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THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Edited by Wendy Harcourt



The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development

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Critical Engagements in Feminist Theory and Practice

Edited by

Wendy Harcourt

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Foreword

The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development plunges us straight into some of the most disturbing and important issues of our time. Global injustice and violence; the nature of care and love; new forms of power and resistance; the politics of knowledge and the politics of sexuality; survival on an injured planet – all these feature in the handbook.

When development institutions and international aid agencies began to take account of gender, as they did under feminist pressure in the 1970s, their understanding of the concept was minimal. In the usual policy model, there were two categories of people, the men here and the women there, and the reform needed was to add the women into the development programme.

This was not a stupid idea, given the exclusion of women from state power and economic decision-making that was normal at the time. Bringing women into development agendas required hard campaigning; indeed, it still does. But the dichotomy of men versus women was a radically simplified idea of gender, and the simplification had important consequences. It homogenized each of the two categories, ignoring the vast variations within them. It produced stereotyped images – men dominant and aggressive, women nurturant and victimized. Above all, it made women and women's difference the problem. 'Gender' in policy language usually meant 'women'.¹

These features of the first women-in-development agenda reflected both official and popular feminist thought in the global metropole. In the following decades, new ideas emerged in metropolitan feminism. In one line of thought, gender was analysed as a social structure, an intricate weave of economic relations, power, emotional connection and more. In another, it was analysed as a set of subject positions in discourse, or fragile and shifting identities. Research emerged on changing masculinities and the diverse situations of men in the gender order. Difference in terms of race and ethnicity became a major issue for metropolitan feminism. Sexuality, which had been part of the Women's Liberation agenda, was increasingly interpreted in terms of difference, with a focus on lesbian identity. Women's studies mutated into gender studies, heavily influenced by European poststructuralism.

How far these changes were relevant beyond the metropole was another question. When in 2000 the United Nations (UN) adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), two of which directly concerned gender, little seemed to have altered since the 1970s. The framing of Goal 4, 'Promote gender equality and empower women', was a simple dichotomy of women versus men (with indices such as the proportion of MPs who are women), and Goal

5, 'Improve maternal health', addressed women only as mothers in the act of giving birth.

Since on any given day most women are not engaged in giving birth, this is a rather limited conception of women's health needs. But the fact that only women give birth is formative in the pattern of gender relations. The leading strands of metropolitan theory have moved far from a concern with conception, birth, infant care, motherhood, fatherhood and education. But these are first-class issues for women's movements in the postcolonial world, and they remain latent issues in the metropole, surfacing in debates about 'work/life balance' and career paths for women.

To put it in a nutshell, gender concerns children and history. Gender is the pattern of human relations that are linked to human reproductive processes and distinctions. That doesn't mean that gender relations are 'biologically determined', because human relations happen in history; they are created, and transformed, through historical agency. It does mean that gender relations are embodied, often in complex and indirect ways; that the social practices for conceiving, bearing and raising children are central to what gender means in different societies and moments of history.

Understanding gender as a creative historical process, surrounding a reproductive arena but not fixed by a biological statute, makes it easier to grasp the connections of gender and development (GAD). For development, too, is a historical concept. Modern scholarship has shown how inadequate was the Cold War concept of a universal template of modernization, according to which – in stages – all the world would follow the United States (US) on the path to prosperity.

Development involves dominance and subordination on a world scale. Over the last 500 years, Western Europe, formerly a province of an old-world economy centred further east, rose to global power and wealth. Western European states, and then Russia and the state formed by the English colonies of North America, became the centres of empires. Both imperial conquest and settler colonialism restructured whole societies by massive violence. Vast land grabs – in Australia, a whole continent taken by one imperial power – tribute, forced labour, mines, plantations and pastoralism produced new colonial economies, which were locked into empires and then into postcolonial dependence.

As the leading metropolises industrialized, the empires slowly merged into a shared capitalist economy, integrated by trade and finance and centred on the cities of the metropole. Political independence for the colonies could not immediately alter social and economic structures or reduce the differences of wealth between colony and metropole. 'Development' was the agenda that set out to do so.

This entire story was gendered. The workforce of conquest was drawn from gender-segregated occupations in the metropole: armies and navies,

long-distance trade, minor gentry and state officials. Conquest normally included mass rape of colonized women, appropriating bodies and disrupting kinship systems. The restructuring of gender orders was a normal part of the making of colonial economies – for instance, the incorporation of colonized men as slaves, indentured or migrant labour in plantations and mines. Women's bodies were incorporated as domestic labour, field labour and factory labour, and in due course as housewives and migrant care workforces.

When conquest turned to empire, requiring the survival of colonial societies, the reproduction of populations and the production of masculinities and femininities compatible with colonial power were vital. Gender became central, not marginal, to colonialism; and, one may argue, to postcolonial development. The independent states that launched development agendas were largely composed of masculinized armies and police forces, gender-divided bureaucracies and patriarchal legal systems. Gendered plantation and extractive industries continued to function in the global South; indeed, new ones were created around oil, ores and agribusiness.

When the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) development agenda of import-replacement industrialization kicked in, masculinized heavy industries arose. When the neoliberal development agenda kicked in, masculinized mining and feminized light manufacturing (clothing, microprocessor assembly) expanded. The great rise in women's literacy and girls' primary education was certainly encouraged by feminism, but the huge investment needed to create European-style school systems was driven by the development agendas of postcolonial states and aid agencies, seeking expanded and more productive workforces.

That is part, at least, of the background to the gender-equality ideas of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration. By the time the Beijing delegates assembled in 1995, the developmental state of the post-Second World War South, like the welfare state of the post-Second World War North, was in retreat. A new world of deregulated finance and trade, transnational corporate power, non-governmental organization (NGO)-based aid and welfare, informal urbanism and precarious employment was coming into existence. This is our world, and this world is powerfully gendered in ways documented throughout this handbook.

This volume approaches its task in an innovative way. Most theory in the humanities and social sciences is written as declamation. The theorist expounds ideas authoritatively, often in a high-flown language; one expects to hear a fanfare by Handel at the end. Many feminists have been suspicious of theory; the language sounds patriarchal and seems to fend off all readers except for specialists.

Wendy Harcourt isn't suspicious of theory, but she does share a commitment to collective ways of producing knowledge, and to the wider circulation of ideas. (Her own writing, in her book *Body Politics in Development* (2009), is beautifully clear.) So this handbook is designed as dialogue, in fact as polylogue. It reprints important contributions, invites other activists and theorists to comment on them, and invites responses from the original authors. The results of such a process are unpredictable, and it is fascinating to see the different directions these discussions have taken.

At one level, the chapters document the hard realities of contemporary gender relations. Continued poverty, continued racism, continued domestic violence; state repression of women's movements, state violence in prisons and war; the destruction of forests and economic security; the repression of sexual diversity.

At another level, the handbook embodies what some contributors think is a crisis in feminism. The optimism of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has taken a battering over the 20 years of its existence. Gender mainstreaming has proved problematic, and there is a fascinating debate on it in this handbook. The rise of authoritarian and misogynist governments has been so marked that UN agencies concerned with gender equality have not risked another world conference. Gains in educational participation by girls and women have continued but have not translated into economic gains; the closing of wage gaps has stalled, and in some places, notably India, women's workforce participation has fallen.

In these circumstances it is not encouraging to know that one strand of Northern feminism has become authoritarian, promoting prejudice against transsexual women and state repression of sexwork; while another strand has woven itself into the neoliberal economy, virtually treating career advancement for middle-class women as the purpose of feminism.

Feminist intellectuals in universities and NGOs are unavoidably part of a global economy of knowledge that gives priority to the North. Data are gathered in the global periphery and shipped to the metropole, where they are processed and theory is developed; the result is re-exported to the developing world as the most up-to-date knowledge. In gender studies, too, Northern theories – Marxist political economy, French poststructuralism, Deleuzian assemblages, queer theory, intersectionality, actor-network theory (ANT) – are routinely applied to Southern data. Ideas devised for political situations in the metropole, such as the deeply confused concept of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) persons, are uncritically applied in discussions of development.

There are clear traces of this economy of knowledge here, but there is also critique and a search for alternatives. The book promotes dialogue between regions, opens with a discussion of the coloniality of gender and recognizes

theorists from the developing world. Theory (in the sense of agenda-setting, conceptualization and methodology) is produced across the global South, on a considerable scale, and in multiple genres, though it is little recognized in the mainstream economy of knowledge. Feminism needs a democratic practice of knowledge production and circulation, and this needs to be a learning process on a world scale. The dialogue here is a promising experiment in learning.

It is common ground among the authors here that questions of theory are ultimately about practice, or are worth debating because they bear on practice. The most effective forms of contemporary theory give us a new understanding of the dynamics of social change.

Feminism confronts new power structures on a world scale, new gender dynamics as well as old ones. A new political arena has been created by the ascendancy of neoliberal regimes. Their tactics have become more sophisticated since the Structural Readjustment shock tactics of the 1980s, but they still service and protect the massive accumulations of wealth and power in the corporate economy that are held by privileged groups of men, the oligarchs of the US and Western Europe.

In transnational corporations and global markets, the economic power of the metropole has partly moved offshore, beyond easy reach of oppositional movements, while still relying on the military power of metropolitan states. New fusions of masculinized state power and masculinized corporate wealth have emerged in Russia, India and, above all, China. In and around the transnational corporations a web of alliances exists between technocratic managers and local patriarchs. Local patriarchies, often relying on religion for hegemony, are also changing, and some have reached into transnational spaces with the resources of oil behind them.

This is an intimidating scene but it is not monolithic. Far from it: the global scene of gender relations is notably unstable, full of conflicts and surging with possibilities. Religious movements threaten local oligarchies as well as women; new technologies redirect flows of profit; and labour migration reconfigures populations and cultures. The cyborg managers are not sitting calmly on top of a smoothly running machine; they are desperately trying to impose order on runaway global processes they only partly understand. They are trying to beat off rivals and put down resistances for long enough to carry their outrageous bonuses home. They have little but an ideology of selfishness – alias neoliberalism – to justify what they do. The new global patriarchy is a landscape of shrivelled souls.

The development agendas of the last 60 years have, in part, worked. Economies are more productive, wealth has grown outside the metropole as well as in it, and exploitation of the environment is more intense. Much of this is due to women's labour, and some of the benefits have flowed to women. Though levels and patterns of inequality vary greatly from region to region,

many groups of women now have more education, more political leverage and better incomes than our mothers or grandmothers had. In the continuing struggles for social control, the stakes are now higher.

This, I think, is the shape of the contemporary crisis of feminism. The problem is not that the movement of the 1970s has died – that was bound to happen, and much of that movement’s legacy is still with us. It is rather that the historical process of creating and transforming gender orders has taken new directions, producing new violences and inequalities as well as new resources, and the old answers won’t do. It is therefore important that this handbook also addresses questions of strategy, and reaches out for answers that will do.

So we learn here about the creative responses of women’s groups, and some men’s groups too: alternative economic models, radical educational and cultural projects, new ways of organizing, expanded agendas of theory and utopian imaginings of gender-just society. I don’t think it matters that none of these proposals is based on randomized controlled trials. There’s a nice phrase of Paulo Freire’s that strategy for change can be based on ‘untested feasibility’.

