the subjective involvement of the researcher. This leads us to a question which Cook and Fonow (1990: 71) ask: 'is feminist methodology that which feminists do or that which we aim for?
>
> (Letherby, 2003: 5)

Furthermore, and relatedly, collaborating across traditional academic boundaries feminists are concerned in their research and scholarship to do more than multidisciplinary and interdisplinarity work, but to also engage in transdisciplinarity practices which involves a critique of the standard configuration of knowledge including moral and ethical concern and reflection (Hillel Bernstein, 2015) (Box 4.3).

Box 4.3 – Reviewing taking gender seriously

■ Male domination in the academy led to a research focus on male experience in the social sciences and humanities;

■ Alongside this focus on men's experience was an adherence to a methodological approach that claimed to be objective and value free;

■ Feminists have challenged both the inherent sexism in traditional approaches and advocate an alternative way of working that is gender sensitive and non-exploitative.

Different differences

In response to the myth that feminist researchers are only interested in researching women's experience, it is important to acknowledge that the first concern of feminist research was, and is, to make women's lives visible. In 1987 Sandra Harding noted that whilst studying women was not new, studying them from the perspective of their

own experiences so that they could understand themselves and their position within the social world had 'virtually no history at all' (Harding, 1987: 8). Yet, if we accept that man is not the norm and woman the deviation and we accept gender diversity/ people of non-binary genders, and if we want to fully understand the life experience and chances of all individuals, we need to consider the social construction of both femininity and masculinity and focus our research on women and men's experience. Thus, 'taking gender seriously' means bringing men back in (Morgan, 1981, 1998; Laws, 1990; Connell, 2011; Law, 2019) and increasingly, also means acknowledging trans and gender-diverse identities. Until relatively recently, much of the work on gender-based violence targeted women respondents in heterosexual relationships, but now there is work that focuses more clearly on men (as perpetrators and as victims) and on violence within same-sex relationships (Twinley, 2016). Research indicates that violence within intimate heterosexual relationships is often linked to real or per-ceived fulfilment of masculinity and in order to understand the prevalence and experi-ence of, and reasons for, such violence a multi-methodological approach is needed (Gelles, 1990; Downes et al., 2014; Marchbank and Letherby, 2014). In 1997, as a response to the previous lack of research on this issue in India, the International Centre for Research on Women began a large, qualitative and quantitative, eight-study research programme aimed at finding effective responses to such violence (ICRW, 2002). There is also a need to be '… cognizant of the possibility that "patri-archal discourse need not be seen as homogeneous and uniformly oppressive" … for women or uniformly liberating and unproblematic for men, and that women do not need to be portrayed as inevitable victims and men as victors' (Annandale and Clark, 1996: 33). So, men can be victims, women can be powerful, men and women often share experiences of powerlessness and an understanding of the differences between women and between men in terms of self-identity, and power and privilege is a vital part of a gender-sensitive approach (see Robinson's chapter in this volume).

There are many examples of areas where more research on women's experience is needed but there are also areas where there is, or has been, less research focusing on male experience. In 1996, Frances Goldscheider and Gayle Kaufman suggested that our understanding of men's fertility and involvement in family life resembles our understanding of women and work in the 1960s. They wrote: 'In the "separate spheres" of social research in the 1960s work and public life meant men, and for most of the time since then, family has meant women. It is clearly time to move on' (1996: 94). Similarly, in his review of research on the relationship between infertility and psychological distress Arthur Griel (1997) argued for more research which considers differences between male and female infertility. Since then there has been increased attention to men's reproductive and parenting experience (for example, Dermont, 2008; Hadley and Hanley, 2011; Miller, 2011) including work on how to engage men in research on these issues (for example, Law, 2019). Yet, reproduction and childcare are still often viewed as 'women's business' denying the significance of men in discussions of in/fertility and non/parenthood and maintaining traditional gen-dered expectations of women (Earle and Letherby, 2003; Davidson and Letherby, 2014, 2019). In research where the primary focus *has* been male experience, it has often been maleness rather than masculinity that has been researched, examined and theorised. A good example here is male criminality. Historically, criminologists paid

little attention to the ways in which the criminal behaviour of young men might be influenced by their understandings of expectations of them, or indeed, how criminological analyses might be understood as reflective of male (researchers) understandings about crime (Walklate, 2007a; Marchbank and Letherby, 2014). More recent examples of research that acknowledges and explores masculinity and its significance include Terry Kupers's (2005) work on how 'toxic' masculinity can be a barrier to mental health treatment in prison and Rose Deuchar and Robert Weide's (2018) international comparison of the role of positive masculine identities to gang intervention programmes.

The development of debates surrounding feminist methodology have taken place during a period of increasing inequality worldwide. With this in mind, '[f]eminism remains inherently contradictory because gender is only part of people's lives (for example, see Siltanen and Doucet, 2008; Hanson Frieze and Dittrich, 2013). In order to transform unjust gender relations, more than gender must change' (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 68). Other key identifiers such as race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, dis/ability, geographical location and so on are also relevant and significant to an individuals' life experiences and life chances, and the intersection (multiple interlocking identities) of these differences are thus essential considerations within research (Hill-Collins, 2000; Walby, 2007; Siltanen and Doucet, 2008, Hanson Frieze and Dittrich, 2013). For example, research suggests that sex work in Africa, Asia and Latin America is influenced by the results of culturally produced racial sexual fantasies in the 'eroticisation' of certain women (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, 2004); men born to great wealth and privilege are often brought up in a way that negates human sensitivity and emotion (Donaldson and Poynting, 2007), and an understanding of the significance of age and generation, class and gender leads to a better understanding of youth and inequality (Woodman, 2013).

Attention to issues of difference is as relevant to the research process as it is to the issue under consideration. Along with other writers (see, Stanley, 1993; Lincoln and Denzin, 1994; Letherby, 2013a; Brennan and Letherby, 2017), I propose that all writing is in some ways auto/biography and that all texts bear traces of the author and are to some extent personal statements within which the writer works from the self to the other and back again. Research writings then include intersections of the public/private domains of the researcher and the researched and research 'is contextual, situational, and specific, and … will differ systematically according to the social location (as a gendered, raced, classed, sexualised person) of the particular knowledge-producer' (Stanley 1993: 49). This explicitly auto/biographical approach, with its focus on the relationships between the self/other relationship, also encourages reflection on power relationships within research, including the differential status given to different voices and different accounts. The academy remains dominated by white, middle-class voices and any representation of the other needs to acknowledge this (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996; Letherby, 2003, 2014). With reference to feminist research, and applicable to gender-sensitive research more generally, there is need to be sensitive to 'the conundrum of how not to undercut, discredit or write-off women's [or men's] consciousness as different from our own' (Stanley, 1984: 201; and see Mullings, 1999; Downes et al., 2014) (Box 4.4).

Box 4.4 – Summarising different differences

■ Challenging traditional sexist approaches and taking gender seriously when undertaking research suggests the need to focus on women's and on men's experience;

■ Other aspects of individuals' social identity – class, age, race and ethnicity and so on – are also important determinants of experience and opportunity and these other differences and the relationships between them should be incorporated within a gender-sensitive research approach;

■ Differences between the researcher and the researched need to be considered not least when researchers are reflecting on how to represent the experience of those they research.

Counting, quoting and other interesting stuff

Despite much evidence to the contrary, there is still a popular view that women, particularly feminists, not only prefer to use qualitative methods but, above all, celebrate and most value the in-depth qualitative interview. Feminists *have* argued that the in-depth interview is a good way of achieving an 'equal' relationship between interviewer and interviewee. In letting respondents tell 'their story', this method encourages the researched to have an active part in the research process therefore diluting the power imbalance in favour of the researcher (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Letherby, 2003). Additionally, qualitative methods, in focusing on the 'experiential', can enable and ensure that different questions are asked and allow people to 'speak for themselves' in their own words (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Tickner, 2005). For example, as J. Ann Tickner (2005) has recorded, feminists working in the area of international relations have drawn on ethnographic, narrative, cross-cultural, and other methods that are rarely taught to students to attempt to understand the gendering of international politics, the state and its security-seeking practices and its effects on the lives of women (and men). So, many feminists suggest, there is methodological value in a method (the in-depth interview) and an approach (qualitative methods, more generally) which encourage the production of research *for* rather than research *about* or *of* women and men and girls and boys (Oakley, 1981; Bowles and Klein, 1983). However, there are potential problems with this, not least because, as noted above, gender is not the only signifier of difference. Women and men are divided by other variables such as race and ethnicity, class, sexuality and so on. This is likely to affect the research process, and researcher/respondent matching is impossible to achieve (Ramazanoglu, 1989; Mullings, 1999; Fawcett and Hearn, 2004). Further, the very fact that some individuals are 'happy to talk' may be an indication of their powerlessness and researchers need to be careful that information freely given cannot be used against those who gave it (Finch, 1984; Letherby, 2013b). This suggests that some objectification of the researched is inevitable as the researcher, more often than not, has the ultimate control over the material (Ramazanoglu, 1989; Stacey, 1991; Cotterill, 1992; Letherby, 2003; Brannen, 2013, Pettinger et al., 2018).

In support of the myth that feminist researchers favour particular methods, Ann Oakley argued in 1998 that the 'critique of the quantitative' overlaps with the 'critique of mainstream/malestream' and thus '[t]o be a feminist social scientist one must have a certain allegiance to the qualitative paradigm' (Oakley, 1998: 708). This, Oakley argued, led to a 'paradigm war' with male researchers being associated with quantitative methods of data collection and women researchers with qualitative methods (especially the in-depth interview). But Oakley was not the first to point this out, nor was she the first feminist to make use of other methods (for discussion and examples see Reinharz, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Kelly et al., 1994; Letherby and Zdrokowski, 1995; Letherby, 2003; Miner-Robino et al., 2011). Furthermore, Jennifer Platt's (2007) analysis of British authorship in sociology journals highlights that whilst women have always employed qualitative methods in a majority of their empirical articles, so too have men. Conversely, Christina Hughes and Rachel Cohen's (2010) internationally oriented analysis focusing on articles published in 19 gender, women's studies, feminist and other women-oriented journals in 2007 indicated a relatively strong quantitative presence with 51% using quantitative methods, either alone or in combination with qualitative methods, and 43% relying solely on quantitative methods. However, Hughes and Cohen (2010) add that a distinction needs to be made between the broader terrain of journals which focus on women's issues including psychology, economics, health studies and geography and explicitly feminism journals with use of quantitative methods much more likely to be reported in the former rather than the latter.

Although, historically, feminists were particularly critical of the survey method, it was its epistemological appropriation by those who attempted a 'scientific', 'value-free' approach and the tendency to concentrate on male concerns that was the issue (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1993; and see preceding discussion). Indeed, as noted earlier, much of the work challenging traditional philosophical approaches was equally gender blinkered. Yet, the use or not of quantitative methods by feminists and other gender sensitive researchers seems to be discipline related, and further reflection is needed (Hughes and Cohen 2010). This is especially important for most, if not all, social researchers who now agree that that appropriate methods should be chosen to suit research programmes, rather than research programmes being chosen to 'fit' favourite techniques (for example, Kelly et al., 1994; Oakley, 2004; Scott, 2010; Pettinger et al., 2018). Oakley (2004: 191) suggests that 'the most important criteria for choosing a particular research method is not its relationship to academic arguments about methods, but its fit with the question being asked in the research'. Reviewing three feminist research texts, Rosario Undurraga (2010) argues that limited use of methods risks limiting the questions being asked:

> ... if the choice of method depends on the research questions and the trend of feminist works has been to use qualitative research tools, then it would be wise to reflect on the kind of questions feminists are raising. Are there questions that feminists could ask, but are not, that demand quantifiable evidence? ... I suggest we reflect on the kind of research questions we are asking and perhaps more saliently, what we are not asking.
>
> (Undurraga, 2010: 281)

Jacqueline Scott outlines the value of a mixed-method approach:

> Qualitative research is important for understanding people's experiences of discrimination in particular settings and also for probing women's own interpretations and understanding of their situations. Qualitative research is also invaluable for exploring the policy contexts that influence the opportunities and constraints that shape people's lives. Thus qualitative research can help inform the way that quantitative researchers (some of whom are feminists) interpret what they write. ...
>
> One strength of quantitative research is its ability to identify the patterns and processes by which gender inequalities are passed on or modified from one generation to the next. Increasingly, such analysis takes seriously the way that gender intersects with other influences on (dis)advantage, including race and age.
>
> (Scott, 2010: 234–35)

The rise in the use of the internet means that researchers need to (re)view the internet, and the associated network capital available for some (Urry, 2007), as an area where gendered and other inequalities are evident. There is also the opportunity and responsibility to conduct gender-sensitive research online (Kozinets, 2009; Davidson and Letherby, 2014, 2019). Work here includes consideration of the differential use of the internet and social media (Zobl and Drüeke, 2014; Davidson and Letherby, 2014, 2019) and enables primary data (collected for the purposes of a current project) and secondary data (data collected previously or material not originally produced or recorded for research) to be collected from a variety of individuals and groups (Kozinets, 2009). According to Elena Vacchelli and Magali Peyrefitte's discussion of digital storytelling (2018: online), 'sharing and co-producing stories with one another has its roots in feminist activism and allows researchers and practitioners to use women's relationality as a starting point for social transformation rather than as a reason to silence their voices' (Box 4.5).

Recognition that the research process is an emotional and embodied experience for all (see below) has also encouraged the use of performative methods drawing on creative and art-based approaches – including fictional prose, poetry, photography, drama and art work – to collect and to present data (see, for examples, Frank, 2000; Inckle, 2010; Douglas and Carless, 2013, Letherby and Davidson, 2015; Leavy, 2017; Pettinger et al., 2018; Vacchelli and Peyrefitte, 2018). It is a truism that creativity is central to arts research. But creative approaches are now used by social science researchers in a range of ways: to gather data; as a way of engaging with and reflecting on relationships with participants and to share findings and influence policy, practice and theory as the research leads to new ways of knowing.. This kind of method/ological activity encourages work across cultures, and between and beyond academic disciplines, and has political and epistemological significance. Thus:

> The intersection of arts and political activism are two fields defined by a shared focus of creating engagement that shifts boundaries, changes relationships and creates new paradigms. Both activist and artist work

in the challenges of the unknown and the unpredictable, never truly able to determine the outcome and forever questioning if there is more to be done. This experimentation also forms the essence of what can be the engine of success and motivation towards true change whether we are immersed in a specific social cause or a global peace movement, composing an original score, sharing a story by means of carving a sculpture, or using performance to highlight a critical message (Blum, 2017).

Box 4.5 – Words, numbers and more

- Despite a belief that feminist researchers favour qualitative methods, it appears that most social science researchers – both male and female – do;

- Although qualitative methods are more commonly used by male and female researchers in Britain, internationally there appears to be about equal use of quantitative and qualitative methods. There are also disciplinary differences;

- Research methods need to be chosen for their 'fit' to the topic under research and new developments, such as use of the Internet, necessitate new methods;

- Gender-sensitive researchers have embraced creative ways to collect and present data.

Gender-sensitive researchers

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever, within which gender is a cross-cutting issue. Three objectives underpin the strategy on gender equality:

- Fostering gender balance in research teams, in order to close the gaps in the participation of women;

- Ensuring gender balance in decision making, in order to reach the target of 40% of the under-represented sex (sic) in panels and groups and of 50% in advisory groups;

- Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation (R&I) content, helps improve the scientific quality and societal relevance of the produced knowledge, technology and/or innovation; ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/promoting-gender-equality-research-and-innovation.

Historically, male researchers were interested in undertaking research in areas where men predominated. When women entered these areas as researchers, they argued that they were able to obtain rich data because of their perceived 'invisibility'. As Carol A. B. Warren (1988: 18) notes, women in organisations have traditionally been employed as filing clerks, secretaries and in other service jobs and this advantaged her as a researcher in a court of law, as her presence drew 'hardly a glance from the males engaged on "more important" business'. Alternatively, when Joel Richman (1994) undertook research in gynaecology departments, he was presumed to be a medical

man, like the other men he came into contact with. Although such stereotypical misunderstandings are (arguably) less likely now, expectations of researchers and gender identity (in combination with other characteristics) is still significant within research relationships. Sofia Villenas (2010) describes her experience as an ethnographer in a rural North Carolina Latino community. She writes of finding herself 'co-opted' by the dominant English-speaking community to legitimate their discourse of Latino family education and child-rearing practices as 'problematic'. This led her to urge researchers to acknowledge and draw on their own histories of complicity and marginalization. Nthanbiseng Violet Moraka, in her study of women directors in South African mining companies (2019), reflects on how all aspects of her identity and experience of being a black South African woman from a 'poor' background, now an academic and married with children, affected not only her approach to her project but also her interactions with the women and men she interviewed.

Issues of emotional involvement, management and work are also an aspect of research relationships. 'Emotion work' includes regulating and managing the feelings of others and oneself in order to conform to dominant expectations in a given situation (Frith and Kitzinger 1998, drawing on Hochschild [1983] 2012). The historical gendered division of labour allots the role of caregiver to women, which means that women are primarily responsible for 'working with emotions' (James, 1989; Gray, 2010; Moraka, 2019). Thus, women are held responsible for the emotional needs of others and men are not. This is relevant for male and female fieldworkers, and women have traditionally been portrayed as 'more accessible and less threatening than men' which, coupled with their supposedly 'superior' communicative abilities, has been thought to make the interactions of fieldwork easier (Warren, 1988: 45). Not only sexist, this denies the hard work that women *and* men – both as researchers and as respondents – do in the field. However, Helen Sampson et al. (2008) suggest that researcher risk is still stereotypically gendered:

> … whilst there are male researchers who conduct research with concern for participant and researcher relationships, the evidence … suggests that it is female researchers who suffer greater exposure to emotional risk as the result of their attachment to feminist methods. Male researchers' preoccupations appear to be more related to physical risk and their concerns revolve around physical violence and fear of such violence, of putting their 'bodies on the line' when doing research.
>
> (Sampson et al., 2008: 929)

Clearly, displays of emotion can be difficult and even dangerous for both researchers and the researched. Researchers have written about visible displays of sorrow, joy and anger within fieldwork and about the need for researchers to sometimes hide their emotions, not least in response to sexist, racist and other prejudicial comments and behaviour (for example, Ramsay, 1996; Sampson et al., 2008; Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Carroll, 2013). Reflecting on the place of emotion in the research process, Stanley and Wise (2006: 3.4) distinguish between the necessary 'analytical dimensions of emotion' and 'wallowing or describing emotion for the sake of moral credentialism'. But emotion *is* integral to (feminist) methodological processes not least because

emotion is part of everyone's life, and emotional expression within the research process is often data in itself (e.g. Hochschild, [1983] 2012); Lee-Treweek and Lingokle, 2000; Gray, 2008, Jewkes, 2011).

In addition to emotional risk within research physical, intellectual and/or professional danger may also be of concern (Lee-Treweek and Lingokle, 2000; Letherby and Stenhouse, 2013). Despite increasing worries about research ethics and protecting respondents from emotional or physical risk (Truman, 2003) researcher risk has, until recently, attracted less attention. Furthermore, any approach that challenges a traditional masculine model may lead to criticism from the mainstream (Sparkes, 2002; Letherby, 2003; and for such a critique see Hammersley, 2018) (Box 4.6).

Box 4.6 – Summary of gender-sensitive researchers

- A researcher's identity as male or female and other social and physical signifiers can have an impact on relationships in the field and thus on the data collected;

- Emotion and emotion work is integral to research relationships and can entail risk for the researcher and the researched;

- Physical and reputation risks are also possible when undertaking research.

Epistemological concerns

It has become commonplace for researchers to acknowledge the significance of their personhood, locate themselves within the research process and produce 'first person' accounts. There is also recognition among social scientists of the need to consider how the researcher as author is positioned in relation to the research process, not least with reference to the choice and design of the fieldwork, the analysis, editorship and the presentation of knowledge (Iles, 1992; Letherby, 2003; Inckle, 2010; Brennan and Letherby, 2017). Research activities tell us things about ourselves as researches as well as things about those we are researching (Steier 1991). As Michael Brennan and I (Brennan and Letherby, 2017) have argued:

> When academics write about themselves but acknowledge the significance of others in the story their work could be labelled **auto**/biography … When writing about others but recognising the subjectivity of the biographer auto/**biography** is more appropriate.

> (Brennan and Letherby, 2017: 158)

Thus, auto/biographical scholarly writing acknowledges, and highlights, the complex relationship between self and other (Stanley, 1993; Morgan, 1998; Sparkes, 2002; Letherby, 2014; Brennan and Letherby, 2017). There are clear epistemological (and political) implications here in the challenge to 'malestream' assumptions of objectivity and value neutrality which serves both as a corrective to much traditional research (by which researchers 'write themselves out' of the knowledge they produce). Not surprisingly then, many feminist and gender-sensitive researchers, along with others – for

example, researchers in the field of critical race studies and in death studies – advocate and utilise auto/biographical approaches to research (Vargas, 2000; Brennan and Letherby, 2017).

In my own work I have tried to work towards a position that challenges traditional claims to objectivity and recognises both the personhood of the researcher and the complexity of the researcher/respondent relationship and yet allows for useful things to be said. Accepting, along with others, that subjectivity and bias is inevitable (see Letherby et al., 2013 for details) I have argued '… it is better to understand the complexities within research rather than to pretend that they can be controlled, and biased sources can themselves result in useful data' (Letherby, 2003: 71). However, and ironically, I add that an acknowledgement of subjectivity and the associated 'supersensitivity' to the 'relevance of the personhood of the researcher could feasibly lead to the conclusion that our work is more objective, in that our work, if not value-free, is value-explicit' (Letherby, 2003: 71).

Although, as researchers, we are not intellectually superior to our respondents (Stanley and Wise, 1993, 2006), we do have privileges (for example, discipline training, research resources and access to multiple accounts) and must admit the implications of these. I agree that we all 'observe, categorize, analyse, reach conclusions' and thus that 'people theorize their own experience … and so researchers of the social are faced with an already "first order" theorized material social reality' (Stanley, 1990: 208, and see Brannen, 2013). But researchers have the privilege of 'second order theorising', which involves 'interpretation', not just 'description' of respondents' which leads us to make strong knowledge claims and argue that their research is 'broader', 'fuller' than what has gone before. So, I am arguing that my research is in some ways 'superior' and stands as a successor to what has gone before. I do not believe that I am in a position to generate the 'true story' of any experience I research, but I argue that 'my story' can stand in opposition to, and as a criticism of, 'other stories' (both feminist and non-feminist, academic and lay).

As noted above. the personhood of the researcher is relevant to theoretical analysis just as it is to research design and fieldwork and as Holland and Ramazanoglu argue, there is 'no technique of analysis or methodological logic that can neutralise the social nature of interpretation' (cited by Morley 1996: 142). What is distinctive about feminist, and other critical research approaches, is that it admits this. So, for feminist methodologists. 'conscious subjectivity' replaces the 'value-free objective' of traditional research (Duelli Klein cited by Wilkinson 1986: 14; Letherby, 2002, 2003, 2013a).

In 1986, Barbara Katz Rothman, writing about issues of involvement, went so far as to suggest that there has been a fundamental shift in methodological thinking where an 'ethic of involvement has replaced an ethic of objectivity'. From this perspective, writing from personal experience rather than from a position of 'detached objectivity' gives the writer 'credentials' (Rothman, 1986). However, although within the research process connections are made between respondents and researchers and experience is sometimes the motivation for research, it is not always possible or desirable to research issues close to us (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996; Fawcett and Hearn, 2004). Furthermore, identification should not be seen as a prerequisite to 'good' research and it is inaccurate to assume that *all* research is grounded in the autobiography of researchers. In addition, researchers do not always identify with respondents and vice versa, even when they share an experience and/or identity (Letherby and

Zdrodowski, 1995). Thus, researchers do not have to draw on their own life experiences to do *good* work, but our life experiences/identity are present at some level in all that we do and that it is important to acknowledge this (Cotterill and Letherby, 1993; Fine, 1994; Letherby, 2003, 2014; Rothman, 2007; Brennan and Letherby, 2017). Keeping this in mind, I feel more comfortable with Rothman's later reflections on the production of 'accountable' knowledge (see also Letherby, 2003, 2013a):

> Whether the stories we use are our own, or those of our informants, or those we cull from tables of statistically organized data, we remain storytellers, narrators, making sense of the world as best we can. … We owe something … to our readers and to the larger community to which we offer our work. Among the many things we owe them, is an honesty about ourselves: who we are as characters in our own stories and as actors in our own research.
>
> (Rothman, 2007: unpaginated)

Many researchers begin their research with experience of what they are studying (for example, see Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996; Rothman, 2007; Letherby, 2013a; Guest, 2016; Twinley, 2016) and/or have views on what they might find as much as respondents do. The researcher/respondent relationship itself impacts on the research process and product. As researchers, we become the biographers of our respondents whilst recognizing that the autobiographies that respondents share with us are influenced by the research relationship. Respondents have their own views of what researchers might like to hear. Moreover, we draw on our own experiences to help us understand those of our respondents (Cotterill and Letherby, 1993; Robinson et al., 2007). Additionally, all experience is context specific, and this affects our engagement with, and perception of, our own and others' experience, all of which highlights the need for researchers to be explicit about the significance of their personal as well as intellectual (Stanley, 1993) autobiography to the 'academic labour process' (Stanley, 1993: 45). Theorised subjectivity acknowledges that research is an auto/biographical practice in that the relationship between self and other within research is significant and goes further because the subjective practice and privilege of the researcher(s) is always under scrutiny (Letherby, 2003, 2013a).

Involvement, detachment and associated power differentials are significant through choice of topic and through fieldwork relationships to the representation of findings. Yet, it is important not to over-pacify respondents by always defining them as vulnerable; power dynamics in the researcher/respondent relationship often shift and change (Cotterill, 1992; Letherby, 2003, 2013a; Pettinger et al., 2018) (Box 4.7).

Box 4.7 – Reflecting on knowledge production

- My argument for 'theorised subjectivity' recognises the inevitability and the value (both positive and negative) of the subjective within the research process;
- Researcher privilege, not least in terms of access to resources, enables second order theorizing on data which can result in fuller, broader, more detailed accounts and understandings of female and male experience;

- Power is an important part of the research process, but it is simplistic to assume that researchers are always more powerful than the individuals being researched;

- Reflection on the relationship between the self and other should be central to research.

Influence and impact

From reading this chapter and others in this volume it is clear that gender-sensitive researchers are concerned to undertake research *for* rather than research *about* women and men, girls and boys, femininity and masculinity. Methodology is significant here. Specifically, with reference to feminist approaches:

> Feminist methodology is at the heart of the feminist project of changing the world because it is the focal point for bringing together theory, practical research methods and the production of knowledge.
>
> (Wise and Stanley, 2008: 221)

There has always been some opposition to this, exemplified by Martyn Hammersley and Roger Gomm's (1997) argument that taking a political approach to research results in bias and leads to faulty knowledge. They assert that research should be motivated by the wish to produce the 'truth' and that 'knowledge production' must be systematically forefronted in the collection, analysis and presentation of evidence. A goal recently reiterated by Hammersley in 2018. Not surprisingly because of their open political commitment, feminists and others similarly politically motivated are accused of not producing valid and authoritative knowledge. In response I return to my view that within research subjectivity is inevitable and that reflection on the significance of this adds to the accountability of the research product.

Sometimes the methodology used can itself enable a positive impact. Julia Downes et al. (2014) undertook interviews with women and girls and men and boys following their participation in workshops in which participants produced visual autobiographies. They conclude by arguing for the value of this approach, not least as a research method, but in terms of impact and emphasis:

> As to the importance of cultural activities for men and more particularly women, in health terms … we would suggest that community-based cultural activities can provide for very productive kinds of self-positioning. More broadly, they are especially good at enabling the articulation and development of cultural, social and symbolic resources because they are more fluid and wide-ranging than the practices of conventional research or, indeed, much of everyday social life.
>
> (Downes et al., 2014: 5.2)

In 2004, the African Gender Institute ran a project entitled Mapping Sexualities, one of the aims of which was to develop a research methodology suited to carrying out

in-depth case studies of the dynamics of gender and contemporary sexual cultures in Ghana, South Africa and Uganda. Thus, the concern here was to discover what methods and methodological approaches could best lead to an impact in an area that is considered by many to be taboo (Bennet and Pereira, 2013).

In recent years others have entered the debate and a growing number of researchers across the social sciences, humanities, arts and physical sciences have begun to argue for approaches that include and encourage greater involvement of the researched in the research process, from the design stage through to the presentation of the data (Letherby and Bywaters, 2007; Pettinger et al., 2018; Vacchelli and Peyrefitte, 2018). Furthermore, the debate about whether or not research and researchers should have political aims extends beyond the academy with funders, local and national governments, and research assessors all calling for 'evidence based research' and for evidence of the useful 'impact' of research (see Letherby, 2013b for more detail). So 'relevance' and 'usefulness' are increasingly important in defining what research should be done, what knowledge should be produced and how said knowledge will be assessed.

This is encouraging for those who argue for research praxis (practice informed by research and theory). However, the full-scale adoption of the 'making research count' agenda is not unproblematic for, as Sandra Nutley (2003: 12) argues, researchers who want their work to be useful must pay attention to the gap between academic and policy or practice worlds that have 'different priorities, use different languages, operate to different time scales and are subjected to very different reward systems'. A related concern is that if we only do research that focuses on funders and governments' priorities, just whose interests are being served? (Locock and Boaz, 2004; Letherby and Bywaters, 2007; Back 2015). Additionally, continuing having to prove that research is making an impact generates another layer of research and debate concerned with how to best improve research impact and, ironically, this takes time away from potentially impactful research.

In thinking back to the beginnings of my academic career, it makes me smile to remember how, when starting my doctoral research, I was excited about what a difference I could make. My doctoral research was invaluable to me. It taught me a lot about the whole process of research, it fuelled my fascination in methodological and epistemological debate, it enabled me to say some useful (I hope) things about childlessness, parenthood and identity, and it gave me the resources to work in an environment I continue to find rewarding and challenging. What my PhD did not do was have the impact I hoped it would. I spoke about my work at conferences and wrote some articles and chapters and a few small pieces for non-academic audiences, and I am gratified that I am still sometimes asked to speak, write, and examine on the topic. I could have done more, but at that time, I did not have the skills or the support to do so. More recently, with colleagues from Coventry University from a series of projects which explored the experience of teenage pregnancy and young parenthood, *impact* included the development and delivery (by the research team) of training for health and social care professionals (Letherby et al., 2004). Similarly, with colleagues from the University of Plymouth, research on pregnant women living with long-term conditions (Letherby and Stenhouse, 2013) and on engagement with homeless people (Pettinger et al., 2018) has led to local initiatives.

In comparing these areas of work, I know that the methodological lessons I learnt as a postgraduate influenced the approach in further work. Also relevant in the later projects was the political motivation of (almost) all of our respondents and of the commissioners of our research and their keenness to work with us to make things better (Box 4.8).

Box 4.8 – Summary

- Although feminists and other gender-sensitive researchers have always been concerned for their research to have impact in the 'real world', recently this approach has been more broadly adopted.

Conclusion

Discussion of feminist methodology is relevant to any debate about gender-sensitive research. Furthermore, this discussion is part of a broader debate focusing on the relationship between knowing and doing/product and process within the social sciences and humanities. Feminist methodological practice has influenced the mainstream, not least in relation to the place and significance of politics, power and emotion within research and with reference to the relationship between the research process and the research product. The feminist critique of the mainstream has, in turn, led to critique of the feminist approach and debate amongst feminists themselves. Researching and writing in a different and challenging way has attracted some criticism. But rather than stifle feminist and gender-sensitive researchers' collaboration across disciplines and cultures, the sharing and further development of new methods and approaches has taken place. The current mainstream focus on impact is an example of how earlier concerns of gender-sensitive researchers have been taken up more broadly. Debate and discussion amongst feminists and other critically focused researchers should and will continue. Such critique encourages new developments and new debate and therefore more accountable practices that likely will more generally influence research practice and process.

Further reading

S. N. Hesse-Biber (ed.) (2011) *Handbook of Feminist Research*. 2nd edn. California: Sage. An edited text that presents a multidisciplinary approach to feminist research and ends with a checklist of things to consider when undertaking research.

P. Leavy (ed.) (2017) *Handbook of Arts-Based Research*. New York: Guilford Press. This edited book brings together researchers from a variety of disciplines. The authors reflect on all aspects of the research process from design to publication. Methods considered include poetic inquiry, dance, music, drawing and painting and installation art.

G. Letherby, J. Scott and M. Williams (2013) *Objectivity and Subjectivity in Social Research*. London: Sage. The authors reflect on the history of debates on objectivity and subjectivity and in addition, add their own voices to the debate. The book is written as a 'trialogue' in that we each state our own positions, which is followed by responses from the others. The book as a whole highlights the importance of the process/product relationship (especially Chapters 5 and 7).

H. Ramji (2010) *Researching Gender: Theory, Methods and Analysis.* Buckingham: Open University. This book focuses on issues that arise when researching gender issues. For example, what is the best way to reflect the complexity of gender issues when choosing a research project, how can the dynamic and socially produced aspects of gender be interpreted and how can theory and method influence one another during research?

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what ways does feminist and gender-sensitive research differ from other research? Is it better?

2. Reflect on how your own gender – and other aspects of your identity – might be significant within the following projects:

   ■ A quantitative cross-cultural study of family life in the UK, Germany and Pakistan.

   ■ A study of male prisoners on day release to a community gardening scheme where the data is collected face-to-face via in-depth interview.

   ■ An online study, collecting stories and images from women born in the 1940s and 1950s.

3. Find a research article, from any discipline, that reports on a creative, arts-based method. Were the researchers sensitive to gender throughout the research process?

4. Write a 1500-word research proposal on a topic of your choosing. Include brief details on the issue, the choice of method(s) and why, the intended respondent group, envisaged dilemmas whilst in the field and end plans, including the presentation of findings. Throughout, reflect on the significance of gender to the project and on the auto/biographical aspects of the work.

5 GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Manuela Lavinas Picq
and Momin Rahman

Introduction

This chapter approaches sexuality as a social issue. Conceptualizing sexuality as social rather than 'natural' has been central to feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex or queer social movement (LGBTIQ) challenges to sexual oppression. The LGBTIQ acronym is now the common policy language, expanded from LGBT and increasingly used interchangeably with SOGIE, the acronym for sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. We begin with the historical context of modernity and its impact on the organization, regulation and understanding of sexuality in the West. Here, we make the core argument that gender categories are the primary framework for the regulation of sexualities. In the next two sections, we discuss how feminist and LGBTIQ critiques of sexuality developed and coalesced around *social constructionist* analyses. We summarize key aspects of these analyses and demonstrate the overriding importance of a social constructionist analysis as the foundation for critically engaging with the issue of sexuality. The next section discusses the more recent incorporation of ethnicity into these analyses, focused on the key concepts of intersectionality and postcolonialism which have corrected the absence of racialized perspectives in initial critiques of sexuality from feminism and LGBTIQ studies. In conclusion, we reiterate the central concepts of social constructionism and their importance in understanding sexuality, notably from indigenous perspectives.

The chapter therefore takes the reader beyond common sense understandings and assumptions. For example, in contemporary times, it may seem that sexuality is celebrated in popular culture such as music videos and songs, and commercial products such as advertising. Although this is more explicit in Western countries where sexual rights seem more advanced, the public celebration of sexuality is not necessarily an indication of 'progress'. While many companies link individual sexual attractiveness to their products when advertising, this overwhelmingly reinforces traditional values of gender and related hierarchies of sexual and racial identities, as well as naturalist understandings of sexual identity and behaviour (Gill, 2007; and Holliday in this volume). Moreover, political discussions of sexual rights remain fraught on a range of issues internationally, from battles over school sex education curricula, mainstreaming sexual harassment and violence policies, and enshrining or expanding LGBTIQ rights, all of which provoke reaction from conservative groups that want to maintain a social order of heterosexuality that stigmatizes sexual diversity and women's sexuality. Sexualities are extremely *political*, and the main reason for this is based on contemporary versions of sexuality. These derive from a particular *historical* and *Western* tradition that is based on oppressive gender hierarchies and associated sexual behaviours, and binary categories of male/female and hetero/homo. We should not assume,

therefore, that sexualities have always existed in the ways they do now, either as individual identities or desires, or as a reflection of some eternal natural order based on biological function.

For example, many indigenous languages around the world refer to multiple genders and sexualities. In Tikuna, an isolated language in Amazonia, with no common ancestry or demonstrable genealogy with any other language, *kaigüwecü* is the word that describes a man who has sex with another man and *ngüe tügümaêgüé* that for a woman who has sex with another woman (Picq and Tikuna, 2019). For the Diné or Navajo people in the contemporary south-western United States, *nádleehí* means 'the changing one', encompassing individuals who 'cross' traditional gender expectations, including sexual behaviours (Roscoe, 1998), whereas Zapotecas in Juchitán, Mexico, have a third gender called *muxes* for people who are neither men nor women (Mirandé, 2017). These linguistic registries invoke worlds that have long recognized alternative genders and sexualities that are untranslatable in the limited framework of modern binaries of hetero/homosexuality. These diverse sexualities were largely repressed by colonialization in each region by various European states that took over control for economic reasons but also imposed cultural regulation, including their understandings of heterosexual hierarchies and binaries (Picq, 2019). Thus, native sexualities were gradually lost through colonial regulation that supplanted them with the Western hetero/homosexual binary associated with colonial religious codes (Morgensen, 2011).

These indigenous examples show the complicated historical context for sexuality, linked with Western colonial capitalism, and associated cultural hierarchies that positioned Western civilizations as 'modern' and superior and, crucially, imposed ideas about 'normal' gender identities (Massad, 2008; Rahman, 2014). At the very least, this indicates that sexuality is not simply a 'natural' or eternal feature of human existence but is subject to multiple social forces of regulation, control and, often, oppression. This means that critical analyses of sexuality are both necessary and difficult to practice. They are necessary if we are to understand the ways in which an apparently *natural* aspect of our identities and behaviour is shaped by *social* forces and thus often reflects and intersects with social hierarchies of power and oppression, such as gender and ethnicity, as well as dominant social structures such as class and consumerism. Such critical understandings can be difficult to deploy in public culture, however, because they require a thorough re-orientation of our ways of thinking, away from the common sense experience of sex as a private and 'natural' activity, disputing taken-for-granted cultural moralities and, crucially, questioning the assumed normality of sex as a natural biological part of our human existence.

Indeed, sexuality is not only, or perhaps even mostly, about sex. The common idea that sex is at the biological and/or psychological core or essence of humanity has been criticized, especially by feminists, as part of the ideological regulation of sexuality. In this sense, when we are conceptualizing sexuality, we are taking an anti-naturalist or anti-essentialist perspective on human behaviour, identities and social organization and regulation. 'Essentialism' is a concept that appears regularly in research and theory on sexuality precisely because it has been the focus of sustained criticism. Ideas of biological sexual essence are also a primary dimension of the commonsense explanations of 'natural' gender divisions, and so we must remember that gender is the key intersecting structure for the understanding and organization of sexuality. Thus,

criticisms of essentialism in sexuality have developed in tandem with criticisms of gender as a natural or essential human division.

The ideas covered below do not, therefore, focus on sexual acts and behaviours as their starting point but, rather, the social significance of sexual identities, the hierarchies and meanings systems attached to them, often through an intersection with social hierarchies of gender and ethnicities, and the ways in which they are all socially regulated, both by the state and broader cultural norms. In gender and women's studies, feminist and queer analyses have mainstreamed the idea that we have to explore the social significance of sex, in terms of sexual identities, sexual stigmas, and how individual sexual acts occur in socio-historical cultural contexts.

Modernity and the production of regulatory sexual knowledge in the West

Modernity refers to the era of Western colonialism beginning in the sixteenth century and the related industrialization of the West through capitalism from the eighteenth century, as well as the development of natural science that developed evidence-based methods and theories during this era. These interrelated transformations were significant in their impacts on gender and sexuality along three main dimensions: a new organization of gender divisions tied to capitalism; the emergence of scientific explanations of sexuality, often referred to as sexology, that created 'normal' and 'deviant' categorization of sexualities; the association of sexual deviance with both working-class populations in the West and colonized ethnic populations globally.

Prior to industrialization in the West, sexuality was understood through Christian religious naturalism that conceptualized it as a natural biological force in all humans that needed control through the exercise of moral spiritual character. Sexuality was thus sinful lust, underwritten by biology but provoked by a lack of morality. Classic historical studies have shown that in most agricultural societies, there were differences in gendered labour, with women taking care of food preparation and men labouring in the fields (Clark, 1968; Laslett and Wall, 1972), although women and men also shared tasks when needed, including the raising of children. Industrialization brought a shift to large-scale factories and workplaces *outside* the home and thus drew men away from household production to waged labour in new urban areas. Although women also initially worked in lighter physical industries such as textiles, they were gradually excluded from paid wage labour on industrial sites, through a mix of legislation and action by trade unions representing working-class men (Hartmann, [1976] 1979; Weeks, 2017). This created a more rigid division of gender within these societies based on the wage-labour/domestic binary that separated out women's work and men's work. At the same time, the capital-owning middle classes, who owned factories and controlled trade, became more socially powerful, replacing the traditional land-owning aristocracies in industrializing Western societies. This emergent middle class came to value domesticity because families in which the wife did not need the income from paid employment were seen to have significant wealth (Hall, 1992). Thus emerged a new 'domestic ideology' of a home-based femininity associated with a passive female sexuality, only to be stimulated by the male's more 'naturally' aggressive and dominant sexuality, and only within marriage (Hall, 1992; Weeks, 2017). The

emergence of modern capitalism thus had a direct impact on the organization and understanding of gender identities and associated sexual behaviours.

Moreover, the emergence of the scientific study of sexuality – sexology – supported this developing ideology of middle-class gender and sexual division. There are a vast number of sexological studies from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, based on various combinations of legal, medical and proto-psychological case studies. Particularly influential were Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* ([1886] 1965), Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* ([1897] 1936), and Freud's essays on sexuality ([1905, 1925] 1995), which all assumed a natural heterosexuality built on female passivity and male sexual dominance. These studies combined with existing Christian religious traditions to assert a new version of a respectable *passive* and spiritual female sexuality in the early part of modernity. The need to assert middle-class gender norms produced, therefore, more legal, moral and social emphasis on a rigid, marital path for sexual activity, justified by the proto-scientific 'medical model' of sexuality (Weeks, 2017) that characterized women as 'naturally' sexually passive and men as 'naturally' sexually dominant and aggressive. For example, there were widespread moral purity campaigns focused on sex work in Europe and North America. These were often started by evangelical Christian men, but middle-class women (who now had leisure time in the absence of paid work) became involved over the course of the nineteenth century. These campaigns, along with a focus on women's suffrage, are often characterized as the first wave of feminism and many reformers focused on rescuing working-class women from their 'immoral' lives of prostitution but also criticized the double standard of sexual morality that accepted male sexual needs as naturally inevitable while demanding that women remain chaste (Rahman and Jackson, 2010).

These campaigns were partly the result of the mass urbanization in the industrial era that caused overcrowded housing, work and leisure spaces for the working classes, creating anxieties about their sexual morals and behaviours in such close living quarters. This resulted in new laws, moral panics, and social campaigns, all designed to control sexual temptations for a working class that was seen as less intellectually able to exert self-control over lustful or perverse temptations (Weeks, 2017). As well as sex work, there was also an increased focus on homosexuality, with a particular concern about potentially 'deviant' homo-erotic outbursts of male lust. The range of new laws and policing campaigns that criminalized women sex workers were also applied to homosexual activity (Greenberg, 1988). The dominant religious influence in Christian Europe from ancient times uniformly disapproved of homosexuality, which was part of a rejection of all sexual acts that were not reproductive.

Crucially, laws and culture did not seem to equate homosexuality with specific people. What changes during the industrial nineteenth century is that existing anti-sodomy or depravity laws became the basis for additional regulations, such as the Criminal Law amendment in England that broadened the scope of homosexual acts, together with a much more consistent enforcement (Weeks, 2017). Furthermore, this regulation began to adopt the conceptualization of a 'deviant' homosexual *type of person* that was emerging from sexological studies, displacing the idea of 'deviant' or 'immoral' sexual acts as a potential within all (Bristow, 1997).

The emerging sexological science of bio-psychological sexual normality and deviance also became a dominant way of explaining sexuality around the world (Chiang, 2010).

Laws and religious values from the West were imposed directly on colonized countries in the case of the British, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese Empires (Greenberg 1988; Human Rights Watch, 2013; Kirby, 2013), affecting both cultural and statutory regulation in the Americas and vast areas of Asia and Africa. Heterosexuality was a central component of these colonial processes. In Brazil, the imperial Portuguese state created the *Directory of Indians* that registered indigenous individuals in forms that regulated intimacy and domesticity, echoing the sexological science developed in the West. Bureaucratic interventions centered on compulsory heterosexuality, decrying the 'incivility' of indigenous homes where 'several families (...) live as beasts not following the laws of honesty (…) due to the diversity of the sexes' (Fernandes and Arisi, 2017: 32). Indigenous households were subject to the monogamous 'laws of honesty' and heterosexualization became central in the process of 'civilization'. Rifkin (2011: 9) refers to a similar process in Native North America as 'heterohomemaking'. The framing of native sexualities as 'deviant' forced indigenous peoples to translate themselves in terms consistent with the jurisdiction of Western states and made it almost impossible to maintain diverse genders and sexualities.

The decriminalization of homosexuality in France with the 1791 Penal Code did not systematically reach the colonies; it resulted in social regulations without social acceptance (Greenberg, 1988). Over the nineteenth century, the criminalization of sodomy spread across colonies, distinguishing 'civilized' bodies from the 'savage' and/ or sexually uncontrolled 'other'. Sodomy laws spread with European empires. Article 377 introduced in the British Empire in 1861, criminalized sexual activities considered 'against the order of nature' (Puri, 2016). Female homoerotic activity was less scrutinized, even when laws technically included lesbianism, largely because the dominant idea of 'passive' women made it almost impossible to imagine homoerotic activity between women (Faderman, 2011). During Brazil's colonial period, for example, virtually no women were charged with sodomy, leading the Portuguese Inquisition to declare in 1646 that sodomy among women was no longer part of its jurisdiction (Vainfas, 1995) (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1 – Sexuality and modernity

■ Cultural norms shifted during the industrial era in the West to reflect new 'ideals' of gender and sexuality, drawing on pre-existing religious ideologies, but adding a new dimension of scientific explanation to justify gender hierarchies and binaries. This is the medical model of sexuality that is both hierarchical and binary, enshrining rigid male/female, hetero/homo separation and the subordination of women and non-heterosexualities.

■ The requirements of dominant economic and cultural gender division provide the basis for modern hierarchies and regulations of sexuality, both in the West and globally, justifying the regulation of non-heterosexual sexualities and women's sexualities.

■ The economic and political dominance of the West exported heterosexual codes of conduct across colonial territories, often displacing local traditions of gender and sexual diversity.

The development of social constructionist feminist thought

Modernity consolidated the bio-psychological medical model of sexuality as a physical act that is fundamentally driven by instinctual reproductive urges but also combined with a similarly natural 'essence' of human psychological identity. Since an 'essence' is a core and eternal quality of an object, sexuality has become commonly understood as a biologically and psychologically *essentialist* aspect of human individuality. Religious essentialism also persisted through modernity, and so we have a legacy of religious morality combined with scientific essentialism as the dominant way of understanding and regulating sexuality. A critique of this model developed during the second wave feminist movements of the late 1960s in Western countries and concurrent early LGBTIQ social movements (dealt with more fully in the following section). In part, feminist and early LGBTIQ studies drew upon the cultural shift in sexology and sociology that was occurring in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

New studies emerged in sexology that began to conceptualize sexuality as potentially socially produced, including the Kinsey studies *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953). The conceptualization of sexuality remained a heterosexual biological drive model effectively wedded to normative psychological development of binary gender, but Kinsey et al. did at least begin to suggest that fluidity in sexual preference was more common than binary gender and sexuality allowed for. Thus, the Kinsey studies began a public discussion of sexuality that started to consider the existence of sexual fluidity through bisexuality, and the distinctiveness of women's sexuality. These tentative explorations were further accelerated by subsequent studies such as those produced by Masters and Johnson in the 1960s, beginning with *Human Sexual Response* in 1966 (Masters and Johnson, 1966). In the 1970s, the feminist Shere Hite produced further reports based on large-scale surveys in the USA that began to identify the lack of sexual satisfaction amongst women and ascribe it to the dominant cultural invisibility of sexual knowledge of female anatomy and sexual pleasure, rather than some psychological flaw or natural passivity in women. Thus, although mid-century sexology was still based on physiological drive models allied to an associated psychology, these studies did bring sexuality into public discussion in a more positive way, particularly in their discussions of the potential fluidity or variety of sexual orientations and their discussions of women's sexuality as an independent physiological phenomenon, not necessarily dependent on male stimulation. A significant early move beyond the drive models was made by John Gagnon and William Simon's study *Sexual Conduct* (1973), anchored in a sociological symbolic interactionist perspective that introduced the concept of sexual scripts as a way to understand how social context determined appropriate sexual behaviour, over and above biological drives. This had some early influence on gay studies (Plummer, 1975) and continues to have impact on some contemporary feminist theorizations, such as those of Jackson and Scott (2010).

Feminist theorists contributed significantly to re-orienting sexuality as a social concept, through a combination of self-organized women's groups where discussions of sexuality, political actions such as campaigns for shelters to host women victims and survivors of domestic violence, and engagement with dominant academic and particularly scientific ideas took place. This led to an analytical focus on the ways in

which essentialism was oppressive to women and, moreover, that this oppression was not a reflection of a natural order of gender and sexuality but, rather, the result of the *social* organization and representation of gender and sexual hierarchies in particular historical and social contexts or constructions. Hence, this vast range of analysis is often broadly referred to as social constructionism.

There are four key elements in social constructionism: a feminist critique of heterosexuality as a social institution rather than a 'natural' formation; the identification of sexuality as a central technique of control within this institution; identifying negative experiences of sexuality such as sexual violence and homophobia as the result of these social hierarchies of power; and the emergence of an analytical consensus contesting identity categories and their associated sexual desires as 'natural'. Crucially, we must remember that these were not initially academic movements but ground-up social movements that created public debates and related analytical ideas, often in conjunction with emerging individuals and groups in universities. We do not have space to rehearse the history of second wave feminism and gay liberation (see Weeks, 2016; Stryker, 2017; Stulberg, 2018; Charles, this volume) but there are numerous accounts that demonstrate the specificities of these political developments in different Western and non-Western countries, and their interconnections with the emerging counter-cultural, anti-war, civil rights and new left politics of the time, some of which proposed a 'freeing' of sexual morality from cultural norms (Rahman and Jackson, 2010; Basu, 2017).

In second wave movements, various strands of liberal and socialist feminism from the nineteenth-century first wave reappeared, with the former focusing on legislative changes that would increase women's educational and employment opportunities, and the latter joining the resurgence of Marxist criticisms of the entire social system in the West. What was new in the 1960s was the development of a *radical* feminism that often supported the political tactics of liberal equal rights feminism but produced a distinct critique of the social system focused on the concept of *patriarchy* rather than class as the key explanation of women's subordination The concept of patriarchy denotes a total social system of male privilege combining the economy, culture and the state, and providing the structured context in which individual identities and behaviours are developed (Walby, 2011).

Patriarchy became a widespread term during the 1970s across all feminist movements and sexuality took a much more central role in radical feminism because it was theorized as a key aspect of patriarchy, identifying the ways in which sexuality was *socially* formed in order to support and reproduce patriarchal structures – for example, in Kate Millett's influential *Sexual Politics* (1971). Catherine MacKinnon's work has been important in stating the case for sexuality as the *central* dynamic around which women's exploitation and oppression is organized (1996: 181). A range of feminist work supported this perspective, notably materialist feminism that analysed domestic relations of production to understand the material economic basis of gender inequalities and sexual exploitation (Delphy, [1984] 2016). This permitted two important theoretical moves. First, sexuality, and particularly sexual exploitation and violence, are understood as central manifestations and a cause of gender inequalities, rather than ultimate consequences of other forms of inequality such as class. For example, Andrea Dworkin's influential analysis of the vast pornography industry in the USA

illustrated the ways in which representations of women's sexual subordination could only be made sense of within – and contributed to – a totalizing system of women's oppression rather than being understood simply as an economic form of exploitation or the inevitable outcome of catering to 'natural' male desires (1981). The second important feature of radical feminist thought is that locating sexuality as part of a social system demands that we understand sexuality as socially constructed rather than biological or natural.

These two points come together in radical feminist critiques of heterosexuality as a social institution of patriarchy. Adrienne Rich's (1993) analysis of 'compulsory heterosexuality' linked gender inequalities in work, violence, families and cultural representations together in an account of male power that coerced women into heterosexuality as 'natural' subordinates. In contemporary research, these critiques of the institutions of patriarchy and heterosexuality are conceptualized using heteronormativity, originally coined by Warner (1993b) but now used by most feminists to denote the political purpose of hetero-genders as oppressive, as well as the pervasive cultural normalization of binary and hierarchical gender and sexual categories. Within this broad critique, there have also been more nuanced feminist theorizations of heterosexuality as a site of contestation for women (Hockey et al., 2007; Jackson and Scott, 2010; Richardson, 2012). For example, Melanie Beres and Panteá Farvid (2010) demonstrate the ways in which young women negotiate the sexual ethics of casual sex with an emphasis on their ability to set limits of sexual expectations and a focus on their pleasure. At the same time, this agency is still occurring under cultural expectations of sexuality as a 'male sexual drive', which means that women are reflexively aware that their engagement in casual sex is also a management of the continued double standard of sexual activity that comes from a male-dominated model, thus negotiating the divide between being seen as 'slutty' or 'pure'. Moreover, one component of heterosexual sexual encounters for women remains managing male pleasure, whether this is in casual sex as in the study above, or longer-term committed relationships (Kelly et al., 2017).

Radical feminism made visible gendered divisions in heterosexual behaviours and conceptualizations of sexual violence. For example, there is now a public recognition that sexual harassment and violence are an inevitable aspect of heterosexuality, most visibly through the global rise of the #MeToo movement, but also in the regulation of the casual sex or 'hook-up' culture in universities across the Western world (Garcia et al., 2012). Many universities in North America have introduced policies to address sexual harassment and violence, acceding to the radical feminist critique that everyday gendered heterosexual behaviours and identities are imbued with gendered divisions of power (see Kelly and C. Jackson, this volume). More specifically, they are recognizing the feminist insights that male-dominated cultural practices reify male authority, gender and sexual segregation and subordination, all contribute to 'rape-prone' campuses (Reeves Sanday, 1996).

Displacing the biological justifications of essentialism, feminist thought has mainstreamed the idea that sexual violence is an inevitable aspect of the way in which unequal gender identities are organized. Indeed, there is now a vast body of research that has derived its overall analytical frameworks from feminist social constructionist thought, regardless of its empirical focus. We now have huge numbers of studies on

sexual behaviours, sexual representations in the media and politics, the formation of sexual identities from childhood until old age, and so on, all pointing to the fact that sexual behaviours are learned 'scripts', anchored by cultural expectations of differences between men and women, heterosexuality and sexual diversity. These studies overwhelmingly frame sexuality as socially produced, both in terms of how laws and culture provide the reference points for individual development, and how these cultures are patriarchal and heteronormative. Moreover, in terms of understanding sexuality as a source of oppression, and particularly gendered violence, these insights have been hugely impactful, becoming mainstreamed in many workplaces, national jurisdictions, and through inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (Walby, 2011) (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2 – Key points on feminist social constructionism

- Social constructionism is anti-essentialist.
- Gender and sexual identities are the result of the social organization of patriarchy into hierarchies and binaries that prioritize male over female and heterosexual over non-heterosexual.
- Patriarchy produces the institutionalization of heteronormativity that subordinates women and non-heterosexualities.
- Sexuality as gendered power is given priority in radical feminist explanations of gender oppression and control, in contrast to liberal, Marxist and socialist feminism. This perspective emphasizes that oppression is the result of social organization and division, not the result of a natural biological order of sexuality.
- Heterosexuality is theorized by feminists as a political institution and site of contestation, rather than a natural form of gendered sexual organization.
- Sexual desires are learned behaviours, not biological mandates.

LGBTIQ and queer theories of sexual identities and hierarchies

The first wave of LGBTIQ liberation movements from the 1970s contributed similar anti-essentialist theoretical analyses to feminism by focusing on the social institutionalization of heteronormativity. LGBTIQ social constructionism shared a historical method with feminism, a focus on structural conditions of modernity, as well as an early emphasis on symbolic interactionist and social labelling perspectives, first developed by Gagnon and Simon (1973). For example, Mary McIntosh's pioneering essay on the 'Homosexual Role' ([1968] 1996) argued that the stigma accorded to homosexuality was social and political, with dominant cultural formations such as religion labelling homosexuality, underpinning legal restrictions, and operating politically to guide the majority into heteronormative gender identities. Weeks's (2017) historical and structural analysis similarly showed the ways in which the identity of homosexuality was the product of new sexological medical models during modernity that

prioritized binary and hierarchical gender categories. Many gay male theorists also argued that the sexual exploitation and violence associated with patriarchal heteronormative masculinity produced a stigma towards gay men because they subverted patriarchal solidarity (Altman, [1971] 1993; Adam, 1998). Furthermore, there were analyses that discussed the structural consequences of capitalist urbanization for the emergence of anonymous and hidden queer sub-cultures in newly enlarged urban towns, providing leisure locations such as bars or private houses in which a collective sense of gay identity could start to form (D'Emilio, 1993; Adam, 1998; Weeks, 2017).

Most influential in LGBTIQ sexuality studies, however, was Michel Foucault's historical analysis of dominant medical, psychological and legal practices and ideologies that aimed to invest normative heterosexuality with social dominance (Foucault, 1981). Foucault focused his analysis on how power operates, arguing that these emerging forms of legitimate knowledge – overlapping explanations that claim credibility and authority – gradually shifted the dominant Western way of understanding sexuality towards an essentialist identification of deviant sexual behaviours with specific types of people. The dominant operation of knowledge reflects power in society, leading to his famous formulation of 'power/knowledge' and, moreover, it is this operation of power as knowledge that *produces* how we understand an object or issue, rather than simply describing a pre-existing fact. Thus, he argues, homosexual acts become attached to a homosexual 'species', a type of person who is inherently homosexual rather than the prior cultural understanding of homosexual acts as a potential in all people. This view is radically anti-essentialist, refuting the existence of homosexuality as an eternal essential fact, and instead suggesting that homosexual potentialities and behaviours can exist without being equated to homosexuality as a totalizing or core identity. Foucault's theory was profoundly radical at the time but subsequent historical studies of the West (Boswell, 1980; Weeks, 2017) and cross-cultural historical studies (Vanita and Kidwai, 2000; Massad, 2008; Chang, 2010) illustrate that his basic insight is accurate: there is clear evidence that sexual acts and behaviours have not always been equated to types of people across different cultural and historical periods. The modern notion of exclusively *being* a specific sexuality is both recent and culturally specific and has served the purposes of institutionalizing heteronormativity and its gender hierarchies. For example, research on male sexual behaviours and AIDS/HIV over the last 30 years has established that there are many 'men who have sex with men' (MSM), who do not identify as 'gay', thus breaking the essentialist link between sexuality and identity (Youde, 2019). This is reinforced by research on online sex sites, where straight identified men search for sex with other straight men while disavowing any gay identity (Ward, 2008).