In discussions of strategy on a world scale, it is particularly important that feminist theoretical work from beyond the global metropole should be emphasized – not just ‘voices from the South’ but the analytic, agenda-setting and conceptual work done in those societies. That is critical for building the intellectual resources for global feminism. The old idea of ‘development’ is, we may hope, on the way out, but the tasks of realizing global gender justice, equality of respect and resources, peace and the conditions for living well are entirely present.

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Note

1. Much of the background to the arguments presented in this foreword can be found in Connell (2014), Connell and Dados (2014) and Connell and Pease (2015).

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Introduction: Dilemmas, Dialogues, Debates

Wendy Harcourt

Introduction

This handbook starts from the premise that feminists engaged in GAD debates are caught in a dilemma. On the one hand they wish to act in solidarity across the globe, to create spaces and possibilities for all women, wherever they are placed. But, on the other hand, they can only do so by unpacking the profound divisions, tensions and systemic inequalities and failures that underline a development discourse dividing cultures and societies into ‘developed’ and ‘undeveloped’. To begin with, as Raewyn Connell points out in her foreword, even speaking about ‘women’ proves to be a dilemma, as does feminist engagement working for social justice in a world dominated by patriarchal, racist, militarist neoliberal capitalism.

The topics I chose to be covered here reflect these dilemmas: ‘gender, power, decoloniality’; ‘institutions, policies, governmentality’; ‘globalization, care, economic justice’; ‘gender, science, ecology’; ‘livelihoods, place, community’; ‘gender, race, intersectionality’; ‘violence, militarism, conflict’; ‘bodies, sexuality, queering development’; and ‘visions, hopes, futures’. They are admittedly somewhat unusual topics for a GAD handbook. In putting this volume together, I was not interested in assembling a predictable set of essays on ‘agriculture’, ‘economy’, ‘governance’, ‘population’, ‘education’, ‘youth’ and ‘health’. I wanted to push beyond the canon of GAD texts that are already available and to take the opportunity to explore some of the dilemmas, debates and dialogues I have been involved in over the last 20 or more years. I also wanted to create a multifaceted dialogue that could connect the diverse feminist locations, generations, experiences and disciplines that I see as shaping GAD discourses. I therefore selected nine ‘core’ texts by feminist scholars and activists who while not central to development policy I would argue have critically influenced feminist analyses, strategies and visions in GAD discourse. Put together, I see these nine texts as producing a systemic analysis of the dilemmas,

debates and dialogues in GAD with important insights into how development processes have shaped gender relations in peoples' lives, cultures and environments. I have deliberately selected critical texts by a somewhat eclectic range of scholars and activists in order to open up the traditional boundaries of what is GAD. The main aim of the handbook is to encourage readers to go beyond mainstream development institutional discourse to look at how feminist practice and vision (whether in IR, political ecology or social movements) shape development policy and studies.

Even though there are a hefty number of pages here, inevitably one volume can only partially cover all that GAD claims as its field. So what I hope will make this handbook particularly engaging is its structure. The nine core texts have been used to kick off a discussion that is analytical, critical and respectful among generations of scholars and activists. Each section is made up of a republished core text, followed by a set of chapters by established and upcoming feminist scholars and activists. These essays respond to the core texts directly, and at the conclusion of all but one section there are the candid responses from the authors of the core text. I was particularly appreciative of the open engagement among the core text writers with the responses – it is difficult to have earlier work critiqued by another generation of colleagues. It is in their thoughtful and candid replies to the observations, stories and critiques that their original texts evoked that you see the personal and political way in which feminists from around the world can work together in unpacking and challenging the complex issues underlining GAD.

GAD and IR

As editor I encouraged contributors to tell the 'inside' story alongside their observations, analysis and critique of GAD processes. So in this introduction let me add my inside stories of how the handbook emerged in order to explain further its somewhat quirky approach and to signpost some of the key debates that have shaped feminist analysis and political engagement in development over the last 15 years.¹

The idea of a handbook first emerged in a conversation with Palgrave when I was describing some of the debates that surfaced at a conference entitled 'Feminism, Difference, and Beyond' organized by the Swiss International Relations Collective (SWIRCO).² My planned speech was 'Gender Matters to Whom? Keeping the Politics in Gender and Development', where I wanted to speak about the 'body politics' of feminist movements challenging the bureaucratizing of gender within population and development policy (see Harcourt 2009). On the first day of the conference I listened as very sophisticated ideas about gender, power, nationality and difference and the role of feminist theory were debated. They were sparked by papers that analysed what

I saw as not particularly representational or important historical events: a video of a woman being beaten in a street; a set of photographs of a US military cemetery; the narrative experiences of a surrogate; and a reading of a UN document on sexwork. I was intrigued by how visuals were so important, and how so much was being deciphered from images, narratives and stories. The immediate impact was that I rushed back to my hotel room and changed my presentation to speak to images of gendered bodies in 'development' through which, I argued, power relations around the body were normalized and the experience of class, gendered and racialized othering was made invisible. In the conference dialogues I felt there was a lot of translating needed between 'GAD' and feminist IR. The GAD 'practices' I was describing, others saw as a quaint world of women's movements engaged in UN speak and ideological pushes, and pools of small amounts of development funds for 'gender equality'. Such time-consuming negotiations papered over the real power issues related to sexuality, militarism, government machinations and masculinities. Reading the essays in Section VII, and in particular Spike Peterson's powerful and instructive response about feminist theory and practice in her work (Chapter 7.4), I think my instincts at the conference were right.

Engaging with feminist IR raised for me some important concerns about 'high' and 'low' feminist theory, and the different approaches of IR and GAD. Feminist theorizing on racism, sexuality, power, embodiment, violence, masculinities and militarism is taken for granted among IR scholars. In contrast, in GAD, such concepts are on the edge of development policy and debates. On the other hand, IR seemed to be all about theory, whereas GAD scholars assumed their work could be used by people 'in the field' and was integral to the shaping of development discourses. As I read the essays in Section II and the candid reflections on governance feminism in Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay's response (Chapter 2.4), I felt there were different approaches that needed clarification. I particularly found Sara de Jong's contribution (Chapter 2.1) helpful in this debate.

The handbook, then, is set up to make connections among feminist IR and GAD practitioners in order to understand how to speak across theory and practice, whether it is challenging the politics of development technocrats or analysing military power and repression; whether it is making visible the gendered politics of sexuality in development or the racism in war economies.

Other knowledges and decoloniality

A second set of conversations that inspires the handbook comes from when I joined ISS and found myself needing to translate my experiences as a feminist writer and advocate in social justice movements and NGOs into formative

knowledge as a lecturer in development studies. At the outset I found myself puzzling over how to be a feminist in a development studies institution.

In starting this new phase of my life where I was paid to teach and research, I discovered that different things counted. In my activist life what was important was whom I had met and knew; what events I had attended; which networks and movements I was engaged in; and my 'off the cuff' opinions on the latest events. I found that in academe what was important was which school of thought I belonged to; where I published in the hierarchy of academic publications; and therefore to which literature I was contributing. As a feminist I found this difficult. Following my belief that 'personal is political', I felt compelled to bring in how feminist practice informed my work, and to translate how those experiences were part of GAD 'real world' and therefore should be taught as part of the learning process. There was no real school of thought about that. I also wanted to bring in the many conversations from the 'outside' of development that were critical of development processes. Again, these did not appear in academic texts – at best there were footnotes to the 'grey texts' of the writings (blog posts, visual stories) of NGOs and social movements. How, I asked myself, could I translate the different knowledges I had built up from my engagement in development policy and advocacy debates outside academe into an order of knowledge that could be studied and taught? How could I connect my students and my academic writing to these 'other' conversations about development?

I admit I felt quite at loss. But then, via my friend and sometime writing partner Arturo Escobar, I made contact with some ISS colleagues (Rosabla Icaza and Rolando Vazquez, Chapter 1.3), who were convening with students the 'other knowledges' group on the edge of the ISS (literally meeting in the house of a former lecturer). Here I found an intellectual space where my political and institutional concerns about 'teaching' development critically from experiences could be expressed. The first meeting I attended in 2012 together with Sunila Abeysekara, a 'scholar at risk' at ISS.³ We were both searching for an intellectual space where we could share and reflect on our years of activism. Sitting on the floor, with glasses of wine and nibbles being passed round, we heard from three women in their 30s – from Mexico, Indonesia and Belgium – about their journey as subjects of development as women from (or visitors to) 'developing' countries, and how as students and as teachers they wanted to reclaim their stories from the dominant development narratives. During the conversation that followed, and further encounters of the other knowledges group, I started to feel more able to be a feminist in an academic space. In these discussions I could engage in intercultural dialogues that were profoundly critical of development processes, sharing and learning from others' experiences (see Harcourt and Icaza 2014). I was able to position myself more comfortably as a teacher speaking from my position as a white, educated Australian/European-based

feminist who was first involved in feminist and environmental activism in the 1980s before I had ever heard of development. In the other knowledges group, and in various other seminars that grew from those discussions, questions were opened up about whose and what experiences and knowledges count in development studies. How do different places, histories and communities converge in, or how are they subsumed in, the mainstream of development? What are the 'otherwise' realities to hegemonic economic and social processes? How do UN advocacy and social movement visions interact with government policy and globalized privatization processes? These questions that helped to 'decolonize' our understanding of development processes enabled me to doubt less about whether my knowledge 'counted' in development teaching. The inspiration I felt from these dialogues, many originating from Latin America, is why this handbook begins with a section on 'gender, power, decoloniality' and the very enlightening essays on power, gender and otherwise knowledges in the responses to 'The Coloniality of Gender' by Maria Lugones.

Place and the possibility of transformative politics

J. K. Gibson-Graham has also inspired critical thinking on GAD, although like Maria Lugones they would not position themselves as development scholars. Their work has been pivotal for my own explorations of the politics of place and feminism. Gibson-Graham's intellectual rigour is matched by a tremendously positive hope in feminist transformative processes. Although neither belong to feminist movements, they have built an impressive following of feminists across genders, disciplines and continents. Writing as a team,⁴ they have nurtured an important network of scholars that opens up the feminist debate on development via a post-modernist critique of capitalism. In their intellectual project of the decentring of capitalism they show that it is possible to create a more just social and economic world. The vital and ongoing legacy of Gibson-Graham can be seen in the exchange among the essayists in the section as they break through the hegemony of capitalism working from a place-based perspective that allows new economic imaginaries to flourish.

Intersectionality and the queering of GAD

A major debate throughout the handbook is how gender is perceived – from the questionings of Section I on the decoloniality of gender to Section III's body politics and the move beyond the dual category 'women' and 'men' to include 'trans', and Section VIII's questioning of heteronormativity and the queering of development. As I pointed out above, there is a tension around how not to focus on 'only' women in GAD as well as how to understand race, class, colonial histories, religious, social and cultural categories and identities

that define femininities, masculinities and 'othering'. The awkward category of intersectionality emerges in many places, and again I was reassured that it is a tricky and not easily understood concept. One of my first assignments as a teacher was to give a lecture on intersectionality. I dutifully read all the articles I could and admit to finding Nira Yuval-Davis with her discussions on the politics of belonging in the core text here, and her other work, an instructive way into understanding the 'intersections' of so many different social definitions and identities. As the authors in their brilliant writing in Section VI show, 'intersectionality' is a slippery and difficult concept but is also crucial to debates around how to think about gender beyond women and female embodiment.

Queering development has been something I have learnt much about through fascinating conversations with Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly, and their large network within and outside what they call the 'development industry'. I vividly recall in the 2008 meeting, mentioned in the chapters in Section VIII, being asked what it was like to be married to a man, be a mother of two daughters, and be a feminist. The intimation was that it was probably almost impossible. Good question, I thought, and one that GAD needs to ask far more often in all contexts. In another animated conversation about sexual desire where I spoke about my sexual passion during late pregnancy, I later realized that I had been speaking to a sexworker, who, it dawned on me, was not actually describing a fantasy when she spoke about an exciting encounter in a hotel with a waiter. Sexuality informs and abounds in our lives and yet in GAD it is too often seen as a 'problem', a 'risk' or a violation – yet it is about desire and pleasure, and is at the heart of many of our positive choices about life.

Tippling points – and what keeps us going

Silently undergirding discussions about GAD are the taken-for-granted relations we have with nature understood through the prism of modernity, progress and exploitation. As Arturo Escobar argues, that development's inherently violent process towards peoples, natures and cultures has become so naturalized that it is no longer remarked upon (Escobar 2004). GAD processes are inevitably linked to those forms of violence played out in the 'well-intentioned' work of developmental specialists and development experts who 'cannot snap the bond of violence and development' (Kothari 2004: 10). As Section VII graphically shows, development processes are about conflict, war, oppression, violence in and outside of homes, displacement of communities, scarring of landscapes and the destruction of cultures.

The recognition of the violence of development is starkly evident in the increasing unsustainability of dominant economic and social 'lifeworlds', as Dianne Rocheleau so evocatively describes the intertwining of all living beings. Section V on the ecology and critiques of science inspired by Rocheleau's work

goes deeply into the many contradictions and difficulties of bringing environmental concerns in GAD discourses, beginning with the need to unpack Western science and economic ideological assumptions on which development is based. The section offers keen insight into how feminist political ecology (FPE) grapples with different feminist knowledges (scientific, indigenous, ecological, anthropological) in order to map out the narratives and rooted networks that connect our lifeworlds. It counters the fears that are dominating mainstream development that continually reminds us of the endgame we are playing with the Earth's resources.

The entire handbook is motivated by feminist visions of how to work with the violence, change it and move to 'otherwise' lifeworlds. Feminists are positioning themselves in interesting ways in this neoliberal era of capitalist technologies and power. Section IX speaks to feminist engagement in social movements that are trying to bring about a feminist vision, in multiple ways – whether in transnational feminist networks, as citizens working for peace in India, or fighting in alliances to change the oppressive political regime in Iran. All have their imagined utopias that help to keep us going.

Outline of the handbook

This handbook starts with a provocative and substantive foreword by a key figure in gender studies – Raewyn Connell – which, together with this introduction, sets out a broad critical feminist approach to GAD in theory and practice.

Section I establishes the critical approaches to GAD from the perspective of power, race and colonization. Starting from the concept of decoloniality as developed by Maria Lugones, it sets out 'the modern/colonial gender system' which undergirds GAD theory and practice, both in the hidden assumptions and in the contestations of the 'modern gender system' by women of colour, indigenous women and feminists from the global South. The core text is 'The Coloniality of Gender' by Maria Lugones, with the following chapters by Catherine Walsh, Claudia J. de Lima Costa, and Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez.

Section II explores the 'doing' of GAD in development institutions with an examination of the institutional project of development in the last two decades. The critiques examine the governance practices in the bureaucratizing of GAD, with a critical look at gender mainstreaming, and the world UN conferences on gender, donor gender policies and national gender machineries. The section raises questions about the amount of feminist energy that has been invested in these global or national level bureaucratic spaces. The core text is 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business' by Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay, with the following

chapters by Sara de Jong, Aruna Rao and Joanne Sandler, and Anouka van Eerdewijk.

Section III looks at the critical linkage between globalization, care and economic justice, taking the cue from the core text, which shows the complex links between globalization, women's health and economic justice. It critically examines globalization and its impact on gender relations in families, societies and transculturally as the backdrop to development that continues to focus on national wealth and governmental responsibility for care relations despite its evident failures. The core text is 'Globalization, Women's Health, and Economic Justice: Reflections Post-September 11' by Rosalind Petchesky with the following chapters by Alexandra Garita and Debolina Dutta.

Section IV explores a feminist political ecology perspective on the interlinkages between ecology, economy and technology that inform rural-based GAD theory and practice. It takes up the ideas developed by Dianne Rocheleau to present some of the cutting-edge feminist analysis on the gendered nature of science and technology underlying development's often racist and gender-blind approaches to the growing bioeconomy. The core text is 'Rooted Networks, Webs of Relation and the Power of Situated Science: Bringing the Models Back Down to Earth in Zambrana' by Dianne Rocheleau with the following chapters by Padini Nirmini, Ingrid L. Nelson and Lyla Mehta.

Section V looks at women's political engagement in place at their defence of their homes, environment and livelihoods. It examines the interrelations among diverse gender relations, agriculture, ecologies and economies in women's gendered struggles for their wellbeing and livelihoods. The focus is on women's organizing and creative resistance for personal and community survival, including the current concern over climate change. The core text is 'Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place' by J. K. Gibson-Graham, with the following chapters by Kelly Dombroski, Michal Osterweil and Yvonne Underhill-Sem.

Section VI unpacks the concept of intersectionality looking at how racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other systems of discrimination create inequalities and structure the relative gender positions of women. Reflecting on issues of identity, belonging and racism proposed by Nira Yuval-Davis, the authors explore the concept of belonging and why and in what contexts feminists and gender policymakers have taken up intersectionality as a tool for analysis, advocacy and policy development to combat exclusion. The core text is 'Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging' by Nira Yuval-Davis with the following chapters by Aili Mari Tripp, Susan Paulson and Marisa Belausteguioitia-Rius.

Section VII looks at how militarism, global restructuring and economic insecurity determine the global gender order that derails and determines development strategies. The violation of women's rights as part of war, the search

for security, and the violence and militarization of development are not often addressed in mainstream development, but they are explored here by taking up the complex arguments around militarisms and gender set out by V. Spike Peterson. The core text is ‘Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and “War Economies”’ by V. Spike Peterson with chapters by Maryam Khalid, Heather Turcotte and Sara Niner.

Section VIII examines sexuality at the core of body politics that critically informs development practice. It takes up the proposal by Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly that sexuality is a cross-cutting issue that lies at the heart of the disempowerment of women. The section looks at the heteronormative assumptions about sexuality that inform GAD practice, and the side-stepping issues of sexual pleasure and sexual identity, unless addressed in terms of deviance. It discusses how sexuality is a critical part of human behaviour, embodiment and identity and therefore GAD. The core text is ‘Sexuality and the Development Industry’ by Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly, with the following chapters by Stella Nyanzi, Andil Gosine and Xiaopei He.

Section IX concludes the handbook with reflections on how feminist activists continue to inspire and engage with GAD, bringing in insights from non-Western cultures, asking how we can rethink what is community, and how to live with the Earth and embrace the spiritual with the material. Reflecting on the vision of Peggy Antrobus, it gives space to feminist activists and myself (wearing my feminist activist hat) to describe their hopes for the future that keeps GAD alive to the needs for alternatives. The core text is ‘Feminism as Transformational Politics: Towards Possibilities for Another World’ by Peggy Antrobus, with the following chapters by Mansoureh Shojaee, Shobha Raghuram and Wendy Harcourt.

I hope the handbook will be welcomed by teachers and students of GAD studies as well as by those engaged in feminist policy and activism, complementing other texts used in GAD studies departments.⁵

With such original, engaging and brilliant contributions, the volume confirms feminist scholarship in development studies as a vibrant field of academic study. It reveals the diverse ways that feminist theory and practice inform and shape gender analysis and development policies as it bridges generations of feminists working in different institutions and disciplines and among diverse geographical regions.

Notes

1. I have elsewhere written a more detailed historical survey of major debates by feminists in the context of the UN and social movement debates since the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 (see Baksh and Harcourt 2015).
2. The debate continued in a published conversation with other keynote speakers – L. H. M. Ling and Marysia Zalewski – on how scholars theorize international politics

and development studies, and the methodological and political intentions of feminist IR (Swirco 2015).

3. Sunila was a wonderful and inspiring feminist, human rights defender, artist and friend of many. She sadly passed away in 2013. Her last piece of writing was on South Asian transnational feminist movements (see Chhachhi and Abeysekera 2015).
4. Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson wrote together under the penname J. K. Gibson-Graham and Gibson continues to do so in this book although Graham sadly passed away in 2010.
5. For example, Mohanty et al. (1991), Ostergaard (1992), Marchand and Parpart (1995), Jackson and Pearson (1998), Parpart et al. (2002), Cornwall et al. (2007), Richardson and Robinson (2008) and Visvanathan et al. (1997, 2010).

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Section I

Gender, Power, Decoloniality

1.0

The Coloniality of Gender

Maria Lugones

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I am interested in the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality in a way that enables me to understand the indifference that men, but, more importantly to our struggles, men who have been racialized as inferior, exhibit to the systematic violences inflicted upon women of color. I want to understand the construction of this indifference so as to make it unavoidably recognizable by those claiming to be involved in liberatory struggles. This indifference is insidious since it places tremendous barriers in the path of the struggles of women of color for our own freedom, integrity, and wellbeing and in the path of the correlative struggles towards communal integrity. The latter is crucial for communal struggles towards liberation, since it is their backbone. The indifference is found both at the level of everyday living and at the level of theorizing of both oppression and liberation. The indifference seems to me not just one of not seeing the violence because of the categorial separation of race, gender, class, and sexuality. That is, it does not seem to be only a question of epistemological blinding through categorial separation.

Women of color feminists have made clear what is revealed in terms of violent domination and exploitation once the epistemological perspective focuses on the intersection of these categories. But that has not seemed sufficient to arouse in those men who have themselves been targets of violent domination and exploitation, any recognition of their complicity or collaboration with the violent domination of women of color. In particular, theorizing global domination continues to proceed as if no betrayals or collaborations of this sort need to be acknowledged and resisted.

In this project I pursue this investigation by placing together two frameworks of analysis that I have not seen sufficiently jointly explored. I am referring, on the one hand, to the important work on gender, race and colonization done, not exclusively, but significantly by Third World and Women of Color feminists, including critical race theorists. This work has emphasized the concept of intersectionality and has exposed the historical and the theoretico-practical

exclusion of non-white women from liberatory struggles in the name of “Women.” The other framework is the one introduced by Anibal Quijano and which is at the center of his work, that of the coloniality of power. Placing both of these strands of analysis together permits me to arrive at what I am tentatively calling “the modern/colonial gender system.” I think this understanding of gender is implied in both frameworks in large terms, but it is not explicitly articulated, or not articulated in the direction I think necessary to unveil the reach and consequences of complicity with this gender system. I think that articulating this colonial/modern gender system, both in the large strokes, and in all its detailed and lived concreteness will enable us to see what was imposed on us. It will also enable us to see its fundamental destructiveness in both a long and wide sense. The intent of this writing is to make visible the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting us – both women and men of color – in all domains of existence. But it is also the project’s intent to make visible the crucial disruption of bonds of practical solidarity. My intent is to provide a way of understanding, of reading, of perceiving our allegiance to this gender system. We need to place ourselves in a position to call each other to reject this gender system as we perform a transformation of communal relations. In this initial paper, I present Anibal Quijano’s model that I will complicate, but one that gives us – in the logic of structural axes – a good ground from within which to understand the processes of intertwining the production of “race” and “gender.”