The gradual institutionalization of LGBTIQ studies in Western universities over the last three decades has, broadly speaking, been anchored both by the anti-essentialist body of work that relies heavily on Foucault and the broader feminist and LGBTIQ structural theories that demonstrate that sexual stigma and regulation results from the institutionalization of heteronormativity. It is important to note that these are not necessarily convergent or complementary theories. Feminists have remained focused on gender as the organizing category for sexuality, whereas much Foucauldian analysis conflates the two, or at the very least does not give priority to gender as a distinct category from sexuality (Jackson and Scott, 2010).

Furthermore, the initial insights of symbolic interactionism for understanding the processes of sexual subjectivity have largely been displaced by a combination of social constructionist approaches that try to link individual resources for identity to broader social structural context. This has been part of the move towards labelling most studies from an LGBTIQ perspective as 'queer' studies, adopting the public term (since the 1990s) for non-heterosexual identities. There is, however, a distinct body of **'**queer' theory that remains focused on the de-construction of essentialist sexual and gender identities (see Hines and Richardson, this volume).

Queer theory drew specifically on Foucault and represents one aspect of the gradual mainstreaming of his ideas in sexuality studies. Specifically, queer theorists focused on the potential for the transgression and subversion of dominant forms of knowledge, or what Foucault described as discourses. His formulation opened up the possibilities of fracturing the dominant framework of gender and sexual categorization because, he argued, discourses themselves were both authoritative *and* fragile: 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, rendering it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (Foucault, 1981: 101). Queer theorists focused on the potentially transformative idea of power that this analysis represents, contained in the idea of resistance to power, seeking to de-construct *any* essentialized identity – including such identities as lesbian and gay – broadly arguing that we may inhabit such identities at a given socio-historical cultural moment, but our ultimate aim should be to de-legitimize the regulatory operations of power as knowledge that produce these identity frameworks in the first place. Through a huge body of work, Judith Butler has become the most influential queer theorist to the extent that she is now the scourge of current conservative social movements that argue against gender and sexual diversity politics as an unnatural 'gender ideology'. In *Gender Trouble* ([1990] 2006) Butler argued that the existence of binary gender categories associated with specific sexual behaviours – what she called the *heterosexual matrix* – made these categories exclusive, natural and interdependent. Butler used the example of drag to illustrate that all gender identities are constructed through repeated performance based on culturally available discourses of what gender is, rather than any natural or essential quality of gender. Hence, we *all* 'perform' culturally dominant versions of gender rather than inhabit biological categories of gender (see Richardson in this volume). Of course, it is easy to see how socially conservative movements translate these complex ideas into a suggestion that new forms of gender and sexual identities are based on an academic gender ideology where people can simply choose to perform any gender or sexuality, thus upturning the 'natural order' (Patternotte and Kuhar, 2017a, 2017b, as well as Robinson and Richardson in this volume)

More pertinent than conservative biological reductionism, from a sociological and political perspective, this radical rejection of identity categories can indeed be problematic. Some sociologists are critical of queer theory's inability to account for the evident social structural foundations of gender and sexuality, arguing that queer analytics that are focused on the cultural discourses of heteronormativity have less analytical links to social systems of patriarchy and capitalism that make these discursive regimes permanent and impermeable to 'performative' subversion (Hennessy, 2012; McLaughlin, 2012). For example, monogamy is a dominant social way of regulating women in heterosexual relationships but feminist science studies scholar Angela

Willey (2016) has contested the naturalization of monogamy as biological fact, illustrating monogamy as historically contingent, showing how Christian ideals regarding monogamous marriage became secularized in late nineteenth-century scientific sexological discourse (Robinson, 1997b; Willey, 2016). She also highlights the racial resonances of historical discourse around non-monogamy, how monogamy is constituted through race and how it frames civilized, natural, and moral sexualities. She argues that the genealogy of monogamy is tied up in the institutionalization of white bourgeois values of sexuality and is also problematically rendered a universal norm. Indigenous scholars also understand monogamy as a central aspect of colonial dispossession, demonstrating how marriage was yoked together with private property through settler colonialist laws that displaced indigenous forms of relationships that were not linked to property (TallBear, 2018). Furthermore, this displaced women's autonomy, tying land tenure rights to heterosexual, one-on-one, lifelong marriages which disrupted indigenous relations in which women occupied positions of authority and controlled property (Anderson, 1993). In these economic and social contexts, women cannot easily perform a subversion of gender and sexuality.

Furthermore, queer theory proper is far removed from the contemporary politics of LGBTIQ movements in most countries, where we have seen a gradual expansion of citizenship rights tied directly to the notion of a stable and exclusive gay or lesbian identity, framed as *minority* rights within the overall heteronormative structure of gender and sexuality. In this sense, the everyday realities for queer people may be improving in many contexts (Weeks, 2007; Richardson, 2017), and this may echo some of the advances we see on women's sexual rights, but the fundamental structure of heteronormative binaries and hierarchies seems less open to destabilization (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3 – Developments in LGBTIQ studies

- Early gay and lesbian theories converged with feminist critiques of patriarchy as heteronormative, creating a social stigma towards non-heterosexual behaviours and identities.

- Foucauldian analysis extended this social constructionist critique using the concept of power/knowledge, arguing that modern sexological knowledges operated as a form of power to create dominant and deviant sexual identities such as 'the homosexual'.

- Queer theory extends this analysis to deconstruct forms of sexual identity based on the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual.

- Research on same-sex behaviours supports the fundamental Foucauldian and social constructionist idea that sexuality is not always indicative of a sexual identity.

The politics of presence: incorporating ethnicities through intersectionality and postcolonialism

It has been demonstrated that Western academia is institutionally racist in the sense that it reflects the lack of opportunities and access for racialized minorities that is evident across all Western societies (Henry et al., 2017). Although many non-white

feminists in early second wave political movements discussed racialization as a key dimension of patriarchal gender inequalities and sexualized power in some now classic texts (Beal, 1970; Combahee River Collective, 1983), this focus was largely lost in the gradual mainstreaming of feminists into the academy. LGBTIQ theories similarly did not pay adequate attention to ethnic hierarchies in the West or internationally, limiting the appreciation of racialization as a core dimension of both sexual stigma and gendered sexualization, as well as the creation of modern homosexual possibilities (see Kapoor in this volume). It is important to understand that the absence of analytical frameworks that combined gender and sexuality are the result of the physical absence of those experiencing, and being interested in, such issues. Just as the Western academy ignored the social basis of gender and sexuality for most of its existence because of the absence of women and visibly queer people, so too have academic feminism and sexuality studies largely failed to incorporate ethnicity because they have been overwhelmingly a white profession. Hence, subsequent arguments from African American, minority ethnic and postcolonial feminist and queer theorists have questioned whether theories of gender and sexuality have been primarily based on the experiences and knowledge of white, Western, middle-class women and LGBTIQ people (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017a, 2017b). For example, although the concepts of patriarchy and gender *were* nuanced and multi-dimensional in many ways (Walby, 1990), there was often an oversight of the fact that ethnic solidarity was often as important as feminist solidarity to minority women (Collins, 2000).

Intersectionality has become a key concept that seeks to redress the absence of ethnicity from gender and sexual analytics. Although Kimberle Crenshaw (1991, 2019) is often credited with coining the term, Collins and Bilge (2016) demonstrate that the methods and conceptual frameworks of an intersectional approach both precede and are more expansive than the academic institutionalization of the idea through the work of African American feminists in the United States. Collins's (2000) own work is an important part of the conceptual development, producing a black feminist critique that argues for an intersectional analysis that does not reduce black women's experience to either gender or race but combines the two. This is necessary because, as she points out, many key targets of radical feminism, such as prostitution and pornography, are manifested in racialized ways. Intersectionality has become a hugely influential and resonant concept for feminists and LGBTIQ theorists, achieving something of an orthodox status in contemporary research, even if that often means a loose use of the term (Davis, 2008). Indeed, the third wave of feminist research is often characterized through this expanded focus on racialization and ethnicity (see the chapters by Charles, Hines and Richardson in this volume).

The central point of intersectionality for sexuality studies is to understand that sexuality is not constituted by gender alone. In contemporary analytical frameworks and empirical research, there is an understanding that sexuality intersects with other social hierarchies beyond gender, primarily race/ethnicity and class. A current example is the sexual violence directed towards indigenous women in settler colonial states like Canada and the USA. In both, women from the indigenous population are disproportionately more likely to be the victims of violence and sexual assault than the majority white population or other ethnic minority groups. Four out of five native women experience violence today and 85% of them are sexually assaulted by

non-tribal members (MMIWG, 2019 https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/). The victims are likely to be young – mostly under their mid-thirties – and from lower socio-economic classes. In Canada, there have been numerous reports detailing how the police services *perceive* indigenous women as disproportionately involved in sex work and drugs, and how this perception has further lowered police interest in taking violence against them seriously. As they continue to be murdered in disproportionate numbers, indigenous women launched a campaign demanding justice and created the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Database, which logs cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit persons from 1900 to the present (Lucchesi, 2018). Audra Simpson (2016) argues that Native American women are murdered because they have been deemed killable, rapable, and disposable. Hence, their bodies are less valuable and, in that sense, their 'disappearances' are not a mere 'crime' with a perpetrator, a victim and a punishable transgression of a legal code, but they are the inevitable outcome of colonial gendered racialization. This intersectional violence of colonial sexism, racism, and economic extraction makes them invisible and thus vulnerable (Picq, 2018). Explaining sexual violence towards indigenous women through gender or sexuality is insufficient because it does not account for the full range of oppressions that have coincided to shape their experiences. We must take account of the gendered racialization of colonial dispossession that has resulted in a long history of native women being portrayed as sexually licentious. Their contemporary marginalization is a legacy of the colonial appropriation of land.

We need to understand sexualities in the historical context of Western colonialism. Many scholars of sexuality draw on postcolonial frameworks, which are different from intersectional approaches but also focus on racialization. Postcolonialism has a broader historical view, asking us to consider how Western dominance during modernity has created forms of knowledge that prioritize Western cultures and identities. A key concept of postcolonialism is *orientalism,* conceptualized by Edward Said in his 1978 study of the same name. Said argued that the military and economic dominance of the West from the eighteenth century onwards produced new forms of knowledge or, put more simply, new ways of thinking and understanding the world and the peoples within it. Specifically, Western nations produced the idea of the colonized 'East' or the 'Orient', as inferior, traditional, and thus ripe for a control that was 'progressive' or 'civilizing'. Orientalism legitimizes Western control as *beneficial* to the colonized. This idea continues today, particularly around the internationalization of LGBTIQ rights (Rahman, 2014; Altman and Symons, 2016; Richardson, 2017).

Sexuality has only recently emerged as a concern for intergovernmental human rights organizations, most prominently the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN), although the former remains the only one to have mainstreamed sexual diversity rights (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2019). When queer rights are resisted in international contexts, the broad explanation defaults to the 'traditionalism' of non-Western cultures, either as nations or minority immigrant populations that are too religious/socially traditional and explain the role of gender and sexuality through traditional understandings of gender divisions. In this context, women are seen as subordinate to men and defined primarily by biological roles, thus prioritizing reproductive heterosexuality and stigmatizing non-heterosexualities. Effectively, the assumption is that Western societies have moved on from this 'Victorian' subordination (as critiqued by

social constructionism) but non-Western societies 'lag behind'. This focus on the traditionalism of non-Western cultures is exemplified in academic arguments such as the World Values Surveys (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), discourses about sexuality deployed in international gay rights organizations such as the International Lesbian and Gay Associaion (ILGA), and increasingly in Western mainstream politics.

There is, however, an assumption of a Western essentialist model of sexuality as universal in much of contemporary queer politics. Therefore, we have a current situation whereby national governments and international LGBTIQ organizations are assuming a model of 'diffusion' of sexual diversity from the West to the (less developed) 'rest', ignoring the social constructionist analyses of how modern LGBTIQ identities developed in specific socio-historical contexts in the West (Rahman, 2014) and often displaced indigenous and local cultural versions of sexual identity (Massad, 2008). This assumption potentially locates LGBTIQ politics within a new form of colonialism. For example, Mepschen et al. (2010) argue that gay politics has undergone a 'remarkable shift' that has moved it to centre-stage in the civilizational defence of European and specifically Dutch culture against the multiculturalism represented by Islam. They argue that the association of secularism with sexual freedom is now central to contemporary Dutch identity, and that the exceptional progress of gay rights in the Netherlands has resulted in a normalization of gay identity *within* Dutch nationhood – what Puar (2017) describes as 'homonationalism'. This recent incorporation of homonationalism into Western values and politics permits the use of homosexuality to challenge various immigrant and non-Western cultures as outside the parameters of modernity and, hence, progress (Rahman, 2014; Puar, 2017) (Box 5.4).

Box 5.4 – Key points on racialization

- Feminist and sexuality studies became mainstreamed into institutionally racist Western academia.
- The absence of black, minority ethnic and indigenous scholars resulted in the absence of sustained attention to racialization processes and impacts.
- African American feminists brought critical race theory to bear on gender and sexuality, specifically creating the concept of intersectionality.
- Postcolonial and indigenous scholars have demonstrated that sexuality is a key technology of colonial control that persists to the present day.
- Contemporary international standards of gender and sexual 'equality' are being deployed in a neocolonialist framework.

Conclusion

If we only think of sexuality as another term for 'sex', we cannot begin to understand the social significance and regulation of sexual identities and behaviours. Sex supposedly speaks to the 'truth' of who we are but that 'truth' has become understood and

explained as an *identity* that embodies our status and worth, defined socially, rather than simply our sexual acts defined by us as individuals. In contrast to the common sense essentialist view of sexuality as reduced to psycho-biology, it is important to consider what sexual acts *mean* in the cultural and political context in which they occur. For example, how do sexual acts equate to or signify social identities such as masculinity, femininity, lesbian or gay identity, and how do these relate to social hierarchies such as gender and racial divisions? This is the fundamental conceptual shift that feminist and queer social constructionist thought has achieved in gender and women's studies. Thus, we need to reverse the essentialist causal logic that prioritizes biological function, and instead ask how we, as individuals, use cultural and political meanings of sex and sexuality to learn and develop our own identities and behaviours and make sense of our bodies, and what we do with them. While there are now innumerable studies on sexual behaviours, we have argued in this chapter that we need to understand the larger-scale theories and concepts that help us to understand the way in which cultural and political meanings of sexuality are socially structured in terms of being permanent, large-scale, often oppressive and culturally variable according to ethnic identification or global region.

Further reading

A. Fausto-Sterling (2000) *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World*. New York: Routledge. Fausto-Sterling explains how biological difference can be produced over time in response to different environmental and social experiences and tackles the limits of biologically reductionist models of gender and sexuality. This introductory book offers accessible perspectives from biochemistry and neurobiology.

S. Jackson and S. Scott (2010) *Theorizing Sexuality*. New York: Open University Press. This text argues for the centrality of the social in relation to sexuality and provides a good historical overview of feminist theories.

M. L. Picq and M. Thiel (2015) *Sexualities in World Politics: How LGBTQ Claims Shape International Relations*. New York: Routledge. The book offers an overview of how LGBTQ perspectives impact international relations in practice and theory. The chapters analyse LGBTQ perspectives and experiences from Amazonia to Turkey, Uganda and Ireland, and theoretical debates from sexual rights to universalism.

S. Seidman (2015) *The Social Construction of Sexuality*. 3rd edn. New York and London: W.W. Norton. Seidman analyzes the consequences of privileging and stigmatizing certain sexual practices and identities. The book addresses lesbian identities, social control and moral standards, with a discussion on cyber intimacies.

S. Vidal-Ortiz, B. A. Robinson and C. Khan (2018) *Race and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Polity. This book on critical cultural theory offers conceptual introductions and empirical case studies on issues like sex work and migration to show that race and sexuality are inseparable in today's world.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is heteronormative patriarchy still the basic template for gendered sexuality in your culture? Think about the practices associated with feminine and masculine genders.

2. How in/visible are LGBTIQ identities? Does in/visibility challenge heteronormativity or re-enforce it as the norm?

3. What are the assumptions about how different ethnicities, in a culture or region of your choice, value sexual rights? Think about whether we can understand sexuality outside racial and ethnic contexts.

4. How much sexual socialization is occurring through online media in your culture? Think about social media and access to information, imagery, and sexual encounters.

6 GENDER AND RACE

Nisha Kapoor

Introduction

Anti-racist and postcolonial feminists have been principally concerned with exploring, analysing and resisting the oppressive structures produced through intersections of gender, race and class. Contrary to the dominant narratives presenting feminism as progressing in an almost linear fashion (first wave, second wave, third wave), women of the Global South and black and minority ethnic women situated in the West have long histories of resisting systems of oppression – patriarchy, racism, imperialism and capitalism – within their locales (Jayawardena, 2016). The dominant narrative that indicates the growing inclusion and consideration of marginalised women in the feminist project should not be read in terms of a developing stage of consciousness of black and minority women. Rather, it speaks to the success of struggles by women previously excluded from recognition to be encompassed and recognised within broader feminist concerns.

The central tenets within anti-racist and anti-imperialist feminist paradigms have centred the social structures of racism, colonialism and patriarchy, exploring how oppression operates through their intersections. Within this broad field, the most radical concerns move beyond questions of identity and representation to the structural manifestations of racism, imperialism, post/colonialism and capitalism (Davis, 1981; Taylor, 2017). They centre questions of labour and social reproduction, reproductive justice, criminal justice and war and securitisation as critical feminist issues.

Key themes that have occupied these alternative feminist traditions include:

- a general critique of the category of woman to account for differential positions in socio-economic structures – for example, within the labour market and housing provision;

- how race, class and gender work in conjunction, focusing on the experiences of working-class women of colour;

- social reproduction as a site of resistance and resilience. This is a critique of viewing women's domesticity only in relation to capital;

- policing and carceral capitalism which trades on the disproportionate criminalisation of communities of colour;

- war, colonialism and imperialism;

- modes of solidarity and sisterhood where the centring of white, middle-class women in struggles is questioned and critiqued.

Taking account of the intersections of oppression, black, postcolonial and indigenous feminisms have asked what this means for the subject positioning of racially oppressed

women and what form and shape progressive resistance movements might take. By doing so, these feminist interventions have worked to reformulate understandings of social issues and problems addressed by white feminists in particular ways and endeavoured to strive for more inclusive and emancipatory solutions (Davis, 1981; Carby, 1982; Parmar, 1982; Brah, 1996; Hill-Collins, 2015; hooks, 2015). Consequently, anti-racist feminisms consider not only the effects of these systems on the positions of women of colour, but also what inclusive emancipatory struggles for freedom and justice might look like. Such strategies proceed with the view that when the most oppressed in society are free, everyone is liberated because the freedom of the most oppressed would necessitate the destruction of multiple systems of oppression. These feminist interventions have been attentive to multiple identity formations produced in the context of multiple domains of power in operation simultaneously.

This chapter will explore a range of contemporary themes that have occupied feminists working in this tradition situating recent debates within established frameworks and ideas in this field. While the particular focus of anti-racist feminists have always been wide-ranging and multiple, responding to shifting forms of oppression that come with political-economic changes, there are a number of themes that have occupied this feminist writing that are worth elaborating upon, not least because they have been particularly productive for enhancing the quality of more conventional analyses of social injustice. In this chapter I will illustrate and elaborate on some of these debates, pinpointing critical highlights and interventions. I will begin by looking at debates on intersectionality of race, gender, class, and go on to explore recent interventions on the issue of social reproduction. Later sections will examine postcolonial feminism, imperialism and the subjectification of Muslim women. The final two sections focus on contemporary resistance struggles, particularly the Black Lives Matter movement and the debates around the politics of identity in struggle (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1 – Key terms

Women of colour: A term used to denote political solidarity amongst women who have been historically racialised and dehumanised as 'other' or 'non-white'.

Postcolonial feminism: A school of feminist thought concerned with critiquing the 'double oppression' of colonialism/imperialism and patriarchy experienced by women in once-colonised countries. This tradition of feminism struggles against the oppression of colonial powers, the representation of women by men within their societies and the Eurocentric and racist nature of Western feminism.

Black feminism: A feminist school of thought that centres the experiences of black women to highlight the intersectional nature (Crenshaw, 1989) of oppression. Black feminists operating in this tradition show how racism, sexism, class oppression and heteronormativity are intricately bound together.

Indigenous feminism: This school of feminist thought also operates within an intersectional framework, but indigenous feminism is particularly concerned with issues of decolonisation, self-autonomy, and indigenous sovereignty.

Throughout the chapter, I use the term *anti-racist feminism* to collectively refer to the traditions of feminism led by black, ethnic minority, indigenous and postcolonial women.

Race, gender, class

Anti-racist feminism has actively argued that Western or white feminism, with its historical singular focus on patriarchy, did not develop the conceptual tools for understanding or struggling against the complexities of racialised, classed and gendered power and oppression. With the primacy given to gender differences, Western feminism had created the fiction of a universal category of 'sisterhood' which disguised or refused to acknowledge middle-class, Euro- or Western-centric bias. As Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1993: 96) note, 'much of feminist theory ... was predicated on the "sisterhood" of women endowing the category woman with an essentialist and static property always in dichotomous relation to men'. This made it unable to explore the extent to which some women might be positioned as oppressors of others, rather than merely as the oppressed. Western feminism also constrained its ability to consider the ways in which multiple social structures could operate in tandem to marginalise black, ethnic minority, indigenous or Third World women. In contrast, anti-racist feminism has revisited feminist concerns relating to work, reproduction, family, welfare and social security to open up the framing through which we consider inequalities and injustice in these areas.

The struggle for reproductive rights is one example of this. Campaigns led by white women against legal prohibitions on abortion and for women's right to choose have been critiqued by black and Native American women in the USA as centring only a partial account of power and control over reproduction. Since the experiences of reproductive oppression by black and Native American women have historically involved the restriction of their fertility and reproduction by state and institutional powers (Lash, 2017; Roberts, 2017). The issue, they point out, is not simply about the emphasis on and enforcement of women's roles for reproduction but, for women of colour, the curtailment of their fertility and reproduction. While restrictions on abortion rights disavow the autonomy and control women should have over their own bodies, impacting on all women at certain moments, the practice of enforced sterilisation, which has been used in the context of the US state's war on poverty and war on drugs, has disproportionately involved policing black and Puerto Rican single mothers (Jones and Seabrook, 2017; Roberts, 2017). In addition, the historic genocidal policies targeting indigenous communities has included the sterilisation of Native American women (Gurr, 2011). Consequently, African American and Native American women have argued that the focus of the struggle ought to be for reproductive justice rather than reproductive rights (Roberts, 2017).

This quest to situate black women's experiences within broader feminist debates, to understand the ways in which race shaped female identity and marginalisation and thus to recognise the differences between the experiences of black and white women was the principal objective of classic texts such as bell hooks's ([1981] 2015) '*Ain't I A Woman?*', and has subsequently informed an entire field of black feminist literature. The black feminist tradition has worked to place black women's experiences in the centre of analysis, and as Patricia Hill Collins (2015: 2349) notes, 'to highlight black women's interpretations of our social worlds'. For Collins, there are several core themes that distinguish black feminist thought, which encompass the naming of oppression and refusal to hide the rawness of power relations; the exercise of epistemic agency in the face of epistemic oppression, meaning that black women were positioned as agents and producers of knowledge in a context where agency and autonomy in processes of

knowledge production were routinely denied; a commitment to social justice; and recognition of the importance of addressing the complexities of intersecting forms of power where a singular race only or gender only approach would be insufficient. Keeyanga Yamahtta Taylor (2017: 2) echoes this sentiment when she notes: 'Black women's experiences cannot be reduced to either race or gender but have to be understood on their own terms'.

But this work exploring the intersections of race and gender goes beyond the USA and beyond the specific experiences of African Americans to also include the experiences of women of colour in Europe, other settler colonial states and the post/colony. In the early 1980s, black feminists speaking in the British context, such as Hazel Carby (1982) in her eminent essay '*White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood*,' noted how key concepts for (white) feminists – 'patriarchy', 'family' and 'reproduction' – did not easily capture the experiences of black women or apply in the same way. She argued that black feminists 'decry the non-recognition of the specificities of black women's sexuality and femininity, both in the ways these are constructed and also as they are addressed through practices which oppress black women in a gender-specific but nonetheless racist way' (Carby, 1982: 117). Avtah Brah (1996) and Amrit Wilson ([1978] 2018) also centred the importance of intersectional approaches, of being attentive to how the dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity operate in conjunction for reckoning with the experiences of women of colour. At the same time, there was greater emphasis on collective solidarities between Asian and black women in the British context. Both Hazel Carby (1982) and Avtar Brah (1996) remind us of the coalitional mobilisation around the political subject 'black' in the British context, a key part of the genealogy of anti-racist mobilisation in British history. As Avtar Brah (1996: 13) explains, 'the British "black" political subject emerged as a signifier of the entangled racialized colonial histories of "black" settlers of African, Asian and Caribbean descent, affirming a politics of solidarity against a racism centred around colour'. In this context black feminism 'emerged in conversation with a number of political tendencies. It was partly formed around politics of the "black", partly within the nexus of global class politics while simultaneously articulating a constitutive moment within British feminism and gay and lesbian politics.'

As I am indicating here, the emphasis on intersectionality has not restricted itself to race and gender, but has also stressed the importance of class and sexuality (Brah, 1996; hooks, 2015; Taylor, 2017). The struggle to centre the ways in which multiple oppressive structures work in tandem and must thus all be reckoned with for realising liberation and equality has battled with the class differences that work across race lines but also within racial categories. Historically, the struggles waged by white middle- and upper-class women against being subordinated in the home as housewives, for example, did not resonate with working-class women (hooks, 2015), and women of colour in the West have always been disproportionately working-class. More recently, attention to class inequalities within anti-racist feminist debates has highlighted the specific positioning of ethnic minority women within the labour market and the disproportionate impact of austerity measures, as a result. As Akwugo Emejulu and Leah Bassel note:

> Minority women are more likely to be employed in the public sector (as teachers, nurses and social workers, etc.), more likely to be subcontracted

> to the state via private sector organisations (as care workers, clean-
> ers, caterers, etc.) and are also more likely to be connected to the local
> state (through accessing public services) because of gendered caring
> responsibilities.
>
> (Emejulu and Bassel, 2015: 88)

The disproportionate number of women of colour in the care, domestic and low-paid services industries is particularly important for illuminating, again, how the intersecting structures of race, gender and class produce different effects and lived experiences for different groups of women. As Sara Farris (2017: 157) notes, in Western Europe, Muslim and non-Western migrant women's employment are highly concentrated in the care sector with 42% of these women employed in the care and domestic sector in private households, the care sector in hospitals, and residential care, home care and cleaning activities. This is indicative of the broader point, made earlier by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (2003), that the sexual division of labour is globalised and reflective of the power relations and uneven development produced by imperialism and global neoliberalism. Women from the Global South increasingly provide the care, cleaning and sex work for the Global North. To speak of gender inequalities in this context requires not only recognition of the ways in which race, gender and class operate together to subordinate working-class women of colour, particularly from the Global South, but also recognition of the ways in which middle-class Western women benefit from this system through the reproductive work that is provided for them.

There are further critiques that have been voiced by anti-racist feminists in relation to this theme of social reproduction (Farris, 2017; Bhattacharyya, 2018). Social reproduction theory refers to a Marxist-feminist intervention which seeks to emphasise how class and gender oppression work together, how the 'production of goods and services and the production of life are part of one integrated process' (Ferguson, 2017). This therefore argues that the work women do in the private sphere to reproduce and maintain the labour force operating in the formal economy of work ought to be included in analyses of the contradictory nature of capitalism. More recent interventions in this debate recognise how race, colonialism and sexuality are also implicated in this contradictory relationship (Bhattacharrya, 2017; Ferguson 2017).

Yet, within a framework of racial capitalism (which recognises that economic opportunities and outcomes are often distributed along racially demarcated lines, and extends to acknowledge not only the exploitation of labour by capital but also those on the edges of the labour market, those subject to periodic exclusion from the labour market or to a subordinated position within the labour market), the role, function and contours of social reproduction can be framed differently. Critical race-class interventions begin from the position that debates and fears around population, reproduction and labour force requirements have always been deeply racialised ones (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Demands of capital and economic need are perpetually balanced against the desires of the racially privileged to maintain superiority. In the words of Gargi Bhattacharyya (2018: 39): 'who is produced and for what ends become questions of population control and not only … a matter of feeding the formal economy'. So where traditional Marxist-feminist critiques have done much to draw attention to the

unpaid women's work that is the supplement underpinning the reproduction of human life, critical race feminists have argued that a more expansive account is necessary which accounts for the fact that the reproduction of human life does not only take place in privatised spaces of the family and nor does the reproduction of human life only involve reproducing productive workers (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Social reproduction does not simply involve reproducing workers but, rather, all the kinds of work entailed in replenishing humanity exploited, rejected and abused in arenas of work. Social reproduction in the context of racial capitalism 'requires additional input, to compensate for the components of life that occasional or non-existent or depleted wages will not cover and perhaps also to remake a sense of humanness in the face of the particular dehumanisations of racism' (Bhattacharyya, 2018: 44). The home and community spaces that carry out social reproductive endeavours can be places of sanctuary and replenishment. As Bhattacharyya explains:

> The degradations and depletions of racial capitalism require someone else to remake undervalued bodies and to soothe broken psyches. This may not mean that such replenishment is valued or recognised or that the transactions of the wage, when it exists, include resources for such replenishment. However … the impetus for the labour of this remaking and replenishment is not to prepare again for the onslaught of the labour market. Instead the labour of remaking human beings against the battering of racial capitalism takes place for the far more usual reasons of love, care, community survival.
>
> (Bhattacharyya, 2018: 44)

This section has sought to highlight the emphasis that anti-racist feminism has placed on the importance of intersectional analyses for reckoning with multiple social structures that produce differential subject positions and thus specific forms of injustice and inequality. In the following section, I will go on to discuss some of the key concerns and debates that have been raised by postcolonial feminists.

Key concerns of postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial feminism has had an important impact upon social theory and activism, effectively revising broader understandings of the role and meaning of feminism. Concerned with themes of racism, identity, discourse and representation that have preoccupied the work of postcolonial theorists in general, such as Edward Said (1978) and Frantz Fanon (1963), the point of departure for postcolonial feminist interventions has been to explore how colonial and imperial enterprises were embedded in gender relations and dynamics (Spivak, 2003; Lorde, 2007; Mohanty, 2007; Stoler, 2010). Equally, postcolonial feminists have explored how postcolonial conditions and inequalities are shaped by gender relations. Critiquing the lack of concern with the role that gender plays in subject formation, postcolonial feminists have stressed that race, gender, class and caste all intersect in discourses and representations which work to marginalise and subjugate post/colonial subjects. Accordingly, postcolonial feminism has highlighted not only the 'double colonisation' of women produced under

colonialism and patriarchy, but has also made postcolonial analysis more attuned to the ways in which gender and sexuality are mobilised within colonial discourses and within subject construction (Gandhi, 2018).

It is the limitations of Western feminism and its tradition of being complicit in colonial and postcolonial racisms, however, that have formed the principal point of critique for postcolonial feminists. The critiques that have been voiced of Western feminism are multiple and wide-ranging, but perhaps some of the most pertinent issues raised include the universalisation of objectification and sexualisation; the privileging of women and patriarchy as categories of oppression; and the appropriation of values and symbols associated with Western feminism to justify colonial violence. I elaborate on each of these in turn.

The tradition of *universalising* problems of objectification and sexualisation – that is, the assumptions within Western feminist critique that mean the sexualisation and objectification of women are standard and equally similar – is one key critique made by postcolonial feminists (Mohanty, 2007). As this disregards the role that race, class, colonialism and imperialism play in the subjectification of women, not only does such universalisation ignore the specificity and differences between forms of objectification but it also ignores the hierarchies and material consequences that arise as a result. For example, racialised women are often positioned at extreme ends of the spectrum concerning 'ideal femininity'. They are presented as either being excessive – the hyper-sexualisation (animalistic) representations of the black woman (Gammage, 2015; Benard, 2016) – or inadequate – the passive, delicate and mute Asian woman (Wilson, [1978] 2018). So, though all women have traditionally been framed by objectified standards of femininity – in this example the attractiveness and emphasis on the sexual body – women of colour have often experienced these standards in a different and more objectified manner (Mohanty, 2007; Tyagi, 2014). This has frequently meant that experiences of rape and sexual violence are not acknowledged or taken as seriously since such representations/objectifications assume that there are different thresholds for violation at play (Verso Report, 2018). In this framing, a black or orientalised woman objectified as exotic and hyper-sexual, portrayed as always available for sex, is not taken as seriously when she speaks out about sexual assault.

A second critique concerns the universalising and privileging of 'women' and 'patriarchy' as categories of oppression to the neglect of thinking about the effects of racism and colonialism. Postcolonial feminists often centre issues of state violence manifest in racist policing, incarceration and border control and immigration regimes within the feminist project, matters which are often neglected within traditional Western feminist perspectives. Furthermore, the postcolonial feminist critique points to the silencing of the privileges and complicity of Western women in colonial and postcolonial racisms that occur when categories of 'women' and 'patriarchy' are universalised. So, historically, European women gained culturally and materially from the colonial project – for example, through cultural privileges and recognition and through labour relief that came with the employment of colonised women to perform domestic duties within the household. The complicity of Western feminist movements with colonialism and imperialism has been noted by Catherine Hall et al. (2000: 54) who observe that British feminists from 'Mary Wollstonecraft onwards had drawn upon histories of "civilisation" which had the progressive histories of

women and family in the West at their centre … such progress was indicated through comparison with the harems and polygamy of an undifferentiated Orient, and the burdened and labouring women of "savage" populations'. By the 1860s, British feminism was informed by a sense of superior civilisation and also by a mission to civilise. As noted above, in the contemporary period, as domestic labour and care work become increasingly commodified, it is disproportionately performed in Europe by migrant women from the Global South (Farris, 2017). Middle-class European women thus become complicit with patriarchal systems of oppression while working-class women (disproportionately women of colour) are tasked with a double burden of social reproduction, performing care and domestic work for an employer and at home (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003).

The appropriation of values and symbols often associated with Western (both radical and liberal) feminisms in order to justify and propagate colonial and postcolonial violence and injustices is another key critique raised by postcolonial feminists. Here notions of freedom, liberty and equality are framed as 'values' of Western civilisation rather than principles that are continuously struggled for. They are, in turn, incorporated into discourses of Western feminism so that civilisationist tendencies which historically buttressed the colonialist project are integrated into the Western feminism project. It is then in the name of granting women's rights that colonial settlement, violence and rule come to be legitimated. In the more advanced iterations of this practice, gender inequalities are portrayed as principally a concern for the Global South and East since gender equality and agency are framed as being of Western origin/attribute. The appropriation of Western feminist discourses in this way is illustrated most acutely through imperialist feminism where colonial occupation, settlement and intervention have often been justified in terms of 'liberating women' (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Kumar, 2016). Historically, Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century were charged with saving 'poor' 'downtrodden' 'oriental' women from the East (Kumar, 2016) while suffragettes in Britain argued that the equality of women in Britain would be beneficial for the Empire as part of their case for gaining the right to vote (Burton, 1994; Grewal, 1996).

Of late, colonial occupation has continued to be justified in the name of women's rights. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 was strongly framed in such terms with the first ladies of the USA and the UK, Laura Bush and Cherie Blair, both expressing the need to liberate Afghanistani women. The words of Laura Bush (2001) that 'the fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women' were yet another reiteration of colonialism's historic concern with 'saving brown women from brown men' (Spivak [1987] 1993: 93). But the interests of private corporations have also infiltrated such feminist dynamics through the 'NGOization of feminism' (Lang, 2014), which means that advocacy and action for women's rights come to be co-opted in the interests of private capital (Kumar, 2016). One example, as Deepa Kumar (2016) notes, is the eight-month campaign in Afghanistan for Beauty without Borders, 'funded by Revlon, L'Oreal, and other cosmetic companies to the tune of three quarters of a million dollars. The goal was to teach Afghan women how to be beauticians as a route to liberation … the beauty companies got a nice little public relations boost out of it, not to mention profits and new markets for the sale of their products'. Gargi Bhattacharyya (2008: 49) suggests that it is the more active participation and

employment of Western women as emissaries of a 'western feminism that characterises freedom in market-friendly terms, including a buy-in to commodified versions of sexual emancipation' which is arguably what distinguishes this particular period of imperial femininity and feminism.

The figure of the Muslim woman which has surfaced in the context of the War on Terror has arguably come to represent the paradigm against which imperialist feminist discourses have been sustained and fortified (Bhattacharrya, 2008; Kumar, 2012; Farris, 2017). Over the trajectory of the post-9/11 period, the positioning of Muslim women has played a significant ideological role within a broader political project that has centred discourses of cultural deficiency and inadequacy within Islam to explain multifarious geo-political events and justify Western imperialist interventions (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Mamdani, 2005; Kundnani, 2014). And here discourses that help to frame imperialist and colonial occupation are rearticulated within the West itself through Islamophobic narratives largely fixated around Muslim women's dress as a marker of integration. Postcolonial feminism is thus a useful framing for analysing and responding to racism and Islamophobia in the West as much as across the Global South.

In this section I have described key concerns that have occupied postcolonial feminist debates which have principally centred the limitations of Western feminism to address its own complicity in racism, colonialism and imperialism. In sum, such concerns include:

- the universalisation of objectification and sexualisation;

- the privileging of women and patriarchy as categories of oppression;

- the appropriation of values and symbols associated with Western feminism to justify colonial violence.

There are multiple contexts across the Global South where these criticisms apply and where Western feminism has been reproached for these reasons. In the context of the War on Terror, it is Muslim women who have been particularly subject to this kind of antagonistic appropriation of feminism. In particular, the orientalist binary of victim/villain has been a dominant trope for representing Muslim women. It is this theme that I will now go on to explore in more detail (Box 6.2).

Box 6.2 – Orientalism

As Edward Said (1978) defined it, orientalism refers to a system of knowledge whereby the East or 'Orient' is depicted, largely in cultural forms, by Western artists, writers and intellectuals. It is a hierarchically construed system whereby the West has been able to depict the East in essentialised ways, as static and undeveloped, and with power to narrate the East in ways that restrict the East's ability to narrate itself. Orientalist discourses that represent people of the Orient in dehumanising ways help to reproduce discriminatory treatment against them.

Orientalism is gendered and there are specific tropes that have been used to represent women and men of the East.

Muslim women as victim/villain

Lila Abu-Lughod's (2002) question 'Do Muslim women really need saving?' offers an entry point into the broader postcolonial feminist responses to the War on Terror that have brought insight into the symbolic role that the bodies of Muslim women have come to play in contemporary geopolitics. The fixation on dress and dress codes has been central to the political narrative. Abu-Lughod and other postcolonial feminists (for example, Mahmood, 2005; Mohanty, 2007; Hussein, 2019) have pointed to the complexity of cultural practices marked by class, caste, sect and locality that inform choice, agency and habits of veiling to argue against normative Western readings that regard the veil simply as a marker of oppression and unfreedom. If veiling can be a marker of multiple forces, a marker of respectability, of resistance to Western conformity, of piety, of retaining comfortable separations between the private and public sphere, then the practice will not automatically end on the defeat of oppressive state apparatuses such as the Taliban, not least because of the defiance against the substitution of one set of patriarchies (Taliban) for another (US/Western imperialism).

Agency around identity, whatever the stimulus might be – whether Muslim women veil for piety because faith provides solace from racism, because it is an act of refusal to conform to Western standards of integration, or simply because – can be a way in which resistance is expressed, a way of refusing to acquiesce to violent hegemonic demands for assimilation. But further critical analyses of pathological representations of Muslim women have moved us away from limiting debates to identity choices. Here analyses have reflected on the significance of representation, of centring the dress codes of Muslim women for the dual projects of nationalism and imperialism. Gargi Bhattacharyya (2008: 50), for example, notes that 'the display of women's bodies and the manner of their display is a central aspect of the dissemination of the culture and values of the new imperialism'. The fixation on women's dress as a symbolic marker of freedom and emancipation, to the neglect of focus on material realities such as access to employment, education, decent housing and health care is somewhat unfortunate, given that earlier feminist struggles did much work to critique the objectification of women, the exhibition of women's bodies, the judgement of women by their dress and the restrictions and chastisements on covering and uncovering. Yet the return to an obsession with Muslim women's dress occurs at the same time, and thus in relation to, the deployment of Western women as central figures in, and measures of, the West's standards of civilisation. The ability of Western/Westernised women to embody the concept of rights through their own physicality helps to promote certain restrictive ideas of freedom and liberation, not least notions that sexual liberation and sexual rights as well as the ability to freely participate in consumer markets are synonymous with women's rights (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Kumar, 2016). The veiled Muslim woman, in contrast, is constructed to represent the opposite: submissive, subjugated and sexually oppressed. It is on this basis that militarised interventions come to be narrated in terms of liberation.

At the same time, the forceful unveiling of women in sites of Western military occupation in the Global South during different periods has been echoed in Europe through state-imposed burqa bans passed in countries such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands (Hussein, 2019). Part of a broader anti-Islam rhetoric, actors from across the political spectrum have frequently focused on Muslim women's dress as a

sign of non-assimilability, portrayed patriarchy and misogyny as being inherent within Islam, and depicted Muslim presence as the mark of social malaise and disintegration (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Farris, 2017; Hussein, 2019) that threatens the preservation of Europe. This assault has been implemented:

- at the level of law through bans (for example, France's 2010 act 'prohibiting concealment of the face in public space' and the police enforcement of such laws);

- at the level of political rhetoric through media and political commentators (for example, Jack Straw's (then Labour Home Secretary) declaration in 2006 that he preferred that Muslim women did not veil in the interests of community cohesion and asked that his Blackburn constituents remove veils before meeting with him; and in 2018, Boris Johnson's (then Conservative Member of Parliament and former Foreign Secretary) comparison of veiled Muslim women to 'letter boxes' and 'bank robbers' in the UK);

- through far-right mobilisations (for example, the mass support for Islamophobic far-right populist politics across Europe – see Liz Fekete, 2018);

- through everyday hate crimes, disproportionately against Muslim women and often entailing the forceful removal of the hijab (Marsh, 2018), and arguably a form of state-sanctioned sexual assault (Stahl, 2018). And again, discourses of women's freedom and emancipation often underpin justifications for such attacks.

As Sara Farris (2017) has insightfully discussed, there has been a particular convergence between different political actors – far-right nationalists, some feminists and femocrats, and neoliberal advocates – who have deployed anti-Islam representations in the name of women's rights. This is a phenomenon she has identified as 'femonationalism', which 'describes, on the one hand, the attempts of Western European right-wing parties and neoliberals to advance xenophobic and racist politics through the touting of gender equality while, on the other hand, it captures the involvement of various well-known and quite visible feminists and femocrats in the current framing of Islam as a quintessentially misogynistic religion and culture' (Farris, 2017: 4).

But the assault on Muslim women in Europe has also exposed the multi-layered and oscillating discourses attached to their embodiment which is never only or simply a victim narrative, but also one of threat, culpability and pathological reproduction (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Kapoor, 2018; Hussein, 2019). Whereas narratives of Muslim women as victims dominated earlier years of the War on Terror, later years have seen this narrative increasingly overlaid with representations of Muslim women as themselves violent, embodying the terrorist threat. The 'saving Muslim women' narrative which was laid out as the platform upon which Western (state) masculinities exert themselves over brown men has increasingly proceeded alongside other forms of state violence that insist on incorporation or civic integration. Integration and citizenship, framed through a discourse of British values and assessed in terms of English language ability and civic knowledge and participation, are used as disciplinary mechanisms that have been progressively tied up with discourses of security, particularly where Muslim women are concerned (Kundnani, 2007; Bhattacharyya, 2008). In the UK, part of the policy framework for advancing the socio-economic positioning of Muslim women, including recognition of their civic participation, has

been tied up with counter-terrorism policy agendas that have framed Muslim women as being central to the project of winning the 'hearts and minds' of Muslim communities (Kundnani, 2014; Rashid, 2016). Non-compliance signified through any sign of non-assimilation is associated, in this framing, with cultural threat and potential for radicalisation. As Shakira Hussein (2019: 3) notes, the call for bans against the burqa in Europe are part of the response to those more threatening representations of Muslim women 'as active participants in Islamism and the "Islamisation" of the West'. It is not only that Muslim women are periodically portrayed as embodying the terrorist threat of physical violence (a representation fortified through media stories of Muslim men donning the niqab and dressing as women to escape arrest) but that they can also embody a cultural threat. Since women are typically tasked with the duty of transmitting and instilling desired cultural practices, Muslim women are identified as playing a pivotal role in determining the customs of Islam in the West (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Farris, 2017).

State interventions have thus oscillated between dogmatic civic integrationist approaches that in the UK have insisted Muslim women achieve certain levels of English as well as knowledge of British history and cultural practices (Rashid, 2016) and calls for Muslim women to act as 'moral authorities' within their families and communities to report signs of radicalisation (Kapoor, 2018). In late 2007, Hazel Blears, the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in the UK, responding precisely to the call against the stereotype of Muslim women as 'submissive victim', explained that Muslim women, like all women, played a particularly important part in 'binding families together', as mothers, daughters, wives and sisters, but held a particularly 'unique moral authority' within their communities, and argued that more needed to be done to value their economic, cultural and civic contributions (DCLG, 2007). Since the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group (NMWAG), the body tasked with achieving the increased representation of Muslim women in civil society, was funded through Prevent monies (a counterterrorism programme that aims to 'de-radicalise' young people through pre-emptively policing their actions, behaviours, views and ideas), the political call for inclusion has transpired to be very much contingent on commitments to counter extremism. A key remit of NMWAG stated from the outset would be to encourage Muslim women to influence and challenge 'the false and perverted ideology spread by extremists [and] give our young people the skills and knowledge to turn their backs on hate' (DCLG, 2007; Allen and Guru, 2012). Subsequently, calls for Muslim women to act as informants within their communities were made explicitly by the Metropolitan police force in 2014 (Kapoor, 2018).

This section has explored the ways in which Muslim women are frequently represented through an orientalised lens that situates them as alternating between villain and victim, reflecting, in particular, on the way such constructions have fixated on Muslim women's dress. This orientalist binary:

- operates at the level of representation of Muslim women in public, political and media discourse;
- is materialised in policy approaches for policing Muslim communities, specifically in the ways interventions are made, aimed at Muslim women.

In the subsequent sections I will go on to outline some of the key themes centred in contemporary anti-racist feminist resistance struggles through a focus on the #MeToo campaign, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the debates around the politics of identity in struggle.

Debates in contemporary anti-racist feminist struggles

#MeToo

There has been much discussion and debate within black and postcolonial feminism about the nature of resistance, particularly as it concerns questions of solidarity, intersectionality and the politics of identity. In recent times the recurring theme of white privilege in debates around feminist solidarity, movements and mobilisation has been vocalised in relation to the #MeToo campaigns (Emejulu, 2018; Verso Report, 2018) which gained the attention of the mainstream public when celebrity (white) women spoke out about sexual harassment in their respective industries, but which at the same time silenced 'the founder of the movement, Tarana Burke, who ha[d] been working to expose rampant sexual violence against women of colour for more than a decade (Emejulu, 2018: 271; see also Charles in this volume).

This oversight was subsequently corrected and the central role of women of colour in the movement was increasingly noted as the struggle to address the routinisation of sexual assault and its institutional forms advanced (Verso Report, 2018). As the movement has evolved from that originally conceived by Tarana Burke, it has been noteworthy for its reliance on social media platforms – and use of a hashtag – for disclosure which has raised a series of questions regarding how mass international disclosures might lead to structural change as well as the impact online disclosure may have for those disclosing their experiences of sexual abuse (Verso Report, 2018). But perhaps one of its most progressive elements and indicators of success is the way the #MeToo movement has become an example of feminist transnational solidarity with variations of the movement erupting in 85 countries, including India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Nigeria, South Korea, a number of Arab countries, Australia and across Europe (Powell, 2017). In China, Leta Hong Fincher (2018) notes that a number of disclosure posts published under #MeToo have been deleted due to state censorship and the lack of press freedom has made it more difficult for the movement to receive mass public attention. Yet with the continued organising and protests of young Chinese women on university campuses and the rise of the movement both on and offline, Chinese state media has begun to comment on its existence. Transnational alliances have helped to achieve this. Where the #MeToo movement has brought to the fore the scale of everyday and institutionalised sexual harassment and assault, it has also brought about new possibilities for transnational feminist solidarities.

Black feminism and Black Lives Matter

It is perhaps through the Black Lives Matter movement, a movement established by queer black women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, in the aftermath of the acquittal of George Zimmerman, charged with the murder of Trayvon Martin, in 2013 (see blacklivesmatter.com) that the pivotal role of black feminism within

anti-racist movements mobilising against police violence has really come to the fore. Police violence and imprisonment have been a perpetual focus of black feminists who have pointed to the deep connections between slavery and the US penitentiary system, the incorporation of racist ideologies within the criminal justice system (through representations associating black people with criminality), and the integration of punishment regimes sanctioned under slavery within the prison system (Davis, 2003; Alexander, 2010; Ritchie, 2012). Connecting this history with contemporary structures, black feminists have been at the forefront of naming and critiquing the 'prison industrial complex', a term used by activists and scholars to dispel myths that rising levels of incarceration were rooted in rising crime levels and to illustrate, rather, that 'prison construction and the attendant drive to fill these new structures with human bodies have been driven by ideologies of racism and the pursuit of profit' (Davis, 2003: 84). Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007), for example, unpacks the relationship between the growing number of prisons in the USA and the re-structuring of the political economy to show how prisons, incarceration and related practices of securitisation have been the state solution to surpluses of finance capital, land, labour and state capacity. The consequences have led to a significant increase in levels of incarceration of young people and escalations in the use of punitive justice.

Significantly raising the profile of the scale, intensity and banal nature of police brutality against black people, the Black Lives Matter movement has helped to reconfigure mobilisations within a feminist frame. Alongside feminist analyses of and interventions against police violence and expansive imprisonment, the movement for Black Lives has built on the longer struggle to open up discussions to centre the experiences of women, and to note connections between direct violence from the police and other forms of state oppression, such as the denial of state welfare assistance and policing by social services (Ritchie, 2012; Roberts, 2017), as well as the connections between state violence and violence in the domestic sphere. As Cathy Cohen (2016: 776, in conversation with Jackson) notes, 'feminism fundamentally makes us ask the question, when we confront the traditional model [of who we think about as the victim of state violence], what are the other examples of state violence or state oppression that we need to be paying attention to?'

Feminism has informed the Black Lives Matter movement in terms of structure and leadership (Cohen and Jackson, 2016). It is not a movement led by a single (male) figure but a movement that is 'leaderful' with cis and trans women taking positions of power (Ransby, 2018). And it has also informed the ways in which ultimate goals and objectives are imagined. As Cathy Cohen (2016: 777, in conversation with Sarah Jackson) explains, 'Radical black feminists, in particular, have argued that while immediate policy changes can be part of what we fight for, the structural transformation of the lived condition of marginal communities has to guide our struggle'. In this sense, critical black feminists have argued that alternative justice systems to the state criminal justice system must be sought in order to address gender violence and other forms of harm since the police themselves act as an oppressive force against black and other working-class communities. Following this line, Black Lives Matter has, too, advocated for alternative systems of restorative justice.

Yet as I have been indicating through the chapter, black, postcolonial and indigenous feminists have stressed the need to understand and analyse the mutually

constitutive, intersecting axes of race, class and gender for reckoning with structural forms of oppression and for informing strategies of struggle. Here, questions asking what solidarity and sisterhood mean and how they ought to be practiced, which were raised in earlier feminist movements, have continued to occupy debates in contemporary struggles. While there are continuities between earlier black feminist movements and the Black Lives Matter movement, there is also some recurring debate regarding the role of 'identity politics' and subject positioning in struggle.

In *How We Get Free*, a collection of interviews with black feminists, Keeyanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2017) re-connects contemporary anti-racist organising through Black Lives Matter with earlier black feminists who formed the Combahee River Collective (CRC). The CRC was a radical black feminist organisation formed in 1974, 'named after Harriet Tubman's 1853 raid on the Combahee River in South Carolina that freed 750 enslaved people' (Taylor, 2017: 4). They were a radical alternative to the National Black Feminist Organisation which was more conservative in its outlook and had failed to grapple with issues of class alongside race. It was the Combahee River Collective statement, published in 1977 and a key reference point for much subsequent anti-racist feminist organising, that introduced to the world terms such as *interlocking oppression* and *identity politics*. These terms intended to recognise that black women were not ever a single category, but it was the merging of multiple identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, that compounded how black women experienced oppression. Though these ideas had been alluded to in much earlier writing by African American women – for example, by Anna Julia Cooper in 1892 (Taylor, 2017) – the CRC helped to centre the importance of them. They sought to extend socialist analysis and struggles for emancipation to encompass race, gender and sexuality. The significance of the CRC statement is explained by Taylor (2017: 7–8):

> The Combahee River Collective Statement stands tall among the many statements, manifestos, and other public declarations of the period for its clarity, rigor, and political reach. It is an important document not only as a statement of radical Black feminism but also in its contribution to the revolutionary left in the United States. The main reason is that the women of Combahee not only saw themselves as 'radicals' but also considered themselves socialists. They were not acting or writing against Marxism, but, in their own words, they looked to 'extend' Marxist analysis by recognizing the plight of Black women as an oppressed group that has particular political needs. As they wrote, 'We are not convinced … that a socialist revolution that is not also a feminist and antiracist revolution will guarantee our liberation.'

In the way the CRC spoke of it, identity politics referred to two factors. The first was that oppression on the basis of identity (whether race, gender, class or sexual orientation) was a source of political radicalisation. The social position of black women in the US context made them disproportionately vulnerable to the exploitations and violence of capitalism. The second was that personal experience shaped political outlook. In the words of Taylor (2017: 9) 'The experiences of oppression, humiliations and the indignities created by poverty, racism, and sexism opened Black women up to the possibility of radical and revolutionary politics'.

Following on from this, in more recent times, questions have been raised over the misplaced use of identity politics as a concept, which it is suggested has moved away from its original intention (Taylor, 2017; Haider, 2018). In anti-racist organising around Black Lives Matter, for example, the use and mobilisation of identity politics has been open to critique and debate (Haider, 2018). Interventions here have warned against the use of a more reductive conceptualisation of 'identity politics' that moves away from structural forms of analysis so that the identity of subjects becomes the central focus of the ways in which struggles are organised. The point of referring back to the objectives of the CRC and their use of the term is to re-centre the political and historical basis and context of the concept (Haider, 2018). It is to remind us that as the CRC used it, identity politics was not intended to be exclusionary or suggest that only those experiencing a particular form of oppression could fight against it; nor was identity politics intended to be used 'as a tool to claim the mantle of the "most oppressed"' (Taylor, 2017: 11). It was intended, rather, to validate and recognise the particular experiences of oppressed groups while simultaneously creating a space for their political organisation and mobilisation.

Conclusion

Anti-racist feminists are principally concerned with exploring the multiple ways in which different but interrelated systems of oppression intersect. Arguably, one of the most critical contributions of black, women of colour, postcolonial and indigenous feminisms is that they have highlighted the insufficiency of understanding and struggling against inequalities and injustices through a singular frame. Rather, anti-racist feminisms, in their most radical form, have pointed to the connections between racism, sexism, and class inequalities, noting the circularities between oppression in the West and the Global South as well as the distinct differences. The specificities of these feminist concerns alter in different locales, but intersectional frameworks have enabled political solidarities among them.

Further reading

G. Bhattacharyya (2008) *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror*. London: Zed Books. This book provides a great analysis of the sexualised racism of the War on Terror, as well as the ways in which feminism has been appropriated and everyday militarisation intensified in this context.

K. Jayawardena (2016) *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Verso. This book provides excellent analysis of the histories of feminist movements across the Third World, decentring Western feminism and showing how Third World women's movements for social emancipation have their own trajectories, outside Western feminism, responding to changes in historical circumstances that produced material and ideological changes that affected women.

K. Y. Taylor (ed.) (2017) *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books. This book provides a good introduction to radical black feminism as it has progressed from the 1970s to the contemporary through a series of interviews with black

feminist activists from those who founded the Combahee River Collective to one of the founders of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Wilson ([1978] 2018) *Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain*. Toronto: Daraja Press. Focusing on the experiences of Asian women migrating to Britain, this book offers theoretical insight into post-war emigration, patriarchy, caste and feudal practices, race relations, colonialism and imperialism.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why have anti-racist feminists argued that intersectional approaches are important for understanding and addressing social inequalities?

2. What are some of the historical and contemporary critiques raised by postcolonial feminists in relation to Western feminism?

3. How is 'imperialist feminism' exemplified in the racism and sexism faced by Muslim women?

4. What are some of the key agendas of contemporary anti-racist/anti-imperialist feminist movements? What are some of the challenges to achieving solidarity in struggle?

7 MEN, MASCULINITY STUDIES AND FEMINISM

Victoria Robinson

Introduction

The study of masculinities continues to develop both across the disciplines and within the field of critical masculinity studies. Topics which have traditionally been theorised in relation to men and masculinities such as sexuality, sport and the relationship of masculinity studies to feminism remain on the academic agenda. However, newer areas and re-imagined older topics are increasingly being theorised, such as masculinity and affect theory, intersectionality and race, as well as the development of new conceptual frameworks such as inclusive masculinity, and the blurring of popular and theoretical debates around concepts such as toxic masculinity. Increasingly, developments, arguments and critiques of masculinity are taking place online, as well as in institutions of higher education.

The international political landscape, with its shift to the right and the growth of populism and nationalism worldwide, has meant a rise in anti-feminist and misogynist views in the 'real' world and online, but also a feminist fightback by women, especially younger women, against the worst excesses of patriarchal masculinity. This can be witnessed in the development of campaigns such as the #MeToo movement where men's sexist and abusive behaviour is called to account (see the chapters by Charles and Kapoor in this volume). This has been accompanied by an increasing, if not yet complete, theorising of masculinity in global contexts, which has revealed how some men, too, according to race/ethnicity, class and sexuality, for example, can be seen as vulnerable, and, in diverse contexts, discriminated against.

Therefore, this chapter examines the continuing growth of masculinity studies, the development of theoretical and empirical work on masculinity across disciplines and the key concepts and issues associated with this, as well as the connection of masculinity to gender relations and feminism. In 2000, Stephen Whitehead noted that since the mid-1980s, research on men and masculinities has grown rapidly, citing as evidence the enormous number of books, websites and courses as evidence of this phenomenon. Initially, some feminists were sceptical about such developments (Canaan and Griffin, 1990), but the growth in research on men and masculinities shows no sign of abating.