The coloniality of power

Anibal Quijano thinks the intersection of race and gender in large structural terms. So, to understand that intersection in his terms, it is necessary to understand his model of global, Eurocentered capitalist power. Both “race” and gender find their meanings in this model (*patrón*). Quijano understands that all power is structured in relations of domination, exploitation and conflict as social actors fight over control of “the four basic areas of human existence: sex, labor, collective authority and subjectivity/intersubjectivity, their resources and products” (Quijano 2001–2002: 1). What is characteristic of global, Eurocentered, capitalist power is that it is organized around two axes that Quijano terms, “the coloniality of power” and “modernity” (Quijano 2000b: 342). The axes order the disputes over control of each area of existence in such a way that the meaning and forms of domination in each area are thoroughly infused by the coloniality of power and modernity. So, for Quijano, the disputes/struggles over control of “sexual access, its resources and products” define the domain of sex/gender and the disputes, in turn, can be understood as organized around the axes of coloniality and modernity.

This is too narrow an understanding of the oppressive modern/colonial constructions of the scope of gender. Quijano's lenses also assume patriarchal and heterosexual understandings of the disputes over control of sex, its resources, and products. Quijano accepts the global, Eurocentered, capitalist understanding of what gender is about. These features of the framework serve to veil the ways in which non-“white” colonized women were subjected and disempowered. The heterosexual and patriarchal character of the arrangements can themselves be appreciated as oppressive by unveiling the presuppositions of the framework. Gender does not need to organize social arrangements, including social sexual arrangements. But gender arrangements need not be either heterosexual or patriarchal. They need not be, that is, as a matter of history. Understanding these features of the organization of gender in the modern/colonial gender system – the biological dimorphism, the patriarchal and heterosexual organizations of relations – is crucial to an understanding of the differential gender arrangements along “racial” lines. Biological dimorphism, heterosexual patriarchy are all characteristic of what I call the “light” side of the colonial/modern organization of gender. Hegemonically these are written large over the meaning of gender. Quijano seems not to be aware of his accepting this hegemonic meaning of gender. In making these claims I aim to expand and complicate Quijano's approach, preserving his understanding of the coloniality of power, which is at the center of what I am calling the “modern/colonial gender system.”

The coloniality of power introduces the basic and universal social classification of the population of the planet in terms of the idea of “race” (Quijano 2001–2002: 1). The invention of “race” is a pivotal turn as it replaces the relations of superiority and inferiority established through domination. It reconceives humanity and human relations fictionally, in biological terms. It is important that what Quijano provides is a historical theory of social classification to replace what he terms the “Eurocentric theories of social classes” (Quijano 2000b: 367). This move makes conceptual room for the coloniality of power. It makes conceptual room for the centrality of the classification of the world's population in terms of “races” in the understanding of global capitalism. It also makes conceptual room for understanding the historical disputes over control of labor, sex, collective authority and intersubjectivity as developing in processes of long duration, rather than understanding each of the elements as pre-existing the relations of power. The elements that constitute the global, Eurocentered, capitalist model of power do not stand in separation from each other and none of them is prior to the processes that constitute the patterns. Indeed, the mythical presentation of these elements as metaphysically prior is an important aspect of the cognitive model of Eurocentered, global capitalism.

In constituting this social classification, coloniality permeates all aspects of social existence and gives rise to new social and geocultural identities (Quijano 2000b: 342). “America” and “Europe” are among the new geocultural identities. “European,” “Indian,” “African” are among the “racial” identities. This classification is “the deepest and most enduring expression of colonial domination” (Quijano 2001–2002: 1). With the expansion of European colonialism, the classification was imposed on the population of the planet. Since then, it has permeated every area of social existence and it constitutes the most effective form of material and intersubjective social domination. Thus, “coloniality” does not just refer to “racial” classification. It is an encompassing phenomenon, since it is one of the axes of the system of power and as such it permeates all control of sexual access, collective authority, labor, subjectivity/intersubjectivity and the production of knowledge from within these intersubjective relations. Or, alternatively, all control over sex, subjectivity, authority and labor are articulated around it. As I understand the logic of “structural axis” in Quijano’s usage, the element that serves as an axis becomes constitutive of and constituted by all the forms that relations of power take with respect to control over that particular domain of human existence. Finally, Quijano also makes clear that, though coloniality is related to colonialism, these are distinct as the latter does not necessarily include racist relations of power. Coloniality’s birth and its prolonged and deep extension throughout the planet is tightly related to colonianism (Quijano 2000b: 381).

In Quijano’s model of global capitalist Eurocentered power, “capitalism” refers to the structural articulation of all historically known forms of control of labor or exploitation, slavery, servitude, small independent mercantile production, wage labor, and reciprocity under the hegemony of the capital-wage labor relation.” In this sense, the structuring of the disputes over control of labor are discontinuous: not all labor relations under global, Eurocentered capitalism fall under the capital/wage relation model, though this is the hegemonic model. It is important in beginning to see the reach of the coloniality of power that wage labor has been reserved almost exclusively for white Europeans. The division of labor is thoroughly “racialized” as well as geographically differentiated. Here we see the coloniality of labor as a thorough meshing of labor and “race.”

Quijano understands “modernity,” the other axis of global Eurocentered capitalism, as “the fusing of the experiences of colonialism and coloniality with the necessities of capitalism, creating a specific universe of intersubjective relations of domination under a Eurocentered hegemony” (Quijano 2000b: 343). In characterizing modernity, Quijano focuses on the production of a way of knowing, labeled rational, arising from *within this subjective universe* since the XVII century in the main hegemonic centers of this world system of power (Holland and England). This way of knowing is Eurocentered. By “Eurocentrism” Quijano

understands the cognitive perspective not of Europeans only, but of the Eurocentered world, of those educated under the hegemony of world capitalism. "Eurocentrism naturalizes the experience of people within this model of power" (2000b: 343). The cognitive needs of capitalism and the naturalizing of the identities and relations of coloniality and of the geocultural distribution of world capitalist power have guided the production of this way of knowing. The cognitive needs of capitalism include "measurement, quantification, externalization (or objectification) of what is knowable with respect to the knower so as to control the relations among people and nature and among them with respect to it, in particular the property in means of production." This way of knowing was imposed on the whole of the capitalist world as the only valid rationality and as emblematic of modernity.

Europe was mythologically understood to pre-exist this pattern of power as a world capitalist center that colonized the rest of the world and as such the most advanced moment in the linear, unidirectional, continuous path of the species. A conception of humanity was consolidated according to which the world's population was differentiated in two groups: superior and inferior, rational and irrational, primitive and civilized, traditional and modern. "Primitive" referred to a prior time in the history of the species, in terms of evolutionary time. Europe came to be mythically conceived as preexisting colonial, global, capitalism and as having achieved a very advanced level in the continuous, linear, unidirectional path. Thus, from within this mythical starting point, other human inhabitants of the planet came to be mythically conceived not as dominated through conquest, nor as inferior in terms of wealth or political power, but as an anterior stage in the history of the species, in this unidirectional path. That is the meaning of the qualification "primitive" (Quijano 2000b: 343–344).

We can see then the structural fit of the elements constituting Eurocentered, global capitalism in Quijano's model (pattern). Modernity and coloniality afford a complex understanding of the organization of labor. They enable us to see the fit between the thorough racialization of the division of labor and the production of knowledge. The pattern allows for heterogeneity and discontinuity. Quijano argues that the structure is not a closed totality (Quijano 2000b: 355).

We are now in a position to approach the question of the intersectionality of race and gender in Quijano's terms. I think the logic of "structural axes" does more and less than intersectionality. Intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other. The move to intersect the categories has been motivated by the difficulties in making visible those who are dominated and victimized in terms of both categories. Though everyone in capitalist Eurocentered modernity is both raced and gendered, not everyone is dominated or victimized in terms of them. Crenshaw and other women of color feminists have argued that the categories

have been understood as homogenous and as picking out the dominant in the group as the norm, thus “women” picks out white bourgeois women, “men” picks out white bourgeois men, “black” picks out black heterosexual men, and so on. It becomes logically clear then that the logic of categorial separation distorts what exists at the intersection, such as violence against women of color. Given the construction of the categories, the intersection misconstrues women of color. So, once intersectionality shows us what is missing, we have ahead of us the task of reconceptualizing the logic of the “intersection” so as to avoid separability. It is only when we perceive gender and race as intermeshed or fused that we actually see women of color.

The logic of structural axes shows gender as constituted by and constituting the coloniality of power. In that sense, there is no gender/race separability in Quijano’s model. I think he has the logic of it right. But the axis of coloniality is not sufficient to pick out all aspects of gender. What aspects of gender are shown depends on how gender is actually conceptualized in the model. In Quijano’s model (pattern), gender seems to be contained within the organization of that “basic area of existence” that Quijano calls “sex, its resources, and products.” That is, there is an account of gender within the framework that is not itself placed under scrutiny and that is too narrow and overly biologized as it presupposes sexual dimorphism, heterosexuality, patriarchal distribution of power, and so on.

Though I have not found a characterization of gender in what I have read of his work, Quijano seems to me to imply that gender difference is constituted in the disputes over control of sex, its resources, and products. Differences are shaped through the manner in which this control is organized. Sex, he understands, as biological attributes that become elaborated as social categories. He contrasts the biological quality of sex with phenotype, which does not include differential biological attributes. “The color of one’s skin, the shape of one’s eyes and hair “do not have any relation to the biological structure” (Quijano 2000b: 373). Sex, on the other hand seems unproblematically biological to Quijano. He characterizes the “coloniality of *gender* relations,” that is, the ordering of gender relations around the axis of the coloniality of power, as follows:

1. In the whole of the colonial world, the norms and formal-ideal patterns of sexual behavior of the genders and consequently the patterns of familial organization of “Europeans” were directly founded on the “racial” classification: the sexual freedom of males and the fidelity of women were, in the whole of the Eurocentered world, the counterpart of the “free” – that is, not paid as in prostitution – access of “white” men to “black” women and “indias” in America, “black” women in Africa, and other “colors” in the rest of the subjected world. [*En todo el mundo colonial, las normas y los patrones formal-ideales de comportamiento sexual de los géneros y en consecuencia los patrones de organización familiar de los “europeos” fueron directamente*

fundados en la clasificación “racial”: la libertad sexual de los varones y la fidelidad de las mujeres fue, en todo el mundo eurocentrado, la contrapartida del “libre”-esto es, no pagado como en la prostitución, mas antigua en la historia – acceso sexual de los varones “blancos” a las mujeres “negras” e “indias”, en America, “negras” en el Africa, y de los otros “colores” en el resto del mundo sometido.]