Indeed, interest has increased across the disciplines in different countries worldwide, especially in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Europe, but also in more recent times in other countries such as Africa (see Morrell et al., 2012; Hearn et al., 2015; Pasura and Christou, 2018) and Asian countries (see Louie and Low, 2005; Ikeya, 2014; Louie, 2014; Lin et al., 2016; Martin, 2017), amongst others. Since 2002, the establishment of masculinity studies and theorising men

and masculinity within the disciplines has continued to grow in exciting new ways. Lucas Gottzén and Ulf Mellström (2014) argue that masculinity studies has now become a more international and institutionalised field, evidenced by academic infrastructures, the proliferation of academic posts and institutional support, albeit still a 'modest' field of research. This has manifested in courses on men's studies, as in the United States, or – in an increasing number of countries – courses on masculinity in disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies, literature, history and education, but more recently in disciplines or areas such as technology and business and organisation studies. The term *masculinity studies* is used generally to define this field of study and research. Though, as I go on to discuss, there have recently been renewed critiques of masculinity studies as an area, by feminists and others.

In this chapter, the following will be discussed:

- a historical context to the study of men and masculinity;

- the institutionalisation of masculinity studies;

- some fundamental concepts and ideas which inform this theorising on masculinity, including recent debates around both toxic and inclusive masculinity;

- developments around men and sexuality in global contexts;

- feminist and other recent critiques of theorising on masculinity.

The historical context

It should initially be noted that feminists, and others, have constantly maintained that the study of masculinity has always been, and remains, part of the feminist agenda (see Hanmer, 1990; Evans, 1997). As early as 1978, in *About Men*, Phyllis Chesler wrote on men and patriarchy, men's relationships with other men and their relationships with women. She considered, amongst other issues, men and sex, pornography, fantasies and male violence:

> I wrote this book in order to understand men. First, I turned to books already written by men, about men. I found them of limited usefulness. Only some men, mainly poets and novelists, spoke about themselves in a personally authentic voice; only some men wrote about the male condition with an awareness that is different from the female condition.
>
> (Chesler, 1978: xv)

Feminist criticisms of this emerging field were visible in the 1990s, including those by Joyce Canaan and Christine Griffin (1990), and Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (1994), although these and other writers were also cautiously optimistic about such developments. Feminists in different countries have also commented on and critiqued masculinity theorists' attempts to theorise gender in relation to feminism (see Wetherell and Griffin, 1991; Richardson and Robinson, 1994; Bartky, 1998). So, too, have gay men (Edwards, 1994) and those concerned with issues of race and ethnicity (Abdel-Shehid, 2005). The issue of intersectionality more generally,

including class, age and embodiment has, more recently, been placed on the masculinity studies agenda. Moreover, debate continues about the place of the study of masculinity in gender and in women's studies courses (see, for example, Gaffney and Manno, 2011, who examine the pedagogical implications of integrating the topic of masculinities into these courses in the United States).

Such past critiques will be considered later in the chapter, as well as how some of these earlier criticisms have been addressed. As we will see subsequently, the theories and concepts used by masculinity theorists have developed and become more sophisticated, as well as being more recently critiqued (see O'Neill, 2015; Waling, 2018). Theorists writing about masculinity have also been reflective about the methodologies they have employed when engaging in such theorising. For instance, there have been various criticisms of the sex role paradigm used in the early days when masculinity was first theorised. The sex role concept originally developed by Talcott Parsons, which sees masculinity as a fixed and easily defined set of behavioural norms into which all men fit, has been criticised by feminists and those involved in men's studies. Key criticisms have been that masculinity, and indeed femininity, are seen in singular, not plural, terms. Moreover, within the sex role theoretical framework, power relations between women and men, and between men themselves can be ignored, and cultural or historical differences can be downplayed (see Brod, 1987; Kimmel, 1990, for further discussion of this topic in a historical context).

As well as functionalist concepts such as sex roles coming under scrutiny, some theorists have also criticised the biological determinism which has underpinned some thinking on male behaviour and identity (Whitehead, 2002). The general theoretical consensus has been, as within feminism, that social constructionist theories are best suited to explain mens' behaviour in a contemporary, historical and cross-cultural context. But within a broad, and increasingly problematised, social constructionist viewpoint on masculine identity, subjectivity and behaviour, diverse perspectives and issues are covered, some of which this chapter will explore.

Therefore, out of these earlier critiques of initial concepts such as sex role theory and biological determinism, came some later concerns:

- the notion that masculinities are multiple;

- the need to study men and masculinities in historical and cross-cultural contexts;

- the idea expressed by the term *hegemonic masculinity*;

- an increasing recognition that masculinity studies needs to be more globalised;

- an emerging concern with intersectionality (Box 7.1).

Box 7.1 – Hegemonic masculinity

Historically, there has been a move to recognising 'hegemonic masculinities' – that is, asking how 'particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance' (Brod, 1987: 92). The work of Connell (1987, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2019) has been fundamental to the development of this concept.

The institutionalisation of the study of men and masculinities

Both women and men have theorised masculinity, and masculinity studies has been institutionalised, especially in the United States, in the guise of 'men's studies'. I have previously argued (Robinson, 2001) that men's studies as a field of study was a recent development in higher education, mainly in North America and Europe. The so-far limited institutionalisation of men's studies can be seen as having its origins in the 'men's movement' (particularly in the United States) or in other Western countries in the context of diverse groupings of 'men against sexism'. More recently, it can be seen that in some parts of the world – for example, the Nordic countries and the United States – there are academic posts which now exist specifically in the field of masculinity and courses on men and masculinity, as well as the international proliferation of centres for the study of masculinity, and networks and conferences where masculinity research is central.

In a now-classic definition, men's studies have been termed 'the study of masculinities and experiences as specific and varying social-historical-cultural formations' (Brod, 1987: 40). The need for such an interdisciplinary subject area has been based on the idea that, whilst seemingly about men, traditional scholarship precludes the study of masculinity as a specific male experience. Men's studies, like women's studies/gender studies, are opposed to patriarchal ideology's masquerade as knowledge and raise new questions whilst simultaneously revealing the inadequacy of established frameworks of knowledge in answering old ones (Brod, 1987).

Others have preferred, for political and theoretical reasons, the term *critical studies of men and masculinities* (Hearn and Morgan, 1990) or, more recently, *the critical studies of men* (Hearn, 2004). This perspective has been seen to be more sensitive to earlier feminist scepticism and fears of the de-politicisation of gendered power relations through a 'complementary' approach to the study of masculinities – that is, 'men's studies'. Such simplistic typologising obscures differences and similarities within and between such positions. Further, many theorists writing on masculinity outside these two positions, across the disciplines, may not align themselves with either position but may well use the theoretical insights of both perspectives, more often combined under the broad term of *masculinity studies*. Within these broad perspectives, those theorists writing about men and masculinities do so on a growing number of different topics, which include the body, globalisation, intimacy and the emotions, fatherhood, sport, violence, aging and the life course and feminism, amongst others. Initially, it was in the Anglophone world, Nordic counties and elsewhere in Europe where masculinity studies were first established, but there is growing evidence of the emergence of theorising on masculinity in parts of the world such as Asia, Latin America and Africa (Gottzén and Mellström, 2014; see also Gabriel, 2014; Louie, 2014; Ratele, 2014; Serrano-Amaya and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, 2015; Venkatesh, 2015; Lin et al., 2016; Martin, 2017; Pasura and Christou, 2018).

However, it is important in looking at the growing and diverse critical positions on masculinity to recognise theoretical and methodological differences both between and within the groups and perspectives that characterise this body of writing. For instance, those interested in both theorising men and masculinities and in men's position in society have ranged from the North American Robert Bly, whose movement sought to

heal men's deep psychological wounds by their becoming 'wild men', in touch with each other's feelings as men and which is sometimes defined as the mytho-poetic men's movement; the Jungian perspective, which sees masculinity and femininity as connected intimately to psychic truths; the gay men's movement; the pro-feminists who would align themselves with the feminist cause; and those men who are simply 'anti-women', and who argue that the Women's Movement and feminism have emasculated men, with women now having the advantage, in the world of work.

Tim Edwards (2006) summed up some of these shifts and argues that the study of men and masculinity can be divided into three main 'waves':

- The first wave, in the 1970s, referred to the development of the 'sex role' model in relation to questions surrounding masculinity.

- The second wave, in the 1980s, was based on the notion that the model of a white, Western, middle-class account of masculinity was not adequate to explore the multi-faceted nature of men's diverse experiences. Further, working-class, black and gay men were now viewed as subordinate to this hegemonic model and, importantly, the main emphasis in the study of masculinity was now on power, and its very complex meanings and operations.

- The third wave, since the 1990s, is very much influenced by poststructuralist theory, insofar as it relates to performativity, normativity and sexuality. In this phase, Edwards argues, we see a much more interdisciplinary body of work occurring, for instance, with work across literary, cultural and media studies, as well as the social sciences. Here, the emphasis is now on masculinity as contingent, open to change and in flux (Box 7.2).

Box 7.2 – Recent developments

Since the 1990s, it can be seen that as well as masculinity research encompassing more disciplines than ever and in more countries worldwide, contemporary developments include an increased and more nuanced recognition that masculinity is globalised (see Hearn, 2014; Hearn et al., 2015), that the relationship with masculinity studies and feminism needs to be continually re-evaluated (see Beasley, 2012; Waling, 2018), that key concepts such as hegemonic masculinity have been both critiqued and developed, that 'old' and not always attended to concerns of differences between men are starting to be conceptualised in relation to intersectionality (see Christensen and Jensen, 2014), and also that theorising of masculinity continues in new and diverse ways (see Buchbinder, 2012), including new methodological insights (see Pini and Pease, 2013; Schjerpen Hoel, 2015).

Having given both a brief historical and an institutional context, this chapter will now go on to examine in more depth some of these key conceptual innovations in the study of masculinity.

Conceptual developments in the study of masculinity

As already stated, amongst masculinity writers in general there has been (from the 1990s especially) an acceptance of masculinity as a social construction which, as such, sees masculinity as fluid and open to both contestation and change:

> This has led to a recognition that the dominant forms of men and masculinities are themselves not merely 'natural' and unchangeable ... Thus men and masculinities are not seen as problematic but as social constructions which need to be explored, analysed and indeed in certain respects, such as the use of violence, changed.
>
> (Morgan, 1992: vii)

There has also been a move away from the notion of a singular masculinity to the idea of masculinities. As Whitehead (2002) notes, masculinities are multiple and plural, differing over time, space and context and they are enmeshed with variables such as race and ethnicity, class and age. He also warns against seeing 'truths' of masculinity in the behaviours, attitudes and practices of men and boys. He argues that theorists such as Freud, Jung and Parsons have fallen into this tendency.

Raewyn Connell (2000) makes the point in relation to the concept of multiple masculinities, that in multicultural societies there are also multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity. As well, such diversity between men exists in both different settings and in the same setting. Men enact manhood in different ways, for example depending on whether the context is work, school or home based. She gives the instance of a 'transnational business masculinity', which she defines as a form of masculinity marked by egocentrism, conditional loyalties (even to corporations), and a declining sense of responsibility to others. Such men have power in multinational corporations and operate in global markets. However, it is important to recognise that this group is not a homogenous one. For instance, in East Asia, there is more of a tendency for this group of men to be involved in business by a commitment to hierarchical relations and a social consensus. By contrast, for men operating in business in North America, there is a tendency to display hedonism, individualism and more social conflict. She concludes:

> Though the hierarchy of masculinities is part of the problem in gender relations, the fact that there are different masculinities is in itself an asset. At the lowest level, it is established that masculinity itself is not a single fixed pattern. More positively, multiple masculinities represent complexity of interests and purposes which open possibilities for change.
>
> (Connell, 2000: 226)

In this way, by seeing masculinities as different across and between contexts, we can envisage change occurring through the dynamic and multi-faceted experiences of men, in a global context.

The 'crisis of masculinity'

The idea of a crisis of masculinity has had much purchase for some of the theorists writing on masculinity, and for popular culture and the media. Therefore, due to changes in the economic structures which have impacted on occupational roles for men, and subsequent changes in their family position as head of the household, as well as the rise of feminism, some have claimed that men no longer have a stable identity, and an existential state of crisis has thus ensued (see Faludi, 1999). Whitehead (2002) argues, however, that we need to be wary of insisting that men are in crisis. In his view:

- Firstly, men are not a homogenous group and therefore all men cannot be in crisis.

- As well, the notion of a crisis justifies a backlash against women's interests in general and feminism in particular.

Alternatively, Edwards (2006) asserts that the very concept of a crisis is itself unclear in terms of what it actually means. He argues that it is important neither to dismiss the concept, nor fully accept the validity of it. Are men, he asks, actually in crisis, but not in ways which are most popularly thought of? If, as he further argues, it can be seen that for men such a crisis stems from both 'inside' and 'outside' – that is, outside in relation to men's position in the family and work, for instance, and inside, in relation to men's experiences and any perceived shifts in these experiences of actually 'being men' – then we can perhaps start to narrow down what the concept might mean for different men. He concludes that through an examination of specific areas such as work, crime, family and sexuality, amongst others, it can be seen that, geographically, some men have 'crisis tendencies' – that is, some men indeed have been affected by wider economic trends leading to increased unemployment and deprivation in inner city or rural areas. However, he feels there is very little evidence to support the thesis of an 'overall crisis' in masculinity. Buchbiner (2012) goes further and considers the argument that this crisis may actually be built into the very structure of the masculine, and he examines emergent masculinities post-9/11. Connell (2005), on the other hand, sees the crisis as dual-edged, in that masculinities have been configured around a 'crisis tendency': 'both through conflict over strategies of legitimation and through men's divergent responses to feminism … While the tension leads some men to the cults of masculinity … it leads others to support feminist reforms' (Connell, 2005: 85). Out of such a 'crisis', then, can emerge, at least potentially, positive changes to gendered power relations.

More recently, those writing on men and masculinity have attempted to see a notion of 'crisis' in different terms. If a conception of 'crisis' as a discursive tactic to enable men to hold onto patriarchal power is simplistic as well as being too suspicious, as Fintan Walsh (2010) contends, then his view that crisis is not necessarily an end in itself but a state of disorder which is merely a precursor to a period of productivity and restructuring, as well as constitutive of subjectivity allows for a more creative interpretation of the concept: 'To think of masculinity as an embodied, social and political domain in which crisis might be performed is to conceive of gender and sexuality as a performative arena of sorts, where ostensible disorder does not simply signal the

radical dissolution of form but rather its reorganization' (2010: 1–2). Whilst I (Robinson, 2014) have argued that we have to examine the notion of crisis in the context of contemporary political discourse and creatively connect it to other concepts, such as risk, if we are not to continue treading old (theoretical) ground around the 'crisis' concept.

However, there are currently renewed calls that we are in the middle of new debates around the concept. Raisin (2017) writes:

> The rise of this purported crisis debate is indicative of the fact we are living in a time of significant social change. Because so many of the historical constructions of society are fundamentally patriarchal, when those ossified structures are loosened – whether by a movement (first- and second-wave feminism, for example) or circumstance (de-industrialisation, financial crisis, or the fracturing of political predictabilities) – then any one-size conception of masculinity buried within them is thrown into the open.
>
> (Raisin, 2017: para 2)

His response to this is that we need dialogue and openness to be able to talk about men's anxieties in relation to any perceived notions of crisis, but also importantly, from a feminist and gendered relations perspective, we need to have equality to move the conversation about men in crisis on. However, some theorists continue to refuse to believe in the concept of crisis, seeing it as a bogus idea which can be more accurately termed a *rhetoric of crisis*, which allows feminist claims to be de-legitimised, albeit one which has real impact on society (Dupuis-Déri, 2012).

Hegemonic masculinity

The most debated, discussed and influential concept in masculinity studies has been the concept of hegemonic masculinities. It is also argued that most men do not correspond to the hegemonic model, but that many men are complicit in sustaining it. The hegemonic model of masculinity is also seen as heterosexual (see Carrigan et al., 1985), a claim I go into more detail on later in the chapter.

The Australian scholar, Raewyn Connell, already referred to (1987, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2019), is one of the theorists writing on masculinity to reach a wider audience outside the field of masculinity studies. Her work on a 'critique of hegemonic masculinity' has been very influential in shaping the terms of the debate on masculinity. Connell's definition and analysis of hegemonic masculinity views heterosexual men as entrenched in the system of patriarchy, but she also finds reasons for men to want to change this system, even though they are the main beneficiaries of such an oppressive structure. She asserts that not all men are the same and some groups such as 'effeminate or unassertive heterosexuals' may not be part of the dominant masculinity.

For these theorists writing in the second wave, hegemonic masculinity is one which is 'white, heterosexist, middle class, Anglophone, and so on' (Hearn and Morgan, 1990: 11). This model allows us, they claimed, to look at the various

subordinations, stigmatisations and marginalisation men may experience within patriarchal societies because of their sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion or marital status.

Historically, feminists such as Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) have also explored the concept of a hegemonic masculinity. They note that masculinity varies over time and setting and also argue:

> Hegemonic versions of masculinity frame relations of inequality. How-ever, hegemonic forms are never totally comprehensive, nor do they ever completely control subordinates. That is, there is always some space for subordinate versions of masculinity – as alternative gendered identities which validate self-worth and encourage resistance.
>
> (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994: 5)

The concept of change in relation to different groups of men is a prevalent one in recent literature on masculinity. In her later work, Connell (2005) further examines the concept of hegemonic masculinity by stressing multiple masculinities and by exploring groups of men undergoing different experiences of change. Some are seen to be wanting to transform gender relations, and others are resisting these transformations. Connell's general theoretical construct is to combine, in her analysis, both men's personal life and social structures. So a notion of compulsory heterosexuality for men, for example, is seen to reveal both the complexity of changes in masculinity and also the diverse possibilities of real change.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is one which has attracted, in more recent years, some criticism of it as a concept that can explain the experiences of all men, in different cultures and historical periods, and I will raise some of these criticisms later in the chapter. It is worth now considering more closely the idea of hegemonic masculinity in relation to heterosexuality and heteronormativity, given the number of issues it raises for feminists and others.

Hegemonic masculinities and heterosexuality

As I have argued (Robinson, 2007), a number of theorists have closely linked hegemonic masculinities to heterosexuality, which is seen to have consequences for diverse groups of women and men in different ways. One such theorist, Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (1996), has argued that theorists have explored the ways in which dominant definitions of heterosexual masculinity are affirmed and authenticated within those social and cultural arenas where ideologies, discourses, representations and material practices systematically privilege men and boys.

In later work, Mac an Ghaill and Chris Haywood (2011) extend their analysis to engage with a multi-dimensional perspective to show how young working-class men currently inhabit a new cultural condition the authors term the 'post-colonial urban space of inner-city schools'. They argue that it is through the lens of multiple categories of difference – for example, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, generation and class – that these shifts can best be articulated. Thus, a contemporary concern with intersectionality, including sexuality, can be seen to inform this theorising of working-class

masculinity and education. (See also McCormack and Anderson, 2010, for research which argues homophobia is lessening in the face of the development of a 'softer' masculinity in a UK school; and Blanchard et al., (2017) for ethnographic work in a north-east England school which proposes that young men have positive attitudes towards homosexuality, as well as being able to exhibit emotional and physical intimacy with each other.)

Further to this, in the late 1970s and early 1980s there developed a focus on men's violence as being systematic and central to male domination and a growing critique of normative heterosexuality and masculine sexuality as fundamentally implicated in this violence (see Hearn, 1998a). Later, there was a growing complexity in feminist accounts of power and violence in heterosexuality, as exemplified in the work of feminist theorists such as Stevi Jackson (1999) and Diane Richardson (2000b, 2010); see also Kelly in this volume. Heterosexual men have also been seen to be entrenched in a defence of patriarchy, but as noted in the previous section of this chapter some authors, such as Connell (2000), have also found a number of reasons why it is in men's interests to question the institution of heterosexuality and their part in upholding this and patriarchal relations.

The specific concept of 'masculism' recognises hierarchical forms of masculinity as powerful and privileged in various settings and contexts, including the way heterosexual men are advantaged (see Carrigan et al., 1985; Whitehead, 2002). Further, hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as how dominant male sexual practices are used to generate a naturalised view of the world, a view that is so ingrained in dominant culture that it appears as natural, or as 'common sense'. Indeed, hegemonic masculinities are premised on masculinity being defined as femininity's opposite and, within this context, heterosexuality is the unchallenged, often essentialised, norm which upholds this hegemony (see Connell, 2000, 2005).

A number of diverse topics and areas have sustained critical attention in the context of hegemonic masculinities and heterosexuality. These include: sport, intimacy, the emotions, embodiment, violence, education, fatherhood and relationships (see Hockey et al., 2007; Robinson and Hockey, 2011). In an innovative work, Katarzyna Kosmala (2013) investigates heteronormativity and the spatial and temporal representations of masculinities, doing so in relation to representation and visual culture. This investigation is across different spheres, for example, leisure and work in relation to public discourses and private spaces, including the realm of the sexual. Since then, Karioris and Allan (2018) have argued that there are limits to how sexuality is theorised within critical studies of men and masculinities, and the time has come to see if a more 'sex positive' stance on men's sexuality is possible (Box 7.3).

> **Box 7.3 – Global heteronormativity**
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> A body of work exists that has been concerned with men, heterosexual and other identities, behaviours, practices and gender relations in global contexts. Some of these accounts provide a sharp contrast to the idea of inclusive and less threatening masculinities when witnessed in relation to other men and women. Ratele (2014) is concerned with well-known cases of homophobia in both Malawi and South Africa and argues that there is some evidence that reveals a

shift in hegemonic African masculinities. However, though homosexuality and non-heteronormative sexualities can be seen as threats to the dominant heterosexual order, they also serve as a distraction for some of the socioeconomic difficulties of Africa's hegemonic rulers, and personify the difficulties of achieving the hegemonic African masculine ideal (see also Shefer (2013) and Ratele and Shefer (2013) on race, sexuality and apartheid). Victoria Robinson (2020) has identified the importance of theorising risk in the context of masculinities and sexuality, specifically when men follow such heteronormative and hegemonic sexual scripts. Men can take sexual risks through heterosexual penetrative sex which endangers both themselves and their female partners. (See Dworkin (2015) and also Plummer (2013) for research in the Caribbean on young men and risk-taking sexual behaviour and Ragnarsonn et al.'s (2010) work on the sexual health risks to men through unprotected sex.) Meanwhile, Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto and Chiara Bertone (2012) argue that medical discourses surrounding the taking of Viagra help to re-establish biological notions of Italian men's virility, through a focus on men as predators and concepts of respectability. Importantly, however, Shefer et al. (2015) argue that assumptions where young women are always defined as vulnerable while young men are simultaneously assumed to have power need to be challenged with a renewed focus on men and risk, where their own potential vulnerability and lack of power is accepted.

Critiques of theorising on men and masculinities

There have been both general critiques by feminists and others of theorising on masculinities and more specific interrogations of key concepts such as 'hegemonic masculinities'. I will discuss both these elements in this section.

In their diverse responses to theorising masculinity, theorists have varied in their relation to feminist theory and feminism as a political movement. Some theorists have acknowledged the debt male theorists owe to feminism, while others have rejected feminist insights or have stereotyped particular feminist positions such as radical feminism (Robinson, 2003).

Further, there has been an overriding concern that the current notion of emphasising changing masculinities should not ignore or minimise men's continuing power at both a structural and personal level. Putting such critiques in a historical context, the feminist Jalna Hanmer (1990) has asserted that there are aspects of the approaches to the study of men which worry her, particularly the US role theory and socialisation theory. She saw this as limiting the study to the individual, or else attempting to explain social formation and processes purely at the level of the individual. As already noted in this chapter, some masculinity theorists themselves have criticised this approach (see Whitehead, 2002).

Victor Seidler (1994), when discussing 'men's studies' as they have developed in the United States, put forward the argument that their development has left behind 'difficult personal terrain' for theoretical engagement. This suspicion is connected to the strength of a positivist social science methodology in men's studies, which Seidler feels is related to the disciplinary strength of psychology and leads to his criticism of

a behaviourist approach. This is seen to be a simplistic explanation for the connection between empirical research and feminist theory – for example, in the relationship of pornography's effects on men and their behaviour and relationships with partners.

Other writers, for example Harry Christian (1994), are more concerned with dis-locating the idea of hegemonic masculinity. He has argued that, though a common conception of heterosexual men's experiences of sex is one of domination and control, his personal experience has been that sex is about shared physical enjoyment. So, he argues against general statements about heterosexual men, based on limited empirical evidence, which ignore variations amongst straight men, and concludes that:

> The non-gay identity needs to be distinguished (Christian, 1994: 188). Edwards (1994, 2006), writing on the issue of gay studies and masculin-ity, has further argued: 'In addition, men's studies of masculinity added some insights into masculinity and male experience though frequently excluded full consideration of sexual orientation and heterosexuality as a component of masculine identity.'
>
> (Edwards, 1994: 1)

Whether masculinity studies has fully discussed or theorised these differences, which a focus on hegemonic masculinities reveals, is still doubtful. Some would disagree, and moreover would argue that the field of men's studies has recognised that it 'owes a lot to those voices proclaiming the legitimacy of experience and the need for recog-nition of the inherent dignity of other marginalised groups (gays, lesbians and people of colour)' (see Doyle, 1994). Thus, it is claimed that the early works of men's studies practitioners, where masculinity was constructed by generalising from white, hetero-sexual and middle-class experience, do not now inform and limit the analyses of mas-culinity. Other, more current scholars, or other masculinity theorists in general, may not agree that men's studies have theoretically embraced diversity and difference fully, but they argue, as Gottzén and Mellström (2014) do, that there is a growing concern with intersectionality, as evidenced in the work of Mellström (2003), Jeff Hearn (2009) and Sune Qvotrup Jensen (2010). McCormack (2012) puts forward an argu-ment that teenage boys are redefining both masculinity and heterosexuality, which is leading to a decrease in homophobia (Box 7.4).

Box 7.4 – Race and masculinities

Gamal Abdel-Shehid (2005) is concerned with exploring how black sporting mas-culinities have been both constructed and interpreted within critical masculinity studies which he terms 'good boy feminism'. He illustrates this by the use of Michael Messner's work on sport, which he critiques as being too simplistic in its conflation of sport and patriarchy. Here, 'good boy feminism's' notions of mascu-linity are seen to incorporate a hierarchical and essentialised notion of maleness. Further, black men are presumed to be 'written out of text of male participation in feminism by virtue of their placement within the "state of the nature"' (Abdel-Shehid, 2005: 53). He claims that 'good boy feminism' is a heterosexist, as well as racist, paradigm because of an inherent inability to theorise desire and how

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it works for men in the making and unmaking of masculinity. Men, by virtue of their essential maleness, can only be either masculine or emasculated, and, therefore, Abdel-Shehid sees no theoretical middle ground is available.

Since that time, there have been more nuanced attempts to examine and critique the multifaceted and complex lives and representations of black masculinity. An example of this is Mark A. Neal (2013), who uses current African American popular culture to interrogate black masculinity from different perspectives.

Other work, for example, by Michael Kimmel (2013), attempts to deconstruct the lives of 'angry white men' in the United States, who, he argues, suffer from a collective sense of 'aggrieved entitlement', as men across classes in the United States feel that minority groups and women now benefit in ways white men used to do historically. Letting go of that rage, he feels, will allow men to be healthier and happier human beings. More recent research can be seen to have emerged on global and transnational masculinities, where race in intersection with other variables has been examined, see Hearn et al. (2015) and Pasura and Christou (2018).

Critiques of hegemonic masculinity and contemporary conceptual developments

A more general critique of hegemonic masculinities is offered by Whitehead, who argues, on one hand, that the concept 'achieves what patriarchy fails to achieve: it offers a nuanced account of femininity-male power while staying loyal to the notions of gender and sexual ideology, and male dominance' (Whitehead, 2002: 90). But he also argues that, as a concept, hegemonic masculinity is as reductionist a category as patriarchy, its fundamental inconsistency being that while it recognises difference and resistance, its primary underpinning is seen to be its notion of a fixed male structure. (However, it is worth noting that some feminists have challenged this rather reductionist view of patriarchy itself: see, for example, Walby (1990).) Ultimately, Whitehead argues: 'Hegemonic masculinity is a useful shorthand descriptor of dominant masculinities, but its overuse results in obfuscation, in the conflation of fluid masculinities with overarching structure and, ultimately, in "abstract structural dynamics"' (Whitehead, 2002: 9).

Victor Seidler (2006) further critiques Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinities for making it difficult to understand the relationship of diverse masculinities within particular cultures, as cultures have been reduced to relationships of power, and so we have not been able to theorise the ways in which culture relates to emotional life and power. In addition, Hearn (2014) argues that the term 'hegemonic masculinity' has now become hegemonic itself. Though Hearn does not reject the concept, and acknowledges its clear usefulness in theorising masculinity, he states that it does not go far enough in its aim to deconstruct gender and gender relations. Instead, as he argued in 2004, he calls for a shift in focus to the idea of the 'hegemony of men', which he defines as 'a dialectical material, embodied formulation, highlighting '*naming men as men*' … yet also critiquing how the taken-for-granted category of men obscures intersectionalities' (Hearn, 2014: 11, emphasis in original). Other theorists have defended the term.

As Connell has noted, not all of the many uses of the concept have been consistent (Connell, 2005). While some empirical studies of masculinity do explore non-hegemonic forms of masculinities in relation to hegemonic forms, others do not. Hegemonic masculinity is sometimes used as a free-floating concept, in contrast to Connell's original concept, which is firmly anchored at the top of a hierarchy of historically specific masculinities, including subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities (Wedgwood, 2009). (See Lusher and Robins (2007) for a discussion of Connell's theory of gender, which investigates how hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalised masculinities interact, but also looks at their relationship to men's lives in different social contexts.)

However, Connell (2005) argues that the concept of hegemonic masculinities is still essential to theorise gendered power relations. She also states that although it is time to consider the use of the concept, how it has been utilised in masculinity studies and whether it is time to reject the category or re-affirm it, is still very much debated. For Connell, then, it is still of great use in theorising power relations among men and looking at masculinity in relation to how gender orders are legitimated. More recently, Ann-Dorte Christensen and Sune Qvotrup Jenson (2014) theorise that if an intersectional approach is combined with hegemonic masculinity, then this allows for a more nuanced contemporary analysis of the complexities of differences and the hierarchical power relations of men. Furthermore, Amanda Coffey and David James (2013) argue that Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity is still very important in research on specific issues, such as masculinity and education, remaining a point of 'theoretical anchorage', as it continues to provide a relational understanding connected with power.

Moreover, as Gottzén (2018) notes, masculinity studies as well as being, in the main, a modernist rather than a postmodernist enterprise with a continuing reliance on the concept of hegemonic masculinities, risk obscuring a 'hybrid masculinities' approach, which acknowledges more positive aspects of men and masculinities as well as continuing patriarchal behaviours and ideologies (Box 7.5).

Box 7.5 – Sport and 'inclusive masculinity'

A recent challenge to a universal and overarching concept of hegemonic masculinity in a sporting context is provided by Eric Anderson's and Rhidian McGuire's (2010) work on the sport of male rugby. Their data provides a counterargument to the notion that sport automatically maintains and creates a dominant form of masculinity. Participants were seen to display less homophobia than might be expected in a traditional sport such as rugby, did not have disrespectful attitudes to women and also were not seen to be taking excessive risks when engaged in their sport. However, evidence also exists to show that in some sports, such as football, homophobic attitudes are still very much in existence (Spaaij, 2008). (See also Woodward in this volume.) Thus, despite the global presence of sports people such as David Beckham – who can be said to embody the new 'metrosexual male' (see for example, Miller, 2005; Pompper, 2010), and it is argued is more at ease displaying his 'feminine side', and therefore able to challenge more traditional perceptions of masculinity, as well as the social construction of gender – the concept of an 'inclusive masculinity' is much debated – albeit

one which has gained traction in the field. (See O'Neill (2015), for an argument that inclusive masculinity theory reflects and reproduces the logic of postfeminism; and Anderson and McCormack (2016) for a refinement and more recent defense of the concept.)

I would also argue that debates on how to conceptualise men, masculinities and gender relations are increasingly taking place on social media, in activist forums as well as in academia – something that Mellström (2018) agrees with:

> The range and diversity of studies are impressive both in terms of theoretical inputs and methodological variation. It is indeed an exciting time to follow a field that once was almost a laughing stock in conventional social science but is now moving onto the center stage of many current political and ideological debates. This concerns the scholarly debate, but also popular media, blogs, vlogs, etc.
>
> (Mellström, 2018: 1)

The idea of toxic masculinities illustrates this view well. Jack Urwin (2016), it is argued, sees this as a 'public performance of masculinity that is conditioned into men from birth' and which results in 'Britain's "lad culture" – which Urwin defines as "vile, shitting-in-pint-glasses, rape-culture-perpetuating behaviour"' (cited in Cain, 2016: para 6). More broadly, toxic masculinity is seen as men's inability to express emotion, resulting in violence and the need for status and the denigration of women's interests. It is not a new term in academic writing (see Connell, 2005; Kupers, 2005), but it is in current widespread usage on social media as well as garnering many critiques (see Sculos, 2017; Akinyemi, 2019; Salter, 2019). It also informs popular accounts of masculinity (see Webb, 2017). Thus, this all illustrates the need for academics to engage with more popular manifestations and circulation of ideas of masculinity, to ensure academic arguments are fully informed, as the terrain to discuss gender politics is shifting rapidly due to technological advances.

Conclusion

Kegan Gardiner (2002) sees academic masculinity studies as an independent field, informed by queer theory, 'race' studies, poststructuralisms and the full range of feminisms. As she asserts, masculinity studies can help feminist theories break free from theoretical impasses, whilst a feminist focus on the institutionalisation of power can guard against simplistic theorising about gender. However, her argument that '[c]urrent masculinity studies focus less on men's power over women and more on relationships between men, as these are regulated by regimes of masculinity' (Gardiner, 2002: 14) indicates that the field of masculinity studies has not yet reached a state of (critical) consensus on its relatively embryonic, though certainly now more developed, relationship with feminism. As Gottzén and Mellström (2014) note, though there has been a growing influence of feminist theory on studies of masculinity, there has been more emphasis put by masculinity scholars on the relations between men – not between men

and women – and any changes in such relations. As well, there is evidence, still, of hegemonic masculinities operating in academia itself (see, for example, Armato, 2013, for a discussion of sexism and hegemonic masculinity in the US academy).

More positively, masculinity has increasingly been theorised in relation to globalisation. Chris Beasle (2008), for instance, argues that although we now understand global hegemonic forms on a world scale – and with specific reference to transnational business masculinity via an elite group of socially dominant men – we need to rethink the concept of hegemonic masculinity so that we have a more nuanced understanding of relations between different masculinities in a global/national nexus. She further argues that such a rethinking allows for a reconceptualisation of how gendered global politics and gendered globalisation may be thought of. In addition, transnational militarism, capitalism and multinational organisations, intersectionality and transpatriarchies in relation to globalisation, as well as transnationalism in the context of men and flux, have also received attention (see Hearn, 2009, 2014; Hearn et al., 2015). In later work, Connell (2014) argues that globalisation and masculinity can be reconsidered through the critical interrogation of the global economy of knowledge. She posits that scholarship in the Global South is generally oriented to theories and methods developed in the Global North. This means, therefore, that the 'coloniality' of knowledge has (somewhat ironically) made it difficult to acknowledge the 'coloniality' of masculinity.

Furthermore, as I have argued in Hockey et al. (2007), theoretical and empirical issues of men and masculinities in relation to space, intimacy, the emotions and the body are now being addressed within a variety of disciplines, and affect more generally (see Reeser and Gottzén, 2018). However, often, such theorising starts from assumptions about fluid and multiple masculinities but tends to assume a static framework within which to explore men's experiences. Men are treated as if they inhabit and perform masculinities in one space alone – for example, either the workplace or domestic sphere. Little consideration has been given to how men exist in different spaces, sometimes simultaneously and at various stages in the life course, and how they manage transitions between work and home life, between being a colleague and friend, father and partner. Focusing on men's mobility and experiences, their strategies and performances of 'being' a man, can speak not only about masculinities but also to gendered, classed and aged relationships across and beyond separate life spheres. In addition, a focus on the everyday, mundane, lived complexities of different men's lives is of continuing importance (see Robinson and Hockey, 2011).

Although it is still debatable how much the theories and concepts of masculinity studies have informed social theory more generally, or developments outside the field more widely (Hearn, 1998b; Robinson and Meah, 2009; Bridges, 2019), it is indisputable that there is now a body of critical work on masculinity which spans many (but not yet all) of the disciplines in the academy. However, as Whitehead points out:

> … in undertaking any critical examination of men, it is important not to lose sight of the material consequences and political dimensions to masculinities and their associated myths and ideologies … it is evident that, while masculinities may be illusory, the material consequences of many men's practices are quite real enough.
>
> (Whitehead, 2002: 43)

This is a point that Hearn (2014) later takes up, with a call to rethink how the material and the discursive relate, which will allow masculinity theorists to rethink perennially important topics such as violence and the body.

A fundamental challenge for those involved with theorising masculinity still remains in a need to consider the everyday realities of gendered lives along with a continuing theorisation of shifting female and male subjectivities, whilst recognising the importance of making such connections in a global context. Further, Beasley (2012) suggests that the current heterogeneous theoretical directions in masculinity scholarship could well be producing an inconsistency or even incoherence in the field. She suggests that it is important to revisit key conceptual distinctions and widely used terms, such as *structure and patriarchy*; *gender identities/masculinities/men*; *hegemony and hegemonic masculinity*; and *relations between gender and sexuality*.

Furthermore, Waling (2018) uses feminist theorising on emotional reflexivity and agency to argue that masculinity studies has become entrenched in utilising static and fixed categories of masculinity and believes that only by paying attention to current feminist ideas can the field escape this impasse. Similarly, Schwalbe (2014) also posits that masculinity studies need to reconnect with their feminist roots for any meaningful progression to occur, whilst Bridges (2019) puts forward the argument that the field is dominated by white male theorists, and that their continued dominance is both politically and theoretically counterproductive, given that this state of affairs excludes other perspectives.

Thus, it is a priority to continually re-examine the epistemological frameworks as well as the aims and politics of masculinity studies. I would add to this (see, for example, Pini and Pease, 2013) that we need also to examine more closely the methodological assumptions around researching men and masculinities if the field is to progress institutionally as well as theoretically and extend its present-day influence in the academy and beyond.

Further reading

R. W. Connell (2005) *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity. This is an updated version of her earlier work (1995), which has become a classic text on the construction and nature of masculinities. Connell looks especially at global masculinity, multiple masculinities and the politics of masculinity. She also discusses the progress of masculinity studies since the first edition was published.

N. Edley (2017) *Men and Masculinity: The Basics*. Abingdon: Routledge. This text provides a useful and up-to-date framework to understand the study of men and masculinities across the social sciences and humanities.

C. J. Pascoe and T. Bridges (2016) *Exploring Masculinities*: *Identity, Inequality, Continuity, and Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This recent volume introduces the field of masculinity studies and goes beyond the concept of hegemonic masculinity to focus on new developments.

B. Pini and B. Pease (eds) (2013) *Men, Masculinities and Methodologies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. This edited collection uses the lens of masculinity studies to contribute to methodological and epistemological debates across diverse issues and methods, including Internet dating, extreme sport, violence, disability, intimacy and emotion, amongst others.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is the field of masculinity studies sufficiently global in reach?

2. Critically examine how debates around 'toxic masculinity' have emerged over time in both academia and social media.

3. How has the study of men, masculinities and race evolved in the context of masculinity studies?

4. Are current masculinity studies sufficiently informed by the diversity of feminist theory?

8 GENDERED BODIES: SEXED LIVES

Kath Woodward

Introduction

The role of bodies and embodiment, which means that mind, body and self are closely interconnected in social and cultural life, has a special place in women's and gender studies, particularly in understanding how gendered bodies matter in the contemporary social world and how bodies and selves are interrelated. Bodies are not just the subjects of medical and natural sciences; bodies and minds are enmeshed, shaping who we are and how we feel about ourselves, and they are always interconnected with the world we live in. Bodies are also political. We define ourselves, and others define us, by our bodies. Having a child's body or that of an elderly person, one with visible impairment, being a woman or a man or having embodied characteristics which challenge expected gender norms, affect how you are seen. Size and shape, tattoos and body piercing as well as the clothes we wear also tell the world who we are. Social movements centre on people's feelings about how they can be defined by their bodies and their attempts to use their bodies to make new selves and new identities. A big subject of disagreement is the extent to which the physical, anatomical body each of us inhabits determines who we are and how far we can self-identify and adopt whatever identity we choose (Box 8.1).

Box 8.1 – Embodied selves

The interdisciplinary notion of embodiment has superseded that of 'the body' in many areas of gender and women's studies. Bodies have become increasingly important in understanding how selves are made through interactive processes (Shilling, 2013). The concept of an embodied self who feels, thinks and perceives the world is integral to contemporary theories of consciousness and cognition, which are responsive to the social world (Newen, 2018).

The notion of embodiment

- is fluid and interactive;
- challenges the Cartesian dualism which suggests that mind and body are separate;
- means that our bodies are inextricably linked to an understanding of the self;
- explains how gender and sexual difference is an important part of identity.

Not all bodies are equally valued or treated equally or even fairly; some bodies are valued more than others. Differences and inequalities demand explanations, which have been the focus of women's and gender studies and came to be linked to identity politics: 'Identity politics involves claiming one's identity as a member of an oppressed or a marginalized group as a political point of departure' (Woodward, 1997: 24). Initially, identity politics challenged traditional class-based party politics and became associated with new social movements celebrating the specific characteristics of the group. The re-emergence of identity politics in the twenty-first century has been open to criticism as a more reactionary and individualistic force than in its original form. Recognition of the importance of bodies, for example, in classifying people and sometimes in justifying unequal treatment, however, led to political activism whereby people sought to take control over their own bodies and their own lives. For example, 'identity politics' involved campaigning against racism, sexism and harassment of people with disabilities, and fighting for the right to exercise control over your own sexuality, reproductive rights and gender identity. More recently, scholars and activists have stressed the intersection of all these forces.

Another development in body politics and gender studies involves the ways in which the relationship between body and self has been the focus of debates about the forging of trans identities, which extends the fluidity of gender boundaries in sexed lives when individuals' perception of their gender contradicts the sexed classification of their body by others and by existing social expectations and categorizations. Bodies can be troubling (see Hines in this volume), but bodies are inseparable from selves and are part of social life so that managing the body is part of managing the self. As was recognized in the feminist classic, *Our Bodies Ourselves*, which was first published in the United States in 1971:

> Our bodies are the physical bases from which we move out into the world ... learning to understand, accept, and be responsible for our physical selves, our image of ourselves is on a firmer base, we can be better friends and better lovers, better people, more self confident, autonomous, stronger and more whole.
>
> (Boston Women's Health Collective, 1978: 12)

Our Bodies Ourselves was one of the first self-help handbooks with which people in the Global North have become very familiar (Shilling, 2013), although in the twenty-first century, hard copy has often been superseded by web pages and social media, where celebrities guide their followers through ways to enhance their physical appearance and well-being (Khamis et al., 2017). Ordinary people also use social media to create their own self-help manuals. This 1971 book was distinctive because it embraced the diversity of experiences in which bodies are central, and it recognized differences among women. It gave expression to women's embodied experiences, thus providing the possibility of control over bodies and selves within the political context of an understanding of the systematic inequalities and disadvantages experienced by women. Different women lived in different contexts where different social forces intersected, but the book acknowledged what is particular and shared about women's

bodies. An emphasis upon women's lived experience has given rise to the development of political activism and theoretical approaches, such as feminist phenomenology, which is discussed below. The 'corporeal turn' (Howson, 2005) expanded to put bodies and embodiment at the centre of other critiques in gender and women's studies (Seidler, 2010), including the 'turn to affect' that brings feelings and emotions into the analysis (Wetherell, 2012). More recently, the focus has shifted onto troubling questions about how gendered bodies are classified and experienced and especially, the relationship between enfleshed, chromosomal, anatomical bodies and gendered, sexed selves (Hines, 2013; Bouman and Arcelus, 2017). What happens when the gendered body one has been assigned does not fit the gender with which one identifies (see Richardson in this volume)?

This chapter seeks to demonstrate that bodies are made and remade in relation to the wider society and are not only biological, although all bodies have biological characteristics. All embodied selves are subject to mortality, however much they might seek to exercise control and postpone death, and each embodied self arrives through the process of birth, largely via a woman's body, with a few instances of trans men giving birth by retaining their ovaries and uterus for the purpose. Bodies are flesh and blood and subject to the frailties of the flesh. There is nothing like pain, discomfort, ill health or impairment of some sort to remind you that you are an embodied self, but bodies are also confident, autonomous and strong, although much of this depends upon the social context. Pain and sickness and life expectancy are all affected by your social position, levels of nutrition and access to health care. Even birth and death as universal aspects of the human condition and all living organisms are subject to social and cultural variations (Woodward and Woodward, 2019). Our bodies are also the site of the expression of feelings and emotions, which impact upon physical well-being and health. Sex and gender are embodied in complex and changing ways and cannot be understood as fixed binaries.

Firstly, the chapter looks at why bodies are important in understanding social relations, and it outlines how women's and gender studies understand bodies. Why and how do bodies matter? Secondly, the chapter uses an example of the classification of bodies in sport to explore the impact of recent debates about trans identities and the social and political implications of how bodies are categorized. This example is explored in the context of gender studies' discussions about why some bodies have been more valued than others. Some of these issues relate to what has been called the problem of binaries – that is, the divisions between women and men, nature and culture, sex and gender and mind and body, which are set up as oppositions, with only two alternatives. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on how selves, bodies and social worlds are interconnected, including the links between how you see yourself and how you are seen by others, and the role of emotion and affect as part of the process. Images have been an important concern, especially in women's studies in relation to media representations of women's bodies (see Holliday in this volume). Lastly, the chapter suggests two ways of thinking about bodies and rethinking some of the ways in which theory and the politics of experience are linked, especially in the context of bodies and embodiment when flesh really matters:

- feminist phenomenological theories and lived experience of being in the world, which seek to show how gendered bodies and sexed lives are made;

- psychosocial approaches that focus on the role of feelings and emotion in the making of embodied selves and the virtual potential of becoming, whereby bodies are never complete but are always changing and developing – and becoming something else.

Bodies

The body you have marks you out in the eyes of others. Think how often you classify others by the features of their bodies when you first meet them: as a child or an elderly person and, still, as a woman or a man. Clothes are often gendered, from the high-street fashion (in spite of occasional forays into androgyny) of the Global North to traditional Islamic dress. Resistance to binary sex can be expressed by subverting expectations. As Judith Butler argues, drag and cross-dressing challenge sexed norms ([1990] 2006). Expressions of strong emotions, such as intense joy, sorrow or anger, are likely to be memorable through their physical manifestations. Gendered bodies have been used to frame ways of speaking, for example in English, with a pronoun: *she* for women, and *he* for men. Pronouns have become central to challenging the rigidity of binary sex. People are now regularly asked for their preferred pronouns, which might be the non-binary plural form, *they*.

Bodies and their images are also common currency of everyday life (Markula, 2009; Bale, 2011). In the Global North, people are bombarded with images of what passes for perfect bodies at a particular time. For women, this includes looking like a child rather than a woman; being exceptionally thin and aspiring to a body which is impossible to achieve for most adult women. Increasingly, the overweight body in the Global North is associated with working-class people, who become the target of state health interventions, rather than the more affluent, and with poverty worldwide, with an estimated increase in global obesity in developing countries, which has nearly tripled since 1975 (WHO, 2018). In spite of some of the positive impact of paralympic sport, women with disabilities are excluded from the media pantheon of 'perfect bodies', however great their athletic achievements (Woodward, 2012). Images and visualization are therefore caught up in the process of making embodied, sexed lives.

Sexed bodies are a key but problematic factor in the classification of people, as the following example taken from the field of sport demonstrates. Sometimes there are disjunctions between physical bodies and the social categories they are given. Feminist critiques present robust challenges to the idea that 'the body' is singular and fixed. It is crucial to explore inequalities and differences between shape, health, fitness, disability, age and appearance, but none of these is simply the property of the body. These differences all have social meanings and affects, too, especially when they are associated with women's bodies, as expressed in UN and other campaigns to promote gender equality – for example, in childbirth (UN, 2018) and in coping with menstruation (Action Aid, 2018). Importantly, feminist critiques address the puzzle of how to reconcile approaches that stress how bodies are socially constructed, with the material, physical properties of bodies themselves.

What is a body? It is an assemblage of breathing, eating, sleeping, reproducing, feeling, sentient functions; a collection of connected body parts. However, some body parts, especially those linked to the reproductive process and with visible differences of racialised characteristics, seem to have been accorded more social and political significance than others in the organization of society and societal relations. Some expressions of sexuality and transgendered bodies are subject to questioning in many parts of contemporary society. Bodies come in different shapes and sizes and are also marked by gender, class, race, ethnicity, generation, ability, disability and sexuality – to mention but some of their distinguishing characteristics.

Bodies are classified in particular ways, as Londa Schiebinger ([1993] 2003) pointed out in her studies of the history of science outlining Linnaeus's taxonomy of animals and plants, which was the result of his controversial attempt to classify human beings as part of the animal world, when human bodies were classified against a standard set by the norm of the European, white male. Schiebinger demonstrates how reproductive capacities were central to the system of classification adopted by Linnaeus in 1735 (and still used today), with all creatures which give birth to live young and feed them being called mammals (Schiebinger, [1993] 2003), thus reducing women to their reproductive role and presenting this as a universal class. Feminist scholars such as Judith Butler have challenged the idea that there could be a single category of 'woman' (Butler, 2011), although she acknowledges that shared embodied characteristics have provided the motor for political action – for example, through campaigning for control of reproductive rights across the world. Bodies can be used as a means of ordering people. Racialised characteristics and sexual difference – which was measured by DNA rather than visible, external features, until the recent move to hormone testing – have all been used to create categories of person, regardless of the capacities and capabilities of those persons, as is shown in the case of gender verification in sport (Woodward, 2009, 2012; Pieper, 2016).

The gendered bodies of women have historically played a key role in the politics of excluding women from public life. For women, the political claim that 'we are our bodies' has often meant being reduced to their bodies, and feminists (for example, Birke, 1986; Fausto-Sterling, 1992) have sought both to understand and explain the thinking behind this phenomenon and to suggest strategies for dealing with the injustices of such social exclusion. However, bodies change through life experiences, health and ill health, ageing and, increasingly, through the interventions of science and technology and transformative cultural practices. Science and technology offer interventions to some of the processes of ageing, such as joint replacement, which facilitate mobility, although pharmaceutical interventions may be more concerned with prolonging life in a state of dependency than in enabling autonomy and quality of extended life (Ehrenreich, 2018). Robotics, exoskeletons, prostheses and AI facilitate competition at the highest levels of elite sport. Donna Haraway (1985) used the idea of the cyborg to show how boundaries, such as those between people and things and bodies and technology, are crossed, and flesh and technology merge into one. Boundaries between species can be crossed (Haraway, 2008; Braidotti, 2013). A key question remains, however, about finding ways of talking about the body without fixing it as 'a naturally determined object existing outside politics, culture and social change' (Fausto-Sterling, 2005: 1495), whilst holding on to the materiality of the

lived experience of flesh; the physical properties of living, breathing bodies. Bodies are always in the world, and those bodies and the world are also changing; the rules, too, are changing and can be changed.

Classifying bodies in sport

Sport, as currently constructed, is governed by rules and regulatory bodies which measure sporting practices, times and speeds and oversee compliance with the rules of the game (Woodward, 2009, 2012). Disability is measured and classified by particular embodied capacities in processes which are becoming ever more complex. Technoscientific advancement (Haraway, 1989) means that the merging of bodies and technology is problematic – for example, when athletes who have been categorised as disabled might be seen to have unfair advantage, as might have been the case of the privileged, white, male, South African, affluent, double amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius, in T43 and T44 competitions, when racialised, ethnicised and gendered privilege combined with technoscience to make his embodied self (Woodward, 2012).

Sport is based upon two sexes: most competitions are either for women or for men, with occasional mixed events, but you have to be one or the other. Sex or gender 'verification tests' were used in order to ascertain 'the truth', but in 2016 this changed. Recent developments in gender politics and the growing visibility of trans athletes have effected changes and a shift from 'objective' testing informed by binary sex which can be assessed by experts, to self-identification and a single criterion: testosterone (Trans, 2019). These debates have implications: firstly, for how sex and gender are defined and understood and secondly, for the importance of bodies, especially women's for sexual politics and the politics of human rights and struggles for equality more widely.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) medical code, chapter 3 (IOC, 2014) states that all female competitors are subject to gender verification to prevent men masquerading. Testing was formerly on the basis of visible physical embodied characteristics but later included genetic and chromosomal testing and the recommendations of a collection of experts, including psychologists. Gender verification is confined to those competing as women, and there have been cases of men attempting to pass as women, for example, in the Olympics. Tests have never been applied to women passing as men, because women could not gain advantage by pretending to be men and thus accused of unfair practice, given the history of men's physical advantage (Hargreaves and Anderson, 2014). One of the few trans male athletes to speak out is Thomas Page McBee (2018), the first ever trans boxer to fight at Madison Square Garden, whose touching, powerful, perceptive account of his transition to being a man deconstructs and critiques masculinity as a socio-cultural construct deeply embedded in male bodies and the embodied practices of boxing. McBee brings together the personal and the social in more complex ways than the regulatory bodies of sport. Regulatory bodies, however, play a big part in making and shaping the gendered embodied selves in sport (see Robinson in this volume) (Box 8.2).

Box 8.2 – Intersex and trans athletes

Intersex

In August 2009 the South African 800 metres athlete Caster Semenya was suspended from competition until a decision could be made about whether or not she was a woman and, thus, whether she could retain her medal and compete as a woman. The International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) instigated testing which ultimately allowed Semenya to continue to compete as a woman who was classified as intersex because of her excessive production of testosterone.

Ten years later, the case was re-visited because the criteria changed. In 2019 testosterone levels are the key determinant of a person's ability to compete as a man or as a woman. In 2016, the IAAF, in response to political pressure, changed the rules of determining gender from multiple criteria to a single criterion and a single test: testosterone levels. Male to female trans athletes could participate as women, without surgery; only hormone therapy was required. In May 2019, the Court of Arbitration in Sport (CAS) ruled against Semenya's appeal. She was told she must compete as a man or take oestrogen to reduce her (naturally occurring) testosterone levels to .5 to combat her hyperandrogenism (an excess of predominantly male hormones such as testosterone, in a female body), even though she has been female since birth and has only ever participated in women's events.

Trans

Trans poses new questions with some female athletes objecting (for example, Paula Radcliffe, 2019) to the arrival of those who have trained and competed as men. The properties of male bodies, which are on average bigger, taller and stronger, benefit sports like basketball, rugby, Australian Rules football and volleyball. Boxing, in which women were only first allowed to participate at the Olympics in 2012, has weight categories, as do weightlifting and judo. Some of the loudest protests have come in cycling, with trans women, who competed as men, achieving victories.

These debates are contentious and sensitive, but they raise big questions; firstly, about what is sex and what is gender and how gendered bodies and sexed lives interrelate. Can sex and gender be reduced to testosterone levels? What about life and experience? Secondly, they pose questions about the links between individuals' bodies and feelings, and the wider society of social rules and practices. It is difficult in sport to be the sex you say you are regardless of the way your body might be classified by others. Feminists have grappled with some of these troubling questions and offer some ways of making sense of them.

Feminist critiques of the body

Bodies have been both subjects of theoretical analyses in gender and women's studies and central to political campaigns of the women's movement. For example, women have striven to reclaim control over our own bodies in aspects of life such as health,

reproduction and sexuality. Women have struggled to be allowed to play sport and to compete at the highest levels (Hargreaves and Anderson, 2014). For a long time, feminist theorists have seen the project of feminism as intimately connected to the body in the world. They have acknowledged not only the importance of the body as a vital, if contentious, dimension of social relations and of the interrelationship between individuals and the societies in which they live but also one in which relations of inequality are deeply invested. Women's embodied experience has been a major concern of feminist activism and in gender studies because the social, political and cultural differences in the ways women and men have been treated have been attributed and even justified – as has been the case in sport, for example – by their having different anatomical bodies. Feminist critiques (La Chance and Lundquist, 2017; Lennon, 2019) have shown how, in Western thought, the body has often been either denied or dismissed, with the mind or the soul occupying a position of superiority over women's embodied experiences, such as those of menstruation, birth, lactation and menopause. Motherhood has been an absent presence (Woodward, 1997), both in the systems of representation that make up culture and in critical analyses (Irigaray, in Whitford, 1991; La Chance and Lundquist, 2017).

Women's and gender studies have, as Iris Marion Young argues, taken as their starting point 'the sociohistorical fact that that women's bodily differences from men have grounded or served as excuses for structural inequalities' (Young, 2005: 4).

Feminist activism of the late 1960s and 1970s addressed women's bodies as the site of experience and developed a politics of campaigns over sexuality, reproductive rights, and combating the constraints of patriarchy and its objectification of women's bodies – for example, through pornography and sexual violence against women (Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1987).

By focusing on the gendered body, feminists might seem to be falling into the trap of associating women with 'nature' and, by implication, linking men to 'culture', with all its connotations of superiority. Feminist critiques have been haunted by the ghost of biological reductionism and the binary of nature and culture. For example, in early second wave feminism, Shulamith Firestone argued that release from the constraints of the female body would only come from technological advances that would free women from the tyranny of childbirth (1971). In this dualism, women's bodies have been associated with a devalued nature, which has to be overcome by a superior (male) culture. Feminist accounts stress the necessity of understanding the material body and embodiment by adopting a range of different approaches, which I will go on to explore (Grosz, 1994; Fraser and Honneth, 2004; Butler, 2011).

More complex theories of the body broadened analyses to include literary and philosophical texts (Butler, 2006, 2011). These trends might be seen to so emphasise the primacy of the social and cultural construction that bodies are viewed as disembodied and disassociated from experience and material structures. Foucault's work has been immensely important in highlighting the historical processes through which bodies are constituted and recreated, and it has informed many feminist analyses (for example, Grosz, 1994; Butler, 2006). The body can be a textual conceptual space of experience and everyday practice and the subject of substantive enquiry. Foucault's work may claim to be primarily concerned with bodies, but they are inscribed bodies that are the product of social, cultural regimes and practices rather than living,

breathing bodies. This approach might, however, open up the possibility of self-identification. The legacy of dualistic thinking led some feminist critics to be reluctant to embrace the body as a key component in the formation of identity because of its associations with essentialist accounts. Luce Irigaray has most positively presented the centrality of the gendered, sexed body in a politics of difference (1985a, 1985b; Whitford, 1991). This position has been subject to criticism (Crossley, 2001) as fixed and essentialist, but she argues for the centrality of the body and its experience in the construction of cultural and social gender differences, highlighting the absence of the cultural importance of women's bodies in Western thought. Women's bodies have been absent from Western cultural tradition except in the more negative sense – for example, in religious discourse through associations with the sins of the flesh. Criticism of Irigaray's work arises partly from the assumptions of dualistic thinking that focus on the body as an entity devoid of agency and intentionality and separate and distinct from a gendered identity, which is embodied.

Women's bodies have long been seen as the cause and justification for their exclusion from public life. Women's and gender studies theorists have grappled with the problems of biological determinism and what is 'natural' in order to resolve such problems which have been framed by the binary of sex and gender. Such oppositions between agency and constraint and between nature and culture have presented problems, especially for feminism. If all difference is socially constructed, where is the distinctive experience of the lived material body?

Embodied identities: body and self

The relationship between the body and identity might appear relatively simple: 'One body, one self' (Fraser and Greco, 2005: 12). The body presents the boundaries of the self, with each person's body demarcating the limits of the self, which takes on different identity positions. However, as Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco (2005) argue, the relationship between body and identity is contested. The idea of the uniqueness of the self has a very specific history, rather than being a universal truth, and goes back to the eighteenth-century development of the notion of an autonomous individual, a sovereign subject based on the Cartesian distinction between mind and body. In everyday language, it could be exercising 'mind over matter', with the primacy of thought and cognition over the flesh, which is subject to the will as expressed in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. This famous Cartesian dualism has shaped common sense understandings of the self and of identity and informed academic discourse.

Steven Rose (2005) points out that the mind–body dualism and the marginalization and devaluation of the body arose from the association of the body with 'biology', with biology as the opposite of the social. It is this body which eats, breathes, gives birth, bleeds, feels pleasure and pain and dies; these are the attributes of the body, which seem so routine that they are not central to social investigation or so 'biological' that they can only be addressed within medical and biological sciences. This has implications for 'who we are'. As Moira Gatens argues, whilst the male subject is 'constructed as self-contained and as an owner of his person and his capacities, one who relates to other men as free competitors, with whom he shares politico-economic rights ... (t) he female subject is constructed as prone to disorder and passion, as

economically and politically dependent on men ... justified by reference to women's nature' (Gatens, 1991: 5).

The biological dimensions of the body, which Judith Butler calls the anatomical body (Butler, 2011), are important in shaping experience, because of materiality and the diversity of bodies and the embodiment of difference across class, race, ethnicity, disability, generation and gender.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) argued that the body is the only tangible manifestation of the person. Embodied sex and gender are seen as key sources of identity. The visible difference of gender is both a key dimension of classification and a source of troubling anxiety when the classificatory system breaks down, for example, as in the sporting example above, when people cannot be or do not want to be slotted in one of two genders or the sex they were assigned at birth (Greenberg, 2012).

At birth, babies are ascribed a gender. This is often what everyone notes first. Gender is required for registration as a citizen and recorded on the birth certificate. A major challenge of trans is to subvert the certainty of these practices rooted in some corporeal, grounded, material certainty. Ambiguity about gender identity that challenges certainty could be a source of insecurity or a subversion of the fixity of traditional identity, opening up the promise of self-determination. Surgical interventions have been carried out so that the gender identities of intersex infants are made to conform to visible, external social and cultural expectations. Social gender precedes sex because expectations are present before any external bodily characteristics are noted. Bodies are more diverse.

Intersex offers embodied possibilities that transcend and challenge the limits of the two-sex model (Greenberg, 2012) and trans adds agency to the challenge. Judith Butler (2011) seizes the subversive potential of uncertainty and suggests that it is only through transgression that the *heterosexual matrix* – that is, the routine cultural practices through which heterosexuality is re-produced – can be subverted. Gender is reproduced through iterative acts and is not fixed in the anatomical body. Thus, transgressions of existing boundaries challenge the rigidity and constraints of such gender classifications. Butler makes no distinction between sex and gender; sex, too, is socially and culturally constructed. Bodies are sexed and gendered and the term *sex gender* can be more useful than distinguishing between the two (Woodward, 2012).

People's bodies offer limitations to what is possible, to the identities to which they might like to lay claim. Physical disabilities, the impact of ageing and the limits to the physical powers and competence of our bodies clearly restrict our potential in the routine of everyday life and in the aspirations, which shape identity. These are the constraints of corporeality, which constantly remind human beings of their embodied subjectivity and demonstrate the necessity of bringing together 'the body' as the object of enquiry and embodied experience.

Bodies also offer more positive aspects of security and certainty. Trans people seek gendered identification with a binary category. All societies and cultures have a series of attributes and expectations and practices that are associated with women and with men and with sex gender. These cultural associations vary across societies and across time and space, but they usually have some link to the properties of the body. Categories and their embodiment change over time (Fausto-Sterling, 1992). Thus, being assigned to a specific sex gender provides a set of ground rules that govern our

behaviour, establishing a cornerstone of identity. This is not to deny or underplay the materiality of the body and reduce difference to what is visible.

Feminist critics (for example, Gatens, 1991; Braidotti, 1994, 2013; Grosz, 2017) have challenged the notion of disembodied gender neutrality by stressing that the self is necessarily embodied. The traditional idea of an abstract, rational self has largely been associated with masculinity. Feminists' renewed emphasis on embodiment reinstates sexual differentiation. Braidotti argues that the focus on embodiment is developed 'by emphasizing the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject' (Braidotti, 2011: 3).

Phenomenology: embodiment and experience

Phenomenology, according to Merleau-Ponty, 'tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanation which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide' (1962: vii). Phenomenology draws on the work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) to describe experience directly in terms of what is happening and how people describe themselves and their actions in a systematic investigation of consciousness. It is direct because it is not mediated by origins, history or psychology. Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenological approach is especially useful in gender and women's studies because he stresses the links between bodies, consciousness and the outside world. He uses embodiment to bring together minds, bodies and the social world. Consciousness is the body as lived in a tangible encounter with human, and non-human, others. Merleau-Ponty's work has been very influential for stressing lived experience. Bourdieu and those who have developed aspects of his work, for example, Nick Crossley (2016), have used the notion of embodiment to locate body practices within material, economic circumstances. Embodiment, as developed in phenomenological accounts, involves body and consciousness, and objectivity and subjectivity in an irreducible ensemble. Thus, 'we matter and we mean through processes and logics of sense-making that owe as much to our carnal existence as they do to our conscious thought' (Sobchack, 2004: 4).

There is necessarily harmony in this interrelationship, however bodies and selves can be disconnected. People may feel a disjunction between their physical body and their sense of self, perhaps because the category to which they have been ascribed does not sit easily with their sense of who they are. Sex and gender and enfleshed experience are often part of such disconnections, whether between your sexed body as female or male and your sense of self as another sex or because of a disconnection between the self you imagine yourself to be in relation to images and expectations and the actual body you inhabit. For example, women may feel extreme disjunctions between their own bodies and sexualised media images, as do men in relation to the physicality of traditional hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2005). The homophobia of some sports, especially men's football, has reinforced such disconnections (Mitchell, 2012). Some recent work suggests more progressive transformations – for example, in the reduction of homophobia, more broadly (Anderson, 2009, 2012), including the emergence of new masculinities (see also Robinson in this volume).

The process of connecting inner and outer worlds may never work perfectly and the process is unfinished and incomplete. The idea of embodiment opens up another possibility for avoiding the binary logic of mind and body whilst including the idea of agency and of intentionality. Even in situations where the body seems to 'take over', the notion of embodiment permits an understanding of what constitutes conscious agency. Even in a situation in which the body (or at least two bodies) might seem to be the prime determinant of experience, like childbirth, labouring women are more likely to perceive themselves as in control when they 'go with' the body, rather than attempting to resist its demands, whether this involves making the decision to receive pharmaceutical or technological intervention or to take a noninterventionist, unassisted route (Akrich and Pasveer, 2004). Childbirth not only involves the bodies of the mother and infant, but also those of attendants, as well as the interventions of technologies that become inseparable from the labouring body (Woodward, 1997).

Tori Moi suggests the 'lived body' as an alternative to the categories of sex and gender, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and the feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1953). De Beauvoir (1953) argued that the body is a 'situation' incorporating the physical facts of its materiality, such as size, age, health, reproductive capacity, skin and hair, and the social context of Moi's 'lived body' is not biologistic – that is, it is not reducible to its corporeal parts, subject only to general laws of physiology and divided into two categories of sex gender. 'The body is always part of culture, inculcated with habits, acting according to social and cultural rules: To consider the body as a situation ... is to consider both the fact of being a specific kind of body and the meaning that concrete body has for the situated individual. This is not the equivalent of either sex or gender. The same is true of "lived experience" which encompasses our experience of all kinds of situations (race, class, nationality, etc.) and is a far more wide-ranging concept than the highly psychologizing concept of gender identity' (Moi, 2001: 81).

The idea of the 'lived body' means bodies are always situated in a particular social context. Thus, the lived body includes the lives of those who have been marginalised or excluded, not the least because of its focus upon experience. However, as Iris Marion Young (2005) points out, although the lived body avoids the binary logic of sex/gender and even nature/culture, it may pay insufficient attention to the structural constraints which shape experience.

Young argues that embodied difference is a constituent of subjectivity and the formation of the self and part of the explanatory framework through which gendered identities can be understood. It is also part of the gendered division of labour and requires the possibility of collective action, for example, in challenging social exclusion and oppression, which would suggest the benefits of alliances between those so excluded, for example, women and LGBTQ athletes. Gendered, racialised differences and body practices have often been attributed to corporeal inequalities relating to size, anatomy, muscle power and stamina and to lower levels of testosterone, often elided with psychological aspects of competition. The exclusion of women from sport has often been based on the claim that women's bodies are smaller and weaker which might be translated as being less capable of tackling assertively in football or rugby, or less competitive in contact sports like boxing – which has recently been challenged by the success of boxers like Nicola Adams in the 2012 Olympics (Woodward, 2014).

More recently, gendered body size and strength has been minimized as relevant in distinguishing women from men as in the argument of trans women athletes.

Young argues that young girls experience 'bodily timidity that increases with age. In assuming herself to be a girl, she takes herself to be fragile' (Young, 2005: 43). Femininity is taken here by Young, following de Beauvoir (1953), as a typical situation of being a woman in a particular society and is thus not fixed, or inherent, or in any sense biological.

Affective bodies

This chapter has stressed the ways in which sexed, gendered bodies are not fixed and given but are *made* through processes, whilst also demonstrating that flesh and blood bodies are part of the process. Affect is one aspect of the making of embodied selves. Affect includes feelings and emotions, which are embodied in their manifestation and experience and are often linked to gender-specific categories. For example, emotions like guilt and shame have physical manifestations, from the blushing of embarrassment to the mental health problems and severe anxiety of carers of loved ones with terminal illness. As Elspeth Probyn argues, shame is personal and social and political. Shame can also serve social purposes (Probyn, 2005).

Gendered bodies may be made, as de Beauvoir (1953) argued, but the process of making is not all social and it is not possible to separate all the different elements in the process. Women's and gender studies have stressed the need to be attentive to process rather than to form (Grosz, 1999; Fraser and Honneth, 2004; Barad, 2007; Butler, 2011).

As I have argued, phenomenologist accounts are especially useful in drawing attention to everyday life and in giving voice to those whose voices have not been heard. However, these approaches stress being in the world as if – even though several factors are in play – there is still some fixity to embodied selves.

Some feminist scholars have gone further than giving voice to people's experiences of being in the world and stress that bodies are never actually finished but are 'becoming'. They have developed the idea of affect as including much more than emotions and extend Deleuze (1968) to argue that bodies are not separate and discrete autonomous entities because bodies are always being made in relation to the world. An important strand in the making of bodies is the two-way relationship between bodies and other elements involved in the process of becoming. For example, the dynamic relationship between bodies and different social and cultural forces can be illustrated in the context of images and representations.

Think about the extent to which people can be influenced by current social representations of sex and gender through emotions like pleasure and disgust. Working-class women can be subjected to hostility and vilification; for being too rowdy on a night out; for eating unhealthy food; for having too many children. Women's bodies can be shameful (Probyn, 2005; Skeggs and Loveday, 2012). The exposure of women's bodies in public, even in sport, is seen as shocking and disgusting in many Muslim countries; conservative regimes and even some neoliberal democracies express disgust at any display of affection between same-sex couples. Women's bodies have been the focus of Western advertising campaigns and popular cultural forms, but sexualised,

often heterosexualised, bodies have increasingly occupied social media. Bodies are reproduced through the repetition of these images and made and experienced in relation to their images. For example, cosmetic surgery is used not only to transform appearance but also to reinvent the gendered self, not least through practices such as breast enhancement (Genz, 2011).

Some approaches, which draw upon Deleuzian ideas, suggest that images and bodies are not separate but are part of the same process (Braidotti, 1994; Coleman, 2009). For example, young women's perception of themselves and their bodies is not simply shaped by sexualised, idealised images in popular culture but through ongoing processes which include elements as diverse as their own bodies: mirrors, photographs, images, glimpses and conversations, through social media, for instance (Coleman, 2009). This process of becoming embodied is never completed, but there are some elements which endure and some understandings of bodies are so frequently repeated or reiterated that they persist. Particular body forms and attraction to some and repulsion at others are repeated and remade routinely, according to this Deleuzian approach.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated some of the ways in which women's and gender studies have theorized 'the body' and reinstated the material body into analyses of power and difference. For example, feminist theories have challenged the idea that bodies are inflexible categories and, especially, those characterized by a binary logic. Feminists have sought to reinstate living, breathing material bodies into the analysis through specific empirical work and through theorising material bodies in more fluid and dynamic ways. 'Thinking the body' has extended to incorporate both the situations in which bodies are located and the body itself is a 'situation', and a living, breathing material body. Theories of embodiment are inspired by a desire to combat inequalities, many of which have been justified in relation to embodied differences. Recent trans activism has created new opportunities for re-thinking how bodies are gendered outside traditional binaries and challenged women's lived experiences of sexed inequalities. Gender inequalities articulate with other embodied factors, such as those based on disability, racialization, sexuality and class.

Embodied selves are made through processes like classificatory systems, the more informal expectations of everyday life and the formal regulatory systems such as those in sport and seen in global contexts such as the Olympic Games, which can, however worthy their intentions for fluidity, present new boundaries and fixities.

Phenomenological accounts with a focus on gender and difference have been particularly useful in highlighting both the entanglement of mind and body and specific contexts as well as the need to focus on practice and experience. Second wave feminists drew attention to the need to express women's embodied experience and to challenge the objectification of 'women's' bodies, just like diverse groups of people who are also constituted as 'other'. Bodies are not just objects upon which the world acts. They are caught up in the processes through which embodied selves are made.

Phenomenological accounts include some notion of agency, and bodies are subjects as well as objects, although agency may not extend to complete autonomy in

gender identification. The 'lived body' provides a useful redress to the limitations and fixities of the concepts of sex and gender.

A focus upon empirical material and listening to the voices of everyday experience, such as the #MeToo movement and the Everyday Sexism campaign counterbalance a surfeit of theory and abstraction. Bodies are limited and disadvantaged, but there are also transformations. Deleuzian approaches emphasize the endurance of some configurations of embodiment, for example, through repetition. Sexualized practices and objectification of bodies are not reproduced through culture but are repeated by reiteration: the more we do it, the more it is what we are and who we are. Bodies and lives interact and change each other within the constraints of social and enfleshed forces.

Further reading

L. Blackman (2012) *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation* (published in association with *Theory, Culture and Society*). London: Sage. This text explores current thinking on the body and combines the 'corporeal turn' with recent interest in emotion and spirituality and some of the less material aspects of the 'affective turn' in the social sciences and humanities. This book considers in depth some of the ideas which are introduced about the breaking down of boundaries (for example, between mind and body) and develops the concepts of becoming, and the instability of bodies.

K. Cregan (2012) *Key Concepts in Body and Society*. London: Sage. This useful reference book provides comprehensive coverage of the ideas and issues included in the field of studies described as the sociology of the body. Key concepts include theoretical approaches and the empirical areas addressed, many of which have been of central importance to gender and women's studies, such as technology, health and ill health, sexuality, reproduction, childhood and ageing.

C. Fischer and L. Dolezal (eds) (2019) *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment*. London: Palgrave. This edited collection, provides feminist philosophical reflections upon the contentious terrain of embodiment in the twenty-first century covering new developments in theory and issues of current importance. It addresses, reproduction, sex, sexualities, trans debates and tensions between trans activists and feminists, violence and trafficking.

M. Fraser and M. Greco (eds) (2005) *The Body: A Reader*. London: Routledge. This reader has an extensive introduction and covers a very wide range of texts through which the body has been theorized across different disciplines, and it positions discussions of 'the body' and embodiment in relation to social concerns and ethical questions. It addresses matters of identity, health and disease, technologies and technoscience.

A. Howson (2013) *The Body in Society: An Introduction*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity Press. The second edition of Alexandra Howson's book provides a very clear and accessible outline of ways of thinking about bodies in the social sciences and includes updated material on developments within what has been called 'the corporeal turn'. In her exploration of the connections between body and society, Howson takes the reader through the arguments and includes a full discussion of the role of feminist and queer theories.

J. Price and M. Shildrick (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. This title provides a useful selection of extracts from classic and later texts organized around different themes, including women as body, sexy bodies and bodies in science and biomedicine. Reprinted in 2010, Abingdon: Routledge.

❓ QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why do you think an exploration of bodies and embodiment is of interest and importance to those working in women's and gender studies?

2. How important are classifications of sexed bodies?

3. How are theories of embodiment and political activism connected?

4. What can the idea of the lived body tell us about how inequalities are made and remade?

5. What part do bodies and how they are experienced play in the definition of gender difference? Might bodies be more important in some fields, like sport, than in others?

6. What do you think the advantages of challenging the binary logic of sex and gender might be?

9 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Liz Kelly

Introduction

Hardly a week passes without national and international news stories featuring violence against women (VAW), a level of recognition that was unthinkable when the first women's studies courses were established in the 1970s. The #MeToo movement has returned to the everyday, mundane intrusions, with accounts proliferating across the planet. That VAW would become the issue around which the strongest global feminist coalitions have been built seemed unlikely when it was the subject of much contention between radical and socialist feminists. No longer marginal or located primarily in activism, it is now a field with its own academic journal (*Violence Against Women*, published by Sage) with a global knowledge base and a significant profile in public policy and international law. This remarkable shift speaks to the commitment and achievements of several generations of feminist scholars, professionals and activists, not mutually exclusive categories.

We have discovered that violence is extensive, occurring across the life course and in a range of contexts: the family/intimate relationships; schools; workplaces; public space and institutions; and during conflict and dislocation.

VAW takes a number of forms, some, like sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, trafficking and intimate-partner violence, appear to be universal, whereas others, including female genital mutilation (FGM; see Box 9.1), forced and early marriage and honour-based violence, are more associated with the Global South. That said, globalisation, specifically mass migration, means that women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of these forms of violence also live in the Global North. It is not possible to address all the forms of violence in a single chapter. Rather, I explore a number of key themes, using different forms of violence as illustrations of the wider issue. This chapter discusses:

- the early origins of work on VAW;
- naming, language and definitions;
- VAW and contemporary gender theory;
- researching violence;
- meanings, impacts and consequences;
- state responses and responsibilities;
- the challenges of prevention.

> **Box 9.1 – Naming and defining FGM**
>
> In the 1970s, the practices now named as FGM were referred to as *female cir-cumcision*. The concept of female genital mutilation (FGM) was coined to draw attention to the fact that FGM was not equivalent to male circumcision. The practice itself is more dangerous, with some girls not surviving, and it has a range of serious long-term health consequences. In a 1998 piece entitled 'Vio-lence embodied?', feminist anthropologist Janice Boddy argued, based on field work in Sudan and Somalia, that we should use women's own language, and commends the term *cutting* (Boddy, 1998). *Female genital cutting* has been taken up by some, defended through respect for survivors and the intent of parents and/or practicing communities for whom the term *mutilation* carries stigma and blame. However, many survivors and community activists still choose to use FGM. The compromise of FGM/C has become more common, especially within international organisations, including UNICEF.
>
> How these practices have been defined has also shifted, with early defini-tions using detailed and explicit descriptions of the three 'types': infibulation, excision, sunna (Roach and Momoh, 2013). Many questioned what such descrip-tions 'did' – including whether they played into neo-colonial approaches which position FGM as the most 'barbaric' practice (Roach and Momoh, 2013). A recent definition from the World Health Organization – 'all procedures that involve par-tial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons' – has prompted new debates about what constitutes genital mutilation. Some raise the question of why, when it is black women's bodies, the practice is deemed a human-rights abuse and crime, yet labiaplasty and vaginoplasty, which arguably fit this definition, are deemed legal cosmetic surgery for predominantly white women.

The emergence of an issue

It is easy to forget how little was known in the 1970s about the range and extent of gendered violence. Initially, awareness developed through sharing experiences in consciousness-raising groups and workshops at Women's Liberation Movement con-ferences; this also revealed how few spaces there were which offered safety and sup-port. Activists began creating new by-women, for-women responses – refuges, rape-crisis helplines, self-defence classes – based on a culture of belief and mutual respect. These activists were innovators, learning and sharing unfamiliar skills and creating new forms of provision. As other women found and used these feminist insti-tutions, understanding expanded an example of the importance of experience as a foundation for feminist understandings of knowledge (see Letherby in this volume). It would not, however, be until the 1980s that prevalence research established just how common abuse was in the lives of women and girls.

Outside the women's movement, violence and abuse were viewed as rare, commit-ted by a few deviant men and/or in dysfunctional families, and there was a strong focus on how the victims contributed to their fates: the concept of victim precipita-tion was widely accepted in criminology and sociology (Walklate, 2007a, 2007b).

Whilst these ideas were critiqued and reframed as victim blame, key early feminist texts continued to differentiate between men who used violence from the majority of 'normal' men (see, for example, Brownmiller, 1975, in relation to rape). This, too, would be challenged as we discovered how routine violence was in women's lives: that it could be considered normative rather than pathological, and that the men who did it were part of our social networks.

This uncovering is often referred to as 'breaking the silence', exemplified by the public testimonies and 'speak outs' which were a core part of feminist activism in the 1970s. An internationalist example is the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, held in Brussels in 1975. The written record (available at http://www. dianarussell.com/f/crimes_against_women_tribunal.pdf) documents women from every continent speaking about a multitude of oppressive practices. More recent work, however, offers different perspectives on silence and silencing. The starting point here is recognition that women and girls have spoken, and continue to speak, to friends, family and state agencies. The question then shifts to whether and how they are heard (Romito, 2008). Silence has also been theorised as an active and strategic decision made in contexts in which to speak may be dangerous, with the position of black and minority ethnic (BME) women often in focus (Kanyeredzi, 2017). Thus, cultures of scepticism or belief and intersectional contexts play a part in whether women speak about violence, what they say and to whom (Rehman et al., 2013).

Naming, language and definitions

To speak even at a basic level, however, requires language – words which name experiences. Whilst rape has been named and defined in law for centuries, many of the other forms of abuse were neither named nor defined, so whilst women and girls might have a sense of having been harmed, there was no language of social recognition (Kelly, 1987). The concepts of domestic violence and sexual harassment were created in the 1970s, and others would follow. Naming challenges what in the Nordic countries has been theorised as normalisation (see, for example, Lundgren, 2004). Naming, in this sense, is a political process which makes both visible and problematic taken-for-granted practices. For individuals, however, naming is more complex since it both places them in the stigmatised category of 'victim', whilst simultaneously locating the perpetrator, who may be an intimate or family member, in the category of abuser or rapist.

For most forms of VAW there have been debates about how they should be named, with multiple shifts in language over the last four decades. For example, domestic violence was often referred to in the 1970s as *battering*, with the corollaries of *battered women* and *batterers* (still widely used in the USA). As it became clearer that physical violence was only one of a range of control strategies, *domestic violence* was more often used, and most recently *domestic abuse* seeks to recognise forms of psychological and economic coercion more explicitly. The tendency for policy makers to conflate all violence between family members with that by partners led many researchers to use the term *intimate partner violence*. Whilst all of these concepts are not without problems, since they fail to accurately name 'who is doing what to whom' (Hester, 2013), some now have wider social recognition.

A parallel debate, following earlier challenges to rape as a 'property' crime – against either a woman's father or husband – has been whether rape should be considered a crime of violence or a sex crime (Gavey, 2005). Early feminist approaches stressed the former, contending that if the crime were to parallel physical assault there would be no legal rationale for addressing consent or the character and behaviour of women victims in court. Legal reform in Canada, and some states in the United States, took this approach, replacing the crime of rape with gender-neutral grades of sexual assault. A book reflecting on the impacts of this strategy (Sheehy, 2012) suggests that not only were the hoped-for changes not achieved, but most cases are now charged at the lower end of the scale and the symbolic loss of the word *rape* has had other unintended consequences. The conceptual critique of positioning rape as a crime of violence has been most eloquently articulated by Catharine MacKinnon (2011), who maintains that it leaves the boundary between rape and sex precisely where it was, undercutting critical feminist engagement with traditional modes of heterosexuality – what has come to be termed heteronormativity (Richardson, 2017) – in which men are presumed to have an ever-present biological drive to seek and have sex and women are responsible for setting and policing the boundaries of access to their bodies.

As VAW became recognised in international law and policy, the need for an overarching definition became clear, the one used for some time by the United Nations is the basis of the most recent in the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women, often referred to as the Istanbul Convention:

> ... violence against women' is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
>
> (Council of Europe, 2011: Article 3)

The concept of gender-based violence has been contested, since arguably almost all violence is this, if violence is understood as a masculinity practice, including violence between men and boys in, for example, gangs and street-based youth cultures (Mullins, 2006) and armed conflict (Enloe, 1993). This has led to the recuperation of both the language of VAW within the UN, drawing on the wording in the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women:

> ... the term 'violence against women' is understood to mean any act of gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately ... manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms ... experienced in a range of settings, from private to public, and in today's globalized world, transcending national boundaries.
>
> (UN, 2006: para. 28 and 104)

The concept of disproportionality is key here, since it recognises that some men and boys are, for example, raped or experience forced marriage, but the overwhelming majority of those subjected to these practices are female. The reference to 'a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms' draws on Kelly's (1987) work, based on interviews with 60 women and which explored all the forms of violence they had experienced as girls and adult women and how these might be connected.

Part of what the continuum concept sought to make visible were the everyday, routine intimate intrusions theorised as connected to forms of violence which are criminalised. The connection was the use of power to diminish and control; what Bea Campbell (2009) has powerfully argued are 'crimes of dominion', in which the fundamental right to bodily integrity is denied, and women's safety and freedom are curtailed. Vera Grey (2018) asks the profound question of whether women trade safety for freedom in how they negotiate public space. The concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins and Bilge, 2016) has enabled further conceptual development, since it illuminates how violence can sit at the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality and/or disability (Kelly, 2012).

The continuum concept further contends that the legal binary between rape and consensual sex does not reflect women's experience. What is recounted in qualitative research are a range of contexts in which women have unwanted sex, only a portion of which they name as rape. Nicola Gavey (2005) has described this as a 'dimensional view' of sexual violence. This is a conceptual intervention which challenges simplistic binary (legally based) definitions through experiential data. Similar arguments have been made with respect to trafficking, smuggling and migration (Kelly, 2007); in law and policy they are defined as mutually exclusive, but they shade into and out of one another in complex ways in the lived experiences of women and men (McAdam, 2015).

Within feminist theory, the victimhood/agency debate constituted a new fault line, with more thoughtful engagements exploring rarely acknowledged intersections (see, for example, Kelly et al., 1996; Lamb, 1999; Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk, 2011; Jakobsen, 2016). The concept of victimhood and the contention that feminist research on sexual violence positions women as inevitable victims are rooted in the notion that to be a victim is to be passive, vulnerable and devoid of any power (Roiphe, 1993). In this construction, agency exists only to the extent that women eschew the status and identity of victim. This simplistic binary is based on ignoring two important dimensions of feminist knowledge: that many women and girls do resist in deed, word and thought and are not passive, but this does not alter the fact that they were victimised (Kelly, 1987; Jordan, 2005); and that violence is an exercise of power, a temporal denial of agency to the person victimised: 'one has been reduced to silence, to the status of an object or, worse, made into someone else's speech, an instrument of another's agency' (Brison, 2002: 55).

Theorising VAW and inequality

It has been assumed that as women become more equal – economically, socially and politically – violence against women would decline. Data from Sweden, and other Nordic countries, suggest this model may be too simplistic. The country that has done

the most to establish formal equality between women and men has the highest level of reported rape per capita of population in Europe (Lovett and Kelly, 2009). Similarly, development programmes are increasingly aware that channeling economic resources through women, whilst more effective in promoting income generation, can have the unintended consequence of heightening tension and violence in interpersonal relations (Oxfam, 2012; Read-Hamilton, 2014).

Diana Russell and Rebecca Bolen (2000) theorised, somewhat contentiously at the time, that if violence against women is an expression of men's power, challenges to that power may, at least in the short term, result in increasing rather than decreasing levels of violence. The implications of this theory for national and international policy are multiple and profound, and yet to be explored in depth.

To analyse these dilemmas and paradoxes we need sophisticated theoretical framings which place the continuum of violence at the core of gender inequality, whilst allowing for change, retrenchment and unintended consequences at multiple levels. Connell and Pearse's (2014) theoretical framework distinguishes between the overarching 'gender order', 'gender regimes' (more localised within institutions, including the family) and 'gender relations' between individual women and men. Whilst the levels are connected, divergences between them are not only possible but to be expected and explored in specific times and places. Anne Morris (2009) draws on Connell's work in her concept of an 'abusive household gender regime' to reflect both the continuum of violence and coercive control in intimate partner violence and familial child sexual abuse. She and other theorists recognise that gender is constantly reproduced (see Richardson in this volume) and that violence is a remaking within gender relations, which simultaneously reproduces gender as hierarchy at the group and social levels. Eva Lundgren (2004), in her research on intimate partner violence, but with wider application, refers to this process as 'gender constitution' – that men construct themselves as men through their use of violence and control. To the extent that they are successful, they simultaneously diminish the women they are abusing through requiring them to adopt their version of femininity.

In public policy, if not in gender and women's studies, gender is often understood as being about women, making the gendering of men and masculinities a critical component in VAW theory. A compelling example is *Holding Your Square* (Mullins, 2006), an ethnographic study of young black men in the United States, which documents the ways these men divide women into a small number of intimates deserving of respect and the rest, who are ripe for exploitation. This complex, careful and critical analysis reveals how this group of young disadvantaged men construct their masculinity on the street, through violence and gender, which in turn creates a sense of entitlement to public space and to women's time, attention, loyalty and bodies. Similar analysis can be found in UK research on sexual exploitation of gang-associated young women (Firmin, 2013; also see Robinson in this volume for further discussion of masculinity).

A further challenge is how to deal with the intersection of gender and sexuality, especially with respect to violence in same-sex relationships. Whilst early studies from the United States (see Renzetti and Harvey Miley, 1996) argued that violence was as common in this context, this claim is complex since the samples were not random and the methodology not comparable to studies of violence in heterosexual relationships.

That said, it is clear that abuse does take place in same-sex relationships. Combining a survey and interviews, a UK study (Donovan et al., 2006) explored the extent to which the dynamics are similar, whilst paying attention to additional layers of complexity. Both heteronormativity, with its roots in gender construction, and homophobia are drawn on in the explanatory framework, including the fact that victim-survivors still prefer to use counselling over criminal justice or specialist domestic violence services (Donovan and Hester, 2015). Understanding violence in same-sex relationships also requires clarity and sophistication in gender analysis.

Establishing a field of research

The early research agenda reflected a preference for qualitative methods, as those which valued and validated women's experiences, reflecting the discussion of feminist epistemology at this point (see Letherby in this volume). This has remained a strength in the field, with some key examples being studies with survivors of the same serial rapist (Jordan, 2008); ritual abuse (Scott, 2001); children and mothers living with domestic violence (Mullender et al., 2002); sexual harassment in public space (Vera-Gray, 2018); BME women's experiences of violence (Kanyeredzi, 2017); and young women's involvement in sexual exploitation (Coy, 2009). Nonetheless, it is the reclaiming by feminists of the survey, to measure the extent of violence, which has had the most influence on public policy and generated ongoing debates.

The first community-based surveys on violence against women were conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United States (see Russell and Bolen, 2000) and United Kingdom (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984). They established the widespread prevalence of violence, committed in the main by known men, including partners and relatives. The carefully constructed questionnaires asked about many forms of violence in diverse contexts, and the interviewers were all women with knowledge and understanding of VAW. Most respondents recalled at least one incident of intimate intrusion in their lifetime and many reported multiple intrusions by the same and/or different perpetrators. Simultaneously, a much shorter and more limited instrument – the Conflicts Tactics Scale (CTS) – was developed in the United States to investigate family violence. The CTS has been subjected to extensive criticism for failing to distinguish between primary offenders and acts used in self-defence; having no measure of frequency or impact; disconnecting violent acts from the context in which they occur (see, for example, Dobash et al., 1992). A revised version of the instrument addressed some of these limitations, but by no means all (Straus et al., 1996). The CTS has, however, become the template on which most subsequent prevalence studies have been built, but with a narrower focus on domestic violence (European Commission, 2010). Many, including the British Crime Survey (now the Crime Survey England and Wales), frame the survey as being about 'crime', which has been shown to decrease disclosure of experiences of violence – surveys framed in terms of women's safety or health have higher reporting rates. Crime surveys are organised around documenting 'incidents'. This is problematic for many forms of VAW, but especially so with respect to domestic violence, which is quintessentially a course of conduct, with most definitions emphasising a combination of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Measuring it as 'incidents' of crime fails to capture this reality:

most succinctly defined as a 'pattern of coercive control' (Stark, 2007). It is those who become entrapped in coercive control who need – and seek – protection and support. A further consequence of an 'any incident' definition is that headline findings on domestic violence – where an 'incident' can be a single slap or a push – show that studies which include women and men produce 'evidence' that women are as violent as men. The most recent data (Office of National Statistics, 2018), reports that 7.9% of women and 4.2% of men experienced an 'incident' in the year ending March 2018. When data is analysed to reflect a course of conduct, the gendered pattern of the majority of victims being female and perpetrators male, a pattern that is so apparent in service-level data from police and other agencies re-emerges (Walby et al., 2016).

The focus on domestic violence has meant that methodological innovation on sexual violence has been limited. One important exception is the SAVI study from Ireland (McGee et al., 2002), based on a quota sample of 1,584 women and 1,534 men, aged 18 to 90. A series of questions explored a range of potential acts, with three measures of prevalence summarised below:

- 20.4% of women and 16.2% of men reported childhood sexual abuse occurring when under 17 years old;

- 20.4% of women and 9.7% of men reported adult sexual violence occurring when 17 and over;

- the lifetime measure – the most serious incident from either childhood or adulthood – found 42% of women and 28% of men had experienced sexual violence.

Intersectional analysis of prevalence data has come primarily from the United States, with several studies finding higher rates for minoritised women.

- Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes (2000) analysed the results of their national Violence against Women Survey, finding that American Indian/Alaska Native women were significantly more likely than white women to report sexual violence, with African American women, or mixed-race having higher rates of reported rape.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004) found higher rates of forced sex reported by university students – black (12.3%) Hispanic (10.4%), white (7.3%).

Valli Kanuha (1996) raised the question of whether there are differential prevalence rates across social groups. We know that violence against women and children occurs in all social groups, but as research becomes more sophisticated and global in reach, it is clear that rates of violence are not consistent across social groups, or between societies. Heightened rates of violence seem most common for women of colour, and especially Aboriginal women (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000; Brownridge, 2009). This analysis can also be applied to conflict, where in many contexts, but not all, sexual violence is heightened (Wood, 2009).

Few contemporary surveys, even when they are cast as about VAW and/or health, ask about the everyday intrusions, which were a core element in the continuum concept. Exceptions here were the specialist VAW surveys in France and Germany (European Commission, 2010), which show that sexual harassment is the most

common form of violence in women's lives. This was confirmed in the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency survey (FRA, 2014), which found that across the 27 member states, 55% of women had experienced at least one form of sexual harassment, with 21% reporting this was the case in the year before the survey was undertaken.

Survey research is ill suited to establishing the extent of less common forms of violence, such as FGM and trafficking, although modules on the former have been used in countries where the practice is common.

Prevalence measures have established that violence is an issue in many women's lives, but methodological limitations mean that this has been at the cost of accurately reflecting the full extent and the contexts in which violence occurs. The intense debates about gender symmetry or asymmetry (whether women are as violent as men), with respect to intimate partner violence, are as much debates about research methods as they are about the reality of violence in the lives of those women and men. Michael Johnson (2008) has argued persuasively that surveys are measuring several distinct patterns, including 'common couple violence' – occasional conflicts where violence is used, where there is a symmetry in victimisation and perpetration; and 'domestic terrorism' – where one partner repeatedly and systematically uses violence as a way to control the other, in which men constitute the vast majority of perpetrators.

Meaning, impacts and consequences

It is a truism to say that violence is harmful, but its impacts and consequences can be understood through several lenses. The most obvious is the medical lens, covering both physical and mental health. A feminist lens theorises the impacts more broadly, as an indicator of women's status, perhaps most succinctly summarised by the UN statement in 1993 that violence against women is 'a cause and consequence' of gender inequality. Here, the meaning, impacts and consequences of VAW are connected directly to women's oppression. Drawing on this framing, whilst the health consequences of what is termed 'street harassment' may be slight, it is nonetheless a regular reminder to women of their subordinate status and curtails their freedom to occupy public space without the risk of intrusion (Vera Grey, 2018). The ever-present threat of violence leads many women to undertake 'safety work' (Kelly, 2012) – having to factor their personal safety into decisions about whether, where, when and how they do certain things. Much of what purports to be 'prevention' is advice to women about how, or more accurately how not, to behave, especially in public space, the message being that if women do not follow the rules, they are to some extent responsible for what happens to them. The most obvious example here is advice about alcohol consumption, with the implicit, but never-stated assumption that men cannot be trusted to not take advantage of a woman who is drunk. In the United States, this debate has played out through the concept of 'date rape' (Roiphe, 1993), which has limited purchase in other jurisdictions, where few rapes appear to take place in the context of 'dates'.

In terms of health consequences, reanalysis of the UK Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey data (Scott et al., 2013), which has a random sample of over 7,000 women and

men, identified several distinct patterns of abuse which correlated with mental health outcomes. One group, equivalent to 1 in 25 of the UK population, had experienced extensive physical and sexual violence, with an abuse history extending back to childhood. Members of this group were five times more likely to have what the survey defined as a common mental disorder and fifteen times more likely to have three or more mental disorders, including attempted suicide and self-harm. The other group with a similar profile was overwhelmingly female and had experienced extensive physical violence and coercive control in an adult partner relationship. Violence is, therefore, harmful at the individual and social levels.

Research is also drawing attention to the intersection of material and emotional disadvantage, with increased burdens in the aftermath of violence. Ava Kanyeredzi (2017) shows this to be the case for African Caribbean heritage women, and work on child sexual exploitation (Beckett et al., 2013) suggests that class stereotypes result in girls as young as 13 being deemed by professionals to be 'choosing' a lifestyle of exchanging sex for money and material goods. This construction of young women meant that professionals abandoned them to ongoing and repeated abuse, compounding the impacts. Recent work by Sharp Jeffs (2015a, 2015b) has begun to uncover the extent to which economic abuse is interwoven with other forms of abuse in intimate partner violence, and is one form of control that perpetrators are able to exert post-separation.

One troubling research finding, now replicated across many studies, is that repeated child sexual abuse correlates with re-victimisation as an adult (Messman-Moore and Long, 2000) through both additional sexual violence and intimate partner violence. This group of women is also over-represented in prisons and in mental health services. At the same time, many survivors manage the legacies of childhood abuse and rebuild themselves and their lives in extraordinary ways. We know too little about the pathways which enable this, but some elements are being believed and supported by a significant other as children and adults. The emergence of the concept of resilience disguises the 'violence work' (Kelly, 2012) that survivors undertake to cope, since there are still burdens to carry even where lives are not determined by abuse. Here, the work of Veena Das (1998), drawing on Bourdieu's concept of social suffering – the weight of inequality in lived lives, is an important reference point. The harms of violence are burdens many women have to shoulder, draining energy, resources and time from what their life projects could have been (Kelly et al., 2014).

The philosopher Susan Brison's *Aftermath* (2002) offers both a personal and intellectual engagement with what it means to be a survivor of violence. The book charts her own process of negotiating the aftermath of brutal stranger rape and how reflecting on this changed her approach to theories of the self:

> I develop and defend a view of the self as fundamentally relational – capable of being undone by violence, but also of being remade in connection with others (Brison, 2001: xi) ... The trauma has changed me forever, and if I insist too often that my friends and family acknowledge it, that's because I'm afraid they don't know who I am.

(Brison, 2002: 21)

Brison explores the changed self, following victimisation, as a relational self, illuminating another of the harms of violence: the betrayal of trust which brings into question relationships with other human beings. Brison's analysis also points to the redress of harms, since she argues that the self can be 'remade in connection to others'. This is precisely what the women-run specialist services have been doing for almost five decades. Theirs is not a medical model of 'recovery' – as in 'return to normal' – but a joint exploration of how violence has changed a woman's life, her sense of self and relations to others and how she wishes to remake herself as a consequence (Kelly et al., 2014).

State responses and responsibilities

The alternative institutions established in the 1970s – refuges, rape crisis centres – resulted in feminists hearing recurrent stories about not only the failure of state agencies to protect and support women, but a catalogue of what some call 'secondary victimisation'. This is more than victim blame, encompassing:

- being left in danger;
- not being informed of rights or options;
- having the symptoms of abuse addressed, through medication, but not the cause;
- removing a woman's children rather than protecting her.

This prompted campaigns for change targeted initially at police and social work. The greatest shifts in the 1980s came from the police in relation to domestic violence and social work around child sexual abuse. Change was extensive in local areas where coalitions were created between feminists on the inside and outside. Institutional change has continued, spurred since the 1990s in the United Kingdom by government initiatives. The formal involvement of governments has been encouraged by international developments, especially the defining of VAW in 1993 by the UN as a human-rights and gender-equality issue (Kelly, 2005). All signatories to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have to report to the CEDAW committee at regular intervals. Since the mid-1990s this has included reporting on preventing VAW and protecting women subjected to it. European countries which have ratified the Istanbul convention – the UK has not as yet – are required to report on progress in protecting women from violence and preventing VAW to the monitoring committee (GREVIO). At the time of writing, eight countries have completed the detailed process, with eight in process.

Global legal reforms over the last 45 years have been extensive and include making forms of violence, such as psychological abuse and stalking, illegal for the first time; overhauling and reforming existing laws on rape, child sexual abuse and trafficking; and using civil law for protection orders. Whilst feminist legal theorists have analysed the ways in which some legal reforms have challenged the masculinism embedded in law, sociologists have raised different questions. Sandra Walklate (2008), for example, critiques what she sees as a 'turn to law', noting that the state has failed to deliver the promised protection. African American criminologist Beth Ritchie (2012) asks a

linked question: whether, in placing faith in legal responses, feminists have been complicit in the mass incineration of African American men and women.

Empirical studies by VAW researchers confirm the limits of relying on law and its enforcement through studying attrition in cases of domestic violence (Hester, 2006) and rape (Kelly et al., 2005; Lovett and Kelly, 2009). Attrition research meticulously tracks cases, noting at what stage they fall out of the process; whilst reporting has increased substantially, the vast majority of reported cases do not result in a conviction – 5% of domestic violence cases in Northumbria (Hester, 2006) and 7% of rape cases across England and Wales in 2013 (ONS, 2013a). The level of reported sexual offences has continued to rise, with the 2018 data showing an increase of 16% for rape (59,698 offences) and 13% for other sexual offences (101,464) (ONS, 2019). Data from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS, 2018) show that neither charging nor prosecutions have risen at the same rates. The result is falling conviction rates. Recent media reporting has shown that the rates of prosecution and conviction have fallen substantially (Barr, 2019).

One of the key findings of the first rape attrition study in England (Kelly et al., 2005) was that there is a culture of scepticism and pessimism at all levels of the criminal justice system. Stereotypes of rape, rapists and rape victims influence whether police and prosecutors find cases 'believable' and/or 'winnable' (Munro and Kelly, 2009). Here, we see the limits of the impacts of feminist engagements with legal systems (see also Conaghan and Russell, 2014). Women are still expected to take appropriate precautions and act in predictable ways in the aftermath of rape. Those who do not conform to expected schemas can become the focus of 'blame work' (Yancey Martin, 2005). One study of 58 rape trials in the United States (Parraig and Renner, 1998, cited in Munro and Kelly, 2009) suggests that in order to be an effective witness, the complainant must enact non-consent in the courtroom. This involves being: polite but not compliant; co-operative but not submissive; answering promptly and precisely; and speaking without shame. This is a tall order for any witness, let alone one who is required to speak about sexual violation. A new study (Smith, 2018) observing rape trials in England argues the issues are far more fundamental than the use of rape myths, asking whether structural inequalities are embedded in the practices of adversarial legal systems.

Judith Herman's (2005) thoughtful reflections on what justice might be from the perspective of women who have suffered violence begins from the recognition that since most perpetrators are known to women – many of them part of their inner circle – and that community standards continue to blame women, neither the criminal justice system as usual, nor restorative justice deliver what is needed. From interviews with survivors, Herman concludes they want:

- recognition – that they have been victimised;

- vindication – that the dishonour, stigma and loss of status are transferred to perpetrators;

- re-connection – with others and communities they are part of;

- accountability – sanctions which protect them and others, which may or may not be punitive;

- freedom from the burdens of harm.

This is an agenda for change that extends beyond criminal and civil justice, and even procedural/parallel justice; it requires a holistic response from the state, communities, friends and family. Icelandic research (Antonsdottir, 2018) has begun exploring in more depth precisely what these contours of justice could look like, both within legal systems and the communities in which survivors are located.

Neoliberal shifts

This agenda is not, however, the one that has been pursued in recent years, particularly with respect to domestic violence, where in the United States and United Kingdom in particular, a criminal justice route has been prioritised, with the concepts of risk and multi-agency responses taking centre stage (Stark, 2007; Coy and Kelly, 2010). A parallel process has been the marketisation of support services.

The critique of the criminal justice route has been most strongly articulated by women of colour in the United States (see, for example, Ritchie, 2012), where both mandatory arrest and prosecution were introduced in the 1990s. The outcomes have been disproportionate convictions of both African American men and women, the latter in what has now been termed *dual arrests* where both parties are arrested (Stark, 2007).

It has become an article of faith in policy that multi-agency responses are necessary if violence is to be addressed effectively. Jalna Hanmer (1995) noted over 20 years ago that multi-agency responses can only be as good as the practice in each of the agencies. The neoliberal emphasis on good and best practice has served as a veil to disguise the more common bad and poor practice, as evidenced in many reports of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) on domestic violence homicides between 2010 and 2014. Peter Harvie and Tony Manzi (2011) report on a longitudinal case study of local government Crime Reduction Partnerships responses to domestic violence, documenting how a feminist approach has been eclipsed by a crime-incident focus, managerialism and what they term a 'perverse equalities framework'. Here, equality is understood as paying equal attention to men as victims. As a consequence, the understanding of power and control as central to both the violence and relations between agencies has been lost.

Part of this process has been that the concept of risk has replaced that of need in domestic violence policy (Mythen and Walklate, 2011), with resources being targeted at those designated 'high risk'. In the process, risk assessment and risk factors have replaced a gendered analysis of power and control. A clear illustration here are the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), which have been institutionalised across England and Wales (and promoted across Europe). A decade on the intention to reduce domestic homicides has not been realised, and concerns have been raised about the fact that women are not present and their consent to information sharing is not always sought or given (Coy and Kelly, 2010). Focus groups for a multi-country European study Cultural Encounters in Intervention on Violence (CEINAV)

revealed that risk served as a 'compass' to guide actions, regardless of women's wishes and participation, and that professionals 'responsibilised' women for their own and their children's safety (Coy and Kelly, 2019).

A way of working that restored agency to women in the aftermath of violence, which was a foundational principle in feminist-inspired refuges and other support services, has been undermined further by marketisation, localism and commissioning (Kelly et al., 2014). A Westminster Government decision to move decision making to local areas coincided with drastically reduced budgets for local government, alongside an interpretation of EU procurement legislation that funding above a specific threshold must be made available to open commercial tender. This has enabled large-scale providers, including generic housing associations, faith-based organisations and G4S (a global private security company), to take over community-based services established by women's organisations decades previously. The losses are most evident with respect to BME women's organisations, as their intersectional specialism no longer 'fits' the new funding regime (Rehman et al., 2013; IMKAAN, 2016). Sylvia Walby and Jude Towers (2012) documented a 31% cut in funding of domestic and sexual violence services at the local level compared to allocations in 2009, and the situation has become more acute since.

Neoliberal economics and social policies cuts to welfare budgets and legal aid have further undermined women's possibilities of escaping violence (Kelly et al., 2014). The Women's Aid Federations and Rape Crisis Networks of England, Wales and Scotland have all campaigned against both the new funding regimes and the shift from need to risk in the last decade. Some quick fixes have prevented the widespread closure of refuges and rape crisis centres, but the future of women's services remains precarious.

The challenge of prevention

Responding to the immediate needs of women who have been victimised has been a priority for both women's organisations and, to a varying extent, governments. As a consequence, prevention has taken something of a backseat. The exception was the innovative Zero Tolerance campaign established in the 1990s in Scotland (http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk). Whilst successive Westminster governments have stated that prevention is a priority in their violence-against-women strategies since 2009, this assertion has amounted to relatively little, apart from the ground-breaking ThisisAbuse (http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/) campaign, coordinated by the Home Office and targeted at young people. In 2011, the feminist coalition End Violence Against Women (EVAW) published a medium- and long-term prevention strategy, *A Different World Is Possible* (End Violence Against Women, 2011), but only minimal progress has been made since. This document makes clear that prevention requires understanding the causes of violence at a number of connected levels, including constructions of masculinity and male entitlement. A new global discussion linked to this is the recognition that many men and boys do not use violence, and what the implications of this are for prevention strategies. Involving men in preventing VAW has become a priority for the UN since 2013, prompting an international debate on this as a strategic move (see, for example, Flood, 2015). Many interventions have

positioned men only as potential perpetrators, but relatively new 'bystander' approaches offer the possibility of eschewing violence, supporting women and challenging abusive peers (Potter, 2012).

The challenges of prevention can also be illustrated in approaches to sexual assault, much of which to date has focused on women's 'refusal skills': that they should learn to say no, clearly and emphatically. Analysis of human refusals in everyday communication reveal that they are rarely 'just saying no', but rather, they are careful and hesitant in an attempt to not hurt the feelings of the other party (Kitzinger and Frith, 1999). Yet we expect – and even teach – young women to do refusals in a different way with respect to sex.

A recent challenge is how to deal with the violence that is enacted online, which includes harassment and stalking and threats of rape and death. The online environment, with its potential for anonymity, has become a new 'conducive context' for VAW, which limits women's engagement and presence. Many individuals and women's organisations have campaigned for service providers and networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to address women's safety, but with limited success. On the other hand, witnessing first hand, overt and blatant misogyny has been one element in a resurgence of feminist activism in many countries. The re-emergence of anger about routine sexual harassment took a further turn with the #MeToo hashtag going viral globally in 2017, a calling to account of individuals and institutions (see also Charles and Kapoor in this volume). Whilst not without its critics, this outpouring of women naming abuse and receiving recognition and validation can be understood as an attempt to create a form of justice in which women, and victim-survivors in particular, set the ground rules.

Conclusion

Violence against women is an arena in which some of the best aspirations of feminism and feminists have been made real: global coalitions which thrive on diversity; continuing and challenging connections between research, activism and public policy; legal reform based on recognition of women's physical integrity and sexual autonomy; and the creation of safety and options for women and girls whose lives have been dominated and controlled. It has made a number of critically important contributions to knowledge, policy and practice.

Feminist research and activism has made major contributions to understandings of VAW. It has established that:

- there are multiple forms of VAW which exist on a continuum from the everyday to the lethally extreme;

- the majority of perpetrators are men known to the women and girls, and very few of the perpetrators have any kind of psychiatric disturbance;

- certain contexts are conducive to VAW: the family; institutions; conflict and transition; public space and online environments;

- what makes a difference to victim-survivors is being believed, heard, recognised, enabled and supported to regain control over their bodies and lives;

- whilst victim blame has been challenged, it remains strong; we still ask, 'Why did she not leave?' rather than 'Why did he hurt her?';

- legal reform has created more access to justice, both through extending the reach of law to more behaviours – harassment, stalking, rape in marriage, trafficking – and the use of civil law to create protection from violence;

- practices by the police, prosecutors, courts, social work and health are informed by feminist research;

- VAW is recognised internationally – by the UN, the EU and the Council of Europe – as a core pillar of gender inequality and a human rights issue.

At the same time, VAW is also the arena in which the extent of what remains to be done is most visceral. Can we claim with any certainty to have done more than make the range and extent of abuse visible, identify flagship projects, and document the continued failure of both justice and welfare systems to respond adequately?

In the current context, in which stories of sexual harassment and abuse of women and girls are 'everywhere', it is worth taking a few moments to reflect on how far we have come. What has changed? There is both a climate of belief and disbelief, a sense that this happens on a wide scale, quickly followed by the question of how it could happen so often; how are these things 'hidden in plain sight'? Whilst there is undoubtedly more belief in the abstract about the scale of VAW, the context in which each woman/girl is abused includes who the perpetrator is, the circumstances and their intersectional position; each and all can lead to questioning her credibility or holding her responsible for what has happened. New challenges have also emerged which require analysis. Is technology merely creating a new context for abuse, in which perpetrators can operate across geographical space, or are they sites for new forms of violence? What are the connections between gender, terrorism and violence against women?

We are, therefore, still a very long way from the ambition of the Women's Liberation Movement – later adopted by the UN and the Council of Europe – of ending violence against women. For this to be more than rhetoric, prevention needs to be at the centre of our thinking, rather than being an optional extra. Two feminists (Walby, 2011; Campbell, 2014) ask whether efforts to create gender equality have stalled across the Global North and whether we are in a new moment characterised by neoliberalism, right-wing and religious fundamentalism, with a rollback of rights and progress. Campbell goes further, arguing that violence is now endemic, in which impunity reigns and misogyny has refound its voice, especially in social media. She argues that nothing short of a gender revolution will address violence effectively and takes heart from the resurgence of feminist activism among young women (see Charles in this volume). Interestingly, these young women are not only paying attention to acts which are criminal offences but discussing and sharing the everyday intimate intrusions which were a focus in the 1970s for feminist activists and researchers.

Further reading

S. Brison (2000) *Aftermath: Violence and the Re-making of the Self*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. An extraordinary book which traverses personal experience and philosophy within an intellectual engagement to approaches to sexual violence, trauma, narrative, theories of the self, autonomy and community.

L. Kelly (1987) *Surviving Sexual Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Established the concept of the continuum of violence, based on interviews with 60 women in which all their encounters with violence are explored. Women are not positioned as victims; later chapters explore coping, survival and resistance.

Y. Rehman, L. Kelly and H. Siddiqui (eds) (2013) *Moving in the Shadows: Violence in the Lives of Minority Women and Children*. London: Ashgate. A unique collection drawing together research and thinking on minoritised women's experiences in the United Kingdom with the theme of intersectionality threading throughout all the chapters.

E. Stark (2007) *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. A provocative book challenging the focus on criminal justice intervention in US responses to domestic violence; argues for physical assaults to be located within a wider concept of coercive control, gendered practices of subjugation in the micro-management of everyday life.

F. Vera Grey (2018) *The Right Amount of Panic: How Women Trade Safety for Freedom.* Bristol: Policy Press. Based on depth work with 50 women, what they experience as intrusive is deftly compared to inadequate concepts. The apparent paradox of women thinking this happens frequently, with their diary entries showing it is unusual, is resolved through recognition that women enter the public space anticipating that intrusion is an ever present possibility. The complex 'safety work' which all women use is theorised as being effective in limiting intrusion, but this is at the cost of women's freedom.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what ways is VAW a core pillar of gender inequality?

2. Is the concept of the continuum of violence still relevant?

3. What might justice, if viewed from the perspective of victim-survivors, look like?

4. How might we explain the continued increase in the reporting of rape to the police, when the criminal justice system is less effective in prosecuting it today than 25 years ago?

5. How might promoting sexual ethics create an alternative and better approach to prevention?

10 GENDER AND MIGRATION

Maggie O'Neill and Alison Jobe

Introduction

Available sociological studies of migration tend to focus on men's experiences of migration. With this observation in mind, this chapter will explore what is known about women's experiences of migration. Following an overview of the literature on gender and migration, we will explore women's experiences of forced migration and of seeking asylum. We will consider how far international refugee law incorporates women's experiences of forced migration and persecution. Two case studies from our own research will be presented in the chapter. The first case study presents Maggie O'Neill's ethnographic, life story and participatory action research with those seeking asylum. This case study highlights that participatory action research and arts-based methods are a useful way of creating space for women to speak for themselves about their lives and experiences, thus generating women-centred understandings to contribute to policy and practice. The second case study presents Alison Jobe's study of UK asylum determinations where women claimed asylum in the UK with accounts of trafficking into the commercial sex industry. The case study explores how, when and why stories were first recognised as credible refugee claims by the UK Home Office, and explores what this tells us about gender and asylum determinations. We conclude with a summary of the key themes, and some key readings and questions to inspire further reflection.

There is a dearth of literature on women and migration, especially from a gender/women's studies perspective. Indeed, our review of the 'migration observatory', based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, revealed only three publications that directly mention gender. One focuses upon the breakdown of selected groups of EU nationals; the second provides a chart of 'gender and reason for migration, all nationalities, 1991–2014' documenting only the male percentage, leaving it up to the discerning reader to obtain the figures for women and only across the following categories: work, family and study (The Migration Observatory, 2014: n.p.). The third provides 'naturalisations by age, gender, region of previous nationality' (2017). The publication by Rienzo and Vargos-Silva (2017/2018) called *Migrants in the UK: An Overview* shares many helpful statistics based on evidence gathered but none are disaggregated according to gender, nor do they reference gender differences. Another briefing examines the reasons why migrants come to the UK. Only four basic types of migration are documented: 'work, study, family, and asylum' (Blinder, 2018: n.p.). Work 'is the most common reason for migration to the UK and asylum is the smallest' and 'asylum applicants constituted 6% of all long-term migration to the UK in 2016' (Blinder, 2018: n.p.).

Feminist sociological and social policy analysis on the feminisation of migration has emerged from work that explored migration from a gendered perspective (Sales, 2007). Contradicting the mainstream and normative view of chain migration (the man migrates and is then joined by wife, family and others in his social network), feminist analysis explores women's experiences of migration (Phizaklea, 1983; Kofman et al., 2000; Tassioglou and Dobrowlesky, 2006) largely in relation to service work, care work, and domestic service as well as fleeing violence and poverty. As Stephanie Nawyn (2010) states, feminist research on migration takes place outside the 'mainstream of the broader field'. Moreover, gender-based articles on migration are under-represented in the major sociological journals and those contributions by feminist migration scholars are in the areas of 'migrant households, family relations, and social networks' (Nawyn, 2010: 754).

Research on gender and migration takes place within the context of globalisation, or, as Zygmunt Bauman (2003) has defined it, 'negative globalisation'. Structural forces include the impact of globalisation and North–South relations (Castles, 2003; Marfleet, 2006). For Stephen Castles (2003), 'globalisation is not a system of equitable participation in a fairly structured global economy, society and polity but, rather, a system of selective inclusion and exclusion of specific areas and groups, which maintains and exacerbates inequality' (2003: 16). The most significant expression of this is inequalities in the experiences of those living in the South that lead to conflict and forced migration. Indeed, the distinction between economic migration and forced migration 'is not the result of a string of unconnected emergencies but rather an integral part of North–South relationships makes it necessary to theorize forced migration and link it to economic migration' (Castles, 2003: 17).

The task ahead for gender and women's studies is to analyse migration and the various configurations using feminist analysis in the context of a globalised and glocalised world that includes the flow of people, goods, technology and communications networks and 'alternative and criminal networks to enable the flow of people from South to North' (Castles, 2003: 190). Migratory movements are an expression of 'new networks through which move capital, data and people' (Marfleet, 2006: 21).