2. In Europe, instead, it was the prostitution of women, that was the counterpart of the bourgeois family pattern. [*En Europa, en cambio, fue la prostitución de las mujeres la contrapartida del patrón de la familia burguesa.*]

3. Familial unity and integration, imposed as the axes of the model of the bourgeois family in the Eurocentered world, were the counterpart of the continued disintegration of the parent-children units in the “non-white” “races”, which could be held and distributed as property not just as merchandise but as “animals.” This was particularly the case among “black” slaves, since this form of domination over them was more explicit, immediate, and prolonged. [*La unidad e integración familiar, impuestas como ejes del patrón de familia burguesa del mundo eurocentrado, fue la contrapartida de la continuada desintegración de las unidades de parentesco padres-hijos en las “razas” no-“blancas,” apropiables y distribuibles no solo como mercancías sino directamente como “animales. En particular, entre los esclavos “negros,” ya que sobre ellos esa forma de dominación fue la mas explícita, inmediata y prolongada.*]

4. The hypocrisy characteristically underlying the norms and formal-ideal values of the bourgeois family are not, since then, alien to the coloniality of power. [*La característica hipocresía subyacente a las normas y valores formal-ideales de la familia burguesa, no es, desde entonces, ajena a la colonialidad del poder.*]

(Quijano 2000b: 378) [my translation]

As we see in this complex and important quote, Quijano’s framework restricts gender to the organization of sex, its resources and products and he seems to make a presupposition as to who controls access and who becomes constituted as “resources”. Quijano appears to take it for granted that the disputes over control of sex is a dispute among men, about men’s control of resources who are thought to be female. Men do not seem understood as the “resources” in sexual encounters. Women are not thought to be disputing for control over sexual access. The differences are thought of in terms of how society reads reproductive biology.

Intersexuality

In “Definitional Dilemmas” Julie Greenberg (2002) tells us that legal institutions have the power to assign individuals to a particular racial or sexual category.

Sex is still presumed to be binary and easily determinable by an analysis of biological factors. Despite anthropological and medical studies to the contrary, society presumes an unambiguous binary sex paradigm in which all individuals can be classified neatly as male or female. (p. 112)

She argues that throughout U.S. history the law has failed to recognize intersexuals, in spite of the fact that 1-4% of the world's population is intersexed, that is they do not fit neatly into unambiguous sex categories,

they have some biological indicators that are *traditionally* associated with males and some biological indicators that are *traditionally* associated with females. (my emphasis) The manner in which the law defines the terms *male*, *female*, and *sex* will have a profound impact on these individuals. (p. 112)

The assignments reveal that what is understood to be biological sex, is socially constructed. During the late 19th century until WWI, reproductive function was considered a woman's essential characteristic. The presence or absence of ovaries was the ultimate criterion of sex (p. 113). But there are a large number of factors that can enter in "establishing someone's 'official' sex:" chromosomes, gonads, external morphology, internal morphology, hormonal patterns, phenotype, assigned sex, self-identified sex (p. 112). At present, chromosomes and genitalia enter into the assignment, but in a manner that reveals biology is thoroughly interpreted and itself surgically constructed.

XY infants with "inadequate" penises must be turned into girls because society believes the essence of manhood is the ability to penetrate a vagina and urinate while standing. XX infants with "adequate" penises, however, are assigned the females sex because society and many in the medical community believe that the essence of womanhood is the ability to bear children rather than the ability to engage in satisfactory sexual intercourse. (p. 114)

Intersexed individuals are frequently surgically and hormonally turned into males or females. These factors are taken into account in legal cases involving the right to change the sex designation on official documents, the ability to state a claim for employment discrimination based upon sex, the right to marry (p. 115). Greenberg reports the complexities and variety of decisions on sexual assignment in each case. The law does not recognize intersexual status. Though the law permits self-identification of one's sex in certain documents, "for the most part, legal institutions continue to base sex assignment on the traditional assumptions that sex is binary and can be easily determined by analyzing biological factors" (p. 119).

Julie Greenberg's work enables me to point out an important assumption in the model that Quijano offers us. This is important because sexual dimorphism has been an important characteristic of what I call "the light side" of the colonial/modern gender system. Those in the "dark side" were not necessarily understood dimorphically. Sexual fears of colonizers led them to imagine the indigenous people of the Americas as hermaphrodites or intersexed, with large penises and breasts with flowing milk. But as Gunn Allen and others make clear, intersexed individuals were recognized in many tribal societies prior to colonization without assimilation to the sexual binary. It is important to consider the changes that colonization brought to understand the scope of the organization of sex and gender under colonialism and in Eurocentered global capitalism. If the latter did only recognize sexual dimorphism for white bourgeois males and females, it certainly does not follow that the sexual division is based on biology. The cosmetic and substantive corrections to biology make very clear that "gender" is antecedent to the "biological" traits and gives them meaning. The naturalizing of sexual differences is another product of the modern use of science that Quijano points out in the case of "race." It is important to see that not all different traditions correct and normalize inter-sexed people. So, as with other assumption characteristics it is important to ask how sexual dimorphism served and serves Eurocentered global capitalist domination/exploitation.

When egalitarianism takes a non-gendered or a gynecentric form

As Eurocentered, global capitalism was constituted through colonization, gender differentials were introduced where there were none. Oyeronke Oyewumi shows us that the oppressive gender system that was imposed on Yoruba society did a lot more than transform the organization of reproduction. Her argument shows us that the scope of the system of gender imposed through colonialism encompasses the subordination of females in every aspect of life. Thus Quijano's understanding of the scope of gendering in Eurocentered, global, capitalism is much too narrow. Paula Gunn Allen argues that many Native American tribes were matriarchal, recognized more than two genders, recognized "third" gendering and homosexuality positively and understood gender in egalitarian terms rather than in the terms of subordination that Eurocentered capitalism imposed on them. She enables us to see that the scope of the gender differentials was much more encompassing and it did not rest on biology. Gunn Allen also shows us a construction of knowledge and an approach to understanding "reality" that is gynecentric and that counters the knowledge production of modernity. Thus she points us in the direction of recognizing the gendered construction of knowledge in modernity, another aspect of the hidden scope of "gender" in Quijano's account of the processes constituting the coloniality of gender.

Non-gendered egalitarianism

In her *The Invention of Women*, Oyéronké Oyewùmí, raises questions about the validity of patriarchy as a valid transcultural category (p. 20). She does so, not but contrasting patriarchy and matriarchy, but by arguing that “gender was not an organizing principle in Yoruba society prior to colonization by the West” (p. 31). No gender system was in place. Indeed she tells us that gender has “become important in Yoruba studies not as an artifact of Yoruba life but because Yoruba life, past and present, has been translated into English to fit the Western pattern of body-reasoning” (p. 30). The assumption that Yoruba society included gender as an organizing principle is another case “of Western dominance in the documentation and interpretation of the world, one that is facilitated by the West’s global material dominance (p. 32). She tells us that “researchers always find gender when they look for it” (p. 31).

The usual gloss of the Yoruba categories *obinrin* and *okunrin* as “female/woman” and male/man,” respectively, is a mistranslation. These categories are neither binarily opposed nor hierarchical. (pp. 32–33)

The prefixes *obin* and *okun* specify a variety of anatomy. Oyewumi translates the prefixes as referring to the anatomic male and the anatomic female, shortened as *anamale* and *anafemale*. It is important to note that she does not understand these categories as binarily opposed.

Oyewumi understands gender as introduced by the West as a tool of domination that designates two binarily opposed and hierarchical social categories. Women (the gender term) is not defined through biology, though it is assigned to *anafemales*. Women are defined in relation to men, the norm. Women are those who do not have a penis; those who do not have power; those who cannot participate in the public arena (p. 34). None of this was true of Yoruba *anafemales* prior to colonization.

The imposition of the European state system, with its attendant legal and bureaucratic machinery, is the most enduring legacy of European colonial rule in Africa. One tradition that was exported to Africa during this period was the exclusion of women from the newly created colonial public sphere... (p. 123)

The very process by which females were categorized and reduced to “women” made them ineligible for leadership roles... The emergence of women as an identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations, resulted, in part, from the imposition of a patriarchal colonial state. For females, colonization was a twofold process of racial inferiorization and gender subordination. The creation of “women” as

a category was one the very first accomplishments of the colonial state. It is not surprising, therefore, that it was unthinkable for the colonial government to recognize female leaders among the peoples they colonized, such as the Yorùbá (p. 124). The transformation of state power to male-gender power was accomplished at one level by the exclusion of women from state structures. This was in sharp contrast to Yorùbá state organization, in which power was not gender-determined. (p. 125)

Oyewumi recognizes two crucial processes in colonization, the imposition of races with the accompanying inferiorization of Africans, and the inferiorization of anafemales. The inferiorization of anafemales extended very widely from exclusion from leadership roles to loss of property over land, and other important economic domains. Oyewumi notes that the introduction of the Western gender system was accepted by Yoruba males, who thus colluded with the inferiorization of anafemales. So, when we think of the indifference of non-white men to the violences exercised against non-white women, we can begin to have some sense of the collaboration between anamales and Western colonials against anafemales. Oyewumi makes clear that both men and women resisted cultural changes at different levels. Thus while

In the West the challenge of feminism is how to proceed from the gender-saturated category of “women” to the fullness of an unsexed humanity. For Yoruba obinrin, the challenge is obviously different because at certain levels in the society and in some spheres, the notion of an “unsexed humanity” is neither a dream to aspire to nor a memory to be realized. It exists, albeit in concatenation with the reality of separate and hierarchical sexes imposed during the colonial period. (p. 156)

We can see then that the scope of the coloniality of gender is much too narrow. Quijano assumes much of the terms of the modern/colonial gender system’s hegemonic “light” side in defining the scope of gender. I have gone outside the coloniality of gender so as to think of what it hides, or disallows from consideration, about the very scope of the gender system of Eurocentered global capitalism. So, though I think that the coloniality of gender, as Quijano pointedly describes it, shows us very important aspects of the intersection of “race” and “gender,” it follows rather than discloses the erasure of colonized women from most areas of social life. It accommodates rather than disrupt the narrowing of gender domination. Oyewumi’s rejection of the gender lens in characterizing the inferiorization of anafemales in modern colonization makes clear the extent and scope of the inferiorization. Her understanding of gender, the colonial, Eurocentered, capitalist construction, is much more encompassing

than Quijano's. She enables us to see the economic, political, cognitive inferiorization as well as the inferiorization of anafemales regarding reproductive control.

Gynecratic egalitarianism

To assign to this great being the position of "fertility goddess" is exceedingly demeaning: it trivializes the tribes and it trivializes the power of woman (Gunn Allen [1986] 1992: 14).