In a now-classic text, which has gone on to be revised and updated several times, Stephen Castles and Mark Miller ([2003] 2009) define five key features or trends of contemporary migration: acceleration; globalisation; diversification; feminisation; and politicisation. Acceleration involves the increase in international migration with broad trends for migratory flows from countries of the South to the North. Globalisation involves the internationalisation of migration, so that not only are more countries impacted by international migration, but they are also receiving migrants from a more diverse range 'of economic, social and cultural backgrounds'. Not only this, but the types of migration are more diverse – namely, 'labour migration, family reunion, refugee movement or permanent settlement' (Castles and Miller, [2003] 2009: 16). The feminisation of migration involves both awareness and understanding of the role of women in the different types of migration, not simply family reunion, but labor migration and refugee movement. Castles and Miller discuss the growing politicisation of migration in that 'domestic politics, bilateral and regional relationships and national security policies of states around the world are increasingly affected by international migration'. These key features underpin Castles and Miller's ([2003] 2009) argument that we are in an 'age of migration'.

Rosemary Sales (2007: 30) argues that migrations 'reflect both long-standing ine-qualities and newly emerging hierarchies of economic and political power'. She gives the example of migratory movements in the Middle East, in part, due to oil wealth, both attracting workers into low-status, domestic service occupations from neigh-bouring countries and giving rise to mobile wealthy and expatriate communities; and not forgetting the refugee populations in the region (Sales, 2007: 34). In this example, globalisation intersects with acceleration and diversification. Hence there are various types of migration, including labour migration; lifestyle migration; student migration and forced migration; 'circuits of migration' (Marfleet, 2006: 216; Kofman, 2012); and temporary migration (Marfleet, 2006). Polish migration is in part an example of short-term and circularity migration (Sales, 2007) as an alternative to emigration. Gendered circuits of migration are explored by Kofman (2012) in her feminist research on migration and care in relation to labour and marriage migrations and especially concerning the transfer of labour from the South to the North.

A trend in relation to the feminisation of migration is the sending of remittances home for family support. In 2006, Sales (2007: 37) documents that nearly half of workers registered with the British Workers Registration Scheme were women and in 2005, more broadly, an estimated US$233 billion in remittances were being delivered to receiving countries with US$167 billion going to developing countries.

An increase in the numbers of women migrants as workers and students is also a key trend which, as Watters (2007) identifies, makes more complex the key migratory trend of 'chain migration'. However, the dominant trend in research on female migra-tion is identified with service work and the 'invisible labour' (Anderson 1993; Kofman et al., 2000; Sales, 2007) of domestic and service workers (Anderson 1993: 677). Women working in the sex industry are a key feature of migratory flows (Agustin, 2007; Mai, 2009).

Given that the concentration of wealth from global capitalism is concentrated in the Global North (meaning those countries that are more economically dominant, wealthy, hold more power in international trade and politics, and are located, for example, in Europe, North America and Australia), global inequalities of wealth and power will inevitably help to create the conditions for migration, especially from countries of the Global South. However, the response from the North, including Europe, is to increase surveillance, border controls and the regulation of migration. One outcome is that a form of binary thinking dominates the field of migration: eco-nomic versus forced migration; permanent versus temporary; regular versus irregular (Sales, 2007: 41). This is starkly represented in the responses by the Global North to people on the move and what has been called the forced migration 'crisis': the erecting and enforcing of borders and walls (O'Neill et al., 2019) (Box 10.1).

Box 10.1 – Gender, place and migration

- The academic literature has tended to focus on men's experiences of migration;

- Feminist scholars have attempted to redress this balance by producing work which considers women's experience of migration;

- According to Castles and Miller ([2003] 2009), there are five key trends of contemporary migration: acceleration; globalisation; diversification; feminisation; and politicisation;

- Women's (and men's) experiences of migration are shaped by global inequalities, with those from the Global South finding it more difficult to migrate to countries in the Global North due to increasing border controls and surveillance of migration in the North.

Moving beyond binaries and related stereotypical thinking, we want to challenge some of the assumptions in the field, using feminist sociological analysis. In the following two sections we focus on forced migration, including gender and refugee status and the sex-work trafficking nexus.

Forced migration

Exile, displacement and belonging

Statistical data, as we describe in the introduction, is very limited on women and migration. However, there is a growing body of research by migration scholars, practitioners, activists and advocacy organisations on forced migration that combines critical analysis and lived experience and seeks interventions in policy and practice. The Asylum Aid's *Women's Charter* and Refugee Action's reports *Standing up for Women* and *Is it Safe Here*? (Dumper, 2002) and *When Maternity Doesn't Matter* (Feldman, 2013) provide rigorous research on women's experience of forced migration and the gender-biased asylum system and in particular with reference to experiences of poverty and destitution; health issues; maternity issues; detention; and problems accessing information.

A report to the UNHCR suggests that 'while women and men may face the same kind of harm, women are often subject to specific forms of gender-related abuse and violence such as rape, abduction, or offers of protection, documents or assistance in exchange for sex' (Global Consultations, UNHCR, 2002). Selling or swapping sex is more often than not a response to economic need. In the migration–trafficking nexus the distinction between forced and economic routes into sex work are blurred.

In the following case study based upon O'Neill's research, we explore a number of the key issues defined above. The research involved ethnographic, life story and participatory action research and participatory arts methods with asylum seekers. It was undertaken in 1999 with a Bosnian community of refugees in the East Midlands, with artists Bea Tobolewska, Maggy Milner and Jennifer Langer, the founder of Exiled Writers Ink.

This research undertook biographical methods and life story interviews, and then those who participated in the interviews met in arts workshops where they re-presented themes from the life stories in arts-based/visual form. Three key themes emerged from the life stories of those involved in the research:

1. Experiences before the war: dislocation was marked by post-communist citizenship in what was then still called Yugoslavia, which reconstituted 'citizenship' on a kinship or community basis – that is, for the Serb leader, only Serbs were allowed 'citizenship' and the protection of law.

2. Experiences during the war: people were displaced and separated from families and friends and lived in refugee camps; some, in concentration camps.

3. Experiences of living in the UK: refugees relocated and rebuilt their communities.

The intention of this research was to focus attention on history and the unspeakable: genocide/refugees; transgressive acts; everyday resistances; and hope for the future; as well as democratic processes and possibilities for citizenship, rights, and freedom within the realm of relative unfreedom (O'Neill, 2004).

This research led to further projects between 1999 and 2010 that sought to develop better understanding of the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees and have an impact on policy and practice. All of the projects were underpinned by the principles of participatory action research and participatory arts and included a focus upon inclusion, participation and valuing all local voices, as well as being interventionist, action-oriented and interpretive. In the collaborative process between refugee/asylum seeker/migrant, and artist and social researcher, a 'thicker' understanding of the lived experiences of migration and processes of belonging and diaspora emerged that challenged myths and stereotypes and helped to produce better knowledge and understanding of social justice. This brought an approach to knowledge production as collaboratively made, not found. Hence, it loosens the knowledge/power axis involved in knowledge production and 'expertise' and fed into policy making through praxis.

Case study one: towards a sense of belonging

This project literally involved walking, as a life story method, and the production of filmic texts, art and photography to represent lived experiences of migration, asylum and refuge. More recently, this work has been further developed by Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani and Tracey Reynolds by combining theatre and performative methods to document and analyse the experiences of migrant mothers and mothers with no recourse to public funds. In doing so, we have sought to 'decolonise' social research to generate new knowledge and insights into the social exclusion encountered by marginalised communities and to better understand women's lives, experiences and sense of belonging and place making involved in enacting citizenship (Erel et al., 2017; O'Neill et al., 2019).

For example, in Figure 10.1 (Home away from Home), a group of asylum-seeking women shared stories, narratives and precious photographs, and these stories were then re-presented visually through the creation of an installation. The photographs and stories of exile and belonging are literally stitched into the fabric of the box to symbolise their migration journeys, including narratives of exile, displacement and the search for freedom, safety and belonging. One of the women involved in creating this installation tells of having left her country with her children and husband and was

Figure 10.1 Home away from Home: artwork facilitated by Jamie Bird and students at the University of Derby; installation, wood, photographs, textiles, cigarette packets, water bottles, children's clothes; 121.92 × 182.88 × 91.44 cm; photo: Aria Ahmed

then separated from her husband. She waited two months with her children, in Calais, before an agent approached her with a possible route to safety. She said that 'some of the agents, they care for us, they understand' (O'Neill, 2010: 138). She was offered a crossing by sea to England and together with her two children was tightly packed into the back of a lorry amongst boxes and other passengers. She said she feared many times on the journey for her children's lives, the most dangerous being a journey by boat and the journey to Calais. She tells us:

> The English people, they don't realize how much we suffer to get here. We had every thing once. The English people, they judge us. They don't ask us they judge us, which is not nice. And today it was very good opportunity to just talk to someone.
>
> (O'Neill, 2010: 138)

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to climb into the confined space of the box (see Fig. 1) and listen to the sounds of 'ports, stations, engines

mixed with the stories of those who had taken the journey, amidst empty chocolate wrappers, an empty bottle, and a child's jumper'.

(O'Neill, 2010: 138)

(The exhibition was covered by *The Guardian* in its 'Society' pages, https://www.theguardian.com/society/gallery/2009/jan/13/sense-of-belonging-exhibition.)

Through the workshops and discussions, knowledge and understanding is shared of women's experiences that includes racism, everyday incivilities, their struggle for recognition and belonging as well as the multiple ways that they experience their partial or non-citizenship status, alongside the performative and iterative citizenship practices they undertake in their daily lives. These gendered dynamics of why women flee are under-examined (Nair, 2015). As Umut Erel, Tracey Reynolds and Erene Kaptani (2017) have evidenced through their work with migrant mothers, using participatory research methods, working *with* women can help researchers to explore 'the everyday experiences of participation and belonging of migrant mothers in actively forming new understandings of community, citizenship and political subjectivity against the grain of racialized practices of subjection and exclusion' (Erel and Reynolds, 2018: 11).

For example, a report by Women for Refugee Women, *I am Human: Refugee Women's Experiences of Detention in the UK* (2015), highlights the stark injustices experienced by women. The mission of Women for Refugee Women is to 'ensure that women seeking asylum in the UK are treated with justice and dignity'. The report (Women for Refugee Women, 2015: 3) contextualises the findings by stating that 'during 2013, the Home Office detained 2038 women who had come to the UK to seek asylum. 43% were held for more than a month'. That women who are 'survivors of rape, sexual violence and other torture' are held for long periods in immigration detention, some on arrival, and others, like the woman in O'Neill's research, because she had exhausted her claim. She was subsequently returned to her county of origin and a situation she had fled in fear of her life.

The report found that detention had 'an extremely negative impact on the mental health of those who have already experienced persecution'. Half of the sample of 33 women had been on suicide watch in Yarls Wood, and 40% said they had self-harmed. In a previous research project on immigration detention by Women for Refugee Women, they found one in five women in their sample had tried to take their own life while in detention. Women's reports of sexual assault, sexual suggestions, being touched sexually, being watched on the toilet, in the shower and in bed were investigated:

> Six women in our sample said that staff at Yarl's Wood had made sexual suggestions to them, and 3 said that they were touched sexually. However, our research suggests that the intimidation of women in Yarl's Wood does not start and end with sexual assault. Almost every woman told us about other ways in which they felt their privacy was invaded, especially by the male staff at Yarl's Wood.

(Women for Refugee Women, 2015: 3)

Needless to say, the report calls for the closure of Yarls Wood detention centre. The report is a helpful resource in examining refugee law and refugee women's experiences.

Victoria Canning's (2017) work explores the experiences of women seeking asylum in the UK and finds that the threat of detention and deportation and poor housing and inadequate welfare access, alongside the Government's systemic cuts to domestic and sexual violence support, contribute to a temporal limbo which limits women's personal autonomy and access to basic human rights. In a broader study of Northern Europe (Britain, Denmark and Sweden), Canning (2019: 46) argues that that women seeking asylum are 'made *more* vulnerable to violence due to the actions or inactions of the states that are supposed to protect them' (Box 10.2).

In the following sections, we will explore women's experiences in seeking asylum and how the legislation and legal processes that determine who qualifies as a refugee are gender-biased. We also explore asylum claims where the trafficking of women in the sex industry was substantive grounds for an asylum claim in a second case study.

Gender and refugee status

The UN's Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, of 1951 (also known as the Refugee Convention 1951) defines who is a refugee, the rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect refugees. An examination of the wording of the Convention reveals that gender, sex or sexuality were not included as potential grounds for persecution:

> A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of *race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion*, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Box 10.2 – Key findings from research on migration

There is limited statistical data on women and migration. What we do know from the available qualitative research is that

- women flee for the same reasons as men;
- there are many injustices in the asylum system for women, including the practice of detention;
- women seeking protection in the asylum system should be treated with dignity.

> Article 1, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 (as amended by the 1967 Protocol)

Due to the absence of gender or sex as grounds for persecution and the focus on persecution by the state rather than by the community or the family, it has historically been argued by feminists that the Refugee Convention has interpreted persecution through a framework of male experience and that women's asylum applications are disadvantaged by the wording of the Convention. Here we draw from MacKinnon's classic critique of the liberal state's apparent gender neutrality:

> The law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women. The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interests of men as a gender, through legitimising norms, relation to society and substantive policies. Substantively, the way a male point of view frames an experience is the way it is framed by State policy.
>
> (MacKinnon, 1983: 644)

Early campaigns by feminist scholars to address gender bias in the Refugee Convention focused on inclusion of gender as additional grounds for persecution. However, authors such as Heaven Crawley (2000) have argued that it is not the absence of 'gender' in the Refugee Convention grounds that disadvantages women in asylum determinations, but that women's experiences of persecution are not well understood by decision makers.

Indeed, what we know from feminist research on forced migration is that women often claim asylum for the same reasons as men, but their experiences are less recognised within asylum determinations. Women claim asylum for:

> their political activities, for supporting rights to freedom and free speech; for hiding people, passing messages, providing community services and providing food and shelter. They seek asylum out of fear, because they do not conform to social norms and expectations; as a response to humiliation, inhumane and degrading treatment; and to seek better lives for themselves, their families and children.
>
> (O'Neill, 2010: 165)

Problematically, when women claim asylum within the recognised grounds of persecution (i.e. a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion) their political activity is often considered to be at a lower level than that of men. Due to this gendered perception, women tend to be perceived to be at less risk on return to their country of origin. As a result, it is often harder to prove a well-founded fear of persecution for women's claims (O'Neill, 2010). Furthermore, where women are at risk of violence from family members or community members, such as in cases of domestic violence and abuse, female genital mutilation, or so-called honour crimes, these risks of violence are outside the Convention grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution.

Feminist campaigns to include gender as an additional ground for persecution in the Convention wording have been unsuccessful. However, in response to concerns around gender bias in asylum determinations, national and international gender guidelines have been developed to address gender-blind policies and decision making within asylum determinations (for example, see UNHCR, 2002; United Nations, 2014).

The most recent guidelines published by the UK Home Office in 2018 set out how gender should be taken into account in decisions on asylum claims and during the claims process. Alongside the reasons for persecution, as set out in the original Refugee Convention, the guidelines identify, as potential gender-based harms, so-called honour-based violence; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage and forced recruitment for the purposes of forced prostitution or sexual exploitation (Home Office, 2018).

Where women's asylum cases involve gender-related persecution, such as domestic violence or rape, women's claims have been successful under the Refugee Convention when it can be argued that these claims fit the category of 'membership of a particular social group'. For example, in the UK, two cases highlight these developments. The first is a case brought by Shah and Islam in which it was judged by the UK House of Lords, in 1999, that women in Pakistan formed a particular social group because women in Pakistan experienced widespread discrimination due to their gender and lacked state protection. In a second case (*Fornah v. SSHD* (2006)), women who are at risk of female genital mutilation were, in some circumstances, ruled to constitute a particular social group.

However, there is evidence that despite the development of gender guidelines and of some success in women's experiences of persecution being recognised, overall decisions on women's asylum applications continue to be gender-biased. As an example, in the UK, Asylum Aid's research into the quality of decision making in women's asylum claims found that the gender guidelines of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) were not being applied appropriately, resulting in poor-quality decision making. A disproportionately high number of these refusal decisions were subsequently overturned on appeal (Asylum Aid, 2011). Women's experiences of violence such as rape or domestic abuse are not typically recognised as grounds for an asylum claim in UK asylum determinations (Baillot et al., 2014). Helen Baillot, Sharon Cowan and Vanessa Munro's (2014) study of rape claims in women's asylum applications found that women face a number of structural and practical obstacles in establishing credibility, and that decision making by the UK Home Office can often be arbitrary, unjust, uninformed or contradictory. Shamira Shackle (2009) illustrates the difficulty women have in evidencing their claims of sexual violence or so-called honour-based violence, asking, 'How can a raped woman prove that her family will murder her because of the shame she will bring? A good lawyer can argue that a woman is part of a certain social group with unchangeable characteristics – a divorced woman, for example, will be a social outcast in many countries – but this is the legal point on which women's cases often fail.'

Evidence from the Netherlands suggests that despite, and perhaps because of, the gendered construction of refugee law, women's asylum applications are more likely to be successful than men's application under certain circumstances. Women's asylum

applications are likely to be more successful when their claims reflect normative constructions of gender, sexuality and ethnicity and Western understandings of Global North- Global South cultural divisions (Spijkerboer, 2000).

Similarly, considering the production and reproduction of gender and sexuality in asylum discourse in the United States, Berger (2009: 659) observes that migrants: 'must present themselves as gendered and sexual beings recognizable (and acceptable) to immigration and court officials'. This, as Hudson (2006) also reminds us, reproduces the male bias of the law and, as Berger states, 'provides the basis for the universalisation of the categories that inform the discourse around gender and sexual norms of the legislation itself' (Berger, 2009: 659) (Box 10.3).

Box 10.3 – Gender and the asylum process

■ Gender and sex are not included as potential grounds for persecution in the Refugee Convention;

■ Despite the development of gender guidelines to address gender bias in the asylum application process and in decision making, women's experiences of persecution still often go unrecognised;

■ However, where women's claims reflect normative constructions of gender, sexuality and ethnicity, women's applications for refugee status may be more successful than men's applications under some circumstances (for an example of this, see the section on trafficking below).

The migration–trafficking nexus

There is a tendency in discourses around trafficking to define trafficking as forced prostitution, which tends to obscure research and analysis of wider experiences and processes of trafficking and fix those who migrate to sell sex as being trafficked (O'Neill, 2010). This is clearly not the case, as research by Nicola Mai (2009) and Laura Agustin (2007) have evidenced in their ethnographic-based research with migrant sex workers. Mai, for example, uses ethnographic research and filmmaking to unpack the representations and experiences of migration and sex work and trafficking in the lived experiences of sex workers. This includes exploitation and the tricky relationships between agency, exploitation and migration. In the migration–trafficking nexus the distinction between forced and economic routes into sex work are blurred.

The beginning of the twenty-first century was a busy period with anti-trafficking campaigners advocating for legislation and services for those identified as victims. The century began with the first global legally binding instrument to set out an agreed definition of trafficking in persons. The UN (Optional) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (often referred to as the Palermo Protocol) defined the trafficking of persons as follows:

> Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs … The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth [above] shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth [above] have been used.
>
> (UN Protocol to Prevent, Supress and Punish
> Trafficking in Persons, 2000)

The UN Protocol definition of trafficking has been subject to extensive critique by academics and legal scholars. The Protocol was adopted by the United Nations as a supplement to the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and many have argued that the framing of trafficking within a protocol on organised crime has resulted in the human rights of victims being neglected (Gallagher, 2010). The definition has also been critiqued for the inclusion of enigmatic and constructed policy terms such as force, consent, coercion, deceit, abuse and exploitation, which are open to broad interpretations by individual nation states (Agustin, 2006: 126; Munro, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2015). These policy terms are especially problematic when defining the trafficking of women into the sex industry, which is further complicated by intractable and polarised feminist debates around consent, coercion and exploitation where women are involved in selling sex. Today, 20 years after the UN Palermo Protocol attempted to re/define the trafficking of persons, a consensus on what human trafficking is, and a clear understanding of who qualifies as a victim, remains elusive.

Following Palermo, trafficking remains a key issue of concern by governments, Amnesty International, the EU and the UN. There is, however, a need for evidence-based research in this area, particularly as numbers of trafficked women have been grossly overestimated (Kempadoo and Doezema, 1998; O'Connell Davidson, 2006; Agustin, 2007; Bernstein, 2008; Mai, 2009; Weitzer, 2012). Much of the policy debate in the first two decades of the twenty-first century continues to be driven by international concern over the trafficking of women and children into the sex industry. Within these debates there is a conflation with migrant sex work and trafficking per se, which closes off enquiry into the complexity of migration and the choices people make under conditions that are not of their own choosing.

We argue that there is an urgent need to disentangle trafficking (forced labour in the sex industry or other informal employment) from migration into the informal economy of sex work/domestic labour/agriculture/caring services. The dominant discourse on trafficking and attendant focus on rescuing the victims of trafficking appears to have reduced the focus (and concern) for migrant rights to an almost singular focus

on trafficking into the sex industry, also defined as sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, this discourse and the underpinning ideology of rescuing the victims means that the issue is individualised, and, in the process, the opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of lives, journeys, choices and decisions is lost in the blurring of migration and trafficking as sexual exploitation.

We also argue that there is a need to understand the complex social, structural and political forces and listen to the women, men and transgender people involved in circuits and networks of migration. Globalisation and North–South relations as well as the 'internationalisation' and 'mainstreaming' of sex work impacts upon push/pull factors (O'Neill, 2010), and a common theme is that people will pay (agents) to travel for work in the informal economy of the sex industry.

What feminist research tells us is that the migration–trafficking nexus is 'the result of powerful market forces inextricably tied to globalisation, capitalism-market forces and the mainstreaming of the sex industry' (Sanders et al., 2017: 163). A key theme identified in the literature is conflating voluntary sex work with trafficking. Helen Ward and Sevgi Okte Aral (2006) argue that increases in unemployment lead to more people looking for work in informal sectors and economies including migrating to sell sex. Agustin (2007) argues that there must be space in policy debates to acknowledge both voluntary migrant sex work and voluntary sex work without dismissing the seriousness of trafficking or conflating the two (see also Sanders et al., 2017). At the international level, the dominant response to the migration-trafficking nexus is victim centred; yet, at one and the same time, the sex industry brings in a huge revenue for nation states.

'Sex trafficking' in the UK context

In the UK context, trafficking into the sex industry was first defined as a criminal act in the Nationality Immigration and Asylum and Act of 2002 (later superseded by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, 57–9). These early trafficking policies were criticised for their focus on trafficking into the sex industry only and for neglecting trafficking into other industries (until 2004, with the introduction of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004, Sections 2 and 4), and for an overly broad definition of exploitation and coercion, where all sex work could be considered exploitative (Munro, 2008).

Julia O'Connell Davidson observed in 2006 that, in the UK context, trafficking was framed as a problem involving organised criminals and 'sex slaves'. The threshold of 'victimhood' was high, with physical suffering the litmus test for police officers and immigration officials who were involved in identifying victims of trafficking. The dominant framing of trafficking excluded those who did not fit the restrictive 'ideal victim' representation found in policy discourse, meaning that rights and protection were only accessible to those telling the 'right story' (O'Connell Davidson, 2006; Jobe, 2010; O'Brien et al., 2013). This has resulted in a hierarchy of victimhood in which only those who have experienced the most extreme suffering and abuse are likely to be offered protection (Andrijasvic and Anderson, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2015).

Case study two: exploring how human trafficking was recognised as a claim to refugee status in UK asylum determinations

The recognition of trafficking as a credible claim to refugee status in UK asylum determinations developed through the early 2000s. Reflecting this, Alison Jobe undertook an in-depth qualitative analysis of asylum claims by women who were identified as victims of trafficking by prominent anti-trafficking organisations and who were claiming asylum in the UK on the basis of their trafficking experiences. The research found that asylum claims from women who were identified as trafficking victims became increasingly likely to be considered a valid refugee claim throughout the 2000s. However, the credibility of an account of trafficking was only accepted by the UK Home Office where applicants fitted the narrowly defined ideal of the female 'sex trafficking victim' as depicted in popular and public stories of human trafficking in the early twenty-first century.

These successful claims were limited to accounts of exploitation of migrant women in the UK sex industry, and those who were recognised as 'authentic victims of trafficking' by both the UK Home Office and key anti-trafficking organisations had to report extreme pain, trauma and suffering. Those whose accounts reflected the dominant narrative of human trafficking in the early twenty-first century were able to access services, receive support and achieve refugee status through the telling of their stories, whereas those whose stories did not 'fit' the dominant narrative were denied refugee protection, support and justice (Jobe, 2008, 2010).

The Home Office believed women to be victims of trafficking into the sex industry when a story of sexual innocence, extreme violence, and imprisonment was recounted. However, when women disclosed sexual histories, described choosing sex work as an occupation or told stories involving their own agency when migrating, they were frequently not considered to be trafficking victims (Jobe, 2008, 2010). Therefore, to qualify as a 'victim of trafficking, asylum applicants needed to tell a story which reflected rather than challenged stereotypes of gender, sexuality and ethnicity, sex work and nation (see also Munro, 2005). For similar observations about gender and asylum claims more broadly see also Spijkerboer, 2000; Munro, 2008; and Berger, 2009.

Miller (2004) suggests applying Rubin's (1984) concept of sexual hierarchies to feminist human rights advocacy, which reveals complex (and uncomfortable) operations of power and judgement in (Western) feminist advocacy around sexual harm. The sexual hierarchies evident in the recognition of trafficking into the sex industry as a legitimate claim to refugee status in the UK prioritise some sexual behaviours over others, placing the claims of those who said they had consented to sex work, for example, outside the story required for a legitimate human rights claim. Miller states:

> Sexual hierarchies are systems of legitimacy both tacit (shaming) and explicit (legal) that arise in various contexts (country, culture, whatever the unit of imagination) and that prioritize certain forms of reproductive, marital, and heterosexual activity above other sexual behaviors and identities, eventually forcing these marginalized behaviours outside the pale of rights claiming.

(Miller, 2004: 36)

Gayle Rubin's (1984: 153) classic analysis of what is considered to be 'good, normal, natural and blessed sexuality' positions commercial sex as 'bad, abnormal, unnatural, damned sexuality'. Claudia Aradau (2008) argues that to be recognised as a 'Victim of Sex Trafficking', women must, effectively, be un-labelled as 'prostitutes' or migrant sex workers to be considered legitimate victims of trafficking. A person who identified as a migrant sex worker and who suffered exploitation would therefore not be considered to be a victim of trafficking, creating a hierarchy of human rights protection in UK asylum determinations.

The global impact of a dominant discourse of trafficking

A growing set of critiques demonstrate that international concern over trafficking has been used by states in the Global North to justify stricter immigration controls (Fitzgerald, 2012), forcing migrants towards irregular migration routes, and through the involvement of third parties, leading to potentially exploitative migration experiences (Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2015). The dominant story of 'sex trafficking' has been critiqued for working to frame all migrant sex work within an abolitionist framework on prostitution that positions all commercial sex as violence against women (Bernstein, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2012; Kempadoo et al., 2012) and for its static representation of migrating women and sex workers as passive victims (Kapur, 2005). This representation reinforces culturally bound stereotypes of naïve non-Western women who do not have the agency to consent to either migration or sex work, denying the migratory agency of women and sex workers from the Global South (Kapur, 2005; Agustin, 2007). This has resulted in broader, and negative, connotations for women who want or need to migrate, and/or for migrant sex workers (Miller, 2004; Kapur, 2005; Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2015).

Authors such as Alice Miller (2004) and Jennifer Suchland (2015) have argued that the focus, through stories of 'sexual slavery', on sexual violence to women's bodies as the driving force behind trafficking legislation has disassociated women's (and men's) stories from the underpinning global socio-economic framework which dictates and frames their experiences and choices. Suchland suggests that the focus on trafficking as violence against women in policy debates on trafficking has meant losing the 'political connection to antiracist, anticolonial, and critical development perspectives that saw historical racial formations and neo-imperialism as key to understanding exploitation and violence' (Suchland, 2015: 7). In other words, a focus on gender, in policy, as the driver for exploitation, fails to account for the intersectional experience of women from the Global South.

Marjan Wijers (2015: 1) argues that the push to define trafficking within a violence against women framework by feminist activist groups has led to a focus on the purity and victimhood of women. Dividing women into innocent victims in need of rescue and guilty ones who can be abused with impunity—but also one with racist and nationalistic overtones (Wijers, 2015: 1). This focus on sexual violence against female migrant bodies in feminist advocacy contributed to the dominant trafficking story involving criminal mafia-style networks and female sex slaves that we see in the second case study above.

In the development of concern over trafficking, Sharron Fitzgerald (2012) suggests that the vulnerability of women from the Global South is used by governments in the Global North to protect their borders, under the guise of a human rights agenda. Speaking about the UK, Fitzgerald (2012) argues that the vulnerability of the female migrant to sexual exploitation affords the UK government an opportunity to justify immigration controls and to protect the UK from 'unwanted Others', while simultaneously appearing to advance a humanitarian agenda in order to protect vulnerable female migrants. Furthermore, in her analysis, Fitzgerald (2010) demonstrates how the UK Government uses women's bodies as a site to defend the boundaries of national community and identity (Box 10.4).

Box 10.4 – Concerns over trafficking

■ Despite growing international concern over the trafficking of persons and a plethora of legislation at international and national levels, there is still a need for evidence-based research in this area;

■ Little is known about the numbers of trafficking victims and the definition of a 'victim of trafficking' is contested and open to interpretation;

■ Concern over trafficking has focused on women trafficked into the sex industry and has frequently been framed as an issue involving 'sex slaves' and organised criminal gangs;

■ Some authors, such as Fitzgerald, suggest that concerns over trafficking have been used by governments in the Global North to tighten border control under the guise of a human rights agenda.

Conclusion

In summary, we have explored the dearth of literature and what is known about women's experiences of migration and also the extent to which international refugee law incorporates women's experiences of forced migration and persecution. We present two case studies. The first explores the importance of participatory and visual methodologies for capturing and sharing women's experiences to develop women-centred work and contribute to policy as well as broader understandings. The second case study explores how women's trafficking narratives were recognised by the UK Home Office and illustrates what this means for understanding gender and asylum determinations. We argue that policy measures in response to forced migration and the migration–trafficking nexus should emerge from rigorous feminist research undertaken using participatory action research methods. This would help to avoid reproducing binaries that ultimately help to reinforce the othering of people seeking asylum, generate better knowledge and understanding of women who migrate and the women, men and transgender people who migrate to sell sex. Producing knowledge based on the narratives and experiences of those who are migrating and/or are situated in the migration–trafficking nexus as well as on the experiences of other key stakeholders is important to extend research conducted by feminist and gender studies scholars. It could form one strand of a more constructive, critical feminist

intervention in terms of research, practice and policy agenda in this area, which, given the increase in literature on migration more broadly, is a topic of current interest and concern in the twenty-first century.

Further reading

L. Agustin (2007) *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry*. London: Zed Books. Through ethnographic research, this book explores and exposes the complexities of the trafficking–migration nexus.

V. Canning (2017) *Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the UK Asylum System*. London: Routledge. This book offers an up-to-date exploration of women's experiences of seeking asylum in the UK.

H. De Haas, S. Castles and M. Miller (2019) *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 6th edn. London: Macmillan International. This book provides a thorough account and analysis of international migration and migration flows.

E. Kofman, A. Phizaklea, P. Raghuram and R. Sales (2000) *Gender and Migration in Europe*. London: Routledge. This book introduces a gendered analysis of contemporary migration and European immigration policy.

E. Tassioglou and A. Dobrowlesky (2006) *Women, Migration and Citizenship*. London: Routledge. This excellent edited collection explores the experiences of migrant women across local, national and transnational contexts, the gendered impacts of migration and the multi-layered aspects of citizenship.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. To what extent are women's experiences of migration shaped by global inequalities?

2. What do you understand by the claim that there is gender bias in the asylum application process? Provide evidence to support your answer from your wider reading.

3. What is human trafficking? Can we easily define what it is?

4. Why do you think women's experiences of migration have been less studied than men's?

11 GENDER, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE MEDIA

Ruth Holliday

Introduction

It is impossible to consider society or culture today without acknowledging the extent to which they are mediatized. Whether people watch programmes on TV when broadcast, download or stream them to laptops, create 'content' on mobile phones, or play video games on PCs and consoles, the media now permeate much of our everyday lives. In the UK in 2019 the average person spent almost 600 minutes a day consuming media (slightly less than the 11 hours a day spent in the USA). Whilst time spent consuming radio, TV, magazines and newspapers has been relatively constant, time spent on the Internet has increased significantly (*Statistica*, 2019). Media technologies, patterns of engagement, and types of content may have changed significantly over the last 50 years, but feminist concerns that men still produce and direct the bulk of mainstream media content, and that women are represented in limited ways (as objectified and sexualized, for example) have endured. It is little wonder, then, that Hollywood was where the #MeToo campaign gathered so much momentum (despite its origins elsewhere, as the chapters in this volume by Charles and Kapoor describe). In addition, social media platforms that provide new opportunities for women's self-representation only seem to have heightened feminist anxieties about self-objectification, and video games have produced new fears about young men's potentially violent behaviour *and* poor body image caused by unachievably muscular avatars in hypermasculine, gun-wielding shooter games. Media formats are increasingly sold in a global marketplace, shifting constructions of gender from traditional and local ideals towards cosmopolitan and neoliberal ones, causing concerns about the imposition of 'Western' gender, for instance. Feminists and gender scholars have analysed a vast array of media forms and engagements that cannot all be covered here. Instead, I will trace some prevalent themes in feminist and gender studies approaches to media and culture from the 1970s to the present.

Postwar neo-Marxist critiques of popular culture framed it as appropriation of folk culture by market capitalism. 'Mass culture', Marxists argue, is of poor quality, mass-produced by the 'culture industries' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002) and sold to the people, who now have to pay for inferior entertainment instead of making their own (Hoggart, 2009). Additionally, popular culture is said both to carry ideologies that (mis)represent the interests of the working classes, tying them to the 'national interest' (which, in reality, is the interest of the ruling capitalist class) (Althusser, 1971), and to reproduce desire for commodities and cultural products which in turn generate greater profits for the latter. On the one hand, whilst having much sympathy with this

position, feminists have claimed Marxism is an *incomplete* analysis, failing to notice women's interests and that the media are both capitalist *and* patriarchal. On the other hand, gender scholars such as Andreas Huyssen (1987) have argued that Marxist analyses of popular culture actually *compound sexism* by coding 'bad' popular culture as feminine against 'good' (masculine) high culture, so when Marxists critique the popular, they often particularly criticize women's tastes and practices (see also Sparke, 1993; Holliday and Potts, 2012).

Marxists have also celebrated the collective heroism of (masculine) workers/producers whilst condemning (feminine) consumers as individualistic and selfish (Huyssen, 1986), failing to see consumption as both pleasure *and* labour for (middle-class) women (Lury, 2011). For instance, whilst Marxists have criticized greedy consumers, worshipping commodities in 'temples of consumption' (shopping malls), Daniel Miller (1998) reminds us that most shopping is actually 'provisioning' (food shopping), but even this mundane activity has important gendered meanings. Miller demonstrates that many women use food shopping to express love and concern for their families, buying low-fat yogurts or sugar-free drinks to care for the health and well-being of loved ones. All the women in Miller's study were familiar with the 'selfish consumer' discourse, but none of them actually behaved like this. Instead he conceptualized shopping as a 'sacrifice' made by women on behalf of their households. Marxists have often interrogated popular culture from a distance, taking a 'god's-eye-view' (Haraway, 1988), and dismissing all popular culture as 'mass culture' rather than exploring its significant diversity, pleasures and uses. Feminist and gender scholars have challenged this 'mass culture' position using qualitative methods to unpack popular culture as it is 'lived' – methodologies that have themselves been feminized and disdained in the past (see Letherby's chapter in this volume). I will now explore some important feminist approaches to women as both objects (representations) and subjects (consumers) of popular culture.

- Feminist concerns are missing from traditional Marxist accounts.

- Marxists reserve their most scathing critiques for 'feminine culture'.

Women as objects of popular culture: media texts and the male gaze

Drawing on Roland Barthes (1957), early feminist scholar Judith Williamson (1978) demonstrated how commodities are woven into networks of meaning through advertising. Barthes noted the 'mythologies' (ideologies) encoded into popular culture through a system of 'signs' (words and images) and developed a method known as 'semiotics' to decode them. For example, Barthes claimed we cannot give someone a bunch of roses without signifying love or passion. There is nothing about a rose itself that is connected to love – it could be an onion or cauliflower – but over time, using roses to express love has become naturalized, so on Valentine's Day we must purchase or accept a commodified gift of roses or risk being seen as unromantic.

Williamson used semiotics and feminist analysis to show how advertisers create naturalized associations between commodities and positive characteristics we might aspire to. Adverts frequently link products to idealized heteronormative families in

which a mother provides healthy meals (breakfast cereals) or clean fresh laundry (washing powders) for her family. These idealized images encourage women to buy food products but also to 'buy into' perfect motherhood, limiting other ways to imagine being a woman. Adverts for alcoholic drinks portray men and women laughing, joking and flirting, fixing products to the positive connotations of friendship, romance and sexual attraction/attractiveness. Decades later, women's bodies are still central in adverts from soap (luxury connoted by a naked woman making a rich lather in the bath) to cars (a bikini-clad woman draped over the bonnet), linking fast cars with masculinity and women being attracted to men with wealth and power (see Figure 11.1).

However, advertising cannot simply reproduce the same old images and associations because contemporariness, fashion and progress are also highly valued in modern culture, so the advertising industry must link products to the current zeitgeist and changing social trends. In 2019, for instance, a new advert for Samsung Galaxy featured a bi-racial lesbian couple watching an ultrasound video of their unborn baby in bed on their phone (Jackman, 2019). Lesbians and gay men have become seen as a legitimate market for advertisers wanting to capitalize on the 'pink pound', and such images appeal to lucrative middle-class cosmopolitans who aspire to liberal values. But to target this consumer group, advertising must also deal with feminism (Hollows and Moseley, 2005).

Dove's 2004 Real Beauty campaign, for instance, co-opted feminist critiques of white, airbrushed bodily perfection in advertising, using women of various sizes, shapes and shades in its soap marketing. Whilst the adverts were inevitably refreshing for many women, Dove mobilized the now broadly accepted feminist critiques of beauty products … to sell beauty products! Increasingly, such codes are used to create

Figure 11.1 Sex sells: using women's bodies in advertising

middle-class identities informed by feminist, sexuality and 'race' studies, such as the 'cosmopolitan' or the 'metrosexual' (see Skeggs, 2004; Banet-Weiser, 2015). Such adverts congratulate women for deciphering liberal or critical signs, simultaneously producing them as a 'lifestyle category'. However, when such campaigns are assembled, in large part by white men with only superficial knowledge of feminist and anti-racist concerns, they risk going badly wrong. Dove's 2017 body lotion campaign seemed to echo Victorian adverts for Pears Soap, featuring black children washed white (see McClintock, 1995), and was widely criticized as racist – a controversy for which Dove was forced to publicly apologize (Slawson, 2017). The advert depicts a beautiful young black model in a brown T-shirt. As she pulls her T-shirt over her head, she reveals not only a white T-shirt beneath it but also a white woman – young and beautiful like her black counterpart, but of different ethnicity.

Feminists have also pointed out that cultural labour has been dominated by wealthy white men. However, just as women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), and, exceptionally, working-class employees, have begun to occupy media jobs, so has media production become increasingly outsourced and 'flexible', and nontraditional workers occupy the most precarious positions (see Conor et al., 2015; Saha, 2018). This inevitably (though not straightforwardly) genders, racializes and classes representations, telling stories from a particular privileged standpoint or 'gaze'.

Gender and film

In 2018, women accounted for 16% of directors, writers, producers, editors, and cinematographers working in the production of the top-grossing 100 films. To break this down a little further, only 4% of directors were women and 25% of these films employed either one or no women in any of these production roles (Women and Hollywood, 2018). Of the top-grossing 1,200 films from 2007 to 2018, only 28% of films featured a female lead or co-lead, equating to just 40 films in 2018. Of major female characters in the Hollywood top 100, 70% were white, 18% were black, 4% were Latina, and 8% were Asian. Female characters were more often to be found in comedy and romance films, and in domestic rather than workplace settings. So, it is clear that there is still some way to go both in front and behind the camera.

In 1975, Laura Mulvey argued there is a direct link between who makes a film and how its characters are represented. Extending the work of John Berger (1972), Mulvey argued that men and women in films have profoundly different functions: Men *act* and women *appear*. Men move the plot forward, solve mysteries, beat enemies, rescue women in trouble, and women are men's reward. Women embody 'to-be-looked-at-ness' and 'sell' the movie, adding beauty and glamour and connecting women's bodies to consumption. She argues that when films are scripted, produced, directed, filmed and edited by men, audiences watch them through a 'male gaze'. Sex scenes, for instance, are usually filmed from 'on top', looking down on the woman's body, and omitting the woman's sexual point of view. Drawing on Freud, Mulvey claims men obtain 'scopophilic' pleasure – the fantasy of possession and control – from looking at beautiful film stars. The camera pans up and down her fragmented body, lingering on her buttocks and breasts. In this sense, women's bodies are constructed as objects – or 'objectified' – for male consumption and female audiences are denied active viewing positions (Mulvey, 1975).

Departing slightly from Mulvey, Mary Anne Doane (1992) contemplates women viewers in relation to the *femme fatale*. Early film roles for women were extremely limited. Hiring was largely based on looks, sometimes via the notorious 'casting couch', on which filmmakers exchanged starring roles for sex (McCreadie, 1990), a practice only recently rendered unacceptable through the #MeToo campaign (Cobb and Horeck, 2018). Many of these early films split women into two types, known as the Madonna/whore dichotomy. Madonnas were good, sought love and marriage and demonstrated care for the male hero. They were usually blonde, and backlit at key moments in the film to create a kind of halo which emphasized their whiteness (Dyer, 2017). Bad, dark or red-haired women were usually seductive, manipulative, femme fatales (whores). Such characters were said to represent filmmakers' wives and mothers, and those they illicitly desired. But surprisingly, these manipulative figures of men's paranoid fantasies provided pleasure for female audiences. Doane (1992) argues that identifying with the 'good' woman positions the female viewer as virtuous but passive and boring, whilst identifying with the femme fatale, feels active, empowering and exciting. But is this empowered sexuality a patriarchal construction or feminist gain? And have things changed dramatically since these early movies? Cartoonist Alison Bechdel famously designed a test in 1985 to evaluate the woman-friendliness of a film (Bechdel, 1986), asking does it:

a) have at least two women in it?

b) who talk to each other?

c) about something besides a man?

Even now, the majority of films and TV shows fail the Bechdel test, centring on bonds between men and rarely representing women's friendships. Conversely, men occupy a range of different characters with whom male audiences can identify. Women have only one difference – their difference from men (de Lauretis, 1987).

- Many cultural forms are constructed and consumed through a 'male gaze'.

- Women's bodies are used to sell commodities or consumed through processes of objectification.

- Women have fewer active roles and still frequently occupy the Madonna/whore dichotomy, playing perfect wives and mothers or dangerous other women.

Women as subjects of popular culture: feminine forms and viewing pleasure

Earlier, I argued that Marxists reserved their greatest contempt for 'sentimental' or 'feminine' forms like romance or soap opera. Accepting this argument, however, positions women as more gullible than men who enjoy popular forms, like football, for instance. Rejecting the proposition that women who enjoy 'feminine forms' are greater 'cultural dopes', however, means interrogating what these genres offer. This has been a key question (and frustration) for feminists since the 1970s and cannot be answered by looking at media texts alone. A landmark investigation by Janice Radway (1984) was the first to take women's enjoyment seriously, asking women readers what pleasures romantic fiction offered them.

Radway studied the reading habits of a group of women in a small US town pseudonymed Smithton who all read a specific brand of romantic fiction: Harlequin Romances (like Mills and Boon in the UK). Radway began her study highly sceptical of the benefits of reading romantic fiction, believing it distracted women from feminism – both ideologically, by positioning men as the key to women's fulfilment, and practically, by wasting their free time. But Radway concluded that romances performed important functions: providing escape from boredom and compensating the lack of emotional care given to women by men. Romance novels allowed women to 'escape' and read love and care into their husbands' indifferent behaviour towards them, positioning this as 'inadequate expression' rather than 'inadequate feeling' (they cared really, but just couldn't show it). The act of reading also offered legitimated time for themselves, away from chores and family demands.

More recently, feminists and queer theorists have concerned themselves with raunchy forms of romance, such as the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series of erotic novels on the themes of bondage, discipline and sadomasochism (BDSM) by the British author E. L. James. Whilst *Fifty Shades* (2011) deploys familiar tropes of romantic fiction – the damaged but powerful and sexually experienced male hero, Christian Grey, and the virginal heroine, college student Ana Steele, the explicit erotic content moves it well beyond the normal prudishness of the genre. James claims her books offer women 'a holiday from their husbands', whilst others have dubbed them (pejoratively) as 'mummy porn' despite selling over 125 million copies worldwide, being translated into 52 languages and setting the record for the fastest-selling paperback of all time. This criticism emanated especially from the BDSM community, who saw *Fifty Shades* as an attempt to appropriate and domesticate a set of radical practices. Feminist journalists such as Katie Roiphe have lamented the books' popularity, claiming they reflect women's reluctance to take up positions of power. Others have seen them as further evidence of the 'pornification of society' (see Attwood, 2018; Paasonen, 2018, for debates). However, the books can easily reflect fantasies of escape from responsibility at a time when many women work a double or triple shift, or experience 'decision fatigue' as sole heads of household. Given their huge popularity, the novels certainly warrant substantive analysis.

For instance, Barker (2013) argues the model of consent used in the novels, as either given or denied, is problematic. During their relationship, Christian claims Ana has most power as she can withhold her consent at any time. Consent in the BDSM community developed as an ongoing practice of negotiation within a trust relationship. Having *only* the power to say no limits Ana's desire, leaving the creative elements of sex to Christian. Ana's power can only limit and restrict, not invent, imagine or experiment, so *Fifty Shades* represents an impoverished version of BDSM. Nevertheless, these raunchy romances created a much-needed space for discussion of consent, sex, and desire for women.

Debates about pleasure have also focused on soap operas which, whilst criticized as low culture, tend to address domestic lives, relationships and strong female characters neglected by other genres (Geraghty, 1990). In a now classic work, Ien Ang (1985) studied Dutch viewers of the imported American soap opera *Dallas*, finding 'haters', 'lovers' and 'ironic viewers' amongst its audience. 'Haters' deployed what Ang called the 'ideology of mass culture' – the Marxist position that has become the 'common

sense' understanding. Because of this, 'lovers' of *Dallas* found it difficult to defend their enjoyment of the show, making excuses for their viewing pleasure. 'Ironic viewers' claimed they enjoyed the show *despite* or *because* it was 'bad'. However, some 'ironic viewers' displayed detailed knowledge about plot lines and characters, performing what Ang called 'surface irony' (they were really 'lovers'). Ang concluded that 'feminine' popular forms are so denigrated by the (masculinist) 'ideology of mass culture' that it has become impossible for women to justify their love of shows they watch. Pretending to watch ironically is a way to enjoy whilst evading criticism, but the real pleasure that soaps offer women is emotional realism that women recognize but other media forms fail to address.

- Three-dimensional women characters are often found in the most denigrated forms of popular culture like romance novels or soap operas.

- Many women value popular culture as escape from care and work, a way to reimagine relationships and for its emotional realism.

- The 'ideology of mass culture' is so pervasive women find it hard to justify their tastes and some deploy irony to hide their love of the popular.

Gender and class: empowered women and dangerous chavs

Whilst Ang thought of *Dallas* 'haters' and 'ironic viewers' as masculinist, I would add to this analysis the importance of class. In fact, distance (not feeling involved) from an object or text is central to a middle-class *habitus* (orientation) according to Pierre Bourdieu (2010) and vital to the process of making judgements of taste. These judgements appear to be rational or inevitable, yet really they draw on messages about good and bad taste that we learn as children, the processes by which we learned them long since forgotten. Different class factions have different types and levels of cultural capital (knowledge about culture), but only middle-class cultural capital (symbolic capital) is accorded value. Taste judgements are therefore *classed* and represent a process of distinguishing the judger, through their judgements, from those of a different (usually lower) class. Bourdieu calls this process 'distinction'. Judging another's taste negatively is a process that Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence'. It is violent because judgements carry the whole weight of social class with them and maintain class structures by putting people in their (classed) place, blocking social mobility.

Neoliberal discourses since the 1990s have downplayed class differences at precisely the time inequity between rich and poor has grown significantly. A sustained media focus on individual social mobility, self-management and personal responsibility foregrounds rare stories of success *despite* underprivileged background, producing the 'common sense' view that those living in poverty do so as a result of their own actions – or inactions. In the United States, the white underclass is known as white trash and in the United Kingdom, as chavs (apocryphally standing for 'council house and violent') and is characterized as feckless, promiscuous, stupid and lazy, sponging off taxpayers via welfare handouts. The reality, of course, is somewhat different. Most people receiving welfare in the United Kingdom are working in low-paid, precarious

jobs which taxpayers subsidize because these workers' pay is insufficient to cover living costs. Imogen Tyler (2013; Tyler and Slater 2018) argues that when figures like the chav recur across a variety of media forms, we might conceptualize them as the 'folk devils' of today (like mods or casuals, discussed by Cohen, 1972).

Anoop Nayak (2006) explores the lives of working-class young men from Newcastle – known locally as charvas (chavs). In postindustrial Newcastle the status and masculinity previously available to young men through heavy labour can no longer be accessed and they must re-make their identities through consumption, despite low incomes and precarious work. These charvas are constructed as dangerous by a media highlighting drinking and fighting in the street. Nayak argues the young men seek value, now as consumers, not producers. Drinking one drink in each bar (pub crawling) enables the young men to be visible as consumers on the street despite low pay preventing access to up-market, city-centre bars. Drinking is supplemented by designer shirts and trainers, and developing a muscular physique at the gym (rather than from work). But the designer label's promise of exclusivity is undermined, through distinction, as it becomes a recognizable part of working-class attire. 'No trainers' policies keep them out of middle-class bars and clubs, and their muscular bodies are read as threatening.

Working-class young women also accrue value from the signs of consumption, such as beauty and glamour (see Skeggs, 1997; Nicholls, 2019) and obtain respect in their own communities by becoming mothers, since motherhood marks entry into adulthood and 'productivity'. However, these shared signs of value are used by middle-class women to distance themselves from 'pramface' young mothers. Distinctions are played out publicly, viciously and viscerally – through outpourings of disgust – on websites such as Urban Dictionary, Chavscum and Popbitch. In her (2008) article 'Chav Mum, Chav Scum', Tyler records these reactions to a *Daily Mail* article about a teenage mother whose partner was a black immigrant father:

> This slut practically represents Britain today and shows how shit this once great nation has become ... sad, really sad that a new-born baby is going to get gonorrhoea all over its thick retarded face when its born.
> ('Chav of the month', December 2005, cited in Tyler, 2008: 29–30)

The violent disgust projected towards the 'chav mum' is racialized as a kind of 'dirty whiteness' contaminated by poverty, portrayed as racist (against middle-class cosmo-politanism) yet conversely contaminated by blackness and hypersexuality ('breeding' multiple offspring of various ethnicities from different dads). Tyler reminds us this representation is haunted by the equally misogynist spectre of the infertile middle-class woman who puts career before motherhood, leaving it 'too late' to have children. The 'chav mum' mocks working-class young mothers whilst also challenging 'middle class women to face their "reproductive responsibilities"' (Tyler, 2008: 30). These constructions are not inconsequential, drawing on nineteenth-century imaginaries of the 'undeserving poor', they have constituted knowledge of the socially marginalized used politically to make draconian cuts to welfare. Recent examples of this mechanism at work can be seen in reality TV. Shows such as *Benefits Street* (2014–) or *On Benefits and Proud* (2015–) capitalize on class disgust to provide entertainment for

middle-class viewers who voyeuristically judge the behaviour of Britons trying to make do in conditions of extreme poverty (for example, see Allen et al., 2014; Jensen, 2014). Whilst these shows perhaps represent new forms of soap opera, middle-class young women, moving to cities for work and cut loose from the constraints of family and community, have been the subject of more up-market media dramas (such as *Sex and the City* (1998–2004), or, more recently, *Girls* (2012–17)).

(Post)feminism and the media

In 2004, Angela McRobbie carefully charted the increasing prevalence of values such as freedom and choice in TV shows targeted at (young, white) career women with high disposable income. McRobbie calls these shows 'postfeminist' and argues that despite numerous representations of female success – jubilant girls clutching exam certificates – feminism is 'taken into account', only to be framed as no longer necessary (2004: 259). Associated with meritocracy and individualism (Littler, 2017), the feminist 'we' had become the postfeminist 'I', she argued. On the other hand, traditionally feminist issues, such as domestic violence, equal pay and sexual harassment, were being reported to a mass audience but associated with 'failed (often working-class) identities'. A huge volume of feminist writing since McRobbie's landmark piece has debated whether or not we are still postfeminist, or even post-postfeminist. Ros Gill and others depict postfeminism as 'choice and autonomy', 'women's bodies as their source of value' and the centrality of 'makeover', including the requirement to 'upgrade' one's psychic life to be 'positive, confident and glowing' (Gill and Scharff, 2011). On the other hand, writing about the USA, Catherine Rottenberg (2018) prefers the term *neoliberal feminism*, to describe the infiltration of the market into all areas of private life. Despite supporting gender equality and calling for women's inclusion in positions of power (differentiating it from postfeminism), neoliberal feminism simultaneously disavows the socioeconomic and cultural structures shaping women's lives, advancing individual responsibility for well-being. Neoliberal feminists have pushed back against the market, to argue for work-life balance, whilst accepting that responsibility for care rests firmly on women's shoulders, albeit aspirational women who want to 'have it all'. Finally, Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) advances the term *popular feminism* to describe terms like *girl power* (really, consumer power) and celebrity and corporate feminism that celebrates women's success but leaves gendered power relations unchallenged.

Whether we call these new mediatized feminisms postfeminist, neoliberal or popular, there is broad agreement on key characteristics such as individualism, success and self-making, the importance of personal grooming and makeover (Ouellette and Hay, 2008; Weber, 2009) (generating a corresponding expansion of nail bars, tanning studios, spas and cosmetic surgery clinics (Holliday et al., 2019)), increasing sexual frankness and exhibitionism (Negra, 2009) and being positive, lovable, outrageous, loud and ambitious (Nunn and Biressi, 2013). McRobbie (2009) argues that constructing the 'right' kind of lifestyle depends on possessing the cultural capital to make 'good' consumer choices, and that looking good is not a personal choice but, rather, an employer requirement, making the perceived freedom to (individually) self-make entirely illusory. However, demand in the new service economy for workers who have

excellent social skills and look good also blurs traditional demarcations between productive masculinity and feminized consumption. And beauty, as a technology of capitalist or patriarchal regulation, is a hard line to hold in the face of queer scholarship (for example, Dahl and Volcano, 2008) that advocates the pleasures of feminine appearance such as 'queer femmes', or those involved in feminist activisms like Slutwalk (O'Keefe, 2014). We should be wary, however, of arguments that reinstate class distinction by positioning 'ordinary women' as victims of femininity against (middle-class) feminists and radical queers as creatively engaging with it.

Female celebrities (from Katie Price to Kim Kardashian) have been particularly maligned for being fake, tacky, talentless or 'famous for being famous' (e.g. Boorstin, 1961) and, loudly, by feminist journalists, for being bad or even dangerous role models for young women. Tyler and Bennett (2010) have shown that 'celebrity bashing' often operates as a proxy for acceptable class and gender disgust, given that many celebrities singled out for criticism have working-class backgrounds, whilst Mendick et al. (2018) argue that young people's imaginary relationships with celebrities contest the classed/gendered rhetoric of 'talentless celebrity' in important ways (though most identify the drawbacks of fame and a preference for an ordinary life). It is also hard to completely dismiss accusations of 'judgmental feminism' in relation to postfeminism. Butler clearly demonstrates that resistance is never outside relations of power, so when young women claim 'I am not a feminist but …', Butler (1991) argues, we should take this negation seriously, seeing it as a power relationship of representation between feminists speaking for (and about) 'ordinary women', not only as acquiescence to patriarchal culture (see also Brunsdon, 1997). All communities make exclusions and draw boundaries between themselves and others, and feminism has often positioned white middle-class values as universal, excluding the interests of 'other' women. Whilst newer (third and fourth wave) feminisms have tended to be more intersectional, largely inclusive of black, queer, trans and nonbinary people, a disdain for the (classed and gendered) popular and for overt (hetero)sexuality has endured (see Skeggs, 1997; Holliday and Sanchez Taylor, 2006).

Feona Attwood (2009) also takes issue with sexual subjectification as a powerful alignment of young women's bodies and self-identities with patriarchal media images, especially in pornography. The proliferation of women-produced alt-porn sites (such as Gothic Sluts, Nakkid Nerds, Beautiful Agony or Furry Girl) Attwood argues, disrupts the male gaze in mainstream porn, providing alternative feminist visions of sexiness. She also claims identities are 'not only or always sexual' but that sexualization is one pleasurable part of identity (2009: 212). Rebecca Coleman (2012) claims young women are often cast as failing feminism simply because what they consider feminist is different from that of previous generations (see also Dilley et al., 2015). Coleman argues that feminist theory rarely develops teleologically but, rather, repeats, alternates and oscillates in multidirectional ways. So, whilst resisting 'sexualization' in the media might seem important for McRobbie and Gill, young women may not even think of themselves as sexualized, only as 'fashionable', and consider other struggles, such as everyday sexism or the anti-abortion resurgence more important. In addition, Coleman (2008) criticizes simplistic 'media effects' models, especially their use in psychology to assert the coercive effects of the media images on women bodies. Media scholars have tried and failed to evidence that watching TV or viewing images on

Instagram effects behaviour directly. Effects models see images and bodies as separate entities – images as 'objects' that effect 'subjects' who compare their own bodies negatively to images and strive to change them. However, this model of the subject is masculine, she argues, because women are both subject *and* object, body *and* image at the same time (see also Young's classic text, 1990). Coleman argues we need to look at 'affects': how images of our own, celebrities' and fashion models' bodies make us feel, and how we already understand not only glossy images in magazines, but also images of ourselves, as constructed (edited, airbrushed, and made-up). These images are interwoven in the process of *becoming*, of continually remaking ourselves creatively and inventively. Images and bodies represent possibilities, and also constraints, because some classed, racialized and gendered bodies must transform more than others to become valued.

- The 1990s saw the increase of TV aimed at middle-class young women who were considered a lucrative market.

- Middle-class young women were associated with success, choice, freedom and sexual agency and with having a gender equality that made feminism redundant.

- Feminist scholars have argued that, in postfeminism, women make themselves into sexualized subjects through consumerism and embrace individualism and meritocracy rather than solidarity.

- The relationship between celebrities and media images and bodies is complex, and constructing one's image can be a source of creativity and pleasure.

RTV goes global

Neoliberalism has given rise to new genres of TV content as well as novel ways of making and circulating it. The rise in reality television (RTV) has been significant. Presenting a range of 'real life' characters, engaged in everyday struggles to overcome personal shortcomings and transform the self, often in intimate and domestic settings, RTV has attracted much attention from gender scholars. Globally successful, the number of formats increased dramatically over the 2000s, and developing and exporting formats internationally has become a lucrative business. EndemolShine, the world's largest independent content producer (and producer of *Big Brother*), owns more than 4,000 formats, circulated to more than 150 countries, generating huge profits from intellectual property (IP). Estimates put the value of the company in 2019 between £2.5bn and £4bn.

  According to Misha Kavka (2012), RTV both enables people to prove themselves and achieve self-improvement through transformation. At the same time, it offers viewing pleasure because it invites audiences to both learn from their experiences and enjoy both their failed attempts (fun) and ultimate transformation (fantasy). All makeover programmes share a common core belief that 'transformation of the self's properties … will result in self-realisation' (Kavka, 2012: 127) and rest on the move from what Foucault (2009) calls the power of the 'Sovereign state' to the 'technology of biopower'. In biopower, governmental strategies organize populations by requiring individuals to remake their own lives in the interests of the state. Powerful discourses

define the nature of human life and health, creating subjects that work on themselves in order to align with these powerful ideas or norms. In addition, RTV promotes a performative understanding of the self, based on participants' intimate confessions. Contestants are presented to the audience as 'personalities' and as sites of (potential) economic and brand value (Hearn, 2011), and, as such, can be seen as part of a broader and increasingly naturalized 'economy of personhood' within late capitalism (Skeggs and Wood, 2012: 12).

In *Why Love Hurts*, Eva Illouz (2012) argues that studying struggles over gendered identities and gender relations in the field of love illustrates key dilemmas for the institutions and cultural concerns of modernity. Like Giddens (1992) (who claims contemporary love relations are becoming more democratic and equal), Illouz argues that love has become more transactional, but she goes further to show the entanglements of affect and the market, claiming that love is:

> rational, self-interested, strategic and profit-maximising [... and] romantic relationships are conceived and managed in the categories of the utilitarian and instrumentalist ethos that lies at the heart of the capitalist economic system.
>
> (Illouz, 2012: 188)

Wei Luo and Zhen Sun (2015) explore dating shows in China, in particular the reality dating programme *Fei Cheng Wu Rao* (*FCWR;* translated as *If You Are the One*)*,* which regularly attracts 50 million viewers. Whilst the format of *FCWR* mirrors the British show *Take Me Out*, Chinese dating shows have been redefined by the government as 'large-scale programs to provide services' (Wei and Zhen, 2015: 244) or helping participants to find real long-term relationships, rather than as 'game shows'. *FCWR* is therefore subject to considerable censorship by the Chinese state and promotes state-sanctioned moral codes and gender norms in an effort, Wei and Zhen argue, to maintain sociopolitical power during the transition from socialism to a market economy. Rather than examining *FCWR* as a Western format imposed through a process of globalized cultural homogenization, Wei and Zhen explore how global formats interact with local and changing Chinese cultural norms. They ask how single women employ 'post-socialist femininities' in a context where 'marketization, privatization, and consumerism intermingle' with the lingering socialist ideals and the common goal of prosperity' (2015: 241).

Women on *FCWR* are usually young, beautiful and glamorous but also successful career women, who, on the surface, have the power to choose or eliminate male contestants. They are characterful and strong and choosing for themselves (in contrast to traditional Confucian match making where the bride's choice of a husband is limited) but are also positioned as desperate to find a husband. Participants occupying central positions on the stage are carefully selected to be attractive and possess a certain level of nouveaux riche status. Older, less beautiful or divorced women need convincing sob stories or big personalities to earn their place on the show. Whilst women quiz male contestants and choose who will be eliminated, male contestants ultimately choose from the remaining women and tend to quiz women about their wealth, status and ability to undertake housework.

Wei and Zhen argue that, under Maoism, women were constructed as vigorous and androgynous and expected to 'hold up half the sky', yet at the same time expected to be good wives and mothers. Conversely, women in *FCWR* represent 'Post-Socialist femininities', their fashion and glamour representing China's new economic power and modernity (Wen, 2013). The unequal distribution of wealth has also created new masculinities based on competition, relative income, and spending power, favouring urban, metropolitan over poorer, rural men. This has shifted Chinese marriage from the idea of a partnership between equals to a system of marrying-up a class for women and down for men on a class scale of A–D. Despite China's gender imbalance, caused by sex-selective abortion under the One Child Policy (ended in 2016), this system leaves A-quality women (and D-quality men) as *sheng nu* (left-over) and unmarriageable (Fincher, 2016). The pejorative term *sheng nu* is worryingly adopted officially by the state organization All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) to describe unmarried women over the age of twenty-seven. So even the state institution designed to promote women's equality attempts to marry off highly educated women with the surfeit of Chinese men before their biological clocks run out. Wei and Zhen argue that state-sponsored stigmatization of single women works through reality dating shows like *FCWR* to restore male privilege, even as gender norms are being reconfigured in post-socialist China. And Tanya Lewis (2017) notices similar shifts in posttraditional reality dating shows in India. Whilst, in the past, Indian marriages were arranged to match couples according to religion, caste and family, reality dating shows increasingly represent romantic love as the best pathway to successful marriage for an upwardly mobile, new middle class independent of the older caste system (Ramasubramanian and Jain, 2009). Yet under this system, the choice of partner is fraught and the risks of choosing the wrong partner individualized, such that shows involving parental choices, like *Date My Folks,* are becoming more popular and being exported from India to countries like the UK and Australia. Writers like Lewis (2017) and Wei and Zhen (2015) chart the ways in which love and intimacy are becoming sites of struggle between traditional beliefs and the marketized and individualistic logics of neoliberalism, particularly for the globalized, cosmopolitan middle class. As class relations change in increasingly globalizing, modernizing and neoliberalizing economies, gender (and family) relations are re-fought, at least in part, through television romances.

- Neoliberalism, based on competition and consumption has become global and is disembedding traditional gender relations.

- New class structures produce different mechanisms for finding partners based on consumer power rather than family connections.

- This produces 'leftover women' in China and considerable anxiety for women in India who now bear the risk of individualized marriage choices.

The problems and possibilities of new media

Despite their global reach, new forms of television still rely on a one-directional 'broadcast' model. The Internet, on the other hand, is a multidirectional, peer-to-peer medium allowing anyone to create content. Early feminist writing imagined the Internet as a democratic, gender-neutral or intersectional space of cultural production outside

traditional media careers and institutions (Plant, 1998; Wolmark, 1999). However, time has revealed that as a relatively anonymous space, it also provides an unregulated opportunity for hate speech or 'revenge porn', all the more violent for the difficulties of tracing its source (see Ging and Siapera, 2018). Several recent examples of aggression have been directed at female public figures, leading Amanda Hess (2014) to claim that 'women are not welcome on the Internet' (see also Filipovic, 2014) and prompting new regulation in the UK (BBC Online, 2018). Debates centre on whether or not online social media, by offering individuals the possibility of creating their own content, represent a more democratic 'public sphere' (Habermas, 1991). One recent example of public misogyny on Twitter is worth considering in detail. #Gamergate refers to the online harassment of game industry workers Zoe Quinn and Brianna Wu, and feminist media critic Anita Sarkeesian. Quinn's former boyfriend, Eron Gjoni, accused her online (falsely) of sleeping with journalists to win a game design contest. Sarkeesian defended Quinn in a newspaper article, after which both received rape and death threats, and 'doxing' (posting online someone's personal information hacked from their IP address). One gamer called police, reporting an armed felon at Quinn's address, mobilizing a terrifying armed police raid. Eventually, Quinn and her family were forced into hiding. Gamergate proponents denied harassment, claiming it was made up to win publicity for Quinn, but posts by Gamergaters revealed a deep anger at what they saw as the infiltration of gamer culture by women and feminism (Mortensen, 2018). Since Gamergate in 2014, there has been significantly increased awareness of the online abuse that prominent women or people of colour face on a regular basis.

In contrast, the #Ferguson campaign represented a temporary political alliance between young African Americans calling out police racism after the shooting of black teenager Michael Brown by officer Darren Wilson on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri. The 18-year-old was unarmed, had his arms raised in a gesture of surrender and was pleading 'Don't shoot' when he was shot and killed. Wilson claimed Brown was 'huge and threatening' in what was widely alleged to be a racist construction of black masculinities. However, this 'execution' was captured on video and posted on social media within an hour, going viral on Twitter in the week after Brown's death, with 3.6 million related posts under the hashtag of #Ferguson. On the day of Michael Brown's funeral, an article in the *New York Times* claimed the teenager was 'no angel' and had 'dabbled in drugs and alcohol'. In response, huge numbers of black teenagers began to post images of themselves wearing hoodies under the new hashtag #NoAngel. One tweeter wrote, 'I am #NoAngel so I guess I deserve to be murdered too. Yep, perfectly acceptable to gun down a person if they aren't a Saint' (quoted in Bonilla and Rosa, 2015: 9). Activism online grew into demonstrations on the streets, protesting the disproportionate police reaction. Covered globally by the mainstream media (MSM), this and subsequent online activism coalesced around the bigger and broader Black Lives Matter campaign. So, writers like Bonillla and Rosa argue that social media *can* have radical effects. Similarly, although initiated by the black US activist and community organizer Tarana Burke on MySpace in 2006, the #MeToo campaign went viral in 2017 when celebrities tweeted about sexual harassment and assault in Hollywood. Subsequently, high-profile cases like Christine Blasey Ford's accusation of sexual assault against US Supreme Court candidate Brett Kavanagh in 2018 have kept it animated. #MeToo has now become a global alliance, arguably forcing sexual

misconduct to be taken more seriously. But camaigns like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have also prompted a misogynist and far-right backlash – a 'culture war' – and Kavanagh was awarded his seat in the Supreme Court, using it to campaign against women's reproductive rights.

Whilst I argued earlier that feminism has been co-opted by neoliberal media cultures such as postfeminist, neoliberal and popular feminisms, it has also, more recently, seen a resurgence through global online campaigns of 'real' feminist issues contesting gendered power structures that make practices like sexual harassment seem acceptable. In a recent article, Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenberg revisit their earlier writing to explore this feminist resurgence, and conclude that apolitical 'soft' versions of feminism disseminated via the media have inadvertently laid the groundwork for a feminist resurgence:

> Neoliberal feminism has ... – paradoxically – helped to pave the way for more militant and mass feminist movements, such as #MeToo, the Woman's March and the Global Women's Strike. (Banet-Weiser et al., 2019: n.p.)

- The opposing forces of liberalization and neoconservative agendas have produced highly fraught Internet 'culture wars'.
- New media and mobile technologies offer opportunities for a more 'democratic public sphere' but also facilitate bullying and harassment.

Conclusion

For five decades, gender and women's studies have been exploring the entanglements of gendered popular culture with the market and the negations and pleasures this has produced for consumers. During that time much has changed. We have moved from mass to niche media, from a few channels showing programmes for entire families to an abundance of global platforms from which we choose and are sold different content according to our specific tastes and identities, and additionally, we create and share our own content. It is clear that diverse media cultures are part of an increasingly globalized but also fractured social world, and that media and social media can be appropriated for liberalisation or by conservative forces and to interfere in democratic processes. Evidently, the media are becoming increasingly fragmented and this is leading both to a resurgence in feminism, and, at the same time, to alt-right and neoliberal women claiming feminism as their own whist, promoting highly conservative and individualist agendas. However, ironically, in the wake of Trump's election, the reappearance of shameless sexism in the public sphere has had its own galvanizing effect. #MeToo was able to gain such widespread traction at this particular moment in history, at least in part because feminism had already been embraced and rendered desirable by high-powered corporate women like Sheryl Sandberg, Hollywood stars like Emma Watson, and musicians like Beyonce´, to name just a few (Rottenberg, in Banet-Weiser et al., 2019: n.p.). This shows us why popular culture should *never* be dismissed and that the popular is where political battles are won or lost, and real change happens.

Further reading

S. Banet-Weiser (2018) *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. *Empowered* examines the popular feminism of body positivity, self-confidence and achievement in the new age of social media and self-empowerment. Drawing on a number of examples such as Gamergate, the US presidential election, Black Girls Code and the Always #LikeAGirl campaign, she argues that popular feminism and popular misogyny are always intertwined and that a popular feminist commitment to visibility limits possibilities for collective power.

K. Milestone and A. Meyer (2011) *Gender and Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press. This book introduces key theories and concepts in the fields of gender studies and popular culture and examines the role of popular culture in the construction of gendered identities in contemporary society. Using primary and secondary research, the book draws on a wide range of popular cultural forms including music, newspapers and television to illustrate how femininity and masculinity are produced, represented and consumed.

C. Rottenberg (2018) *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This book explores the rise in high-powered women identifying as feminists in the mainstream media in the USA, showing how they mobilize a particular variant of neoliberal feminism that is not interested in a women's movement for social justice. Instead, these feminists foreground the happy work-family balance, transforming balance into feminist ideal, eschewing black and working-class struggles and, in some cases, furthering racist, antiimmigrant agendas. The book asks how we might reclaim feminism from such agendas?

B. Skeggs and H. Wood (2012) *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value*. London: Routledge. This book explores audiences for and reactions to RTV, particularly in terms of emotions. How do we react to so many people breaking down, fronting up, tearing apart, dominating, empathizing, humiliating, and seemingly laying bare their raw emotion for our entertainment? As reality television extends into the experiences of the everyday, it makes the mundane dramatic and often shocking and invites viewers into a volatile arena of mediated morality. This book explores how traditional boundaries between spectator and performer are broken down, creating new relationships between television and audiences.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Thinking about the films that you see most often, how many lead characters of each gender are included? What is the effect of this on the ways in which characters can develop through the actions they take and conversations they have? Can you think of any films that break the rules of normal gender in film?

2. In relation to the reality TV you watch, think about who is behind the camera – their gender, 'race', class or sexuality, for instance. Whose eyes do we see reality TV through? What assumptions do the programme makers make about how we view the characters portrayed? What characteristics make a successful reality TV star?

3. Do you have any 'guilty viewing pleasures' (things you enjoy but feel that an 'educated' feminist should not watch)? Where does the guilty feeling come from? What do you enjoy about these programmes?

4. Think about the ways you interact with the social media. How much time do you spend using it? What are the good and bad things about being so 'connected'? Do you present your 'real' self, or a different version of yourself online? If different, what are the differences?

5. How would you characterize common 'feminist' concerns represented in the media you engage with? Are different kinds of feminism reflected on different media platforms? What and who is missing from these feminisms?

12 FAMILIES, DOMESTICITY AND INTIMACY: CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS IN CHANGING TIMES

Stevi Jackson

Introduction

Family relationships have long been of central concern to feminists but the gendered practices that underpin them are changing, giving rise to much public, political and academic debate. While conservative forces in many parts of the world decry such change as threatening traditional family values, others celebrate it as fostering greater freedom and equality. The degree to which individuals are able to exercise choice in their personal and family relationships, however, is variable, constrained by inequalities of gender, class and race. The global rise of neoliberal economics and modes of governance is ideologically legitimated by a rhetoric of choice, yet exacerbates the inequalities that limit the options available to many.

In the Western world, families have become more fluid and more diverse, accompanied in many countries by the greater acceptability of varied lifestyles from living alone to forming families based on same-sex partnerships. These trends have been understood as indicating a democratising 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens, 1992) or a shift from 'communities of need' to individualised 'elective affinities' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Such characterisations, however, have been contested (Jamieson, 1999; Heaphy, 2007; Smart, 2007), and their applicability beyond the Western world has been questioned (Jamieson, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Ochiai, 2014; Jackson, 2015; Qi, 2015; Liu et al., 2019). The shifting complexities of family life today present particular challenges for feminist analysis. While there is a general agreement that new forms of family life are associated with wider shifts in gender and sexual relations, the extent to which the heteronormative, male-dominated pattern of family life is being undermined is disputed.

In this chapter, I map out this contested terrain, charting the major changes taking place in late modern family life and feminists' efforts to make sense of them. I begin by exploring the history of Western feminist engagements with 'the family' since the 1970s and explain how and why the concept of 'the family' came to be seen as problematic. I then move on to assess the state of family, and especially couple, relationships in the early twenty-first century in order to evaluate some of the claims that have been made about the trajectory of social and cultural change. In so doing, I concentrate on the wealthy (post)industrial parts of the world, such as Western Europe and

North America, as well as East Asian nations and territories with similar economies and living standards; Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. I also include China, which is rapidly modernising. These societies provide useful comparators for considering the relevance of Western theories, especially those making claims about the consequences of late modern social change for family life.

Feminism and 'the family'

Family relationships have historically been central to women's lives and to the maintenance of gender inequality and institutionalised heterosexuality. Second wave feminists writing in the 1970s and early 1980s identified 'the family' as a key site of women's subordination. Their concerns reflected their location in the 'West' (a shorthand term denoting Western Europe and other wealthy nations dominated by those of European descent such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, often referred to as the Global North). They also focused on a very particular family type: the breadwinning husband and homemaking wife with dependent children, which was then seen as the 'normal' family. Feminists radically transformed approaches to family life, highlighting previously hidden problems, such as domestic violence (Hanmer, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1980; see also Kelly in this volume), and exposing more routine injustices, such as inequitable divisions of labour and resources within families (Comer, 1974; Allen and Leonard Barker, 1976). Marriage and family were also critiqued as heterosexual institutions, reinforcing both women's subordination and the marginalisation of lesbians (Bunch, 1975; Rich, 1980; Wittig, 1992). For some, however, critique was tempered with a degree of ambivalence, the recognition that, whatever inequities were associated with family life, it was also frequently the source of women's most meaningful and supportive relationships.

Middle-class feminist critiques of the family were often insufficiently attuned to the benefits family relationships might provide for women who did not share their material and social privileges. Black feminists argued that families could be sites of resistance to and protection from racism rather than a source of oppression (hooks, 1981; Carby, 1982; Bhavnani and Coulson, 1986). They exposed the ethnocentric assumptions underpinning white feminists' emphasis on women's dependence in families when African American and African Caribbean women were frequently the main family breadwinners and had little opportunity to be dependant housewives (Somerville, 2000). They highlighted the intersections between racism and sexism whereby black women were pathologised as irresponsible single mothers and Asian women as 'passive victims' of overly 'controlling' extended families (Parmar, 1988: 199). Some, however, did confront gender inequality and domestic violence in minority ethnic communities through both activism and research, notably Southall Black Sisters (see Gupta, 2003).

Whatever their shortcomings, feminists did problematise and denaturalise 'the family', pointing out that what was deemed normal and 'natural' in Western societies was culturally and historically specific. Some began to question the concept of the family (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Thorne, 1982), prefiguring a shift in the social sciences from treating the family as an institution to focusing instead on the everyday practices through which people 'do family' (Morgan, 2011) and the 'practices of intimacy' through which they 'generate and sustain a subjective sense of closeness and

being attuned and special to each other' both within and beyond conventional family relationships (Jamieson, 2011: 1.2). This approach, which has characterised studies of family life since the 1990s, facilitates attention to both the inequalities within intimate relationships and their more positive aspects.

Bringing 'the family' into question

Terms such as *the typical family* may still conjure up a heteronormative image of mother, father and children, but a diversity of families – step-families, lone-parent families, and lesbian and gay families – now populate the Western social landscape. Those living outside conventional heterosexual families may regard networks of friends as 'family' (Weeks et al., 2001; Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004) as, indeed, do some in heterosexual families (Jackson et al., 2013; Anthony and McCabe, 2015; Jackson and Ho, 2020). There are three interrelated objections to the concept of the family which were raised in the 1970s and 1980s and remain relevant today:

- It conceals inequalities within families;

- It ignores cultural and historical differences in domestic and intimate life;

- It masks the diversity of family forms existing today.

Inequalities

A single family comprises multiple family lives: each individual member is differently located within it. The term *the family* can mask such differences. Feminists were particularly concerned with gender differences, although some considered the subordinate position of children within families (Jackson, 1982; Thorne, 1987; Jackson and Scott, 2013). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, detailed feminist research uncovered economic inequalities within families produced by women's dependence on men – suggesting, for example, that 'while sharing a common address, family members do not always share the same standard of living' (Graham, 1987: 221). While this has become less of a focus with the decline of the male-breadwinner family, inequalities persist and remain important in understanding the gendered consequences of socio-economic change, particularly in these times of economic uncertainty and austerity. Men, women and children within a heterosexual family can still be expected to experience that family differently.

Cross-cultural variability and historical change

There is no essential, natural unit that can be defined as *the family* and assumed to exist everywhere and for all time. Feminist anthropologists were among the first to point out that what we think of as a family is a complex set of relationships and practices, all of which can vary (see, for example, Edholm, 1982). There are differences concerning who counts as related to whom; who can marry whom; what marriage entails; who lives together; how children are raised and by whom; and in who does what for which kin. While drawing attention to this variability, feminists also noted regularities: that all societies, albeit in diverse ways, had some means of ordering relations between women and men in terms of both divisions of labour and sexual and reproductive

relationships (Rubin, 1975; Thorne, 1982). While the diverse societies documented by anthropologists have changed under the impact of imperialism and globalised capitalism, variations persist (Therborn, 2004; Stacey, 2012; UN Women, 2019).

It is clear that the family, as a bounded unit of parents and children, cannot be thought of as a trans-cultural and trans-historical phenomenon. In Western Europe in pre-industrial times the term *family* did not always mean co-resident kin but referred to all those under the authority of a (usually male) head of household, whether kin or employees (Davidoff et al., 1999). The notion that pre-industrial families were typically multi-generational, however, is now known to be a myth. Such extended families, though widespread in Asia, were never common in most of Western Europe, where couples tended to marry relatively late and set up separate households (Therborn, 2004), though this varied by class and region.

Although pre-industrial families were generally patriarchal (Therborn, 2004), the supposed traditional gender arrangement of husbands working and wives presiding over the home is historically of relatively recent origin. It emerged in Western societies in the nineteenth century, was initially a middle-class phenomenon and only gradually spread to the working class. It was the product of complex and gradual changes accompanying industrialisation, whereby most forms of production were removed from households, and waged work – previously characteristic only of particular occupations and classes (Davidoff et al., 1999) – became the norm. Among the rising bourgeoisie a new lifestyle developed based on a domestic ideology, which separated the male world of work and commerce from women's sphere in the home (Hall, 1992). This ideology subsequently spread to other classes, creating the ideal of a male 'family wage' sufficient to sustain a domesticated wife and children, which became the norm by the mid-twentieth century in Europe (Therborn, 2004). From then on, as more women were drawn into the paid labour force, the sole male-breadwinner model of family life went into decline (Lewis, 2001). This 'traditional' family, then, was historically a short-lived product of particular social circumstances, not only in Europe and North America but also in many East Asian countries (see Ochiai, 2008). The idea of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers, however, persists; it retains a strong hold on the collective imagination of late modern societies and has left a legacy in terms of gendered divisions of labour that still affect family life today.

Diversity

In the early 1980s, Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh (1982), noting that only about half the population then lived in households comprising married couples and dependent children, argued that 'the family' was an ideological construct – but one with real effects. It marginalised those living outside families, encouraged us to expect our families to satisfy all our personal and emotional needs and acted as a perpetual excuse for the paucity of public services (a point that now, nearly four decades later, is even more pertinent): 'It is as if the family has drawn comfort and security into itself … As a bastion against a bleak society it has made that society bleak' (1982: 80). Other feminists were less negative. Judith Stacey, for example, argued that feminist critique 'need not be anti-family' but instead, should 'acknowledge and support the diversity of family patterns, preferences and relationships in which we actually live' (1996: 51; see also Stacey, 2012).

The most telling evidence used to back the claim that there is no normal or typical family is that only a minority of households in Western societies conform to the standard nuclear family of man, woman and children. Even in 1971, the high point of early marriage and childbearing, only 35% of British households comprised heterosexual couples with dependent children; by 2010 the proportion had fallen to 21% (ONS, 2011). These figures give the impression that by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century family life was in terminal decline, but this is not the whole picture. In the first place, using an inclusive definition of family, 65% of British households in 2010 were based on some form of familial relationship, defined as 'a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without child(ren)', or a single parent with a child or children (ONS, 2013b: 2). Moreover, the statistics can tell a different story: looked at from the point of view of people in households, the majority of Britain's population – 84.2% in 2010 – lived within family households founded on couples, parent-child ties or on both, showing little change from 1971, when 85% lived in such households, although this total had come to encompass more diverse forms of family.

Diversity in families and couple relationships in the twenty-first century

Family life has not ended, but it has changed due to the existence of varied forms of couple relationships and an ageing population. What counts as, and is recognised as, 'a family', also reflects changes in social attitudes and, importantly, legislation governing gender, sexuality and family life. Most Western jurisdictions now have some form of legal recognition for same-sex partners and their children. In Britain, civil partnership has been available to same-sex couples since 2005 (Civil Partnership Act 2004) and is now to be made available to mixed-sex couples. Same-sex marriage was legalised in 2013, coming into effect in 2014. This has implications for trans people. When a married person transitions to the other gender, they can, if their spouse agrees, obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate; the marriage can then be converted to a same-sex or different-sex marriage, as appropriate. If their partner does not agree, the trans person can only gain a full Gender Recognition Certificate following divorce. All these legal changes affect official statistics: who is counted into what kind of family (Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 Households in the UK in 2017

Type of household	Millions	Percentage of all households*
One person	7.7	28.31
Couple (with/without children)	15.7	57.72
Lone parent household	2.7	9.93
2+ unrelated adults	0.8	2.94
Multi-family household	0.3	1.10
All households	27.2	100
All family-based households	18.7	68.75

Calculated to two decimal points. Source: extracted from Families and Households: 2017. Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2018b)

Recent official statistics reveal the number and proportion of households based on what the ONS defines as a family: a couple (same sex or mixed sex) and/or a unit of parent(s) and child(ren). Table 12.1 shows that the proportion of households based on families has increased somewhat since 2010, from 65% to 68.75%. According to the ONS, 'living in a couple continues to be the most popular living arrangement in England and Wales' (ONS, 2018b: 5); of those over the age of 16, 61.4% were living in couples, while a further 14.2% had previously been married or civil partnered. These figures include everyone over the age of 16 and, given that most of those in their late teens live with their parents, being part of a couple looks even more 'popular'. Moreover, an increasing number of young adults aged 20–34 reside with their parents, since the rising cost of accommodation makes it more difficult for them to establish their own home. Young men were more likely to live with their parents, 32% of those aged 20–34 compared with 20% of young women. Given that men tend to earn more than women, there must be reasons other than financial ones for this difference; possibly, young men are less willing to look after themselves, to do their own cooking, cleaning and washing than young women are. Taking all this into account, Table 12.2 (below) gives an indication of the diverse family forms existing in the UK in 2017.

Table 12.2 Families in the UK in 2017

Thousands			
Family type	**With dependent children**	**Without dependent children**	**Total families**
Married couple family	4,944	7,890	12,834
Opposite-sex married couple family	4,938	7,862	12,800
Same-sex married couple family	6	28	34
Civil partner couple family	8	47	55
Cohabiting couple family	1,251	2,040	3,291
Opposite-sex cohabiting couple family	1,246	1,943	3,190
Same-sex cohabiting couple family	4	97	101
Lone parent family	1,781	1,037	2,817
All families	7,983	11,014	18,997

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics (in ONS, 2018b: 5)

Statistics offer us only a snapshot of families at a given time, but families change over the life course. Many single people will find partners, some of those with partners will end their relationships, childless couples will have children in the future or have had children who have grown up and left home, and many of those living alone may form couples and families in the future or will have done so in the past. Even if everyone married and had children and there were no divorce, each one of us would only live in a complete nuclear family at particular phases of our lives. As the population ages, moreover, many of those who once lived in nuclear families find themselves

living alone as children leave and partners die; women, who tend to outlive male partners, are more likely to end their days living alone.

The figures I have cited refer only to Britain, but similar patterns can be found in most of the Western world. There are variations – for example, in the proportion cohabiting rather than forming state-sanctioned unions, and in forms of legal recognition for same-sex couples. The wealthy regions of East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) share some similarities with the Western world, but there are also differences. Rates of marriage are falling rapidly in most of East Asia. People are marrying much later and birth rates are extremely low. A retreat from family responsibilities is seen as reflecting the excessive burdens Asian families place on women (Chang and Song, 2010; Chang, 2014; Ochiai, 2014). Later marriage in East Asia is not, unlike in Western countries, accompanied by widespread cohabitation, although it is becoming more common for couples to cohabit before they marry (Ochiai, 2014). China is an outlier, having nearly universal marriage, with most marrying before they are thirty, and the overwhelming majority – 87.4% of men and 94.9% of women – by the time they are 34 (UN, 2017a). China is also unusual in its state-endorsed stigmatisation of women unmarried at 27 as *sheng nü* (leftover women) (Ji, 2015; To, 2015). In mainland China, the pressure to marry is such that most lesbians and gay men marry, some to heterosexual partners while others seek 'contract' or 'performative' marriages between a gay man and lesbian (see Liu, 2013; Choi and Luo, 2016; Engebretsen, 2017). Taiwan is the only East Asian jurisdiction to legalise same-sex marriage – and only did so in May 2019, in a restrictive form.

Beyond households

Family relationships are not confined to households; ties of affection and obligation cut across the boundaries of households (Morgan, 1996; Mason, 2004; Smart and Shipman, 2004). Many divorced and separated parents maintain contact with children who live with the other parent, or may share residential parenting, with children regularly moving back and forth between two households, and sometimes family bonds are extended through divorce and remarriage (Nielsen, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Jackson and Ho, 2020). Some couples in ongoing relationships live apart either through choice or through the constraints of their respective careers or care responsibilities (Holmes, 2004a; Beasley et al., 2012; Duncan et al., 2013; Turcotte, 2013). Kin, especially grandparents, are among the main providers of childcare for working mothers in many countries (Lewis, 2001; Ochiai, 2008). Wider family ties are particularly important in East Asian countries with strong traditions of filial piety (respect and care for elders). While some claim that this tradition has been eroded by modernisation (Yan, 2009), others have found it still thriving in modified forms. Although most agree that deference and obedience to elders has declined considerably, there are still strong bonds of reciprocity between generations (Jackson et al., 2013; Lin, 2014; Qi, 2015; Zhang, 2016; Liu, 2017).

With increased geographical mobility in our globalised world, such ties are not only local or even national ones, and kin divided by distance may retain a sense of attachment even across countries and continents. Chinese rural to urban migrants often retain close emotional bonds with their families back in their villages as well as providing

financial support (Lin, 2014; Liu, 2017). For families of Pakistani descent in the United Kingdom, kinship ties extend, even after several generations, to those remaining in Pakistan (Mason, 2004; Smart and Shipman, 2004). More temporary migrants also keep up family connections. For example, a woman from the Philippines might leave children with relatives while she works in Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong or Taiwan to support them (Cheng, 2003; Lan, 2003). In some cases family strategies might involve one parent (usually the mother) and children migrating while the other parent (usually the father) maintains a career in their country of origin, as with Hong Kong's 'astronaut' families and South Korea's *kirogi* (wild geese) families (Abelmann et al., 2014; Chang, 2014). Men might travel for business, leaving wives behind; it is common for men from Hong Kong and Taiwan to spend considerable amounts of time working in mainland China, often developing new intimate relationships there, sometimes even starting a second family but continuing to maintain their 'first' wives at home (Ho, 2014; Shen, 2014). For more affluent transnational families, ease of international travel and new communications technologies make it possible to maintain meaningful relationships across long distances and even the less affluent, such as migrant domestic workers, maintain contact through the Internet and sending gifts home.

While acknowledging the diversity of families, we should not lose sight of the continued salience of families in most people's lives and the persistence of certain regularities. Although cohabitation is emerging as an alternative to formal marriage in Western countries, and some countries recognise lesbian and gay partnerships, we should not underestimate the extent to which heterosexual family relationships remain normative and the gender inequalities associated with institutionalised heterosexuality persist. In what follows, I focus on two main issues:

- the continued relevance of feminist critiques of inequalities between women and men in heterosexual partnerships;

- how feminists should make sense of the increasing fluidity and diversity of family life, often associated with the idea of 'postmodern' families.

Household finances and domestic work

Family-based households are founded on bonds of economic support and cooperation, which also involve economic dependence and unequal divisions of labour. I explore these economic issues before going on to consider more personal aspects of couple relationships and the extent to which increased diversity in lifestyles challenges conventional heterosexual arrangements. One of the major changes since the 1970s is that only a minority of households in most of world's wealthier nations are now wholly dependent on a male breadwinner. In Western countries, along with most East Asian nations, the gap between men's and women's 'economic activity rates' is closing (ILO, 2018a). China is unusual here in that a re-emphasis on gender difference is resulting in falling rates of employment for women; the rate of women's labour market participation fell from over 79% in 2000 to 69% in 2018 (ILO, 2018a).

There are local variations within the world's regions: In South Korea and Japan, fewer women are in paid work than in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong (Ochiai, 2008; Sechiyama, 2013). In Singapore, in particular, married women are encouraged

and expected to be employed; the Singaporean government may promote strong family values, but it also expects families to be self-reliant and to contribute to the city-state's economic growth (Teo, 2013, 2015). In the European Union, the gender gap in employment rates is far greater in Malta and Italy than in Sweden, Finland or the Netherlands (OECD, 2018c). There is also differentiation within countries by age, educational attainment and ethnicity. For example, government figures for England Wales and Scotland in 2017 show that, overall, 70% of women aged 16–64 were in employment compared to 80% of men, but with significant ethnic differences. Of white, British women, 73% were employed, compared with 62% of black women, 60% of those of Indian heritage and only 38% of those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage (gov.uk, n.d.).

The general rise in women's employment reflects a growing demand for women's labour and also women's increasing availability for work, as they have fewer children and take less time out of employment for child rearing. The impact of motherhood on women's employment varies widely from one country to another. For example, in the European context, it has a greater impact in the Czech Republic and Hungary than in the United Kingdom and far less impact in Denmark, with its high overall female employment (European Commission, 2013a). In East Asia, Taiwanese and Hong Kong women are less likely than Japanese or South Korean women to take time out of the labour market when their children are young (Sechiyama, 2013). In many countries it has become a necessity for women to work to contribute to family finances; the flexible economy, technological change, the outsourcing of production to low-wage countries and recurrent recessions have resulted in a decline of secure, well-paid and skilled manual jobs of the kind once monopolised by men, undermining the 'family wage'. The decline in male wages as much as the rise in women's has resulted in the narrowing of the gender pay gap in many countries (Williams and Neely, 2018), but most women still earn less than men – a global phenomenon – and are disproportionately employed part-time. Thus, many women remain wholly or partly dependant on men for at least part of their lives.

Men who are sole family breadwinners or who earn more than their partners potentially have more control over family finances, although they can, of course, cede a degree of control to their partners. How couples manage joint finances influences how financially egalitarian their relationship is. Where both partners are earning, it is common for both heterosexual and same-sex couples in the UK to pool some of their finances and keep some separate, thereby retaining some independent spending money (Vogler et al., 2008; Heaphy et al., 2013). Among heterosexual couples, the man is usually the higher earner. If he pays proportionately more into the joint account, equal personal spending can be achieved, but if both pay the same amount into the joint account, he has more personal money available than she does (Vogler et al., 2008). Greater commitment to financial equity has been reported in lesbian and gay households (Weeks et al., 2001), but this is not always the case; the ideal of equality in same-sex couples does not necessarily translate into strict financial equity (Pai, 2017). Arrangements that could potentially be 'seriously disempowering' have been found among some young lesbian and gay couples, although this was not how the couples themselves perceived the situation (Heaphy et al., 2013: 125); here the meanings of money were more complex and related to the process of becoming a couple while

retaining a sense of independent selfhood. Feminists have become less interested in economic inequalities within families than they were in the 1980s, but what recent research there is, mostly on poverty and abusive relationships, suggests that inequitable distribution of financial resources in heterosexual couples persists in Britain and elsewhere (Sharp-Jeffs, 2015a; Main and Bradshaw, 2016). It is also women who do the hidden work of coping with the management of scarce resources in poorer families (Cappellini et al., 2014).

Heterosexual family life continues to be influenced by the assumption that it is women who take primary responsibility for caring for home and children (Carter, 2018). It is women who tend to give up paid work or take part-time employment after the birth of children; men do so only occasionally (Twamley, 2019). Women's decisions on whether, when and for how many hours they should engage in paid work are likely to take other family members into account (Morgan, 2011: 150), thus fitting their employment around their families. This pattern persists and is also observable in many other European and Asian countries, mediated by the conditions of local labour markets, welfare regimes and the childcare support available for working mothers (Ochiai, 2008, 2014; European Commission, 2013a). Catherine Hakim (2004, 2007) has persistently maintained, controversially, that a woman's employment is a matter of personal preference. Hakim has been criticised for ignoring constraints on choices, oversimplifying the processes through which choices are made and the ways in which choice is socially constructed and socially located – and failing to acknowledge that some women have more choices open to them than others (see, for example, Irwin, 2005; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005, 2007; see also Irving in this volume). Also, Hakim's preference theory cannot adequately explain cross-national variations in the way women manage domestic life and paid work. For example, we cannot assume that Japanese and Taiwanese women 'naturally' have different preferences. While there are differences in cultural attitudes to working mothers in these two countries (Sechiyama, 2013), Japanese women's choices are severely constrained by the organisation of the labour market, a taxation system that disadvantages full-time working wives and the unwillingness of Japanese men to participate in domesticity (Tokuhiro, 2011; Ochiai, 2014).

In countries with a developed wage economy, domestic work in heterosexual couples still falls largely to women although, according to OECD data, this is variable: Men in Korea and Japan spend very little time on domestic tasks, well below the OECD average; Danish and Swedish men do the most, though still less than women (OECD, 2018c). It may be, however, that the inequitable distribution of domestic labour is no longer so taken for granted, at least in Britain. Young women seem to aspire to greater equality in marriage even if they still accept the main responsibility for housework and childcare (Carter, 2018; Jackson and Ho, 2020). Some heterosexual couples are actively pursuing more egalitarian relationships, sharing housework, childcare and, in Britain, parental leave (Twamley, 2019). Studies of lesbian and gay couples reveal a commitment to egalitarian domestic practices (Weeks et al., 2001), but this is not always the case in practice. In lesbian parent families, it can be 'the "birth mother" who is figuratively and literally left "holding the baby"' (Gabb, 2004: 169). Studies of cohabiting Taiwanese and Hong Kong lesbians suggest that the egalitarian ideal is strong, but actual practices reflect the couple's conception of fairness rather than a strictly equal division of labour (Wong, 2012; Pai, 2017).

Although women in heterosexual families continue to do most of the housework and care work, this is less of a focus of feminist analysis than in the past. What emerged from these earlier debates is, however, still relevant: housework *is* work but it is quite unlike work in the labour market; not only is it unpaid, but it is bound up with caring for others within close personal relationships. Because housework is a personal service governed by the requirements of those for whom it is performed, it has no boundaries or limits, no job description and no fixed hours. It can be extended to encompass work in a family business or the wife of an executive entertaining his clients and colleagues. The conditions of household work have changed as a result of more women being employed. Full-time housewives effectively exchange their domestic labour for their husbands' economic support and are therefore dependent on them. Married and heterosexually cohabiting women who are in paid employment gain a degree of economic independence, but if they are earning their own keep they are no longer exchanging domestic labour for maintenance: *they are clearly doing it for nothing*. It has been argued that this makes the relationship more, rather than less, exploitative (Delphy and Leonard, 1992).

Inequality among women is also an issue, given that well-paid women in wealthier nations increasingly ease their double burden by outsourcing domestic work. In Britain, cleaners are usually local women, either self-employed or agency workers, and are typically hired for a few hours a week (Singha, 2019). Elsewhere, migrant workers are the main source of domestic help in an increasingly international market for domestic services (Anderson, 2000; Lan, 2003, 2006; Sim, 2009; Asato, 2014). Wealthy women in the United States tend to employ Central American women, while their counterparts in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong employ domestic helpers from the Philippines or Indonesia. Their working conditions can be harsh and exploitative and visa restrictions often tie them to their employers (Lan, 2003, 2006; Sim, 2009; Constable, 2011; Asato, 2014). There are, however, important continuities between paid and unpaid domestic labour. When domestic work is outsourced, it is still usually women's responsibility to oversee it. Women who do paid housework for others are often also responsible for domestic labour in their own homes. If they are migrant workers, they may have to make arrangements for someone else to care for their children and send money home for this purpose (Hochschild, 2003; Lan, 2003, 2006).

Couples and commitment

While most adult women still live in heterosexual relationships, many now delay or eschew marriage and leave unsatisfactory relationships. Western marriage rates have been declining relatively steadily since their high point at the beginning of the 1970s, except in the United States, where the higher rate is attributed to the frequency of divorce and remarriage (Therborn, 2004). Much of the debate around these trends has been framed in dialogue with Anthony Giddens's (1992) thesis that we are witnessing a 'transformation of intimacy' accompanying the separation of sexuality from reproduction and greater gender equality. The result is the democratised 'pure relationship', in which trust is maintained through mutual disclosure and which lasts only as long as it delivers 'enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it' (1992: 58). Giddens maintains that we are moving from romantic love, based on lasting

commitment to a 'special person', to a more contingent 'confluent love' in which we seek a 'special relationship' (1992: 61–2). Giddens largely ignores other ties and obligations that keep couples together and fails to appreciate that intimacy is founded on many practices other than disclosure – for example, support and companionship. Moreover, practices of intimacy may not necessarily be 'democratising or dismantling of patriarchal arrangements' (Jamieson, 2011: 6.4).

As his critics have noted, Giddens's argument is more conjectural than empirically grounded. In particular, he ignores evidence of continuing inequality in heterosexual relationships, not only material inequalities but also less tangible ones. At the time that Giddens was writing, there had been much research suggesting an emotional divide in heterosexual partnerships, with women seeking a form of intimacy, closeness and togetherness that men failed to offer them (for example, Rubin, 1983; Mansfield and Collard, 1988). Some slightly later research revealed a similar pattern (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Langford, 1999). There are, though, possible signs of change, and it may be that younger women are less willing to put up with a lack of emotional reciprocity (Hockey et al., 2007). It is also easier for Western women to end unsatisfactory relationships than it was in the past.

Although there may now be a greater willingness to enter into temporary liaisons or end unhappy relationships, it does not indicate the end of the ideal of long-term commitment (Holmes, 2004b; Carter, 2012, 2018). Being part of a couple is still seen as an important life goal and is now often mediated through the Internet. While some online dating may be pursued only for casual relationships, much is advertised and pursued in the hope of finding lasting love (Ellison et al., 2006; Heino et al., 2010; Sautter et al., 2010; Rosenfield and Thomas, 2012; McWilliams and Barrett, 2014). Whether online or offline, individuals may pursue casual liaisons and committed relationships at different stages of their lives (Carter, 2013; McWilliams and Barrett, 2014). For example, in Western countries, many young people will have a number of partners before they settle down – and these relationships may be short-lived. Unlike an earlier era in which prolonged courtship preceded marriage, the process today has been described as more of a 'drift' into long-term relationships: couples meet, move in together as their relationship develops and may decide at a later stage to formalise their relationship in marriage (Carter, 2013).

Women may, as Giddens argues, be leading a move towards more egalitarian partnerships, but the evidence suggests that it is the continuing lack of equality that causes much of the strain and instability in contemporary heterosexual relationships. Some men, it seems, resist democratised relationships and prefer more 'traditional' heterosexual arrangements – but now cannot always find wives willing to comply. One strategy open to them is to turn to the global marriage market, aided by a host of international match-making organisations through which women from poorer countries seek to improve their position by marrying men from richer nations (Constable, 2003, 2005; Williams, 2010; Yang and Lu, 2010). European and North American men seek wives from Eastern Europe and Asia; men from South Korea and Taiwan find brides in poorer, more 'traditional' countries in Southeast Asia (Constable, 2005; Yang and Lu, 2010). These men hope to 'fulfil their nostalgia for a prefeminist family romance' by marrying foreign women, in the (often misplaced) expectation that they will be subservient (Lan, 2003: 202).

Postmodern, individualised families?

The transformation of intimacy thesis is part of a wider debate on the direction of change in late modern or postmodern families. Two interrelated but separate claims have been made, the first championed by theorists of late modernity, the second by some feminists:

- the individualisation thesis: that de-traditionalisation, individualisation, reflexivity and choice result in more fragile and contingent intimate relationships (Giddens, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002; Beck-Gernsheim, 2002);

- the de-heterosexualisation thesis: that the heterosexual/homosexual binary is becoming less stable and that there is a queering of family relationships (Stacey, 1996; Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004; Roseneil, 2005).

The individualisation thesis emphasises a breakdown of normative prescription, a disembedding of the individual from the social, freeing us from traditional social constraints. This, as critics have noted, can downplay the extent to which the choices individuals make continue to be shaped by culture, social context and their immediate social milieu – as well as the importance of close personal relationships in most people's lives (Smart and Shipman, 2004; Gross, 2005; Irwin, 2005; Smart, 2007; Jamieson, 2011). Many continue to follow 'traditional' patterns of marriage and domesticity (Carter, 2018), such as women changing their names on marriage (Thwaites, 2016). Such sceptics rarely dismiss the individualisation thesis altogether, but they do contest some of its claims.

Even among those whose domestic arrangements are at the vanguard of social change, it is not clear that individualisation adequately describes or explains their lives, aspirations and dispositions. The popularity of marriage among same-sex couples clearly evinces a concern for commitment (Heaphy et al., 2013) and when same-sex couples have children, they often seek to display their relatedness through their surnaming practices (Dempsey and Lindsay, 2018). Parents who have children through donor conception are certainly pioneers in negotiating new forms of kinship but do not necessarily welcome this as radically individualised choice or a challenge to convention (Nordqvist and Smart, 2014; Nordqvist, 2017). A decision to cohabit rather than marry may indicate a willingness to entertain a less institutionalised relationship and may sometimes be due to material circumstances, but it does not necessarily signal a lack of commitment. Couples 'living apart together' may require a great deal of commitment in order to sustain the relationship (Holmes, 2004a, 2004b; Carter and Duncan, 2018).

The individualisation thesis is a Western idea, formulated from within cultures with a long history of individualism, including the idea that marriage should be based on free choice and mutual love. Most human societies do not share this history. The individualisation thesis ignores alternative cultural traditions, including those of significant minorities within Western societies for whom marriage may be a matter for the wider family or a means of reaffirming alliances among kin (Smart and Shipman, 2004). Arranged marriages, often stigmatised as oppressive from the dominant Western viewpoint, are not necessarily seen by those who contract them as an assault on individual identity but as a confirmation of an identity embedded in family and

kinship. They can also result in relationships that are as close as those in marriages of mutual love (Jamieson, 2011). Carol Smart and Becky Shipman (2004) suggest that we should not think of alternatives to individualised free-choice marriage as 'practices that are yet to catch up in the "individualisation race"', but as 'different ways of "doing family"' (2004: 496). In Lynn Jamieson's terms, they are founded on differing practices of intimacy (Jamieson, 2011).

There has been considerable discussion of the applicability of the ideas of individualisation and transformations of intimacy to East Asian settings. While some adapt these ideas to local conditions, others have contested them (Chang, 2010; Chang and Song, 2010; Ochiai, 2014; Jackson, 2015; Liu et al., 2019). All tend to agree, however, on the continued importance of family ties in East Asia. These are societies characterised by strong familialism and heteronormativity. While homosexuality is not illegal in South Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, Singapore has retained its colonial laws. In all except Taiwan there are no protections in law for sexual minorities, and they are marginalised by the appeal to 'traditional Asian values.' Asian familialism should not, however, be seen as some unchanging cultural tradition; such traditions have often been reinvented, as in China's rehabilitation of Confucianism or Japan's invention of the 'traditional family' in the nineteenth century. As Emiko Ochiai argues, 'Rather than being direct expressions of cultural values ("Asian" or otherwise) familialist social systems are primarily products of socioeconomic conditions and policy decisions' (2014: 217). Many countries in the region enforce 'family values' in a variety of ways. See Box 12.1 next page.

Those who argue that we are witnessing a de-heterosexualisation, or queering of family life, also tend to focus on Western societies, although with some awareness of ethnic diversity. Writers such as Judith Stacey (1996, 2004) and Sasha Roseneil and Shelly Budgeon (2004) share with the proponents of individualisation the idea that we are witnessing changes in intimate life towards more fluid relationships and greater individual reflexivity, agency and choice. They distance themselves, however, from the implication that individuals no longer form meaningful social ties or recognise obligations to care for others. Roseneil's and Budgeon's study (2004: 135) of a sector of the population 'at the cutting edge of social change' (i.e. those choosing to live outside couple relationships) found that these individuals forged strong networks of care and support provided by friends with no 'legal or socially recognised ties to each other' (Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004: 152). Stacey's research on gay men within the 'cruising' culture of Los Angeles, revealed that even a culture based on casual sex can generate 'bonds of kinship and domesticity' (Stacey, 2004: 183).

Roseneil and Budgeon have claimed that the 'heterosexual couple, and particularly the married, co-resident heterosexual couple with children, no longer occupies the centre ground of Western societies' (2004: 140). This overstates the case. There may be a move to less durable heterosexual relationships and a widening of lifestyle choices (at least for the more privileged), but these trends are not universal even in the United Kingdom and the United States. The majority of adults, as we have seen, continue to live in heterosexual relationships, which remain highly gendered. It seems premature to proclaim the end of the heterosexual couple as a normative style of life. Moreover, many of those in same-sex relationships buy into normative ideals of marriage and family (see, for example, Heaphy et al., 2013; Pai, 2017).

Box 12.1 – Regulating Asian familialism

■ Family registers, whereby the state defines and records citizens by family membership rather than as individuals. These are physical documents necessary for access to services such as health care and education:

○ Japan's *kosekei:* All family members must share the same surname; record events such as illegitimacy and divorce (which reinforces stigma); cannot accommodate cohabitation or same-sex-partnerships (but same-sex couples can be recorded as a family if the older partner adopts the younger).

○ China's *hukou:* This is primarily a means of controlling internal mobility. To have no hukou is to have no legal existence and no right to any public services (for example, children born to unmarried women).

■ Enforcing heteronormative living arrangements by making access to subsidised housing dependant on being a heterosexual family:

○ In Singapore, access to pubicly subsidised housing (where 80% of the population live) is dependent on forming a 'family nucleus' for anyone under the age of 35. Young heterosexual couples have to show a marriage certificate before they are given the keys; single young people are effectively forced to remain living with their parents; for queer couples, this means living apart until they are 35 unless they are rich enough to afford expensive private housing.

■ Policing filial piety:

○ In Hong Kong, social security for the elderly is means-tested and their children are expected to make a contribution.

○ In China, elderly parents can sue their children for failing to support them.

■ Encouraging traditional divisions of labour:

○ In Japan, there are tax benefits for couples where the wife works part-time and earns considerably less than her husband.

■ Pro-family propaganda is prevalent throughout East Asia.

While some see same-sex marriage as a challenge to the patriarchal norms of the heterosexual family (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 2004), others are more sceptical about whether such citizenship rights benefit all and the extent to which they destabilise heteronormativity. Such rights have made life easier for many, but state recognition has its drawbacks. The introduction of civil partnership, and now marriage, in the United Kingdom means that any co-resident, same-sex couple, whether in a civil partnership/marriage or not, can be treated as each other's dependants for benefit purposes. Lesbians are more likely than gay men to be disadvantaged by this because of lower female earnings. Not only does this mean that poorer lesbians will lose out financially but it also imposes on them a heterosexualised norm of economic support and dependence (Browne, 2011).

Privileging certain kinds of relationships above others may serve to 'normalise' lesbian and gay lives along heterosexual lines and buy into neoliberal ideas of choice (Richardson, 2005; Barker, N., 2013). There has been considerable criticism of such 'homonormativity' in the last two decades (Duggan, 2002; Santos, 2013; Ammaturo, 2014; Croce, 2015). Homonormative assimilation into mainstream society deflects attention away from a critique of heterosexuality, offers privileges differentially to members of the LGBTQ community and marginalises those who do not conform to normative ideals of marriage and family. It has also been associated with racism and Islamophobia, whereby acceptance of same-sex relationships is equated with modern Western civilisation, whole communities and nations are constructed as intolerant, backward and homophobic, and LGBTQ rights are drawn into right-wing nationalistic projects (Mepschen et al., 2010; Rahman, 2014; Puar, 2017). Such criticisms may seem hollow or irrelevant to those in countries where LGBTQ individuals have no rights or protections. At the same time, we cannot assume that homonormative agendas appeal to those with same-sex desires everywhere. Queer individuals and activists beyond the Western world may have different priorities and aspirations.

Conclusion

Current changes in intimate life, then, are complex, are not unidirectional and do not necessarily undermine family life, although the ways intimate relationships are conducted have become less predictable and more diverse. For more privileged women, new opportunities have created the possibility of living outside heteronormative families; the less privileged may live outside them by necessity rather than choice. Only a very small proportion of the population is, as yet, actively embracing alternatives to heteronormative or homonormative lifestyles, and there is also evidence of the persistence of older, patriarchal practices, such as women taking their husband's name on marriage (Thwaites, 2016). When looking beyond the West, even more care needs to be exercised. Superficially, similar trends in other parts of the world – later marriage, fewer children and more women working – may not have the same meaning or consequences in countries with different histories, cultural traditions and social arrangements. East Asian societies, in particular, remain strongly family-focused, limiting women's opportunities for more individualised choices (Chang and Song, 2010) and also making alternative forms of intimate life less viable. We may live in a globalised, late modern world, but not everyone's experience of it is the same, and it cannot therefore be assumed that social change will have the same consequences for families worldwide.

Further reading

D. Chambers (2012) *A Sociology of Family Life*. Cambridge: Polity. This is an accessible introduction to the changes influencing family life today, highlighting the diversity of families while at the same time taking note of the importance of family ties to individuals. It also includes some international coverage, including material on China, India and the Middle East.

B. Heaphy, C. Smart and A. Einarsdottir (2013) *Same-Sex Marriages: New Generation, New Relationships*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. This empirical study of young couples contracting civil

partnerships in the United Kingdom engages with much of the literature on same-sex partnerships and offers an illuminating picture of what legally recognised partnerships mean to those who choose to enter them.

J. Hockey, A. Meah and V. Robinson (2007) *Mundane Heterosexualities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. This book is based on an empirical study of three generations of extended families and foregrounds what often remains unnoticed about such relationships: their heterosexual foundations. It thus brings heterosexuality as institution and practice into focus.

D. H. J. Morgan (2011) *Rethinking Family Practices.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. In this book, David Morgan returns to his original (1996) conceptualisation of family practices and offers a critical self-reflexive account of its strengths and limitations. In so doing, he surveys much theoretical and empirical work on families.

UN Women (2019) *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/progress-of-the-worlds-women. This report provides useful facts and figures on inequalities and injustices within families globally, framed within a human rights approach. It covers diversity and change in families, the degree of agency and choice women have in their relationships, economic inequalities within families, caring responsibilities, violence, family migration and transnational families.

？ QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. **What does the term *family* mean to you? How does this relate to other definitions of family, such as those used by politicians or the media?**

2. **To what extent are families still characterised by gender inequalities?**

3. **Why is living as a couple still so popular? What are the advantages and disadvantages of other life choices?**

4. **How would you weigh the charge of homonormativity against the benefits of rights to same-sex marriage and parenthood?**

13 GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

Susan Buckingham

Introduction

Despite almost 50 years of debate, explanation and theorisation of the relationship between gender and environment, the links between them are still not well understood, even amongst environmental professionals and activists, as my own research continues to confirm (Buckingham and Kulcur, 2009, 2017). Theorisations of ecological and environmental feminism have inspired feminist environmental activism, just as this activism has contributed to the theories. But while both the theories and the activism have had an impact on the development of international environmental policy, the gender-sensitive application of these policies is far from being achieved.

Awareness of the relationships between gender and environment became more widespread after a number of high-profile international conferences in the 1990s which concluded with agreements that environmental governance needed to take into account gender differences and women's experiences, just as women needed to be involved in environmental governance on all levels and scales. This chapter opens with an outline of how gender has inflected international environmental agreements and then summarises ways in which women experience 'the environment' differently from men and discusses arguments which have been used to frame these agreements. Following this, I consider how ecofeminism emerged as a collection of understandings about how gender and environment are imbricated, and how it has gained explanatory power in a resurgence following a lull in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Explanations of the relationship between gender and environment have become more nuanced during the past 40 years, reflecting feminist discussions on intersectionality and the notion of gender itself. Until recently, discussions about gender were almost exclusively among women, but increasingly, critical analyses of masculinities by men as well as women are bringing the relationship between gender and environment to a wider audience (see Robinson in this volume). I review other theorisations of gender and environment, and how intersectionality, queer and trans ecology have more recently influenced gender and environment thinking.

Women have long been the mainstay of local environmental protests in their communities, most of which are not widely publicised. I review gendered environmental activism on a range of scales and reflect on how these actions relate to ways of thinking about the gender–environment relationship, and the ways in which protesters are gendered embodied actors. I also consider how gendered bodies are used by others in environmental politics.

Gender and environment in the international policy context

In 1990, the US Congresswoman and peace activist Bella Abzug recognised the opportunity for women to campaign for their voices, experiences and expertise to be included in the newly announced UN Conference for Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. To create this opportunity, the Women's World Congress for a Healthy Planet was held the following year in Miami, Florida. This gathered 'more than 1,500 women' from 83 countries, collecting testimony on how the environment and development crises impacted or involved women, resulting in the consensual agenda for advocacy for the Earth Summit, called the Women's Action Agenda 21 (WEDO, 2012: 2). The evidence formed the basis for chapter 24 of Agenda 21, which was dedicated to 'Women', recognising that women have gendered experiences of nature and environmental problems because of their relative lack of power. The perspectives gained from women's experiences should, chapter 24 argued, be acknowledged and included by policy makers. In addition to Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration, which made the strongest statements on the importance of a gender perspective to considering environmental issues, other documents emanating from the conference also contained a recognition of women's vital roles. Three years later, the Beijing Platform for Action on Women included a specific section on the environment, which called for women's participation in environmental decision making. Since these two landmark declarations it is now customary for international agreements to incorporate gender and environmental justice as linked issues and objectives. However, climate change governance did not begin to incorporate measures for gender equality until 2011, when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) required member states to consider gender in their programmes, and to attend to gender imbalance in their negotiating teams (Morrow, 2017). Notably, this was under the arguably somewhat feminist leadership of Christiana Figueres. However, progress on this has been erratic. While the percentage of UNFCCC constituted bodies with women chairs and co-chairs, women delegation members and UNFCCC constituted body members all increased (to 61%, 36% and 36% respectively, between 2013 and 2018), the percentage of UNFCCC women delegation leaders fell (to 24% between 2014 and 2017). For all groups there have been marked rises and falls in the intervening years (IIED, 2019).

In some respects, there has been little change since the early 1990s regarding who makes environmental decisions, and the neo-liberalism which continues to direct the global economy also continues to undermine women in many different ways. While it is encouraging that the C40 Cities global initiative to combat climate change in the world's largest cities has, under the leadership of Mayor Anne Hildago of Paris, set up a women's mentoring and leadership programme, this can reinforce the stereotype of promoting women to fit into a man's world. Black minority women, indigenous women, queer women, disabled women and others who do not fit the stereotypical mould of 'professionals' in business, government and even environmental organisations, are much less visible.