As she characterizes many Native American tribes as gynecratic, Paula Gunn Allen emphasizes the centrality of the spiritual in all aspects of Indian life and thus a very different intersubjectivity from within which knowledge is produced than that of the coloniality of knowledge in modernity. Many American Indian tribes "thought that the primary potency in the universe was female, and that understanding authorizes all tribal activities" (p. 26). Old Spider Woman, Corn Woman, Serpent Woman, Thought Woman are some of the names of powerful creators. For the gynecratic tribes, Woman is at the center and "no thing is sacred without her blessing, her thinking" (p. 13). Replacing this gynecratic spiritual plurality with one supreme male being as Christianity did, was crucial in subduing the tribes. Allen proposes that transforming Indian tribes from egalitarian and gynecratic to hierarchical and patriarchal "requires meeting four objectives:

1. The primacy of female as creator is displaced and replaced by male-gendered creators (generally generic). (p. 41)
2. Tribal governing institutions and the philosophies that are their foundation are destroyed, as they were among the Iriquois and the Cherokee. (p. 41)
3. The people "are pushed off their lands, deprived of their economic livelihood, and forced to curtail or end altogether pursuits on which their ritual system, philosophy, and subsistence depend. Now dependent on white institutions for their survival, tribal systems can ill afford gynocracy when patriarchy – that is, survival – requires male dominance." (p. 42)
4. The clan structure "must be replaced in fact if not in theory, by the nuclear family. By this ploy, the women clan heads are replaced by elected male officials and the psychic net that is formed and maintained by the nature of nonauthoritarian gynecentricity grounded in respect for diversity of gods and people are thoroughly rent." (p. 42)

Thus, for Allen, the inferiorization of Indian females is thoroughly tied to the domination and transformation of tribal life. The destruction of the gynocracies

is crucial to the “decimation of populations through starvation, disease, and disruption of all social, spiritual, and economic structures ...” (p. 42) The program of degynocratization requires impressive “image and information control.” Thus

Recasting archaic tribal versions of tribal history, customs, institutions and the oral tradition increases the likelihood that the patriarchal revisionist versions of tribal life, skewed or simply made up by patriarchal non-Indians and patriarchalized Indians, will be incorporated into the spiritual and popular traditions of the tribes. (p. 42)

Among the features of the Indian society targeted for destruction were the two-sided complementary social structure; the understanding of gender; the economic distribution which often followed the system of reciprocity. The two sides of the complementary social structure included an internal female chief and an external male chief. The internal chief presided over the band, village, or tribe, maintained harmony and administered domestic affairs. The red, male, chief presided over mediations between the tribe and outsiders (p. 18). Gender was not understood primarily in biological terms. Most individuals fit into tribal gender roles “on the basis of proclivity, inclination, and temperament. The Yuma had a tradition of gender designation based on dreams; a female who dreamed of weapons became a male for all practical purposes” (p. 196).

Like Oyewumi, Gunn Allen is interested in the collaboration between some Indian men and whites in undermining the power of women. It is important for us to think about these collaborations as we think of the question of indifference to the struggles of women in racialized communities against multiple forms of violence against them and the communities. The white colonizer constructed a powerful inside force as colonized men were coopted into patriarchal roles. Gunn Allen details the transformations of the Iroquois and Cherokee gynocracies and the role of Indian men in the passage to patriarchy. The British took Cherokee men to England and gave them an education in the ways of the English. These men participated during the time of the Removal Act.

In an effort to stave off removal, the Cherokee in the early 1800s under the leadership of men such as Elias Boudinot, Major Ridge, and John Ross, and others, drafted a constitution that disenfranchised women and blacks. Modeled after the Constitution of the United States, whose favor they were attempting to curry, and in conjunction with Christian sympathizers to the Cherokee cause, the new Cherokee constitution relegated women to the position of chattel. (p. 37)

Cherokee women had had the power to wage war, to decide the fate of captives, to speak to the men's council, they had the right to inclusion in public policy decisions, the right to choose whom and whether to marry, the right to bear arms. The Women's Council was politically and spiritually powerful (pp. 36–37). Cherokee women lost all these powers and rights, as the Cherokee were removed and patriarchal arrangements were introduced. The Iroquois shifted from a Mother-centered, Mother-right people organized politically under the authority of the Matrons, to a patriarchal society when the Iroquois became a subject people. The feat was accomplished with the collaboration of Handsome Lake and his followers (p. 33).

According to Allen, many of the tribes were gynocratic, among them the Susquehanna, Hurons, Iroquois, Cherokee, Pueblo, Navajo, Narragansett, Coastal Algonkians, Montagnais. She also tells us that among the 88 tribes that recognized homosexuality, those who recognized homosexuals in positive terms included the Apache, Navajo, Winnebago, Cheyenne, Pima, Crow, Shoshoni, Paiute, Osage, Acoma, Zuñi, Sioux, Pawnee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, Illinois, Mohave, Shasta, Aleut, Sac and Fox, Iowa, Kansas, Yuma, Aztec, Tlingit, Maya, Naskapi, Ponca, Maricopa, Lamath, Quinault, Yuki, Chilula, Kamia. Twenty of these tribes included specific references to lesbianism.

Michael J. Horswell (2003) comments usefully on the use of the term "third gender." He tells that "third gender" does not mean that there are three genders. It is rather a way of breaking with the sex and gender bipolarity. "The 'third' is emblematic of other possible combinations than the dimorphic. The term "berdache" is sometimes used for "third gender." Horswell tells us that male berdache have been documented in nearly 150 North American societies and female berdache in half as many groups (p. 27). He also comments that sodomy, including ritual sodomy, was recorded in Andean societies and many other native societies in the Americas (p. 27). The Nahuas and Mayas also reserved a role for ritualized sodomy (Sigal 2003: 104). It is interesting that Sigal (2003) tells us that the Spanish saw sodomy as sinful, but Spanish law condemned the active partner in sodomy to criminal punishment, not the passive. In Spanish popular culture, sodomy was racialized by connecting the practice to the Moors and the passive partner was condemned and seen as equal to a Moor. Spanish soldiers were seen as the active partners to the passive Moors (pp. 102–104).

Allen's work not only enables us to see how narrow Quijano's conception of gender is in terms of the organization of the economy, and the organization of collective authority, she also enables us to see that the production of knowledge is gendered, the very conception of reality at every level. She also supports the questioning of biology in the construction of gender differences and introduces the important question of gender roles being chosen and dreamt. But importantly, Allen also shows us that the heterosexuality characteristic of the modern/colonial construction of gender relations, is produced,

mythically constructed. But heterosexuality is not just biologized in a fictional way, it is also compulsory and it permeates the whole of the coloniality of gender, in the renewed, large sense. In this sense, global Eurocentered capitalism is heterosexualist. I think it is important to see, as we understand the depth and force of violence in the production of both the “light” and the “dark” sides of the colonial/modern gender system, that this heterosexuality has been consistently perverse, violent, demeaning, a turning of people into animals, and the turning of white women into reproducers of “the race” and “the class.” Horswell’s and Sigal’s work complements Allen’s, particularly in understanding the presence of sodomy and male homosexuality in colonial and pre-colonial America.

The colonial/modern gender System

Understanding the place of gender in pre-colonial societies is pivotal to understanding the nature and scope of changes in the social structure that the processes constituting colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism imposed. Those changes were introduced through slow, discontinuous, and heterogeneous processes that violently inferiorized colonized women. The gender system introduced was one thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power. Understanding the place of gender in pre-colonial societies is also pivotal in understanding the extent and importance of the gender system in disintegrating communal relations, egalitarian relations, ritual thinking, collective decision making, collective authority, and economies. And thus in understanding the extent to which the imposition of this gender system was as constitutive of the coloniality of power as the coloniality of power was constitutive of it. The logic of the relation between them is of mutual constitution. But it should be clear by now that the colonial, modern, gender system cannot exist without the coloniality of power, since the classification of the population in terms of race is a necessary condition of its possibility.

To think the scope of the gender system of Eurocentered global capitalism it is necessary to understand the extent to which the *very process of narrowing* of the concept of gender to the control of sex, its resources, and products constitutes gender domination. To understand this narrowing and to understand the intermeshing of racialization and gendering, it is important to think whether the social arrangements prior to colonization regarding the “sexes” gave differential meaning to them across all areas of existence. That enables us to see whether control over labor, subjectivity/intersubjectivity, collective authority, sex – Quijano’s “areas of existence” – were themselves gendered. Given the coloniality of power, I think we can also say that having a “dark” and a “light side” is characteristic of the co-construction of the coloniality of power and the colonial/modern gender system. Considering critically both

biological dimorphism and the position that gender socially constructs biological sex is pivotal to understand the scope, depth, and characteristics of the colonial/modern gender system. The sense is that the reduction of gender to the private, to control over sex and its resources and products is a matter of ideology, of the cognitive production of modernity that understood race as gendered and gender as raced in particularly differential ways for Europeans/"whites" and colonized/"non-white" peoples. Race is no more mythical and fictional than gender, both powerful fictions.

In the development of 20th century feminisms, the connection between gender, class, heterosexuality as racialized was not made explicit. That feminism centered its struggle and its ways of knowing and theorizing against a characterization of women as fragile, weak in both body and mind, secluded in the private, and sexually passive. But it did not bring to consciousness that those characteristics only constructed white bourgeois womanhood. Indeed, beginning from that characterization, white bourgeois feminists theorized white womanhood as if all women were white.

It is part of their history that only white bourgeois women have consistently counted as women so described in the West. Females excluded from that description were not just their subordinates. They were also understood to be animals in a sense that went further than the identification of white women with nature, infants, and small animals. They were understood as animals in the deep sense of "without gender," sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned from animals into various modified versions of "women" as it fit the processes of Eurocentered global capitalism. Thus heterosexual rape of Indian women, African slave women, coexisted with concubinage, as well as with the imposition of the heterosexual understanding of gender relations among the colonized – when and as it suited Eurocentered, global capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women. But it is clear from the work of Oyewumi and Allen that there was no extension of the status of white women to colonized women even when they were turned into similes of bourgeois white women. Colonized females got the inferior status of gendering as women, without any of the privileges accompanying that status for white bourgeois women. Though, the history presented by Oyewumi and Allen should make clear to white bourgeois women that their status is much inferior to that of Native American women and Yoruba women before colonization. Oyewumi and Allen also make clear that the egalitarian understanding of the relation between anafemales, anamales, and "third" gender people has not left the imagination nor the practices of Native Americans and Yoruba. But these are matters of resistance to domination.

Erasing any history, including oral history, of the relation of white to non-white women, white feminism wrote white women large. Even though

historically and contemporarily white bourgeois women knew perfectly well how to orient themselves in an organization of life that pitted them for very different treatment than non-white or working class women. White feminist struggle became one against the positions, roles, stereotypes, traits, desires imposed on white bourgeois women's subordination. No one else's gender oppression was countenanced. They understood women as inhabiting white bodies but did not bring that racial qualification to articulation or clear awareness. That is, they did not understand themselves in intersectional terms, at the intersection of race, gender, and other forceful marks of subjection or domination. Because they did not perceive these deep differences they did not see a need for creating coalitions. They presumed a sisterhood, a bond given with the subjection of gender.

Historically, the characterization of white European women as fragile and sexually passive opposed them to non-white, colonized women, including women slaves, who were characterized along a gamut of sexual aggression and perversion, and as strong enough to do any sort of labor. The following description of slave women and of slave work in the U.S. South makes clear that African slave females were not considered fragile or weak.