How gender relations shape environments and environmental exposure

There are some well-worn examples of how, simply by being female, a person's exposure to environmental problems is magnified. One of the starkest is manifest in the Bangladeshi floods as a result of a category 4 cyclone in 1991. In this poor country, where almost half the population live in places vulnerable to inundation, millions of people were displaced and 140,000 were killed in Cyclone Marian and the flooding it caused. A staggering 90% of deaths were of women and children. Many explanations have been advanced, including poverty (women are more likely to be poor than men), cultural norms (it is not customary for women to learn to swim in Muslim countries), and the relative value of female lives (Nagel, 2016). These are figures which are repeated across the Global South, and elsewhere. In a UNDP report *Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction*, the 'Fast Facts' section identifies 70% of all deaths in Aceh Province, Indonesia, one of the worst hit regions in the Asian tsunami of 2004 were of women; the majority of deaths in the European heat waves of 2003 were those of women; and that women are exposed to an increased risk of domestic violence as a result of environmental stress (UNDP, 2013).

Gender, poverty and race combined in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. Three-quarters of New Orleans's housing was occupied by African American women and their children; many of these families had no access to a car and, having failed to escape the city, were stranded in the Superdome and Convention Centre which were offering refuge of a sort. Gender-based violence against women increased threefold in the year following the storm (Nagel, 2016). Similar figures emerge from reports following the bush fires in Australia (Aston, 2013) and across refugee camps the world over. On average, and worldwide, women are poorer than men, but their relative poverty alone cannot explain these gendered experiences.

Another way in which gender and environmental issues are intertwined is through the 'othering' of female bodies in scientific research which determines which products are considered safe to market, or which levels of pollution are safe to experience. This 'othering' has a long history, which Carolyn Merchant argued is located in patriarchy. Her groundbreaking book of 1980 explains how the period conventional history has coined as 'the Enlightenment' can be seen as the father to modern scientific thought, particularly that based on empiricism and so-called objective enquiry (something that feminist scholars have been questioning for the past half century). Combined, these were seen as ways to control nature. This approach, which became the dominant world view because of the power and reach of the European countries which fostered it, treated and depicted nature as 'female', and sanctioned the '"mastering" and "managing"' of Earth (Merchant, 1996: 84). Merchant accuses the Enlightenment of entrenching dualistic ways of thinking which were used to describe a so-called rationality. This defined the norm of masculinity, against which the feminine was measured as 'other' and consequently of less value. This approach continues to dominate scientific enquiry and the legacy of this enduring world view can be seen in the ways in which science continues to marginalise women and the female. The Gendered Innovations project, initiated at Stanford University in 2009, was set up to 'harness the creative power of sex and gender analysis for innovation and discovery' and to explore how 'gender may add a valuable dimension to research'. It presents the

example of biomedical research on animals to demonstrate how male animals are used much more frequently than females, while the results from research on male animals are frequently generalised to females, despite many anatomical differences. The Gendered Innovations project has also noted how the potential effects of environmental chemicals on human reproductive health have been predominantly studied in men (Gendered Innovations, 2019 online).

The science journalist Angela Saini's book *Inferior*, which challenges negative stereotypes of women in science and their implications, presents a number of medical science research projects which have ignored sex differences, and cites scientists as often assuming 'that studying one sex is as good as studying the other' (2018: 57), the other being usually female. She comments on the large discrepancy between studies conducted on males and those conducted on females, concern for which was expressed by the US Congress which, since 1993, requires all National Institute of Health-funded clinical studies to include women as test subjects (unless there is a good reason not to). Saini's book also draws on a number of interviews she conducted with male and female researchers that confirm the persistence of sexism in the academy, which is rife in areas linked to environmental research.

This brings me to the third way in which gender and environment intersect. The professional fields which have the greatest impact on shaping our environment are dominated by men and masculinist ways of thinking: architecture, engineering and planning, amongst them. Energy, mining, transport, waste, and water industries are all heavily dominated by men, and professional staff are mostly drawn from graduates of university engineering departments, which are likewise staffed mainly by men. In the European Union (EU), STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) careers continue to be dominated by men. In 2016, the percentage of undergraduate students who were female (32%) had hardly increased in a decade (it was 31% in 2007). They were taught by even less gender-balanced staff: 35% of their lecturers were female (33% in 2007); 28% of their senior lecturers (23% in 2007) and 15% of their professors (11% in 2007) (European Commission, 2013b, 2019). According to a C40 Cities report, the percentage of women in the built environment workforce comprises 15.9 in Australia, 15.0 in Japan, 14.0 in the UK, 11.7 in Canada and 9.0 in the USA (C40 Cities, 2019).

The urban environments which are designed by these professionals continue to privilege male-dominated work and transport patterns characterised by a single commute, compared to the multiple trip chaining performed by those who combine paid work with taking children to school, elderly relatives to appointments, doing the shopping and other tasks needed to keep households running. In most countries, these tasks are more likely to be undertaken by women (Sanchez de Madariaga, 2013). And in the same countries, the dominant transport mode is likely to be the private car. This is especially true in rural and suburban areas which Dolores Hayden described so eloquently in her classic essay on North America as being socially isolating, car-dependent and consumption-maximising, with their focus on the individual household rather than the neighbourhood or community. Such arrangements, Hayden argued, both isolate women and are excessively environmentally damaging (Hayden, 1980), and they continue today as sprawling cities across the world imitate modernist urbanism (Jarvis and Cloke, 2009; Pojani et al., 2018; Roberts, 2018).

I have indicated ways in which gender and environment are mutually constituted: that depending on our gender, we experience environmental problems differently; that a dominant world view categorises in hierarchical dualisms, in which women are 'other' and secondary to men; and that our environments are produced by gendered decision making. It was to try to understand why and how these relationships exist and persist that ecofeminism, feminist environmentalism and feminist political ecology have emerged.

Explaining the relationship between gender and environment: ecofeminism and her sisters

- Ecofeminism understands gender inequality and the destruction of nature to be inter-related. Prevailing patriarchal social and economic structures have consistently devalued both nature and women and what are considered as feminine ways of behaviour, along with activities with which women and 'the feminine' are associated. It is impossible to address gender inequality while maintaining dominance over nature, or to address environmental problems without ending gender inequality. By recognising the structural interconnectedness between these two processes, ecofeminism is distinct from both feminism and environmentalism. Only the dismantling of these patriarchal structures will prevent further damage to nature and continuing gender inequality.

- Feminist environmentalism is associated with Bina Agarwal, writing from the 1990s, who developed her conceptualisation to address what she saw as a lack of attention to class and caste by a Western ecofeminism. Her feminist environmentalism is rooted in a materialist explanation of women's relationship with nature and considers the different experiences of women according to their class and caste (Agarwal, 2003).

- Feminist political ecology was established in the mid-1990s to challenge the failure of political ecology to incorporate feminist concerns. In their landmark book, Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas Slater and Esther Wangari defined political ecology as being concerned with emphasising 'decision-making processes and the social, political and economic context that shapes environmental policies and practices' (Rocheleau et al., 1996: 4).

My reading of ecofeminism is that it is eclectic and multiple. A common perception of ecofeminism in the 1980s and 1990s, and the basis of a number of unsisterly critiques, is that it was essentialist, relying on some inherent quality of femininity to explain women's particular connection with and vulnerability to nature. While some of the more colourful examples of an essentialist ecofeminism – such as those which promoted women's spiritual connection with nature (see below) – provided ammunition for an easy dismissal of linking gender to environmental issues, early ecofeminist analyses were, in fact, grounded in social relations. Françoise d'Eaubonne, as the coiner of the new term *ecofeminism*, is a good place to start. In the 1970s, d'Eaubonne prioritised patriarchy, a system that pre-dates capitalism, as responsible for the 'current ecological disaster' as well as the 'cause for women's low status in society'

(Roth-Johnson, 2013: 54). This work clearly marks d'Eaubonne and the original ecofeminist text (only published in French, 1974) as social constructionist: exploring social structures to explain the relationship between gender and environment (d'Eaubonne, 1974). It is also interesting that d'Eaubonne conceptualised a 'condition of femininitude' (Roth-Johnson, 2013: 56) in which those who cannot be classified as elite male are 'assimilated to the female in market society'. I will return to this notion when I examine the work that has recently been done on eco-masculinities.

In the previous section, I reviewed Merchant's reinterpretation of what has come to be known as the Enlightenment as an approach in which women (and some men) and non-human nature shared a similar experience of domination. How the world is characterised – by the breaking up of human and non-human nature into categories (by species/genus; by male/female; by human/non-human), or into the Global North and Global South (which obscures both their respective co-dependent wealth and poverty, and deep social and economic intra-national divisions) – remains deeply influential. Ecofeminism has questioned the use of these binaries, arguing that they are artificial human constructs which serve to divide us. These dualisms have been created by a dominant group and position an 'other' against a desired 'norm'. This means that female qualities have, for centuries, been defined primarily in relation to male qualities by those in power. Val Plumwood developed this argument further to suggest that the 'inferior' side of the binary (such as the body, the private, female) is 'backgrounded to', and serves to elevate, the 'superior' side (such as the mind, the public, male) (Plumwood, 1993).

Essentialist ecofeminism was most prominent in exploring the relationship that women, through their bodies and embodied practices, have with nature. Sometimes this was argued to be through women's biologies, which tied them to nature in ways in which men's bodies did not, or at least less obviously – for example, through menstruation, conception, childbirth and breast feeding. Women's practice of natural medicine was also cited to indicate intimate connections with nature (see, for example, Daly, 1978 and Collard and Contrucci, 1988). By re-interpreting these embodied manifestations of femaleness as powerful and connected with the other-than-human natural world, women's historical subordination by a patriarchal society which devalued these embodied practices, was challenged. Taken in the context of a direct challenge to hyper-masculinity (the apex of the favoured hierarchy), this form of ecofeminism sought to rebalance power so that qualities thought to define femininity (such as empathy and cooperation) were prioritised as more important. By doing so, the aim was to create a world in which humans lived more harmoniously with other-than-human nature, and where women and female-associated qualities were valued.

However, the deterministic nature of gender (where being 'male' or 'female' determined one's relationship to other-than-human nature, and each other) invited criticism from feminists who had been at pains to demonstrate how it was the process of socialisation, including patriarchal domination, that created gender and gendered responses to other-than-human nature. For some years, in the 1990s, it appeared that ecofeminism might be destroyed by these critiques. It was also a time in which feminism itself in the Global North was being dismissed as 'political correctness' on the one hand, and as unnecessary on the other, as many considered that gender equality had been won.

Nevertheless, a resurgence of interest in critical ecofeminism from the 2000s has reinvigorated thinking in this area and connected with the earlier social constructivist analyses. Another of d'Eaubonne's arguments for ecofeminism in the 1970s is the 'oppressive conception of motherhood' for which she partially blamed ecologists. Indeed, d'Eaubonne calls for the abolition of the nuclear family unit which, she argues, oppresses women. Sherilyn MacGregor has more recently called for women to be seen as citizens more than mothers (MacGregor, 2006), although as Ruth Lister (2003), amongst others, has noted, it is often through – or due to the absence of – their mothering practices that women's 'good citizenship' is conferred or otherwise. Ali Young has called for the recovery of the role of mothers in ecofeminism, given their struggles in societies which continue to devalue care and carers (Young, 2017). Some of ecofeminism's hetero/repro-normativity has also been challenged by queer and trans ecology critics who argue that ecofeminism reinforces societal norms in which children are raised in households which are, or at least mimic, heterosexual units. They call for understandings of how 'sexual relations organise and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences and constitutions of that world.' (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson, 2010: 5). Di Chiro (2008), a leading writer on environmental justice, queries the focus of concern regarding environmental pollution on reproductive systems, particularly chemical pollution which is said to influence sex or the ability to reproduce, and links this to prevailing hetero and repro-normativity.

Niamh Moore (2018) considers that ecofeminism's use of 'motherhood' has often been strategic, and that ecofeminist activists, if they are mothers, frequently undermine the typical stereotype of motherhood. Her account of women's protest (symbolically, a grandmother's protest) against clear-cut deforestation in Canada's Clayoquot Sound will be used in the following section to demonstrate *strategic essentialism*, a term associated with Gayatri Spivak (Danius et al., 1993). This also draws attention to the impracticality of reducing what is considered 'male' and 'female' to a straightforward binary. Martin Hultman's work since the 2010s has observed how being stereotypically male (competitive, dominant, detached, and so on) is, in fact, only one kind, or aspect, of masculinity. He compares this dominant masculinity – he calls it 'industrial masculinity' – with ecological masculinity, which is more sensitive to nature and works in more co-operative ways. With Paul Pulé, Hultman has more recently written about the need for men to have other kinds of role models than industrial masculinity if they are to interact well with other, less powerful humans, and non-human nature (Hultman and Pulé, 2018; and see Robinson in this volume). They build on Connell's (2005) research with men, which revealed many different kinds of masculinities. Of particular interest here are Connell's interviews with men who were involved in the environmental movement in Australia, and who had been exposed to feminism either in counter-cultural or environmental action groups, or through feminist family members. Hultman and Pulé are two of an increasing number of men becoming interested in and exploring the relationship between gender and environment. Richard Twine proposes ecological politics as 'an important way in which (profeminist) men can subvert, albeit it indirectly, hegemonic masculinity and then potentially create new, mutually enriching and non-oppressive conversations between men and nature' (Twine, 1997: 5 in Hultman and Pule, 2018: 211).

A significant criticism of ecofeminism came from women in the Global South who felt excluded by the implicit focus on white women in rich countries. Vandana Shiva, author of *Ecofeminism* with Maria Mies (1993) and early exponent of ecofeminism, writing in India about Indian women, was unusual in this regard. Bina Agarwal, in 1992, explored how ecofeminism could be useful to a Third World perspective on gender and the environment. But mostly, women from the Global South, as researchers, activists and subjects, have been more likely to work within feminist political ecology. Not that the boundary between ecofeminist and feminist political ecology approaches is always easy to detect, and in the book, which effectively launched feminist political ecology in 1996, Diane Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter and Esther Wangari acknowledged that 'feminist political ecology encompasses much of ecofeminism as well as several related additional approaches that would not fit that label as currently used' (1996: 10). Some feminist political ecologists have also been at the forefront of reintroducing the body in its relationship to other-than-human nature. For example, Wendy Harcourt goes 'deeper into a vision of bodies removed from essentialist, naturalistic and scientific modes of explanation in order to position bodies as sites of contestation in a series of … struggles' (2009: 11). Our (female) bodies are often more susceptible to environmental damage not because of any essentialist reason, but because the gendered social structures which determine decisions lead to situations in which, for example, testing of environmental pollutants reveals only men's exposure/safe limits. And as the next section will show, women use their bodies in strategic ways for protest.

A consideration of the relation between the gendered body and its environment owes much to the pioneering work of Donna Haraway from the 1980s, particularly that which examines the porosity of boundaries. Haraway's conceptualisation of the cyborg, a 'theorized and fabricated hybrid of machines and organisms' (1991: 150), relies on 'crucial boundary breakdowns'. The first is between humans and other animals; the second between the animal-human and the machine (for example, the use of technology from prosthetics and pacemakers to microchips); the third between the physical and non-physical (this could, perhaps, include how subliminal messages influence the ways in which our bodies react). More recently, Stacey Alaimo has developed the concept of '"trans-corporeality" in which the human is always enmeshed with the more-than-human world, underlin[ing] the extent to which the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from "the environment"' (2010: 2 in Seymour, 2017: 255). It is worth contemplating whether queer and trans ecology approaches would have been possible, however, without feminist critiques of binary or dualistic thinking which has so dominated ways of thinking which are now global.

Haraway later contributed to discourses through which we explore distinctions – or not – between the micro-organisms which inhabit our human bodies and what we recognise as 'ours'. The biologist Lynne Marguilis's body of work reveals that the co-dependence between humans and microbes renders any analysis of an independent body rather futile (McFall-Ngai, 2017). And this then has implications for how we consider our place in the whole of nature. These approaches, and the work of queer and trans ecologists, resist dividing phenomena, and even behaviours, into dualisms which reify norms and normative hierarchies.

Intersectional thinking has also been influential in expanding how we think about gender as the characteristic which defines our relationship with other-than-human nature. It is now better recognised that women of colour, disabled women, poor women, trans, lesbian and non-binary women, and women for whom their religion and/or culture are important all experience relationships with other-than-human nature, and the environment, in particular ways. Feminist standpoint theory (FST) is a useful way of conceptualising how the marginalised and disadvantaged (in this case women) have been excluded from decisions concerning non-human nature. From this perspective Sandra Harding argued that those so embedded in, and benefiting from, positions of power cannot readily see the consequences of this power and as such lack the 'epistemic privilege' required to understand, and therefore properly address this issue (2004). More recently (2015), Harding has made the case to create greater diversity within the research process to ensure critical distance and 'strong objectivity', a point which has been made by Gendered Innovations, referred to earlier. Standpoint theory has been criticised for essentialism and for questioning whether the 'oppressed' are any more reliable than the 'oppressors'. However, as earlier discussion in this chapter about the extent of shared experiences of women has indicated, I believe that FST retains some traction. While it has not been widely used in theorising gender environment links, its premises are shared with the environmental justice movement which fights for environmental rights, particularly for poor people and those marginalised by their ethnicity, although women's involvement in environmental justice movements are more likely to reflect their activist work than their grievances. It is also notable, with a few important exceptions which will be presented in the following section, that the academic literature on environmental justice is mostly dominated by men. This is also largely true of environmental movements and NGOs, as this chapter will later consider.

Gendered environmental activism

When, in my Environmental Studies course in the 1990s, I asked students to name some women environmental activists, both female and male students found it difficult to do so. They could have cited Waangari Mathai, Gro Harlan Brundtland, Petra Kelly and Vandana Shiva, but the name which arose most frequently was the late Anita Roddick, founder of the natural toiletries and cosmetics franchise Body Shop. The Body Shop was known for its use of natural ingredients, never tested on animals; its reliance on word-of-mouth and high-street presence rather than paying for advertising; and its sourcing of fair trade products, frequently publicising Ms Roddick's visits to local, co-operative farmers and producers of raw ingredients such as the Body Shop's staple: cocoa butter.

However, no one could now possibly fail to recognise the multitude of women prominent in environmental activity. From the Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who has galvanised a global youth movement challenging politicians to act on the climate emergency, to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the young US congresswoman elected in 2018 who is eloquently promoting the Green New Deal, women are widely publicised role models for environmental action. European women mayors are governing

cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Paris and Oslo, which are taking the lead in banning cars. Meanwhile, one of Jacinta Ahern's first actions when she became Prime Minister for New Zealand was to refuse to issue new offshore oil and gas exploration permits. Women Ministers of Environment in Brazil (Marina Silva in 2009) and the Philippines (Regina Lopez in 2017) had taken decisions a few years earlier to restrict deforestation and mining, respectively, which made them unpopular with their country's business communities.

Women have long been at the forefront of local environmental campaigning, and this activity has been seen as an extension of the domestic arena, and of women's care work. Campaigners such as New York State resident Lois Gibbs, who protested against the unregulated dumping of chemicals in the disused Love Canal site, which was later capped off, with the land sold to build a school on. Fighting a protracted battle to have the otherwise unexplained illnesses and deaths of people in the neighbourhood recognised as resulting from this chemical pollution led to dismissals of Gibbs's data collection – door-to-door talks with her neighbours who had had miscarriages, new borns die, family members diagnosed with cancers – as being mere 'housewives' data' (Gibbs, 1998). Other US women activists have also been characterised in a house-wifely or 'womanly' role in ways which have sought to minimise their importance: Rachel Carson, the science researcher and editor, now a posthumous standard bearer for the environmental movement, who foresaw the consequences of a polluted world in her last book, *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, was vilified as '"an hysterical woman" who used "emotion-fanning words", a woman with an over-sensitive nature, whose book was "more poisonous than the pesticides she condemns"' (Lear, 1998: 261). And as '"hysterically overemphatic" with a "mystical attachment to the balance of nature", and her book as an "emotional and inaccurate outburst"' (Solnit, 2007: 302). Jane Jacobs, the architectural journalist and author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published in 1963, organised protests to stop the destruction of communities in lower Manhattan by massive road building projects. Lewis Mumford, a leading urbanist at the time, demeaned her critical book as 'Mother Jacobs Home Remedies' (title of Mumford's *New Yorker* article) and her observations of women's domestic activities in Greenwich Village (the area which would be destroyed by the road build-ing) as 'the little flirtations that season a housewife's day' (Mumford quoted by Solnit, 2007: 302). Such insults are a supreme example of how women's daily activities and movements are diminished compared with men's. It is therefore of no surprise, that under Mumford's planning approach, which still dominates in many places, it is the higher-income-earning commuters' journeys which take priority over the care-providers' activities (but see S. Jackson and Irving in this volume).

Institutional responses are similarly dismissive of low-income women who are their families' main carers. Judy Sze's research uncovers how women's role in the household has been blamed by governments seeking to hide the real reasons for the increase in respiratory illnesses. She recounts her interviews with a group of African American mothers who complained to New York City Hall that their children had developed asthma as a result of heavy traffic on their street in New York City. Rather than investigating the role of traffic pollution, city officials send environmental health officers into their homes who then accused the mothers of poor housekeeping practices which caused their children's' illnesses (Sze, 2005).

But women are also using their inferior positions in strategic ways. Niamh Moore demonstrates how female protesters challenged clear-cut deforestation in Canada's Clayoquot Sound by symbolically adopting the identity of grandmothers (Moore, 2018). Through their civic involvement, women eschewed models of traditional motherhood to engage politically, sometimes at some cost to themselves through arrest and imprisonment. The grandmother image was symbolic in the way it was used to represent age (a point at which women frequently become invisible to society) and wisdom. Not all of the women were actually grandmothers, and Moore describes the use of clowning and drag which represented the archetypal grandmother while engaging in disruptive political acts.

A more explicit use of drag has been used by Nuclia Waste, a drag queen comedienne who grew up in a family of workers at a local nuclear plant and lived in its shadow. Their performance plays with gender, mutation, and the nuclear industry and is documented by Shiloh Krupar (2012), who reviews their use of camp, drawing attention to the clean-up of a former plutonium production facility. The site's reincarnation as a National Wildlife Refuge erases the history of nuclear power and deployment. Counter to conventional environmental protests, Nuclia Waste challenges the clean-up as a deception. They play with gender and 'queer environmental aesthetics' to reveal 'relations of power, questions, boundaries, and plays with transnatural relations' (Krupar, 2012: 315). Arguably, such performance-activism exposes the impossibility of any return to 'pure' nature. It also reinforces Donna Haraway's use of the term *socialnature*, a hybrid entity reflecting the impossibility of a firm boundary between what is 'social' and what is 'nature'. Such 'boundary issues' also reflect concerns of queer and trans ecology, which question the validity of social-natural boundaries.

The Lancashire Fracking Nanas was organised to stop the Cuadrilla company from exploring the potential for fracking shale gas in Lancashire, UK. They are all women, many working-class, but not all are grandmas, or mothers, and some are too young to be grandmas – though they have grandmas themselves. They play on the domestic imagery of baking cakes and wielding feather dusters but engage in active protest familiar from the Greenham Common women who, in 1981, marched to a US air base in southern England which housed Cruise missiles, struck camp, and occupied the surrounding area for many years in peaceful protest which, nevertheless, involved actions such as handcuffing themselves to the perimeter fence (Harford and Hopkins, 1984).

Two of the most publicised actions led by women have been the Chipco movement in North West India, where women stood guard over forest trees to stop their logging (Shiva, 1988), and the Green Belt movement in Kenya, where women led a tree planting action to provide local jobs as well as to recover damaged environments decimated by desertification as a result of drought. The initiator of this action, Wangari Maathi, at the time the wife of an MP and subsequently an MP herself who, much later, won the Nobel Peace Prize, recalls being dismissed on the basis of her tribe (Kikuyu) and marital status (Maathi, 2006). Less known, but equally inspirational is the women-led weaving rebellion in Indonesia. Mama Aleta Baun of the Molo Community in Timor, Indonesia, led a four-year weaving occupation of marble

mines, during which time Molo men took care of the housework. In 2010, the marble mining companies withdrew, defeated (Women in and Beyond, 2019).

Meanwhile, in 2016, nine women from the Seman community in central Java, Indonesia, led a protest against the building of a cement factory on their land by setting their feet in concrete outside the President's Palace. Both Indonesian women's groups have used the status of motherhood, as celebrated in Indonesia, to stress the importance of their environmental demands for future generations in a form that could be described as 'strategic essentialism'. It is significant that women are leading protests against extractive industries which rely on temporary concentrations of men. The camps which house them, in the USA and Canada as well as in the Global South, have been notorious for violence against women – from prostitution to rape – and indigenous women in particular (Adamson, 2017).

As this chapter was being written, Extinction Rebellion (XR), the peaceful direct action group, burst onto the UK campaigning map, declaring a climate emergency soon after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that climate change was happening much more quickly than previously anticipated, and that the world has a much narrower window of opportunity to take action to drastically reduce carbon emissions by 2030 (IPCC, 2018). XR's tactics include civil disobedience in which participants can elect to be 'arrestable'. In an open letter to XR, the collective Wretched of the Earth, comprising almost 50 groups of indigenous, feminist, poor, disabled and other marginalised campaigners, argue that XR fails to understand that the society and governments to which they are directing their demands are underpinned and shaped by racism, sexism and classism, which has already destroyed the lives of millions of people. The letter is quoted at length in Box 13.1.

Box 13.1 – Letter from Wretched of the Earth to Extinction Rebellion

You may not realize that when you focus on the science you often look past the fire and us – you look past our histories of struggle, dignity, victory and resilience. And you look past the vast intergenerational knowledge of unity with nature that our peoples have. Indigenous communities remind us that we are not separate from nature, and that protecting the environment is also protecting ourselves. In order to survive, communities in the Global South continue to lead the visioning and building of new worlds free of the violence of capitalism. We must both centre those experiences and recognise those knowledges here.

Our communities have been on fire for a long time and these flames are fanned by our exclusion and silencing. Without incorporating our experiences, any response to this disaster will fail to change the complex ways in which social, economic and political systems shape our lives – offering some an easy pass in life and making others pay the cost. In order to envision a future in which we will all be liberated from the root causes of the climate crisis – capitalism, extractivism, racism, sexism, classism, ableism and other systems of oppression – the climate movement must reflect the complex realities of everyone's lives in their narrative. (Wretched of the Earth, 2019)

The communities which are already suffering the effects of climate change are those most vulnerable and oppressed from whose 'standpoints' arguments need to be understood and criticised, and responses made. This response demands that the privileged amongst us must re-evaluate how we engage with environmental action/activism which is respectful of and supports those who experience the environmental effects of economic and political decisions. Indeed, some self-identifying 'queer black/Asian' activists have argued that, having been complicit in causing oppression in the first place, there is no role for the privileged and that the oppressed are the only people who can effectively achieve change (Budge, 2019; Dhaliwal, 2019).

The actions identified above illustrate women's concerns which propel them into action, and how their experiences, use, and sometimes parody, of gender support their actions. In some cases, this has incurred personal and political costs. In many cases, the need for local protest has arisen because more formal opportunities for achieving their goals have not been available. Even in environmental NGOs, where a modicum of gender awareness and attention to gender equality might be expected, women have fewer opportunities than men. And women of colour and women with care responsibilities have even fewer opportunities (Taylor, 2014; Buckingham and Kulcur, 2017).

In the USA, Dorceta Taylor has investigated the gender balance of employees in environmental organisations and notes that while the number of women has steadily increased in government departments and NGOs, these are predominantly white women. Women of colour remain poorly represented in environmental organisations in the Global North. Some black women activists criticise environmental NGOs as being 'white supremacists' appropriating indigenous people's, and women's, protests for their own ends (Dhaliwal, 2019). Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) in rich countries tend to be predominantly white organisations, and, senior decision-making posts tend also to be held by white men. Indeed, interviews with those who lead some of these large ENGOs reveal a lack of understanding of gender and neo-colonial politics. Rakibe Kulcur, in her research into gendered practices in ENGOs, interviewed CEOs who thought that 'environmental NGOs are very male', with one interviewee specifying that these executives were a particular kind of male who had been to private/boarding school, leaving 'a bit of a legacy in terms of how men deal with women'. One male CEO told Rakibe that if she had children, she could say goodbye to an ENGO career (Buckingham and Kulcur, 2017).

There have been ENGO campaigns which have blatantly used women to generate support – one example is the anti-fur campaign from 1990. This campaign, which Gaard refers to being sexist and racist (2011), included naked women branding posters 'I'd Rather Go Naked than Wear Fur' and a film of barely clothed, svelte women models draping bleeding animal skins to make the point that wearing fur is cruel. More subtle perhaps, but to my mind still sexist, is the high-profile Greenpeace campaign Free the Arctic 27, which relied heavily on the image of a young, attractive, vulnerable-looking woman. When a Greenpeace boat protesting oil drilling in the Russian Arctic was held captive in Russia in December 2013, of all the 27 activists and others arrested (the majority of them being men), it was a young, attractive, vulnerable-looking (especially when photographed behind bars) white woman who was the 'poster-child' of Greenpeace in their campaign to get the 27 released (Buckingham, 2017). Despite the increasing numbers and profile of women involved in

environmental campaigning, I argue that the environmental movement as a whole, reflecting the society from which it emerges, has a long way to go before gender equality and respect are achieved.

Conclusion

This chapter opened by locating the global recognition of women's role in environmental action in the 1990s in two landmark United Nations agreements: Agenda 21 and the Beijing Platform for Action on Women. Action to secure these two agreements drew substantially on environmental feminism. Almost thirty years on, and with a plethora of international and national agreements and regulations on gender equality and sustainability, the relationship between gender and environment is still not well understood. Ecofeminism has stimulated ways of understanding this relationship for almost 50 years, such that it now offers a powerful critique, along with feminist political ecology, of how gendered social structures shape our gendered experiences of nature. But while these concepts inform some international policy making, national governments, in general, continue to legislate in ways which reflect enduring power dynamics which continue to marginalise women, particularly women of colour, disabled women, poor women, lesbians and trans people. The dominant neoliberal and patriarchal world view also continues to externalise nature and consider it as a resource from which to extract what we need and dump what we don't. The chapter has explained how women, in particular, are disadvantaged by environmental problems both directly (such as through pollution or anthropogenically affected weather events) and indirectly (such as through violence as a result of these events). Women, and, more recently, queer activists, have drawn attention to their environmental concerns through their actual roles and through strategically parodying stereotypically gendered roles. These campaigns and the increasingly high profile of women politicians who are taking on environmental issues have ensured that gender and environment discourses are reaching wider audiences, including more and more men. However, they are still far from mainstream, and the women involved continued to be marginalised and vilified. Nevertheless, a new generation of ecofeminist theorists and activists and the vibrancy of gender studies interested in exploring links between queer and trans theory and nature suggest that our understandings of the relationship between gender and environment will continue to deepen and strengthen.

Further reading, and a film

S. Buckingham (2020) *Gender and Environment*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge. At the risk of self-promotion, I would nonetheless recommend this second edition. Since the first edition was published in 2000, there have been substantial theoretical and policy developments in the fields of gender, environment and in how they interact. These form the basis of the wholesale revision, and all aspects of this chapter are developed in more detail.

Friends of the Earth and C40 Cities (2018) *Why Women Will Save the Planet*. 2nd edn. London: Zed Books. In 2015, Friends of the Earth identified what it saw as the ten biggest challenges facing the environmental movement in the coming 15 years. How to involve women and address gender equality was one of the ten. This is a highly accessible (and low-priced) collection of essays by

leading women activists, politicians, practitioners and academics who write about the key gender-environment-related issues in their field.

S. MacGregor (2018) *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*. London: Routledge. MacGregor is one of the leading contemporary writers on the relationship between gender and environment, and her work in the 2000s did much to reinvigorate and refresh ecofeminism. In this handbook, MacGregor brings together leading writers on the subject to provide the state of the art of writing on gender and environment in the early mid twenty-first century.

C. Merchant (1980) *The Death of Nature*. London: Routledge. Merchant's book was one of those which transformed the way in which I understood science and the way in which I understood the world. It remains an authoritative, and readable, explanation of how science has developed and endured as a gendered practice.

M. Waring (1988, 2016) *Who's Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics*. National Film Board of Canada, director, Terre Nash. https://www.marilynwaring.com/media/video.asp which takes the viewer to: http://www.nfb.ca/film/whos_counting/

Marilyn Waring was the youngest woman to be elected to the New Zealand Parliament in 1975, in which she became Minister for the Environment. She then studied for a PhD on the United Nations method for calculating public accounts. She wrote a devastating account of how the global economic system favours environmental destruction and marginalises care. This video is an absorbing account of how this works, in turn heartbreaking and funny, and always acute and meticulously researched.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How might environmental professions dominated by men affect (different) women's relationships with the environment?

2. Consider how including a much greater diversity of women (and men) into environmental decision making might reduce environmental damage?

3. Thinking of specific environmental campaigners, and their gender, how are their actions and protests gendered? Also consider how responses to them are gendered.

4. How do you and people you know well experience the environment in gendered ways?

14 GENDER AND EDUCATION

Carolyn Jackson

Introduction

Policy priorities relating to gender and education are strongly influenced by geopolitics, wealth and discourses about gender. In many parts of the world, girls are far less likely than boys to have access to any schooling; according to UNESCO estimates '130 million girls between the age of 6 and 17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary-school age – half of them in sub-Saharan Africa – will never enter a classroom' (The World Bank, 2017). Simultaneously, in other parts of the world, girls are presented as 'having it all' and being 'winners' in relation to education, often at the *expense* of boys. This chapter focuses on the latter. It critically explores discourses suggesting that boys are the new disadvantaged in education. I, like many feminist scholars, argue that generalised claims that boys are underachieving relative to girls are overly simplistic and dangerous. However, such claims have gained traction and need to be contested rather than ignored. So, in the first part of the chapter, I challenge the notion that boys are underachieving by exploring intersecting factors that need to be taken into account and add considerable complexity and nuance to the picture. In particular, I explore differences relating to subject area, level of attainment, country, socio-economic status (SES) and ethnicity, and the intersections between them.

While attainment is clearly an important matter in discussions about education, it is not the only issue that deserves attention. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere (Jackson, 2006a, 2006b; Jackson et al., 2010) that in the UK far too much attention has been focused on (boys') attainment and far too little on (especially girls') experiences of education. Thus, in the second half of the chapter, I shift the focus to explore an issue that has been neglected yet is crucially important: sexual harassment and violence in schools.

Throughout the chapter much, but certainly not all, of the discussion relates to the UK. But as I demonstrate through the use of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data and numerous other examples, the issues and discussion are certainly not specific to the UK. While the chapter focusses on what seem to be two different foci – attainment and experience – in both cases I argue that approaches for improvement require deconstructing gender norms. I start with discussion about gender and attainment.

Gender and attainment

In numerous regions and countries – particularly but not exclusively in the Global North – there are concerns about boys' 'underachievement' in education – for example, Australia, the Caribbean, Malaysia, Scandinavia, the UK and USA. In the UK,

concerns about the academic attainment of boys and young men relative to girls and young women have been voiced strongly and frequently over the last three decades, and raising boys' attainment has been a priority of various Government agencies (Skelton et al., 2007). Indeed, it remains a priority (for example, see Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2016).

In relation to schooling, the concerns are driven primarily by test and examination results which suggest that, *overall*, a larger proportion of girls than boys meet benchmark standards. For example, in England, GCSE (exams usually taken at age 16) data from 2018 show that 'As in previous years, girls continue to do better than boys in all headline measures. The gender gap for Attainment 8 has increased to 5.6 points, an increase of 0.3 points. The gender gap has also increased for the English and maths attainment measure to 6.8 percentage points … an increase of 0.6 percentage points since 2017' (Department for Education, 2018: 15). (Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across eight qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list. Each individual grade a pupil achieves is assigned a point score, which is then used to calculate a pupil's Attainment 8 score.) However, as many feminist scholars have argued vehemently over the last three decades, such headline figures mask very important distinctions. Not all girls are doing well, and some boys are very high attainers. We need to consider intersecting factors such as social class and ethnicity, which I do later in this section. We also need to consider country differences and subject differences and explore gradations within 'pass' categories, so I'll start with those.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data offer useful insights into patterns of gendered performance internationally. PISA is 'a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students who are nearing the end of their compulsory education' (OECD, 2018a). Over 90 countries have participated in the assessments which commenced in 2000. Students are tested every three years in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science (OECD, 2018a). There are differences in performance across these areas when analysed by gender. In science, data from 2015 show that boys score four points higher than girls, on average, across Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries, which the OECD describes as a small but statistically significant difference. However, there are differences between countries. Boys perform significantly better than girls in 24 countries, with the largest difference in favour of boys in Austria, Costa Rica and Italy, where the difference is over 15 points. Girls score significantly higher than boys, on average, in 22 countries; the difference is greater than 15 points in Albania, Bulgaria, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Georgia, Jordan, Qatar, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Arab Emirates. In 33 countries, the share of top performers in science is larger among boys than girls. Finland is the only country in which there are more girls than boys among top performers in science (OECD, 2016: 78)

There is a similar, although slightly more marked, pattern in mathematics. On average across OECD countries, boys outperform girls in mathematics by 8 score

points. Boys' mean advantage is significant in 28 countries and largest (more than 15 points) in Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, and Spain. Girls score higher than boys on average in nine countries: Albania, Finland, FYROM, Georgia, Jordan, Macao (China), Malaysia, Qatar, Trinidad and Tobago. Again, there are notable points in relation to the highest achievement levels: the highest-scoring 10% of boys score 16 points higher than the best-performing 10% of girls (OECD, 2016: 196).

The pattern is different in reading where PISA has consistently found that across all countries, girls on average outperform boys. In 2015, girls outperformed boys in reading by 27 score points on average across OECD countries. However, that is a narrowing of the gap: it narrowed by 12 points on average between 2009 and 2015. While some may celebrate this, it is crucial to explore how and why the gap has narrowed. The picture is troubling: 'During that period, boys' performance improved somewhat, particularly among the highest-achieving boys, while girls' performance deteriorated, particularly among the lowest-achieving girls' (OECD, 2016: 38). Thus, there is little to celebrate.

It is difficult to know why girls' performances on average have deteriorated for reading, but feminists have expressed concerns for a long time that the focus on raising boys' attainment, and some of the strategies implemented to do this, are detrimental for girls and/or reinforce pernicious gender stereotypes. Indeed, there are numerous examples of this internationally (see Jackson, 1999; Charlton et al., 2007). In Barbados, for example, places were protected for boys in the most-favoured selective schools to the disadvantage of better-performing girls (Cobbett and Younger, 2012). In the UK, there have been schemes that introduced single-sex classes (in co-educational schools) for English lessons and used different books for boys (e.g. books about war) and girls (e.g. novels about romance). Such schemes, sometimes referred to as 'boy-friendly pedagogies', are problematic for a multitude of reasons, including that they homogenise girls and boys and reinforce sexist stereotypes which schools should be challenging, not cementing. Charlton et al. (2007) document an example from Australia in their aptly titled article 'Sacrificial girls'. They discuss research undertaken in an Australian school that was renowned within the state for implementing boys' education programmes. Their study revealed that, as part of one such programme, some of the girls were placed in lower sets/streams than equally performing or lower-performing boys to ensure a gender balance across the groups. Charlton et al. (2007: 460) highlight that 'the use of streaming and setting in the case study school demonstrates inequitable practices in that the process was not based upon concepts of merit … but upon a need to improve boys' academic outcomes through striking an artificial gender balance. … We see this as part of a bigger picture occurring in education where boys' needs are prioritised over those of girls.'

It is crucial that schemes to raise boys' attainment do not disadvantage girls. Furthermore, I and others argue that rather than introducing schemes to raise boys' attainment which construct and reinforce gender differences, we should be looking to deconstruct them. This was the conclusion reached from the largest project to date, conducted in England, on raising boys' achievement: a four-year (2000–4) Government-funded project undertaken by Younger and Warrington (2005a) in primary and secondary schools. Based on their extensive research, Younger and Warrington stressed

that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to raising attainment; local contexts are important, as are long-term interventions. However, they emphasised that there is *no case* for 'boy-friendly' pedagogies. Rather, we should be shifting restrictive notions of gender and challenging stereotypes. In their report, they provide a number of case studies that were successful in raising the attainment of boys and girls using socio-cultural approaches. These included a key leaders/befrienders scheme, focusing on the arts and peer-supported reading schemes (Younger and Warrington, 2005a, 2005b). The conclusions of Younger and Warrington are strongly supported by Skelton et al. (2007) who, based on an analysis of gender and achievement for the then Equal Opportunities Commission, also argued that the gender gap in achievement can only be removed by challenging and changing notions of gender. They argued that:

> at the centre of any approach developed by schools to raise achievement has then to be the 'deconstruction of gender difference': that is, the need to reflect on, and take apart, assumptions about what it is to be and behave as 'a boy' or 'a girl'. Because 'boy' and 'girl' are binary opposites, then being 'a boy' means not being 'a girl' and vice versa. Enabling pupils to broaden their views means, rather ironically, placing less rather than more attention on differences between 'boys' and 'girls'. One of the reasons why there have been such disappointing results for schools which have adopted some of the strategies to raise boys' achievement is that they have encouraged teachers and pupils to view boys and girls as gender stereotypes.
>
> (Skelton et al., 2007: 46)

Thus, they urged against focusing specifically on boys, suggesting instead that tackling gender differences in achievement is best attained through an approach to raise achievement in general, and the adoption of strategies that focus the whole school (ethos, teaching practices and organisation) towards that goal. Furthermore, they called for more case studies, training and specific strategies to support teachers to address gender cultures to facilitate educational achievement. I return later to discuss the ways in which gender is being deconstructed in some contexts, and the implications of this. However, first I want to consider the second important factor in the debate about boys' so-called underachievement that I flagged earlier: not all boys are 'underachieving' and not all girls are high achievers. Other factors, most notably social class and ethnicity, are closely related to attainment.

As Becky Francis (2010) and others have pointed out, in the UK, social class rather than gender is the primary predictor of achievement. An analysis by Strand (2014: 131) of educational achievement in England revealed that 'At age 16, the achievement gap associated with social class was twice as large as the biggest ethnic gap and six times as large as the gender gap.' Free school meals (FSM) tend to be used as a proxy of relative poverty – FSM are availed to children who come from households with relatively low income – although this indicator is recognised to have limitations (Gorard and Siddiqui, 2019). Students eligible for FSM have considerably lower levels of attainment than those who are not eligible. For example, in Northern Ireland 41.3% (47% of girls and 35.8% of boys) of pupils who were entitled to FSM attained at least five GCSEs A∗–C, including English and Maths in 2014/15, compared with

73.7% (77.9% of girls and 69.6% of boys) of pupils who were not entitled to FSM (Department of Education, 2016: 21). (The proportion of pupils attaining five GCSEs at grades A∗–C was used as a benchmark indicator of performance before the shift to the Attainment 8 measures described earlier.) In England and Wales students eligible for FSM are less than half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths (EHRC, 2015). When ethnicity is considered, the situation becomes even more complex. Overall, in Britain in 2016–17, Chinese pupils were the highest-performing group at the end of secondary schooling, followed by Indian children and white Irish children. White British pupils were ahead of Pakistani and black pupils but behind Bangladeshi children. The worst performing group by a very considerable margin was 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils' (EHRC, 2018: 27). Intersectional analyses are both complex and very valuable. Steve Strand (2014: 160) argues that the most striking finding to emerge from his analysis of attainment in relation to gender, ethnicity and social class was that:

> the attainment of White British students is differentiated to a greater extent than any other ethnic group by SES [socio-economic status]. Low SES impacts negatively on attainment within all ethnic groups but seem to be associated with disproportionately low attainment among White British students. At the same time, White British students from high SES backgrounds are among the highest attaining ethnic groups, with only Indian students scoring higher.

Strand (2014: 160) stresses, however, that it is not all about class. To illustrate the importance of intersectional analyses, he notes that we have to explain 'the underachievement of Black Caribbean boys relative to their White British peers at average and high SES. Here, the ethnic by gender interaction is also particularly important since we need to understand why Black Caribbean boys, but not Black Caribbean girls, underachieve relative to their White British peers.'

Thus, although gender is associated with attainment in compulsory schooling, it is crucial to consider the ways in which gender intersects with other factors, most notably social class and ethnicity. As Strand (2014: 160) suggests: 'Despite moral panics about white working-class boys (Smith, 2010), it is apparent that this applies as much to White British working-class girls, who are the lowest achieving group of girls, and to low SES Black Caribbean boys.'

So far, I have suggested that:

- there are concerns in many countries that, overall, boys are 'underperforming' relative to girls in school;
- such headlines mask very important distinctions;
- there are different patterns depending on the curriculum subject, country, and level of performance;
- social class and ethnicity are crucial intersecting categories to consider;
- strategies to raise performance should be targeted at all pupils and should challenge gender stereotypes and gender binaries rather than reinforce them.

The dominance of the focus on attainment reflects a current emphasis on educational standards; this focus means that policy concerns are centred frequently on attainment and, more specifically, on raising boys' attainment. Boys are cast as disadvantaged in 'post-feminist' times in which girls 'have it all' and can do, and be, whatever they like because, according to postfeminist discourse, gender equality has been achieved for girls and women (Aapola et al., 2005; Ringrose, 2013). Gender equality has certainly not been achieved. However, this discourse and the focus on attainment has led to young people's *experiences* of education, especially girls', being side-lined (Osler and Vincent, 2003; Jackson et al., 2010; Ringrose, 2013). Yet young people's experiences of education are vitally important as they have implications for health and well-being, as well as performance. There are numerous experiences that could be discussed here. However, I focus on sexual harassment and violence because they have recently started to gain attention at policy level, having been largely ignored previously, despite efforts of feminists of education over many decades to highlight them. Furthermore, it is a pernicious and widespread problem that deserves serious attention and concerted action globally.

Sexual harassment and violence in schools

As Sundaram and Jackson (2018) remind us, sexual harassment affects the lives of women and girls, in particular, every day. Research from a host of national contexts has shown how pervasive sexual harassment and sexualised violence are. The Everyday Sexism Project – an international online project which collects women's stories of sexism, harassment and violence – has demonstrated how women and girls modify and restrict their own practices, language and movements in order to avoid, or to mitigate the impacts of, sexual harassment and violence in public spaces (Sundaram and Jackson, 2018). The Everyday Sexism Project, alongside high-profile cases of sexual harassment – most notably in the film industry – have led to an enormous increase in attention to, and awareness of, sexual harassment and violence around the world. The (re)launch of the #MeToo campaign which saw thousands of women globally post #MeToo to signal that they had experienced sexual harassment and violence has also increased its visibility (see also Charles in this volume). Thus, as Jackson and Sundaram (2018a: 13) suggest, 'we are at a moment in time when sexual harassment and violence are recognised as being pervasive and are, in many ways, hypervisible'. However, as they go on to argue, in many educational contexts there is a complex picture relating to the visibility of sexual harassment and violence: it is at once hypervisible and invisible, as I illustrate in this section.

Sexual harassment has been shown to be prevalent in primary and secondary school contexts in many countries (Lee et al., 1996; Renold, 2002; Cobbett and Warrington, 2013; National Education Union and UK Feminista, 2017; Rawlings, 2017; Bhana, 2018). Cobbett and Warrington (2013) highlight its prevalence in secondary schools in the Caribbean, for example, while Bhana (2018) explores girls' negotiations of sexual harassment and violence in primary schools in South Africa. However, while for decades feminists working in education have highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and violence in co-educational schools (for example, Mahoney, 1985; Lees, 1993), it has received very little co-ordinated attention,

especially at policy level. In the UK, a Parliamentary inquiry in 2016 into sexual harassment in schools acknowledged this lack of attention: 'Despite evidence that sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools is affecting the lives of girls and young women, the issue has received relatively little national attention prior to the launch of this inquiry. It has not been addressed by the UK Government to date' (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016: 5). While the inquiry noted that some schools and organisations are doing excellent work in this area, it also emphasised that 'too often incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence are ignored or receive an inadequate response'. Furthermore, it points to a *lack of* centralised data on incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, thus obfuscating its scale and reducing the visibility. Despite the dearth of centralised data, the Committee reported that 'A number of large scale surveys find girls and young women consistently reporting high levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence in school' (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016: 7), and these are backed up by extensive qualitative evidence. Data showed that:

- 59% of girls and young women aged 13–21 said in 2014 that they had faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year;

- 29% of 16–18-year-old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school;

- 41% of UK girls aged 14–17 who reported an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner;

- 22% of young girls aged 7–12 have experienced jokes of a sexual nature from boys;

- Nearly three-quarters (71%) of all 16–18-year-olds (boys and girls) say they hear sexual name-calling with terms such as *slut* or *slag* used towards girls at schools on a daily basis or a few times a week;

- 28% of 16–18-year-olds say they have seen sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more. (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016: 7–8).

The Parliamentary inquiry and other research evidence (for example, Sundaram, 2014, 2016; Ringrose, 2016) suggest that sexual harassment and sexual violence are normalised in schools: instances are often dismissed as trivial, fun, and jokes and not taken seriously – a point made by Sue Lees over 25 years ago (Lees, 1993). Although gender-based violence and harassment is not an issue only for girls, girls are more likely to be subject to it than boys. Indeed, research in numerous countries illustrates how gender-based violence and harassment in schools is used to police and control girls, as I discuss in the next section. Girls especially speak of the ways in which they are scrutinised and judged based on gendered norms around their body and appearance, and that some boys feel entitled to comment and/or touch them. Unlike when Lees was writing in the 1990s, harassment now occurs via social media as well as face-to-face. Indeed, 'sexting' – the exchange of sexually explicit or nude photos electronically – has been the subject of much debate and research (Ringrose et al., 2012). Ringrose et al.'s (2012) work with young people in two secondary schools in London highlights how sexting is often coercive and that girls are most often adversely affected. Echoing

research findings from the 1990s about face-to-face harassment and coercion (Lees, 1993; Holland et al., 1998), Ringrose and her colleagues (2012: 7) note that sexting: 'is shaped by the gender dynamics of the peer group in which, primarily, boys harass girls … We found considerable evidence of an age-old double standard by which sexually active boys are to be admired and "rated", while sexually active girls are denigrated and despised as "sluts"'. Such experiences can have profound and long-term negative consequences for girls which are often not visible in school. Osler and Vincent's (2003) work, for example, highlights how girls' negative educational experiences can lead to informal self-exclusion from school, which often fails to trigger the support that girls need. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely than girls to face formal disciplinary exclusion, which is more visible and so does trigger support systems.

Those who are not heterosexual, or are perceived not to be, or who express gender in non-binary ways are at even greater risk of gender-based harassment and violence. Homophobic bullying is widespread in schools. According to a report by Stonewall (2017), in Britain 45% of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils are bullied for being LGBT at school; 9% of trans pupils are subjected to death threats at school; 45% of LGBT pupils who are bullied for being LGBT never tell anyone about it; only 29% of bullied LGBT pupils say the teachers intervened when they were present during the bullying. Data from New Zealand show that lesbian, gay and bi students are three times more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual peers, and trans students are five times more likely be bullied than cisgender students (UN, 2017b: 1).

While the data delineated above make clear that sexual harassment and violence are significant problems in schools and give some indication of the scale, they do little to help us to understand and challenge it. So I turn now to consider these issues.

Exploring and understanding sexual harassment and violence in schools

Sexual harassment and violence are about gender. How people experience gender and its impacts in day-to-day life vary considerably; influential factors include, for example, region, age, peers, schools, faith, sexuality (Renold et al., 2017). So gender impacts people in different ways. However, a plethora of research has shown that gender expectations and norms underpin young people's understandings of what constitutes 'acceptable' behaviour in and out of schools. Furthermore, their views on 'appropriate' gender behaviour form the basis from which they explain, justify and rationalise harassment and violence (Sundaram, 2014, 2016; Sundaram and Sauntson, 2016). For example, Vanita Sundaram's (2014) research with young people aged 14–15 years old in schools suggested that girls who do not conform to gender expectations of how girls and women should act within heterosexual relationships are often narrated as 'deserving' of violence towards them. In her research, violence towards women viewed as having transgressed normative expectations of 'appropriate' feminine behaviour within heterosexual relationships was rarely condoned, but it was explained and justified through the assertion of gender norms. Sundaram (2014: 73) argues that:

> women who had been unfaithful to their male partners, women who did
> not do what their male partners asked them to do, women who had lied to

their male partners and sexual rejection of a male partner were all narrated as scenarios in which normative gender behaviour had been transgressed and violence might (understandably) be used.

As outlined earlier, harassment and violence for transgressing gender norms do not occur only in intimate partner relationships; they are pervasive in and out of school contexts. The frequent harassment and violence directed at those who do not conform to gender norms and/or heteronormative ideals means that many young people are fearful of failing to live up to such norms and ideals. This was highlighted recently in research I was involved in (Renold et al., 2017; Bragg et al., 2018) which explored how a diverse range of around 125 young people aged 12–19 years old, living in various regions of England, experience gender, and how gender matters to them. The research revealed that understandings of gender are shifting; diverse forms of gender identity and expressions are increasingly visible in a range of spheres, including the media. Furthermore, many young people regard gender as fluid, or position gender identities in a continuum rather than as fixed or binary.

Thus, our research offers optimism in that many young people are increasingly advocates for the rights of sexual minorities and trans people and are critical of gender inequalities. Many young people are keen to challenge the 'old-fashioned' views of older generations such as their parents and grandparents and are eager to promote change in relation to gender inequalities, stereotypes, (hetero)sexism and homophobia. However, our work also demonstrated how, in practice, the everyday experiences of these young people both in and outside school contexts were much more uneven than their ideals: Gender norms and expectations continue to regulate young people's experiences of their body, appearance, objects and activities. Despite young people's support for gender fluidity and diversity, the world was constructed in such a way that binary gendered choices were frequently inevitable and still strongly policed. Such policing is illustrated by one of our interviewees, Lauren, age 13, who recounted a school-related party where she was dressed in clothes considered by other attendees as insufficiently feminine:

> I turned up to something in what was considered 'boy clothes' and I was laughed at and ... it got really ... because I wasn't wearing pink or something like that ... and I was quite young and everyone else was wearing pink ... I decided to turn up in something that was considered boyish and I was teased about it ... I hated it. ... Everyone stared at me and were saying, 'Why are you wearing boy clothes? Why do you buy boys clothes, are you a boy?' and it was just really negative reaction to it and I didn't turn up in anything like that ever again ... to anything that was ... any social things.
>
> (Renold et al., 2017: 10)

Girls in particular reported feeling at risk in school of judgement based on gendered norms around the body and appearance; pressures around heterosexual relationship cultures and heterosexual double standards were also common. Girls were specifically concerned about some boys' sense of entitlement to judge and comment upon their looks and bodies, and also to put them under duress to perform sexually for boys:

Rhian:	*It's only like the really, really horny ones.*
Ester:	*Like they really like/*
Rhian:	*Take advantage of you if you're not like … mm.*
Ester:	*It's like, let's say you're alone with someone, like. It's not like they would/*
Katherine:	*Do anything/*
Ester:	*Force you. But like/*
Rhian:	*Pressure you/*
Ester:	*They would, maintain, just like. That's a bit like worse than forcing you/*
Rhian:	*'Cause/*
Ester:	*'Cause you feel like you have to, like you just can't stop it, you just like (all age 13)*

(Renold et al., 2017: 78)

In line with findings presented earlier in relation to sexting, girls, unlike boys, were also in a very precarious position with regard to their reputation: there was a thin line between being seen as 'frigid' and a 'slag', which required careful negotiation.

While the second half of this chapter has focused largely on work undertaken in the UK, and it is crucial to situate experiences within specific national contexts, many of the issues and patterns discussed here are not specific to the UK. Deevia Bhana's work in a primary school in South Africa, for example, has many parallels (as well as some differences). She explores how girls construct femininity, underlined by compulsory heterosexuality, in her case-study school. She illustrates how the girls in her study, like many of those in ours (Renold et al., 2017), at times acquiesce to and at other times resist normative gender relations, noting that 'in an environment dominated by male power, fear of repercussions and rape, girls' agency is often quelled through boys' attempts to re-establish boundaries through violence' (Bhana, 2018: 90). In discussing ways to improve girls' school experiences and lives, Bhana (2018: 92) argues that it is essential to address the 'larger discursive environment through which male power is upheld … and address and develop alternative forms of masculinity that are both invested in gender equality and better outcomes for boys.' I agree that this is precisely what we should be doing, and it is to a consideration of challenging sexual harassment and violence in schools that I now turn.

Challenging sexual harassment and violence in schools

In order to challenge sexual harassment and violence effectively, they must be understood as gendered. As Sundaram (2014: 82) argues: 'A gender-blind perspective on violence is problematic in terms of imagining and developing prevention initiatives. Prevention work necessarily takes on a reactive stance if violence is imagined as being done by lone individuals and the fundamental role of gender becomes concealed.'

Unfortunately, where initiatives exist in schools (and elsewhere) they are often 'gender blind'. Thus, they often focus on individualised psychological or counselling approaches such as anger management or developing empathy. They very rarely focus on exploring and deconstructing gender norms and structures, or considering ways in which dominant models of masculinity are constructed in relation to aggression, violence and power.

If approaches are to be effective, they must address the structural and systemic gender inequality that underpins sexual harassment and violence. Research suggests that if we are to begin to challenge gender-based violence and harassment effectively in schools we need to challenge cultures of everyday sexism or gender inequality rather than focus on individual acts of harassment, bullying or violence (Ringrose, 2016; Sundaram, 2016). We need to challenge the normalisation of toxic gendered interactions.

There are numerous examples of school-based interventions that aim to challenge normalised toxic gendered interactions. For example, Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi and Relebohile Moletsane (2015) report on an initiative in South Africa, which has one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world. Through an intervention that used feminist, transformative pedagogies, they worked with school pupils (girls and boys) to explore their experiences of gender-based violence and take action that would effect widespread change. Through this initiative, they explored and challenged the widespread notion that 'men had a right to inflict violence on women and other men to show their manhood or masculinity' (Ngidi and Moletsane, 2015: 71). Their data illustrate the pervasiveness and normalisation of men's violence, particularly as a form of controlling, objectifying and 'owning' girls and women. Importantly, they also chart the ways in which, through the intervention, participants began to challenge this normalisation and seek strategies for change. They express optimism that transformative, feminist pedagogies have substantial potential to address gender-based violence among learners in secondary schools.

While we can learn a great deal from such initiatives, their potential to bring about widespread change is limited by their scale. Although they are to be applauded, they rely on the commitment of individuals or small groups, and a lack of sustained funding and supporting infrastructure means they are typically small-scale and time-limited. Thus, we need to push for sustained and widespread change. Sex and relationships education (SRE) could and should be a key vehicle for this: to teach about gender and sexual diversity, to challenge gender normative practices (within relationships) and to teach prevention of violence against women and girls. However, in practice, sex and relationship education frequently fails to deliver this (Thomas and Aggleton, 2016). In relation to England, Jessica Ringrose (2016) argued in her evidence to the Parliamentary inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools that:

> Sexuality education (PSHE) ... is widely understood as failing to address risks presented by digital technology such as sexualisation, pornography, social networking and online bullying. The outdated SRE curriculum is focused on disease and pregnancy and delaying intercourse is a 'parts and plumbing' approach, where girls must manage boys' sexual urges. By failing to address healthy sexual relationships including the aspect of female

> sexual pleasure, schools are failing to ensure girls' rights to information and knowledge about their bodies, sexual health and well-being.