First came, led by an old driver carrying a whip, forty of the largest and strongest women I ever saw together; they were all in a simple uniform dress of a bluish check stuff, the skirts reaching little below the knee; their legs and feet were bare; they carried themselves loftily, each having a hoe over the shoulder, and walking with a free, powerful swing, like *chasseurs* on the march. Behind came the cavalry, thirty strong, mostly men, but a few of them women, two of whom rode astride on the plow mules. A lean and vigilant white overseer, on a brisk pony, brought up the rear.

(Takaki 1993: 111)

The hands are required to be in the cotton field as soon as it is light in the morning, and, with the exception of ten or fifteen minutes, which is given to them at noon to swallow their allowance of cold bacon, they are not permitted to be a moment idle until it is too dark to see, and when the moon is full, they often times labor till the middle of the night.

(Takak 1993i: 111)

Patricia Hill Collins provides a clear sense of the dominant understanding of Black women as sexually aggressive and the genesis of that stereotype in slavery:

The image of Jezebel originated under slavery when Black women were portrayed as being, to use Jewelle Gomez' words, "sexually aggressive wet nurses" (Clarke et al. 1983: 99). Jezebel's function was to relegate all Black

women to the category of sexually aggressive women, thus providing a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by White men typically reported by Black slave women (Davis 1981; D. White 1985). Jezebel served yet another function. If Black slave women could be portrayed as having excessive sexual appetites, then increased fertility should be the expected outcome. By suppressing the nurturing that African-American women might give their own children which would strengthen Black family networks, and by forcing Black women to work in the field, “wet nurse” White children, and emotionally nurture their White owners, slave owners effectively tied the controlling images of jezebel and mammy to the economic exploitation inherent in the institution of slavery.

(Hill Collins 1979: 82)

But it is not just black slave women who were placed outside the scope of white bourgeois femininity. In *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock (1995) as she tells us of Columbus’ depiction of the earth as a woman’s breast, evokes the “long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment” (p. 22).

For centuries, the uncertain continents – Africa, the Americas, Asia – were figured in European lore as libidiously eroticized. Travelers’ tales abounded with visions of the monstrous sexuality of far-off lands, where, as legend had it, men sported gigantic penises and women consorted with apes, feminized men’s breasts flowed with milk and militarized women lopped theirs off. (p. 22)

Within this porno tropic tradition, women figured as the epitome of sexual aberration and excess. Folklore saw them, even more than the men, as given to a lascivious venery so promiscuous as to border on the bestial. (p. 22)

McClintock describes the colonial scene depicted in a drawing (ca. 1575) in which Jan van der Straet “portrays the ‘discovery’ of America as an eroticized encounter between a man and a woman” (p. 25).

Roused from her sensual languor by the epic newcomer, the indigenous woman extends an inviting hand, insinuating sex and submission... Vespucci, the godlike arrival, is destined to inseminate her with his male seeds of civilization, fructify the wilderness and quell the riotous scenes of cannibalism in the background... The cannibals appear to be female and are spit roasting a human leg. (p. 26)

In the 19th century, McClintock tells us “sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power” (p. 47). With

the development of evolutionary theory “anatomical criteria were sought for determining the relative position of races in the human series” (p. 50).

The English middle-class male was placed at the pinnacle of evolutionary hierarchy. White English middle class women followed. Domestic workers, female miners and working class prostitutes were stationed on the threshold between the white and black races. (p. 56)

Yen Le Espiritu (1997) tells us that

representations of gender and sexuality figure strongly in the articulation of racism. Gender norms in the United States are premised upon the experiences of middle-class men and women of European origin. These Eurocentric-constructed gender norms form a backdrop of expectations for American men and women of color – expectations which racism often precludes meeting. In general, men of color are viewed not as the protector, but rather the aggressor – a threat to white women. And women of color are seen as over sexualized and thus undeserving of the social and sexual protection accorded to white middleclass women. For Asian American men and women, their exclusion from white-based cultural notions of the masculine and the feminine has taken seemingly contrasting forms: Asian men have been cast as both hypermasculine (the “Yellow Peril”) and effeminate (the “model minority”); and Asian women have been rendered both superfeminine (the “China Doll”) and castrating (the “Dragon Lady”).

(Espiritu 1997: 135)

This gender system congeals as Europe advances the colonial project(s). It begins to take shape during the Spanish and Portuguese colonial adventures and becomes full blown in late modernity. The gender system has a “light” and a “dark” side. The light side constructs gender and gender relations hegemonically. It only orders the lives of white bourgeois men and women, and it constitutes the modern/colonial meaning of “men” and “women.” Sexual purity and passivity are crucial characteristics of the white bourgeois females who reproduce the class, and the colonial, and racial standing of bourgeois, white men. But equally important is the banning of white bourgeois women from the sphere of collective authority, from the production of knowledge, from most of control over the means of production. Weakness of mind and body are important in the reduction and seclusion of white bourgeois women from most domains of life, most areas of human existence. The gender system is heterosexualist, as heterosexuality permeates racialized patriarchal control over production, including knowledge production, and over collective authority.

Heterosexuality is both compulsory and perverse among white bourgeois men and women since the arrangement does significant violence to the powers and rights of white bourgeois women and it serves to reproduce control over production and. White bourgeois women are inducted into this reduction through bounded sexual access.

The “dark” side of the gender system was and is thoroughly violent. We have begun to see the deep reductions of anamales, anafemales, and “third” genders from their ubiquitous participation in ritual, decision making, economics; their reduction to animality, to forced sex with white colonizers, to such deep labor exploitation that often people died working. Quijano tells us

The vast Indian genocide of the first decades of colonization was not caused, in the main, by the violence of the conquest, nor by the diseases that the conquerors carried. Rather it was due to the fact that the Indians were used as throwaway labor, forced to work till death.

(My translation) (Quijano 2000a)

I want to mark the connection between the work that I am referencing here as I introduce the modern colonial gender system’s “dark” side, and Quijano’s coloniality of power. Unlike white feminists who have not focused on colonialism, these theorists very much see the differential construction of gender along racial lines. To some extent these theorists understand “gender” in a wider sense than Quijano, thus they think not only of control over sex, its resources and products, but also of labor as both racialized and gendered. That is, they see an articulation between labor, sex, and the coloniality of power. Oyewumi and Allen help us realize the full extent of the reach of the colonial/modern gender system into the construction of collective authority, all aspects of the relation between capital and labor, and the construction of knowledge.

There is important work done and to be done in detailing the dark and light sides of what I am calling the “modern colonial gender system.” In introducing this arrangements in very large strokes, I mean to begin a conversation and a project of collaborative, participatory, research and popular education to begin to see in its details the long sense of the processes of the colonial/gender system enmeshed in the coloniality of power into the present, to uncover collaboration, and to call each other to reject it in its various guises as we recommit to communal integrity in a liberatory direction. We need to understand the organization of the social so as to make visible our collaboration with systematic racialized gender violence, so as to come to an inevitable recognition of it in our maps of reality.

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1.1

On Gender and Its 'Otherwise'

Catherine Walsh

Is gender a tool of the master's house?

–Betty Ruth Lozano 2010

Race is no more mythical and fictional than gender, both powerful fictions.

–Maria Lugones 2012

Introduction

Maria Lugones' seminal essay 'The Coloniality of Gender' (2008) continues to serve as an impetus for discussion and debate within academic and activist spheres, and among those who ally themselves with the analytical framework of (de)coloniality. With this text, Lugones makes visible the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting women and men of colour in all domains of existence. In so doing, she shows the intricate link between gender and race, and she reveals how this system has worked to disrupt and fracture bonds of practical solidarity and shared transformational struggle.

In what follows, I engage several of the central concerns in Lugones' text: coloniality and its matrix of power; gender and patriarchy; and transits within and beyond dimorphic binaries. My aim is two-fold. On the one hand, it is to think with these concerns most especially with regard to emergent debates in Abya Yala/Latin America¹ today. And on the other it is to problematize, pluralize and give movement to these spheres, revealing not only their complexities but also, and possibly more importantly, the creative energies that challenge the 500+ years of domination and divide.

Coloniality and its matrix of power

Anibal Quijano's naming of the coloniality of power in the early 1990s afforded, as Lugones maintains, a historical theory of social classification of

the world's population based on the idea of 'race' as constitutive of the 'global, Eurocentered, capitalist model of power'. As she notes, 'it also makes conceptual room for understanding the historical disputes over control of labor, sex, collective authority and intersubjectivity as developing processes of long duration' (Lugones 2008: 3).

In Quijano's conceptualizations, 'race' is the axis from which all other relations of power emanated. Gender, although not directly named, is 'constituted by and constituting the coloniality of power', Lugones says. 'In that sense, there is no gender/race separability in Quijano's model' (p. 4). The problem, she argues, rests not in his linking of gender and race – which makes sense – but in his limited conceptualization of gender as a structure and structuring of power. In Quijano's view, gender domination is narrowed 'to the control of sex, its resources, and products' (Lugones 2008: 12).

What does Lugones offer to Quijano's analytic of the coloniality of power? How does she widen and complicate its frame and construction?

First off, a few details about Anibal Quijano and his viewpoint are useful in understanding coloniality's meaning and significance. He has been a central figure in Latin American critical and political thought for more than 50 years. His introduction in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s of the concept of structural heterogeneity to describe Latin American socioeconomic and political reality, and his contributions to dependency theory and to critiques of imperial and colonial development, are well known, reflective of a particular Latin American brand of Marxism aligned with his Peruvian co-patriot José Carlos Mariátegui. With the introduction of the conceptual and structural framework of the coloniality of power in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Quijano challenged the historical invisibility of 'race' in Latin American politics and thought, and the then central tenets of class-based theory and analysis, including in his own work. His description of how the invention of 'race' served as a fundamental component of colonial domination and/as capitalism as a Eurocentred world system of power afforded a radically distinct framework for understanding ongoing social, cultural, cognitive, ontological, political and economic patterns or axes of power. While Quijano understands these axes as intertwined, the colonial imposition of a hierarchical system of social classification that was simultaneously racial (European as white, Indian, and African as black) and geocultural geopolitical ('the USA' and 'Europe') makes the idea of 'race' crucial. For Quijano, 'all control over sex, subjectivity, authority, and labor are articulated around it' (Lugones 2008: 3). This analytic has a wide base of use today, orienting analyses, perspectives and struggles across the globe.

As an analytic, the coloniality of power is not a closed frame that portends to depict all forms of modern/colonial power and structural domination over and on existence. Rather, it invites use. And it provokes considerations and reflections on and expansions of its domains and operation. In part, this is

Lugones' project. She uses, widens and expands Quijano's lens. But she also shows how this lens reflects and refracts a heteronormative and male-centred perspective that simplifies, biologizes and dimorphizes gender.