In some countries, most notably parts of the USA, what Ringrose refers to above as the 'parts and plumbing' approach has been limited to a focus on abstinence-only approaches, which have been widely critiqued for being too narrow and ineffective (Thomas and Aggleton, 2016). In the UK, there is an acknowledgment of the importance of education in helping young people to understand what a healthy relationship is and to 're-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent' (HM Government, 2016: 6). In July 2019, the UK Government published a briefing paper setting out changes to the curriculum in England that will come into force in 2020 (see Box 14.1). In Australia, there have been ongoing efforts to integrate violence-prevention work into school curricula at state and national levels. However, Debbie Ollis's (2014) work has highlighted problems with how this is conducted, noting that many teachers have little awareness of the importance of gender equality or a commitment to feminist analysis when discussing their work on respectful relationships (Sundaram et al., 2016).

Box 14.1 – Relationships and sex education in schools

Relationships and sex education has recently been reviewed and revised by the Department for Education in England (Parliament, House of Commons, 2019). There have been several positive changes, including that all primary schools in England must teach 'relationships education' and all secondary schools 'relationships and sex education', and parents/carers may not withdraw their children from the relationships components in either primary or secondary schools. There will be more emphasis on respectful relationships, which is welcomed. Secondary schools are expected to included content on LGBT relationships; primary schools may include LGBT content but are not required to do so, which is seen as a missed opportunity by many.

There has also been positive change in Wales, where there are some excellent resources called AGENDA. AGENDA was developed for primary and secondary schools through a collaboration between Cardiff University, NSPCC Wales, Welsh Women's Aid, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Welsh Government and a group of young people (http://agenda.wales/) and takes a gender equality and rights-based approach to healthy relationships.

There is growing acknowledgement that involving young people in the development of curricula increases the effectiveness of SRE programmes (Thomas and Aggleton, 2016). In some cases, student-led activism can be very productive in bringing about change, although the points made earlier about scale and sustainability also apply here. For example, research by Ringrose and colleagues (Ringrose, 2016) has demonstrated how, in the face of schools' failure to foreground gender equality in its

policies and curriculum, some young people across the UK have created feminist groups, clubs and societies in their schools. A primary motivator for girls organising and participating in the clubs is to combat everyday sexism, including sexual harassment they experience on the street, in the playground and in school corridors. The feminist groups provided a safe space for girls to raise awareness about a range of issues from everyday sexism to sexual violence and harassment and also to raise awareness of these throughout the school through assemblies and lessons with younger pupils. Recommendations from the research include: (1) feminist groups, clubs and societies need to be supported through a whole-school approach with teacher support for groups; (2) school policies such as dress codes that shame girls and policies that discourage girls from openly discussing sexual experiences are reproducing rather than challenging sexism and sexual harassment in schools, so should be changed; (3) schools should provide young people with an environment that enables activism around combatting sexism, sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Although it is essential to tackle sexual harassment and violence in a preventative way through deconstructing gender norms and structures as discussed earlier, it is also important to have policies and practices in place for responding to it. Schools need zero tolerance policies, and processes for reporting and dealing with sexual harassment and violence that are transparent and known to all students and staff; it requires a whole school approach (NASUWT, 2016). Also, teacher unions stress that 'effective training for teachers on dealing with the sensitive issues of girls' sexualised behaviour and acts of sexual harassment is urgently required within all initial teacher training routes and continuing professional development' (NASUWT, 2016: 3). There are a few examples of such provision – for example, training provided by UK Feminista at a Teach First Conference (see http://ukfeminista.org.uk/schools/). However, research by the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) suggests that teachers need more training and resources to enable them to feel confident to tackle these issues and to know they will be supported if there are challenges from parents (see also Thomas and Aggleton, 2016). This applies too, and perhaps even more so, to transphobic bullying. Resources and information for parents are also to be welcomed. It was also suggested that members of an inspectorate should be trained to judge the effectiveness of a school's policy and practices.

Although in this chapter I have focused on gender in compulsory schooling, it is important to note the issues I have discussed are increasingly mirrored in higher education contexts. In recent years, there have been growing, loudly voiced concerns that men are now disadvantaged in universities in terms of admissions and results (Hillman and Robinson, 2016). For feminists of education it feels like Ground Hogday. We are having to make many of the same challenges and arguments that we have been making for decades in relation to secondary schooling, some of which have been discussed in this chapter (see, for example, Jackson et al., 2015). At the same time as men are being presented as the new disadvantaged in higher education, there is also an increasing focus on sexual harassment and violence in these contexts, including in Australia, the UK, and the USA (UUK, 2016, 2018; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017). In the UK, this focus has come about largely because of research and campaigns by the National Union of Students who were concerned about lad culture, central to which is misogyny, sexism, sexual harassment and violence (Phipps and

Young, 2013; Jackson and Sundaram, 2018a; Jackson and Sundaram, 2020). In the USA, work on sexual harassment and gender-based violence in higher education has a longer history, with notable similarities between US frat culture and bro culture and UK lad culture (Kimmel, 2008). So, the parallels between schooling and higher education are striking.

Conclusion

Raising boys' attainment is firmly on the education policy agenda in many countries, especially those in the Global North. This has been the case for over three decades in the UK in what has been referred to by feminists as a 'moral panic' about boys' underachievement (Epstein et al., 1998) and as a 'boy turn' in the USA (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). As noted, the picture is complex: in the UK, social class is the most influential factor on attainment, and social class, ethnicity and gender intersect in complex ways globally. There is certainly no magic bullet approach to raising attainment, but research suggests that approaches are most likely to be successful if they challenge gender stereotypes and deconstruct gender differences rather than exacerbate or reinforce them. Such practices are also likely to contribute to enhanced experiences in school for all students, and especially for those who do not conform to gender norms and heteronormative ideals, and who challenge a gender binary.

The emphasis on attainment has meant that the *experiences* of young people in education, particularly girls, have been sidelined: there has been a widespread assumption that girls are fine. More recently, however, concerns are re-emerging that must not be ignored about the experiences of girls in school, particularly relating to sexual harassment and violence. As we have seen, there are some positive indications this is making its way onto the agenda of policy makers in some countries. For example, in the UK, a parliamentary inquiry (2016) concluded that 'the Government and schools must make tackling sexual harassment and sexual violence an immediate policy priority' (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016: 15). Similarly, sexual harassment and violence is also becoming increasingly recognised as pervasive and in need of addressing in higher education contexts, for example, in Australia, India, the USA and the UK. However, it is too early yet to know whether policies and practices will rely on individualised, responsive measures rather than challenge structural gender inequalities (Jackson and Sundaram, 2018b).

Overall, research suggests that we need to challenge gender stereotypes, binaries and gender-normative practices. We need to create safe spaces where all young people are able, and supported, to discuss and challenge restrictive gender practices. There are signs of a generational shift in how gender is understood and how gender is defined among many young people. These shifts include an expanding vocabulary of gender identity, a commitment to gender equality, gender diversity and the rights of sexual minorities (Renold et al., 2017). However, while many young people display commitments to these principles, their day-to-day experiences are still often regulated by restrictive gender norms. We need to challenge these norms.

Further reading

A. Hadjar, S. Krolak-Schwerdt, K. Priem and S. Glock (eds) (2016) *Gender and Educational Achievement*. London: Routledge. This edited collection explores gender inequalities in educational achievement. Writing from a variety of different perspectives – historical, philosophical, sociological, and psychological – the authors explore gender inequalities in a range of national contexts.

C. Jackson and V. Sundaram (2020) *Lad Culture in Higher Education: Sexism, Sexual Harassment and Violence*. London: Routledge. Drawing on indepth interviews with over 70 staff across six universities in England, this book explores lad culture in universities. In dialogue with research on sexual harassment and violence in higher education internationally, the authors stress the importance of acknowledging that lad culture is gendered and requires theorising in relation to masculinities; they also analyse the ways in which laddish masculinities intersect with other social categories including social class, sexuality, ethnicity and age.

V. Rawlings (2017) *Gender Regulation, Violence and Social Hierarchies in School: 'Sluts', 'Gays' and 'Scrubs'*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Based on qualitative research undertaken with students and teachers in two high schools in Australia, this book provides a nuanced analysis of gender regulation through violence in school contexts.

V. Sundaram and H. Sauntson (eds) (2016) *Global Perspectives and Key Debates in Sex and Relationships Education: Addressing Issues of Gender, Sexuality, Plurality and Power*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. The authors in this edited collection explore a range of issues relating to sex and relationships education in various national contexts. Themes covered include current key debates; panics over girls' 'sexualisation'; pornography; violence against women and girls; consent; sexual diversity.

❓ QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why is it important to challenge the blanket statement that boys are underachieving?

2. In what ways is an overriding emphasis on attainment problematic for young people?

3. How are sexual harassment and violence used to police gender norms?

4. Why is it important to challenge gender norms and the gender binary?

15 GENDER, WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Zoë Irving

Introduction

Over the last half-century, the world of work has undergone a significant transformation that has altered the kind of work people do, and where and how it is done. These changes have also affected gender divisions in work and employment, as some historically established distinctions between 'women's work' and 'men's work' have been dissolved and new divisions have emerged. Women have increasingly joined the labour market and many of them have joined professions previously dominated by men (ILO, 2017). In cementing these gains, popular discourse has exhorted women to 'lean in' for corporate success (Sandberg, 2013) and to 'lean out' as a challenge to corporate institutions and culture (Foster, 2015). Since the 1980s, women have been both lauded and chastised for allegedly 'having it all' (Brown, 1982) while men's embryonic embrace of feminised occupations and care-giver roles has registered far less in public debate. This divergence of approaches characterises the key problematic in transforming gender divisions in work, which is whether gender equality is best served by reshaping male structures from within or breaking them down and replacing them with women-friendly or gender-neutral alternatives.

There is no doubt that the increase in women's economic independence gained through paid employment has achieved positive results in the pursuit of gender equality. Women have greater power to challenge gender injustice and more opportunity to reform employment in ways that better serve the interests of a gender-equal world. However, despite the enormous changes in employment brought about by technological advances, globalised industries and social modernisation, deep-rooted gender divisions persist (England, 2010). Such divisions continue to operate in the twenty-first century, within the structures of class and race that were established in the evolution of capitalist, and subsequently imperialist, social relations of production. These structures set the context in which women and men work, but as individuals with complex identities and life circumstances, women and men's experiences of work and employment are also shaped by the national gender and policy regimes within which they live their lives, and the global political economy of work and care which has layered new patterns of inequality onto existing structures (World Economic Forum, 2018). In more recent times, there is also concern that despite greater public recognition of gender pay gaps and discrimination and harassment at work, political currents are working to reverse some of the institutional foundations on which these fragile advances have been made.

In considering the nature and progress of gender transformations in the worlds of work and employment, this chapter is organised around two key themes that help in understanding the gendered division of work: the quality of work and its quantity. Before examining these themes and their relationship to theory, policy and practice,

the first section provides a summary account of the gendering of work. It explains how patterns of inequality in work are tightly woven into the economy and outlines key theoretical questions, and the related practical struggles with which feminists have engaged before and since the emergence of second wave feminism in the 1960s.

The gendering of 'work'

Sociological enquiry often begins by questioning everyday understandings of ideas and activities and the study of 'work' is no exception. This section illustrates the problems in defining 'work' by considering the gendered implications of:

1. work as a 'productive' activity;

2. work as an 'unproductive' activity;

3. the assumed superiority of productive over unproductive work.

Our understanding of 'work' is inextricably linked to the development of capitalist relations of production. In everyday language, the term *work* is used synonymously with the term *employment*, reflecting an understanding that 'work' is something we are obliged to do in order to get paid, survive and consume. 'Work' is contrasted with 'leisure' undertaken in unobligated time, often utilising the income earned through 'work'. How work is conceived, then, is largely derived from economic theory, both classical and Marxian. To count as work, it is widely assumed that an activity has to be productive, a person's labour has to produce something with a market value. This elision of activity with no *market* value from the conceptualisation of work has been at the heart of feminist critiques of reward-based accounts. Unpaid or *non-market* work, which has traditionally been undertaken in the domestic domain by women, was only officially recognised as work in the 1980s (United Nations, 1986). While the term *housework* is an accepted description of effort expended in managing domestic life, the potential to regard this as worthy of economic reward outside the employment relationship has been vigorously contested. In the early 1970s, for example, the Wages for Housework campaign (see Federici, 2012) was countered by arguments based on assumptions of women's natural duties within marriage (see Lewis, 1984) and the non-productive characteristics of domestic labour (Offe and Heinze, 1992), as well as by feminists who feared the potential further domestic confinement of women that such a payment might support.

Moving beyond housework to consider women's wider work as carers, early feminist writing was critical of both the essentialist basis of assigning care as 'women's work', and the conceptualisation of care as non-productive and effortless. These analyses forcefully demonstrated that caring is both a labour-intensive and economically significant activity, demanding recognition and reward equal to the status and gains of paid employment outside the home (Finch and Groves, 1983; Showstack Sassoon, 1987; Dalley, 1988), although, as Clare Ungerson (1987) argued, not necessarily in the form of 'wages for caring'. Concerned to prevent the further encroachment of either the market or the state into social relations, feminists such as Susan Himmelweit (1995) also counselled against a struggle to commodify care as work. With increasing family fluidity, contemporary research has explored the significance of provision and receipt of care as a central element of fulfilment in intimate social relationships and called for an 'ethic of

care' as a counterbalance to the dominant work ethic (Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Clement, 2018). This more nuanced critique of 'care as work' highlights the dangers of reducing social relations to mere economic value. As with many false dichotomies, 'care' and 'caring work' exist along a complex continuum, in which boundaries between the informal (unpaid) and formal (paid) are highly porous and depend on a constellation of relational and institutional factors (see Folbre, 2006 for a more detailed examination).

With industrialisation, the domain of paid work evolved around male interests, and women's place in employment has largely been determined with reference to the male hegemonic model of industrial labour which does not account for unpaid work. This model assumes full-time, life-long commitment to employment with minimal responsibilities beyond the economic – a model represented by the 'breadwinning' Fordist male manufacturing worker, who gained archetypal status in the period following the Second World War. The association of 'men's work' with productivity and creativity and 'women's work' with reproduction and the mundane does not simply apply to conceptualisations of the public and the private spheres of activity but also permeates women's involvement in paid work and men's roles as carers. This is particularly noticeable in prevailing assumptions around skill, and the nature of skills and attributes required to undertake certain types of paid work. Women, as workers, have been assumed to represent a qualitatively different kind of workforce that is submissive in character and limited in skill.

Questions of quality

Questions of quality in the gender division of labour are largely inseparable from questions of quantity as the two dimensions are dialectically related. However, for the purpose of analysis here, the two dimensions are uncoupled. The term *quality* is used to consider what *differentiates* 'women's' and 'men's' work – that is, how work is feminised or masculinised, how this process of gendering frames the experience and reward of work, and what theories can help to explain the divisions identified. The discussion focuses on the following:

1. the skills and attributes associated with 'women's' and 'men's' work;

2. the impact of gendered skills and attributes on the types of paid work done by women and men and their relative status in employment;

3. the effects of gendered occupational segregation and the gender pay gap;

4. key approaches to explaining gendered divisions in employment.

Gendered skills

The construction of women's skills was an important area of exploration in late twentieth-century feminist writing. It has been argued that not only are women's skills generally devalued on the basis of men's ability to assert *essential* superiority, but that men are also able to prevent women from acting within the male constructs of 'skill' through exclusionary and discriminatory practices. There are numerous historical and more recent examples of men's denigration of women's skills. In the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries, this often occurred through trades union activity, which sought to protect men's jobs and the 'family wage' through the restriction of women's access to training and occupational development (Lewis, 1984; Phillips and Taylor, 1986; Daune-Richard, 2000), and male workers' appropriation of new technology (Cockburn, 1983). In this way feminised occupations have been devalued since they are constructed as low skilled, and they are designated as low skilled because the skills required are those that women are assumed to possess by nature, rather than through recognised processes of acquisition such as apprenticeship.

This restricted, masculine account of 'skill' is exposed in scholarship around the concept of 'emotional labour' developed by Arlie Russell Hochschild ([1983] 2012) which examines the ways in which 'caring' skills such as empathy and insight, and the ability to manage or regulate emotions, form the basis of the activities required in much paid work in 'new' service industries. Women's emotional labour is nowhere more apparent than in sex work, which has become a globalised industry in the twenty-first century (Hardy et al., 2010), but is also evident in female occupations old and new: from social work (Winter et al., 2018) to fashion modelling (Holla, 2016), erotic dancing (Colosi, 2010) to beauty vlogging (Banet-Weiser, 2017). In the light of occupational opportunities offered through both the rise of social media and the expansion of services, understanding of emotional labour has developed to recognise both the 'aesthetic' dimensions – the 'multiple labours involved in "looking good"'(Elias et al., 2017: 4) and the wider embodiment of work – for example, in health and social care, sex work and wider forms of sexualised labour (Cohen et al., 2013). As Lisa Adkins (1995) established in her early research in tourist industries, *sexual* labour is a more general 'condition of employment' in jobs undertaken by women in the service sector. This is manifested in gendered expectations that the appearance and behaviour of female workers is part of the 'service' and, Adkins argues, is indicative of both gendered economic, and power relations. In sum, women's place in employment has evolved within an architecture designed to serve men's interests, both material and symbolic. Following from this, it is no surprise that the ascription of differential skills and aptitudes is apparent in the deeply segregated worlds of work.

Gender segregation in employment

Women's labour has been a core component of pre-industrial as well as industrial history through household production and subsistence, and their subsequent employment in manufacturing, often alongside their children. However, it is through the post-war rise of service-based economies and expansion of welfare states in the Global North that a feminisation of employment is argued to have occurred, particularly since the 1960s when middle-class and married women were drawn from domesticity into employment. This expansion coincided with processes of decolonisation, and so this labour was often undertaken by women migrating to Europe from former colonies. In developing economies (except those in East Asia), women's increased rate of employment in recent decades is largely characterised by a relocation of their work from agriculture directly to services (ILO, 2012). The rise of services also produces a shift from masculinised, physically demanding jobs (also done by working-class women) to a raft of new white-collar occupations.

These welfare, clerical and administrative jobs represent an extension of women's activities traditionally undertaken in the domestic sphere (Elder and Johnson, 2001), and the gendering of work in the public sphere evolving according to pre-assigned roles in the private. The contemporary establishment of consumer services to meet (and produce) demand continues to present opportunities for employment in formerly non-market activities located in the domestic sphere, largely undertaken by women. While processes of feminisation and masculinisation in the growing service sector mirror pre-existing divisions of labour through occupational segregation (sometimes called horizontal segregation), persistent skills-based, and more importantly power-related, vertical gender segregation in employment is also apparent.

Occupational gender segregation refers to the greater proportion of women or men employed in particular sectors or types of work, while vertical gender segregation refers to the difference in status and seniority (and consequently reward) in the jobs they undertake (Levanon and Grusky, 2016). Sectorally, women make up a greater proportion of public sector workers, while men have a greater share of private sector jobs. Women represent the majority workforce in caring and personal service occupations, for example, while men form the majority in occupations that require physical presence and those that are associated with the possession of scientific and technological skills. Figure 15.1 below gives an indication of these divisions in the UK. A further characteristic of horizontal segregation is that feminised occupations also include those where pay is lowest. This qualitative gendered distribution, combined with the

Figure 15.1 Percentage of male and female employees in different occupational groups, UK April to June 2016

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2016), data available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/thegenderpaygapwhatisitandwhataffectsit/2016-10-26

differential representation of women and men in senior positions, and the quantitative divisions of part-time and full-time employment, are all factors contributing to the persistence of a gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap – that is, the difference between the average earnings of women and men expressed as a percentage of male earnings – is a universal feature of employment although it is also differentiated by the intersection of class, race and other dimensions of identity and life-course, as well as by country, sector, occupation and form of employment. From the late 2010s, a public debate surrounding the gender pay gap gathered some momentum, particularly in the UK, the USA and other advanced economies. In 2017, the UK government amended the 2010 Equality Act to include compulsory annual reporting of gender pay gap data for companies with more than 250 employees. The quality and accuracy of this reporting is not yet fully established but, in the first analysis of data in 2018, 77% of employers reported that median hourly pay was higher for men than women with an average pay gap of 11.8% (McGuinness and Pyper, 2018).

Since the gender pay gap is calculated by statistical collection agencies according to different definitions and methodologies, a variety of figures are produced. In the UK, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) measures median hourly earnings excluding overtime payments, and the gap is represented as women's earnings as a proportion of those of men (Evans, 2018), rather than men's as a (usually higher) proportion of those of women. The rationale for excluding overtime is that this is overwhelmingly undertaken by men and could therefore skew the results. The irony that men's further economic advantage gained through working overtime is regarded as the factor that would skew otherwise reliable results is somewhat lost in reporting. Figure 15.2 shows that based on this measure in the UK, the gender pay gap is considerably wider in the age groups of 40 and above where the combination of higher rates of part-time working, and the greater likelihood of parenthood combine to reduce women's earning power relative to men (OECD, 2018b). To combat the 'composition' effects of different patterns of employment for women and men, such as the clustering of women in public sector occupations, the International Labour Organization has developed a factor weighted measure of the gender pay gap, based on hourly mean wages. Table 15.1 below gives an indication of the gaps that exist at a world regional level.

Evidence of a persistent gender pay gap is incontrovertible, however it is defined. It exists despite gains made by women in educational achievement since the 1970s in advanced economies, and the expansion of equal pay legislation such as the 1970 Equal Pay Act in the UK, and its 1984 amendment to address occupational segregation through the requirement for equal pay for work of 'equal value'. In the USA, gender equality provisions upheld through civil rights legislation were strengthened in 2009, with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act enabling challenges to long-standing pay discrimination. In the EU, a number of directives concerning equal opportunities and equal treatment have been implemented since the 1970s, with more rigorous auditing and combatting of pay and wider gender inequalities required through the European
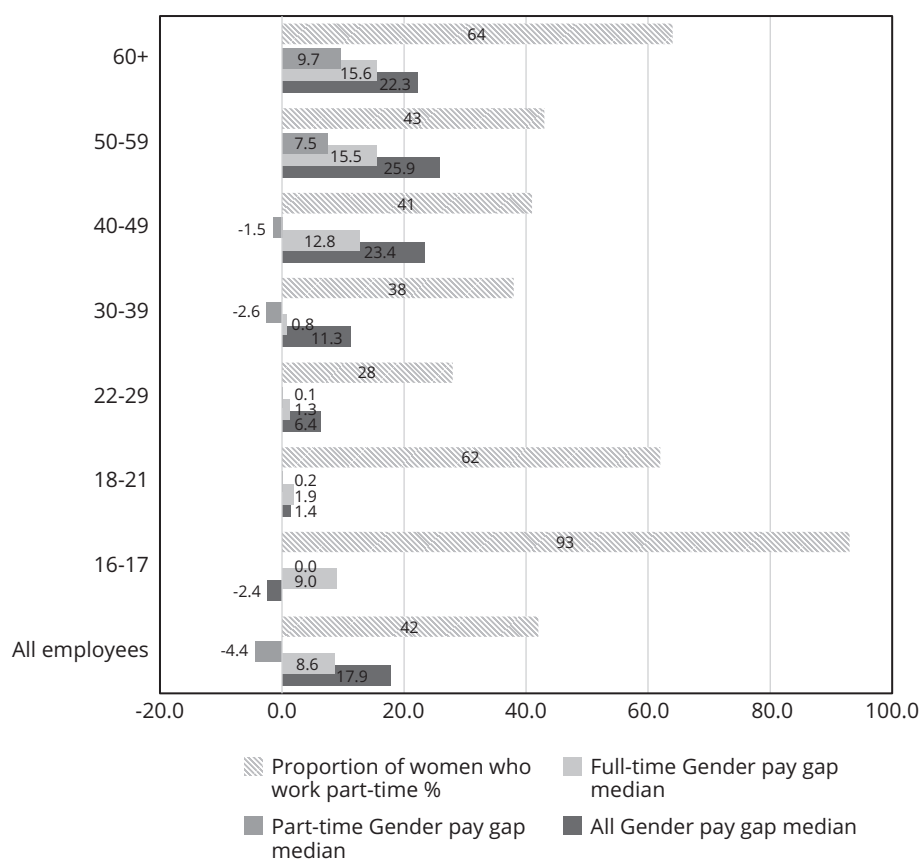
Figure 15.2 Gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) by age group, UK, April 2018

*Source: **Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings,** Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2018c)*

Notes: Figures represent the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings. ***Full-time*** is defined as employees working more than 30 paid hours per week (or 25 or more for the teaching professions).

Table 15.1 Gender pay gap by world region

World Region	Factor weighted mean gender pay gap
Northern, Southern and West Europe	13.3
Eastern Europe & Central and West Asia	20.8
North America	15.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	20.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.8
North Africa and Arab States	13.1
Asia and the Pacific	19.8
World	18.8

Source: ILO, 2018b, Data available at https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS_650829/lang--en/index.htm

Notes: Calculated with data from 2016 or latest year available

Pact for Gender Equality, adopted in 2011. Equality policies and legislation were also strengthened in low- and middle-income countries in response to the financial crisis, with 39 of 55 having introduced measures between 2008 and 2010, mostly relating to employment and discrimination (ILO, 2012: 32, Fig. 8). To put these changes into perspective, however, based on its index of gender parity and the pace of change to date, the World Economic Forum estimates that, globally, it will take 202 years, from 2018, to close the overall economic gender gap (WEF, 2018).

There has been some narrowing of the gender pay gap in industrialised countries. This is partly a result of generally negative developments such as the rise in men's unemployment and the shift in balance from full-time to part-time jobs for both men and women since the financial crisis (ETUI, 2014). In some countries and occupations, it is more related to a trend towards greater gender convergence or desegregation within occupations (for a comparison of the Scandinavian countries, see Ellingsæter, 2013), but clear patterns of overall segregation persist. Jarman et al. (2012) suggest that gender segregation remains most pronounced in the Nordic countries where welfare services are most expansive and women's employment is concentrated in the public sector. However, the authors also argue that occupational segregation may not necessarily disadvantage women in terms of gaining higher pay or access to senior positions, since they are not competing with men. The disadvantaging effects of occupational and vertical segregation are thus complex and can be inverse – that is, that one form can produce a positive effect within the other.

However, even in more feminised professions, such as teaching and general practice in medicine, the effects of vertical segregation see women lagging behind men in their attainment of senior positions, and this is also implicated in the persistence of the gender pay gap. The stalling of women's careers has been explained through the existence of a 'glass ceiling' which functions in organisations via processes of direct and indirect discrimination. Despite legislation to prevent direct discrimination by sex, there are many ways in which women are indirectly prevented from attaining senior roles. These include promotion policies that disadvantage people with work histories that include periods of leave or part-time working, and inflexible working arrangements that preclude those with domestic responsibilities from participation (Livingstone et al., 2016).

Clearly, while occupational gender segregation may provide some advantage to women by removing their need to compete with men, it has no impact on the persistence of their disadvantage where they do. Since it is also the case that the sectors and occupations dominated by men are those that set the rules of the game in society more widely, the challenges for structural reform remain significant. The ILO (2018b) reports that 'women account for less than one third of senior and middle management positions in the majority of developed countries and represent less than 5 per cent of chief executive officers (CEOs) of publicly listed companies' (ILO, 2018b: 9). Historically, women's political mobilisation, particularly within trades unions, has been central to the development of formal measures to tackle employment-related gender inequality, both in relation to anti-discrimination legislation (Curtin, 2018), and in social policy more widely (Siaroff, 1994). More recently, mobilisation has been

bolstered through informal social media channels where the pernicious subordinating effects of sexual harassment in employment (and in general) have been exposed in a number of high profile cases and through the #MeToo movement. This has facilitated wider public debate on gender culture, particularly in organisations, and has drawn attention to the existing deficiencies of equality law and policy (MacKinnon, 2018).

In the 2000s, the drive for *gender mainstreaming* in policy (see *Social Politics*, 2005) at national, world regional (for example, within the European Union) and global levels (for example, within the United Nations), began to confront and unravel the complexities of gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming attempts to address dimensions of inequality that are outside the remit of formal legislation, from institutional and corporate practices to community organising. However, the key problematic associated with 'mainstreaming' is that the interests of disadvantaged groups agitating for change simply become assimilated into existing power structures that benefit from the status quo. In the field of employment, the persistence of occupational segregation and the patterns by which it is manifested are illustrative of this policy impasse. The response to this problematic, including the option to accept difference (and inequality) depends on the preferred explanation of the origins of women's inferior position.

Capitalism, patriarchy and women's choices

Explanation of the existence of feminised occupations and gender segregation in the labour market broadly follows two separate paths. These diverge on the relative strength accorded by authors to:

1. individual agency – that is the extent to which women and men choose to be different (and unequal); and

2. structural processes – that is the set of power relationships between groups (including women and men) which restrict the opportunities of weaker groups to achieve equality.

From these two positions, early theorising of gendered patterns of work tended to rest on either:

1. explanations privileging the accumulation of human capital that emphasise women's choice of investment in their employability, and commitment or 'orientation' to paid work outside the home (Mincer and Polachek, 1980; Becker, 1991; Hakim, 1991); or

2. the effects of patriarchy on the structures of capitalism, emphasising the benefits of women's inferior labour market status and social reproduction which accrue to capital, and the benefits to men gained by restricting women's access to economic resources (Hartmann, 1979; Molyneux, 1979).

The focus on voluntarism, choice, or the exercise of agency is exemplified in the work of Catherine Hakim (1991, 1995, 1996, 2000). Hakim's 'preference' theory (2000) develops the theme of female heterogeneity (Hakim, 1996), which places women's lack of collective interests at the centre of any explanation of their social and economic disadvantage to men. She argues that women's choices to be a 'worker', 'homemaker'

or both, are wider than those of men who consequently have an obvious collective interest to compete and succeed in public life at women's expense. Hakim's position is developed from human capital theory, derived from classical economic approaches that assume that markets are neutral and people are rational.

Hakim's work is highly contested (Bruegel, 1996; Ginn et al., 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998) and challenged by the wealth of literature demonstrating the ways in which markets are political, and rationality regarding working and caring is not primarily economic but subject to social influences (Kremer, 2007). Sylvia Walby's (1990) development of the 'dual systems' analysis of capitalism and patriarchy (Hartmann, 1979) has been especially influential in explaining the constraints within which women make choices. Her work exposes the private and public operation of patriarchal structures, which, respectively, exclude women from the public realms of power and subordinate them within the public sphere of politics and culture (Walby, 1990: 173–9). A key element of dual systems analysis is that rather than reducing changes in gender relations to the forces of capitalism, it emphasises women as political actors, particularly in the period of first wave feminism from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s. Walby also addresses women's heterogeneity, but while Hakim frames divisions between women on a homemaker–worker 'choice' continuum, Walby's approach (1990, 1997, 2009) recognises that gender inequalities are shaped through 'asymmetry' in intersecting dimensions of class and 'race' (Walby et al., 2012). This attention to the social and economic disparities between women has generated a clearer picture of the ways in which gender relations are re-negotiated over time and place, and as Crompton (1999) argues, allows a theoretical pluralism that recognises gendered subjects and social structures.

The structural constraints within which women make choices regarding paid work are captured in the concept of *gender regimes,* which describe how social relations of gender and welfare arrangements are framed in different countries. Central to this understanding of gender relations is the operation and adaptation of the male breadwinner family model developed by Jane Lewis (1992; see also von Gleichen and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018). The male breadwinner model (MBW) has, to a greater or lesser extent, informed both the development of employment practices and the social policies that support them in industrially advanced economies. Although an abstraction that hides the historical reality (Lewis, 2006) of divisions *among* women (such as class and ethnicity), the MBW model remains emblematic of the fundamental separation between the roles of men and women, where 'productive', economically valuable and public activity is assigned to men as *breadwinners*, and 'reproductive', socially necessary but private activity is assigned to women, as *caregivers*.

Questions of quantity

In considering women's gains in work, the significant increase in the proportion of women in paid employment globally is often presented as evidence of gender equality. However, this numeric picture requires a nuanced dissection to properly examine its distributional reality. This section outlines some key divisions and inequalities that are disguised within the general increase in women's employment, including:

1. the distribution of unpaid work between women and men;

2. men's involvement in care and domestic work;

3. the promises and pitfalls of part-time employment;

4. the gendering of precarious work and 'vulnerable' employment;

5. the transnationalisation of care work.

The distribution of paid and unpaid work

Financial reward for 'informal' (non-market) domestic labour remains contested and rudimentary. However, the significance of women's unpaid labour in national economies has become much more visible through the availability of time-use survey data from the 1990s (see, for example, the Multinational Time Use Study https://www.timeuse.org/mtus). In the twenty-first century it appears that although a gradual trend towards gender convergence in time devoted to paid and unpaid work can be detected, the trend is uneven across countries (Gershuny, 2000; Gershuny and Kan, 2012). Jonathan Gershuny terms this 'lagged adaptation' insofar as men's take-up of the unpaid work that employed women can no longer fit into their days has not kept pace with women's take-up of paid work. This accords with the findings of many qualitative and quantitative studies over the last two decades (e.g. Morris, 1990; Delamont, 2001; OECD, 2011a; Wouter et al., 2015) that the onus remains on women to accommodate the desire, demand or necessity to undertake paid work *alongside*, rather than *instead of* their unpaid work, particularly childcare. Women's dual burden of paid and unpaid work is thus a persistent feature of the gender division of labour. In more recent work, Sullivan et al. (2019) associate this persistence with a lagged *generational* effect whereby household interactions gradually filter through to demands for gender-equitable distribution of household labour and the social policies to support this. The authors argue that although cross-nationally uneven, an ever (but slow) upward spiral of equalisation is apparent, and that for the domestic division of labour at least, the gender revolution has not stalled. In terms of policy development, Sullivan et al. (2019) conclude that measures to enable fathers to undertake childcare, and reduced working hours more generally, are the most effective in facilitating change. In the global context, Figure 15.3 below supports Gershuny's conclusions on cross-national variance in the extent of the 'lag'.

As a dimension of household labour desegregation, men's part in performing care has also received scholarly attention, most often in their fathering roles (Hobson, 2002; EOC, 2003; Altintas and Sullivan, 2017) but also within the spheres of social gerontology and disability studies, and the care industry (Arber and Gilbert, 1989; Cameron, 2001; Baker et al., 2010). The Nordic experience has been of particular interest as measures to facilitate men's involvement in the care of their children were pioneered in these countries using economic incentives – for example, paid hypothecated parental leave (that is, leave with an element only payable to fathers) established in Norway in 1993. Marre Karu and Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay (2018) identify 17 countries where similar provisions have subsequently developed and conclude that policy success is dependent on the availability of both income replacement and hypothecated leave.
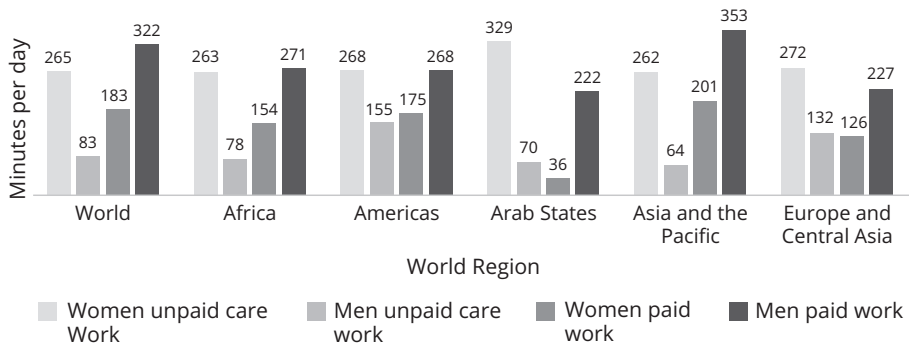
Figure 15.3 Time spent in daily unpaid care work and paid work by sex and region

Source: Data from ILO (2018d) Figure 2, p. xxx

There is a policy dilemma inherent in attaching value to care within a framework of pre-existing, gendered, capitalist, social relations where men's engagement in work is predicated on monetary reward. In addition, while there are clear moral and economic arguments that provide a foundation for policies to support a gender-equal ethic of care (Fraser, 1997), even the most highly desegregated countries are unable to legislate a male desire to share fairly the rather less fulfilling domestic tasks (Tai and Baxter, 2018), although Altintas and Sullivan (2017) indicate that this, too, may be slowly changing. Time-use data and deficits in policy development imply that in advanced economies there is a widening gap between the supply and demand for domestic labour and, as discussed below, it is a gap that reveals global as well as local divisions among women in the distribution of work.

The distribution of paid work

As the previous section has shown, there is an unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men. The converse of this is the equally unequal distribution of paid work undertaken mainly outside, but also inside, the home. The most significant dimension of this unequal distribution is the part-time/full-time divide which differs between countries. Cross-national variation in the extent and form of part-time employment is a product of macro-economic goals pertaining to labour supply, combined with the gendered outcomes of social politics, at national and supranational (such as European Union) levels. What this means in practice is that the degree to which women can participate in employment to the same *extent* as men depends on both the availability of services and provision to support domestic and caring work, and where this support is accessible only, or partly, through the market, their capacity to pay for it. Despite the development of a range of policies to support work–life balance in advanced economies, by far the most predominant way in which women reconcile the demands of paid and unpaid work is through engagement in part-time employment, and this is a global phenomenon (ILO, 2012).

For women, part-time employment represents both friend and foe in the struggle for gender equality (Ellingsæter and Jensen, 2019), and its quality is linked to (occupational) class (Warren and Lyonette, 2018). It allows some opportunity to achieve financial and personal independence and a means to combine this with managing domestic responsibilities, but this form of work–life balance comes at a huge cost to women. Following a widespread increase in part-time employment in the 1980s, cross-national analyses undertaken in the 1990s clearly established that part-time employment contributes to the undervaluing of women's skills, provides lower pay and fewer opportunities for career advancement, and enables exclusion from the social rights of citizenship gained through employment-related social protection provisions such as pension entitlements (Blossfeld and Hakim, 1997; O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998). Part-time workers are also likely to remain part-time (OECD, 2011b) and are thus subject to cumulative labour market disadvantage, with poorer lifetime employment prospects. Since it is constructed as inferior and secondary to the male ideal of full-time employment, in isolation, the part-time alternative supports neither equality in the workplace, nor a more gender-equal division of labour within households. As can clearly be seen from Figure 15.4 below, it also remains a thoroughly feminised form of paid work.

Across the advanced economies, the extent to which part-time employment forms a national economic strategy to maximise labour market participation, varies
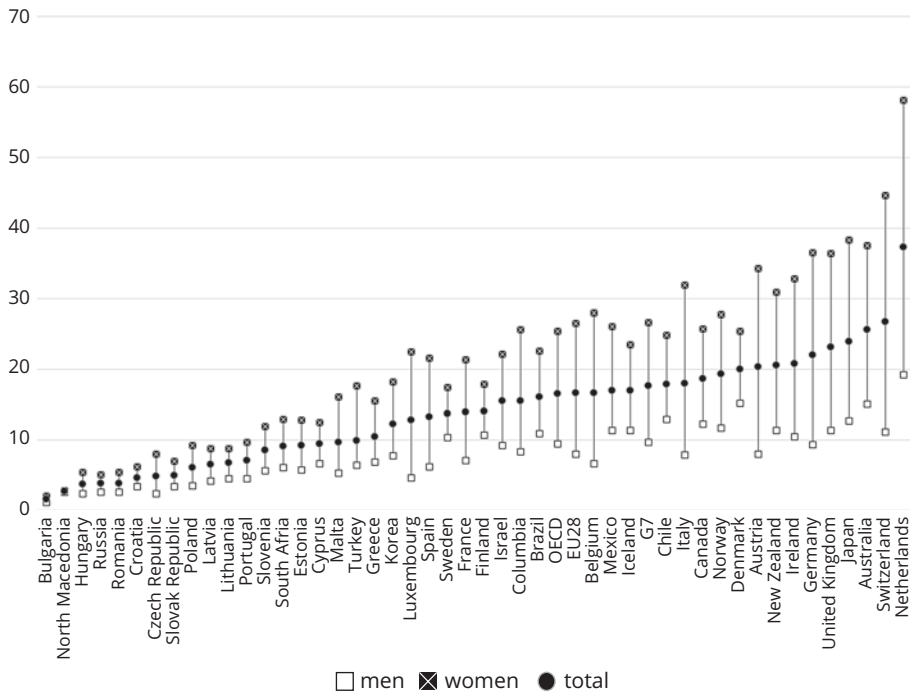
Figure 15.4 Part-time employment 2018 (% of total employment, women, men and total)

Source: OECD (2019), Part-time employment rate (indicator), doi: 10.1787/f2ad596c-en (accessed on 27 August 2019)

considerably. Part-time employment has been the greatest source of job growth in the OECD countries over recent decades and the proportion of part-time workers increased from 18.6 to 20.6% in the OECD countries between 2007 and 2015 (OECD, 2015). During this post-crisis period of low growth, the increase was attributed to a rise in 'involuntary' part-time employment due to lack of availability of full-time jobs. The male full-time referent persists as both model of aspiration and means to economic security, but this should not imply that the experience of part-time employment is uniformly negative at the individual level. In the Nordic countries, for example, where parents' option to reduce working hours is an established statutory right, part-time employment is not confined to low status or low-paid occupations and is regarded as an important element of gender equitable employment policy. In the Netherlands, too, part-time employment is essential to the aim of 'flexicurity', an economic growth strategy aiming to reconcile the needs of employers for a 'flexible' workforce with the needs of employees for employment protection. Hailed as the 'first part-time economy in the world' (Visser, 2002), the participation of Dutch men in part-time employment, at 37.4% in 2017, is also the highest of the advanced economies. The 'four-day week' has also been subject to media interest in the post-crisis labour market context with a number of companies opting to pursue this model to promote productivity and work–life balance (for example, Booth, 2019).

In historical contrast to these progressive dimensions, both part-time work and part-time workers were initially regarded as a reactionary force in the process of labour organisation. The evolution of part-time contracts was recognised as a breach through which the collective power of employees would leak away. The early hostility and exclusionary practices of male-dominated trades unions (Cockburn, 1983; Charles, 1986) clearly acted against the interests of women part-time workers. However, since the 1980s, as union membership has declined in many industries, unions have done much to incorporate part-time workers in negotiations and policy, particularly within the EU framework of employment legislation. Nevertheless, women and men part-time workers, and the increasing numbers of other non-standard workers, still remain less likely to be unionised (O'Connor, 2013), accelerating the erosion of labour as an agent of power in the contemporary global labour market.

Since the 1980s, what is often termed 'non-standard' employment – that is, employment that diverges from the full-time, open contract referent – has become much more standard. More apposite is the term *precarious employment* since this emphasises the outcome of this type of work as well as its temporary and contingent nature. Originating in French policy debates in the 1970s concerning *précarité de l'emploi* (Fagnani and Letablier, 2009), it has more recently been argued that from an intersectional perspective, a focus on 'precarious lives' better accommodates the recognition 'that employment and household are intertwined' (Clement et al., 2009: 241). Although subject to a range of definitions (see Vosko et al., 2009), the scope of precarious employment covers a variety of contemporary forms of paid work from self-employment to agency work, zero hours contracts to seasonal work, home working to informal unregulated work. Informal employment, which includes own-account and contributing family workers, as well as unregistered, unregulated employment not subject to social protection coverage, is extensive in many countries in the Global South, representing over 90% of women's work in Bangladesh, for example

(see Figure 15.5). Globally, men represent 79% of employers while women represent 63% of contributing family workers, and the latter status represents 42.3% of women's employment in developing countries compared to 20.2% of men's employment. The related concept of vulnerable employment is also used to capture the particular conditions of work experienced by own-account and contributing family workers (ILO, 2012). The gender distribution of vulnerable worker status is broadly equal in all world regions except Africa, where the share of vulnerable employment in total employment is 17% higher for women than men (ILO, 2018a). Precarious forms of employment have become so universally prevalent that Standing (2011: 7) has argued that people employed on such terms are a new *class-in-the-making*, the 'precariat', which he suggests 'consists of people who have minimal trust relationships with capital or the state'.

From a feminist perspective, two key points arise in considering Standing's analysis. Firstly, the 'securities of industrial citizenship' and 'sources of social income' (see Standing, 2011: 10–11) that he argues are lacking in the experience of the precariat are the kinds of public and private privations with which women are all too familiar. Secondly, as has been suggested elsewhere (Irving, 2001), it is telling that it is only as men have become subject to the long-term insecurities of a globally transformed labour market that greater interest in precarity has been generated. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, general patterns of employment have predictably shifted towards the female model since the key characteristics of this model – greater numerical flexibility, weaker links to the labour market, eroded social protection entitlements
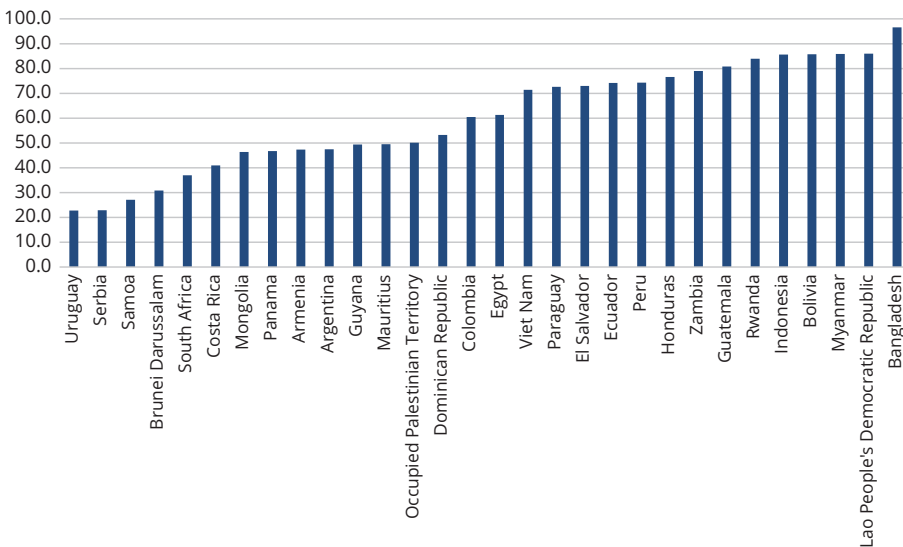
Figure 15.5 Informal employment as a % of women's employment, Countries with data for 2017

Source: ILOStat for indicator description; see https://www.ilo.org/ilostat-files/Documents/description_IFL_EN.pdf

through intermittent and partial participation, and reduced employer investment in human capital – are all advantageous to employers in times of economic uncertainty.

The rise of precarious employment also prefigures a reconceptualisation of unemployment since the distinction between being in and out of work is not only much harder to sustain in the advanced economies but is also difficult to apply in the many countries in the Global South, where the insecurity of informal employment and under-employment in agriculture, and more recently, market services, makes unemployment less policy relevant, particularly for women. Even in the post-crisis, advanced economies, data collection agencies such as Eurostat (for the EU) now include new forms of unemployment in their databases. As Figure 15.6 below indicates, women's rates exceed those of men on both the new and standard measures.

The recognition that unemployment has been hitherto disguised by statistical categories is a positive development since it provides a challenge to established gendered understandings about the nature of paid and unpaid work, and the privileging of men's assumed greater psychological and financial 'need' for paid work. Prior to the 2008 crisis, women's rates of unemployment were higher than those of men in most industrialised countries (OECD, 2005), but since then, men's unemployment has risen faster than that of women. In the UK, analysis of a similar trend in the recession of the 1980s led to the suggestion that there is a gendered 'silver lining' to occupational segregation (Rubery, 1988) and an associated effect has been observed in previous recessions in Latin American countries (ILO, 2012). However, while in the post-2008 recessions the hardest-hit industries and sectors have been those where male employment predominated (ETUI, 2013), austerity policies indicate women's
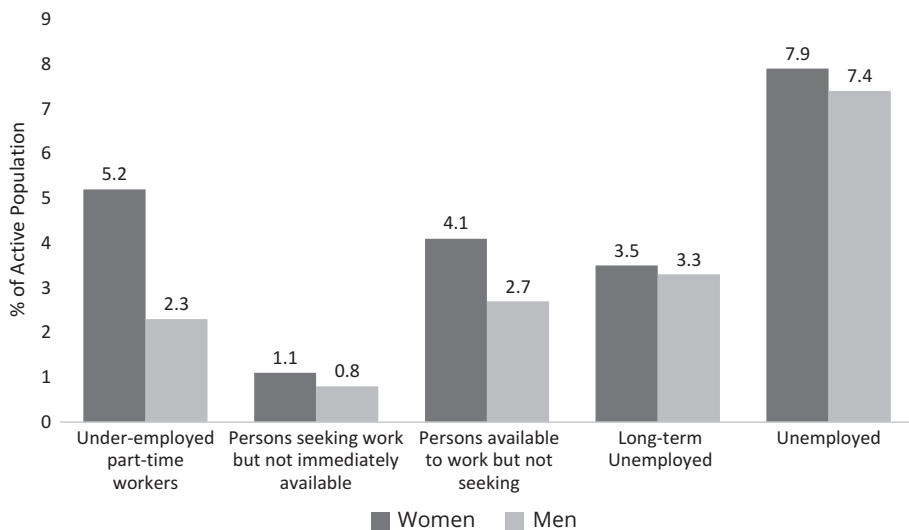
Figure 15.6 Measures of unemployment by sex, EU28, 2017

Source: Labour Force Survey, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database

Note: Annual averages

employment cannot provide a compensatory lifeline to economic security (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). In the global context, the gender gap between women's and men's unemployment has actually widened since 2008, and is projected to increase by 2021 (ILO, 2018b).

Unemployment figures mask enormous gender differences across countries, between age groups, between those with low and high skills and educational attainment, between different sectors of the economy and between migrants and non-migrants. In a world that is argued to have shrunk through processes of technological and economic globalisation, it is this latter dimension of variation that is increasingly significant. The relationship between new patterns of global demand for labour and patterns of migration starkly expose the interplay between divisions of gender, race and class, and are the focus of the final section of this chapter.

Distributional divisions of place and race

In the preceding discussion, women have often been referred to in general terms, and while some aspects of gender relations lend themselves to analysis grounded in an understanding of women and men as having universal but separate interests, the interests of women and men are always qualified by the intersection of interests represented in other dimensions of identity and structural forces other than patriarchal relations (Reed, 2006; Walby et al., 2012). Returning to the domestic labour deficit identified earlier allows illustration of ways in which divisions amongst and between women and men result from the interplay of the global political economy of employment and the social relations of race and ethnicity. The demand for care and other domestic work to be undertaken within households where women are in paid employment is a global rather than a local phenomenon (see Figure 15.7). In advanced economies, such as the UK and USA, long-standing patterns of imperialist racialisation of women's work (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018) are being re-established through the operation of a global care industry facilitated by the outsourcing of domestic labour at the household level, and via the international marketisation of welfare services (Yeates, 2005; Razavi, 2007).

While benefiting better-off employed women in rich countries, these processes situate migrant women from the Global South (and Central and Eastern Europe) as insecure and exploited, even where they are highly skilled. ILO estimates suggest that, globally, in 2018, there were 70.1 million domestic workers, of which 70.2% were women. Domestic workers are universally amongst the lowest paid and least likely to have access to social security provisions (ILO, 2018c: 192). Alongside domestic workers, care workers also include nurses, teachers and those providing care services for older and disabled people and children.

Globally, the numbers of migrant care workers are impossible to estimate with any accuracy since they are often undocumented. Estimates indicate that around 36% of documented migrant women workers are employed in the health, social services and education sectors, with just 2% in private domestic work (Awad, 2009: 49, Table 8). Across the OECD countries the share of migrant nurses is 14.5%, but in Sweden, for example, the proportion of care workers in health and social work is 24% (ILO, 2018c). Although not all these workers are accounted for through South to North
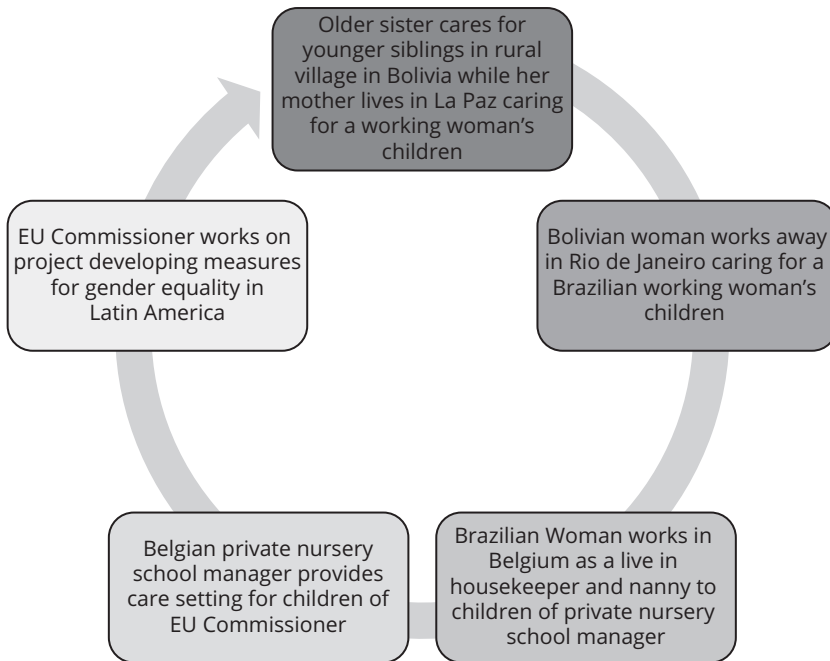
Figure 15.7 How a female global care chain might work (after Hochschild, 2000)

migration, transnational 'productive' care work, largely undertaken by women, is significant in the economic development of low- and middle-income countries through the remittances returned to the countries of origin.

This financial gain is the flipside of human capital loss, and there are also wider implications for the distribution of work since the gains in cheap care workers in the North represent a 'care drain' for the South (Williams, 2012). In losing their caregivers, the care deficit is passed on to the communities of origin from which the workers migrate, serving to further disadvantage both those who give as well as those who need care (Folbre 2006; Yeates, 2009). In practice, the distinction between those who give and need care becomes increasingly specious within the framework of a global care chain, since the care gap left, for example, by mothers who are forced to leave children in their home countries, is often filled by older daughters or grandmothers who would otherwise (and certainly in rich countries) be considered to be in need of care rather than providing it.

The exploitation of a ready supply of care workers to meet the deficit in rich countries also exposes further gendered effects. The employment of migrant women workers in more affluent, dual-income households removes not just immediate pressure for the men in these households to increase their responsibility for unpaid work but also the impetus for more long-term role adaptation, as discussed earlier. The existence of gendered and racialised global care chains also features within national political economies of care, where the private market in domestic caring services reduces pressure on states to develop collective solutions to the care deficit (Shutes and Chiatti, 2012). It also forms part of more formal labour export strategies of

governments seeking economic development and import strategies of governments seeking to reduce the costs of their welfare states (Misra et al., 2006; Yeates, 2009). The post-2008 age of austerity has led to significant cuts in state expenditure on social services, suggesting that the use of cheaper and less protected female migrant labour as a tool to mitigate the costs of meeting the welfare needs of more affluent societies is likely to persist.

The care dimension of transnationalised gendered employment is one aspect of a more general transformation of global labour markets that has occurred through changing patterns of migration and changing demand for labour in the Global North. In analysing national pictures with regard to the scope, specificities and divisions of migrant labour, important factors such as historical colonial relationships and 'immigration regimes' are seen to shape the particular configurations in nation states (Williams, 2012). How processes of discrimination and occupational segregation are racialised as well as gendered can be explained, as set out at the beginning of this chapter, by examining the ways in which 'women's work' and 'men's work' has been established through industrialisation. Since labour markets are now global, achieving gender equality in work and employment is also a complex global project that requires action at multiple levels of governance and across political and civil society.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the historical and contemporary international context in which the gendered divisions of work and employment operate. What is demonstrated in the evolution of gender relations in this domain is that women have consistently shaped their engagement in the public sphere of work around the structures established by men in their own interests as the architects of the various worlds of welfare capitalism and the global political economy. The discussion has outlined the ways in which sexual divisions established in the pre-industrial and industrial eras have resulted in further forms of subordination as women entered paid work, which have limited women's access to economic power and employment security. In the contemporary context, the prognosis for greater gender equality appears less than optimistic. The ongoing effects of economic crisis – precarity of employment and retrograde gender politics that have consequently emerged, combined with the care deficit related to current industrial existence – all indicate testing times ahead. Although the achievements of women (and men) in challenging gender inequalities have been considerable, they are fragile. Inequalities are entrenched and persistent, and social policy is often out of step with social practice in its attempts to address them. The gender transformation of work is dynamic, and so, too, are the ways in which gender divisions are recast and experienced. It is crucial that we continue to seek to better understand the nature of the contemporary gender division of work because the more we understand, the stronger the foundation upon which gender equality can be constructed.

Further reading

Feminist Review (eds) (1986) *Waged Work: A Reader*. London: Virago. This is a classic and historically significant collection of articles originally published in the journal *Feminist Review* in the mid-1970s–mid-1980s. The book presents scholarly contributions to debates in the key areas of feminist analysis of work and employment in that period. Despite significant changes since the 1970s, the perspectives and ideas offered continue to inform both our understanding of gender inequality and our approaches to its analysis.

M. Lansky, J. Ghosh, D. Méda and U. Rani (eds) (2017) *Women, Gender and Work, Volume 2, Social Choices and Inequalities*. International Labour Office Geneva: International Labour Organization. This is an edited collection of 32 articles published in the International Labour Organization's journal *International Labour Review* from 2000. The articles draw on theory and research within a range of social science disciplines, providing empirically informed analyses of gendered labour market participation, care work, policy frameworks, the regulation of women's work and the collective action needed to achieve progress in addressing gender disadvantage in the Global South and North.

R. Milkman (2016) *On Gender, Labor, and Inequality*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press. A collection of work published by Milkman and others since the 1970s, with a concluding chapter that compares women's work in the periods of economic crisis in the 1930s, and following 2008. The analytical themes cover intersecting gender and class, the place of unions in shaping women's working conditions and domestic labour and work-family policy in contemporary gendered and classed labour markets. The book presents a narrative of transformations over time in the USA but also an incisive general sociological account of why gender inequalities persist.

J. Scott, R. Crompton and C. Lyonette (2010) *Gender Inequalities in the 21st Century: New Barriers and Continuing Constraints*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. This book considers gender inequalities in work, family and employment and reflects on what has changed for women and men in their work and family lives. The chapters report on comparative European research in areas of working patterns, divisions of ethnicity, occupational and pay inequalities, time use and household distribution of labour, and the intersectional shaping of inequalities through welfare institutions.

? QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. To what extent do the twentieth-century gender transformations in work represent gains for women?

2. How far is the gender pay gap a result of women's employment choices?

3. How important are social policies to support men's caring roles in achieving greater gender equality in employment?

4. In terms of changes in the global labour market, if the female model of employment is becoming universal, is this likely to advance the conditions of work for all?

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