Lugones' interest is, on the one hand, in the intersectionality of race and gender. For her, intersectionality helps reveal what is not seen when race and gender are treated as separate (and often homogeneous) categories. It makes visible those who have been dominated and victimized in terms of both categories and their fusion, most particularly women of colour. 'The axis of coloniality is not sufficient to pick out all aspects of gender,' Lugones says (p. 4). Intersectionality, in this sense, affords another way to read coloniality that contributes to a deeper analytic understanding of its differential operation. 'Though everyone in capitalist Eurocentred modernity is both raced and gendered, not everyone is dominated or victimized in terms of them' (Lugones 2008: 4). As such, a reconceptualization of the logic of the intersection is a necessary step in broadening and complicating both coloniality's matrix of power and its analytic. Bringing these two frameworks – and their 'thinkers' (i.e., women of colour feminists, critical race theorists, and intellectuals from the project of modernity/(de)coloniality) – into conversation and advancing the articulation are part of Lugones' contribution not just to theoretical analyses but also, and more importantly, to liberatory and decolonial struggles.

Yet Lugones' interest and contribution with regard to coloniality do not end there. In her essay she also opens debate and reflection on the idea of 'gender' itself, and on the existence and operation of what she terms the 'colonial/modern gender system', a system 'thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power' (p. 12). While I will more closely consider this idea and system later, my interest here is to highlight once again Lugones' thinking with coloniality as Quijano posed it. Despite the limitations she sees in Quijano's framework, Lugones does not reject the framework but adds to and builds upon it. 'I mean to begin a conversation and a project of collaborative, participatory research and popular education,' she says, 'to begin to see in its details the long sense of the processes of the colonial/gender system enmeshed in the coloniality of power into the present, to uncover collaboration, and to call each other to reject it in its various guises ...' (Lugones 2008: 16). This statement is reflective of the open, collaborative and pedagogical nature of Lugones' proposition, contribution and project. And it is reflective of her stance as a popular educator and feminist activist; a stance that works to disrupt the masculine authoritative voice so central to Western rationality, challenge perspectives that 'paradigmize' and 'fix' gender, sexuality, race and coloniality, obscuring the ongoing nature of processes and practices of domination, subjection, violence and victimization, and encourage others to join her in mapping, uncovering and analysing the modern colonial gender system. In this sense Lugones does not purport to know the complexity and workings of this system in its entirety.

Rather, and with this text, she begins its exploration and excavation, bringing to light the co-construction of this system and the coloniality of power, and delineating the work to be done. Her subsequent works take these reflections and debates a few steps further.

Lugones, of course, is not alone in bringing to the fore critical considerations of 'gender', in questioning its idea and revealing aspects of its system, yet she continues as a vital interlocutor in these debates. In what follows, I highlight further Lugones' understanding of 'gender' and bring it into conversation and debate with other feminists from Abya Yala.

(En)genderings

For many feminists, including Lugones, the category of gender is important in distinguishing the particular oppression of women. Lugones does not shy away from this category; she complicates it:

White feminist struggle became one against the positions, roles, stereotypes, traits, desires imposed on white bourgeois women's subordination. No one else's gender oppression was countenanced. They understood women as inhabiting white bodies but did not bring that racial qualification to articulation or clear awareness... They presumed a sisterhood, a bond given with the subjection of gender.

(Lugones 2008: 13)

The gender system that Lugones maps has worked to obscure the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality. She reveals its 'light' and 'dark' sides. Biological dimorphism and heterosexual patriarchy are characteristic of the 'light' side. 'Hegemonically these are written large over the meaning of gender' (p. 2). The 'light' side 'constructs gender and gender relations hegemonically', ordering the lives of white bourgeois men and women, and constituting the modern/colonial meaning of 'men' and 'women' in white heterosexualist terms. The 'dark' side, in contrast, is marked by the lived violence of coloniality that endeavoured to convert indigenous people and enslaved Africans – perceived as non-gendered – from animal-like savages into men and women. 'Males became not-human-as-not-men, the human trait, and colonized females became not-human-as-not-women' (Lugones 2012: 73). Women racialized as inferior 'were turned from animals into various versions of "women" as it fit the processes of Eurocentered capitalism', and its heterosexual and patriarchal arrangements of domination and power (Lugones 2012: 13).

For Lugones, gender is a colonial construction. Gender differentials that define women in relation to men within a frame of binary-opposed, dichotomous, antagonistic and hierarchical social categories are composite parts of the

modern/colonial system she describes.² No one would probably deny that the colonial invasion launched a regimen of power in which the idea of 'gender' and patriarchy were key. However, disputes exist among feminists in Abya Yala today about gender and patriarchy's beginnings, and its contribution, or not, to feminist thought.

The notion of 'gender', as the Afro-Colombian feminist Betty Ruth Lozano argues, has come to be recognized as a category with its own epistemological status, explicative of the social relations between men and women, and understood as the cultural representation of sex (Lozano 2010). Here the ontological base of sexual difference is most often left unquestioned (Suarez 2008). 'Gender', in this sense, is most frequently an ethnocentric category. It gives credence to the relations between men and women in Western culture. And it negates the diversity in conception, form and practice of being women, shrouding the diverse ways that peoples and cultures – not white and not of the West – think about their bodies, and challenge in their cosmogonies and lived practice the dualisms and polarities of masculine/feminine and man/woman (see below). The naturalizing of the idea and category of both gender and patriarchy within feminism itself are part and parcel of what Lozano calls 'the modern colonial habitus'.

Feminist thought, in its most generalized terms, has been confronted by black, indigenous, and popular feminisms. The conceptual elaboration of patriarchy has almost always been that of the first world, making it an ethnocentric conception that portends to measure gender relations in all cultures. Without eliminating ethnocentrism, gender and patriarchy become ways to subsume and subordinate the cosmogonies of other worlds (indigenous, black, etc.), to the known (Western) universe.

(Lozano 2010: 13, my translation)

In this sense, Lozano asks whether the categories of gender and patriarchy are not part of the master's arsenal of tools – tools of imperial reason – with which it is impossible to destroy his house (Lozano 2010: 8). Such questioning points to the problems and hegemonic tendencies within feminism itself, including the persistence of Euro-USA-centric frameworks and the continued invisibilization of the differential experience of black and brown women, of bodies not only genderized by patriarchal culture but also subject to the politics of racialization and impoverishment (Espinosa 2009; Gargallo 2013; Lozano 2010). Here the critical query of the Dominican feminist Yuderlys Espinosa is relevant:

When a space has been opened within [Latin American] social movements, and most especially feminism, for the visibility and recuperation of subject positions not recognized before, what bodies have stopped being the object

of the representation of this neglect, and which have remained once more blurred, and why?

(Espinosa 2009: 40)

Similar to Lozano, Espinosa evidences the ongoing nature of the transnational struggle of epistemologies and practices based in ethnocentric ideologies of class, race and heterosexual normativity, and the collaboration between feminisms of both the North and South in maintaining class, race and ethnic privilege. She argues for a decolonial feminism that must, by necessity, assume an explicitly antiracist stand.

Indigenous communitarian feminists in Abya Yala similarly question the ethnocentricity and homogeneity of the gender and patriarchy categories. They also question the idea that patriarchy began with the colonial invasion. These feminists speak of the historical structures of oppression created by patriarchies, in plural; that is, an *entronque* – link, relationship or junction – of patriarchies of ancestral origin and of the West. As the Bolivian Aymara feminist Julieta Paredes notes, ‘gender oppression did not only begin with the Spanish colonizers . . . it also had its own version in precolonial societies and cultures. When the Spanish arrived both visions came together, to the misfortune of we women that inhabit Bolivia. This is the patriarchal *entronque* or junction’ (Paredes 2010: 66, my translation).

Lorena Cabnal, Maya-Xinka communitarian feminist from Guatemala, describes the construction of a communitarian feminist epistemology in Abya Yala that affirms the existence of an ancestral origin patriarchy ‘that is a millennial structural system of oppression against native or indigenous women. This system,’ she argues, ‘establishes its base of oppression from its philosophy that norms cosmogenic heteroreality³ as a mandate, so much for the life of women and men and for both in relation with the cosmos’ (Cabnal 2010: 14). With the penetration of Western patriarchy, Cabnal says, ancestral origin patriarchy was refunctionalized:

In this historical conjuncture, there is a contextualization and a configuring of our own manifestations and expressions that are home for the birth of the evil of racism, later of capitalism, neoliberalism, globalization and the rest. With this I affirm the existence of prior conditions in our native cultures that enabled Western patriarchy to strengthen itself and attack.

(Cabnal 2010: 15, my translation)

For Cabnal, Paredes and other indigenous communitarian feminists, the problem of patriarchy and gender oppression cannot be limited to coloniality and the colonial invasion, nor can its manifestations and expressions be solely understood from the modern/colonial frame. These perspectives, part

of what Cabnal calls the recuperation of the ‘femeology of our female ancestors’ (p. 24), challenge the present-day simplification and recuperation of ancestral cosmologies, and their use by men as mandates to control, order, define and subordinate women. They also challenge feminist perspectives that idealize the gender duality, parity and complementarity characteristic of Andean and Mesoamerican cultures.⁴ Lourdes Huanca, from the organization FEMUCARINAP (La Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Artesanas, Indígenas, Nativas y Asalariadas del Perú), makes clear the lived dangers: today the Andean ideas of duality and parity too often play into the idea of the superiority of the man – of the power of testicles – she contends, justifying the rape of young girls as ‘natural’; men exerting their force over female bodies as nature.⁵

The Argentinian-Brazilian decolonial feminist Rita Segato draws from work with indigenous women in Abya Yala when she also argues for the existence of two patriarchal moments: ‘a patriarchy of low impact proper to the world of the community or village’ and ‘the perverse patriarchy of colonial/modernity’ with its imposition of a Western logic and order, including with relation to sexuality, the body, gender relations and gendered violence:

Contrary to what other authors also critical of coloniality have affirmed (Lugones and Oyěwùmí, among others), it seems to me that gender existed in pre-colonial societies, but in a form different from that of modernity... When this colonial modernity begins to approximate the gender of the community, it dangerously modifies it, intervening in the structures of relations, capturing and reorganizing these relations within while maintaining the semblance of continuity but transforming the sense and meaning of gender and of gender relations.

(Segato 2014: 613, my translation)

For Segato, the idea of gender is tied, in part, to the dimensions that have constructed masculinity since the beginning of humanity – what she calls a ‘patriarchal pre-history of humanity’ characterized by a slow temporality. This masculinity constructs a subject obliged to conduct himself in a certain way, to prove to himself, others and his peers his abilities of resistance, aggressivity and dominion, and to exhibit a package of potencies – warlike, political, sexual, intellectual and moral – that permit him to be recognized and named as a masculine subject with a certain hierarchy over women (Segato 2012):

In the existing modern order... a language that was hierarchical... is transformed in a super-hierarchical order: the hyper-inflation of men in the community environment, the role of men as intermediaries with the (white administered) outside world, the emasculation of these men outside the

community and against the power of white administrators; the hyperinflation and universalization of the public sphere, ancestrally inhabited by men, with the collapse and privatization of the domestic sphere, and the binarization of duality, result of the universalization of one of duality's two terms when constituted as public, in opposition to the other, constituted as private.

(Segato 2012: 15, my translation)

The existing colonial/modern order thus (en)genders a much more complex matrix of power that imbricates gender not only as the limited and particularized sphere of women and men but also as a relational field that crosses all of the social structure and all aspects of social life and living. In this sense, Segato's reading of the interface between the pre-intrusion world and that of colonial modernity, based on the transformations of the system of gender, extends Lugones' arguments:

It is not merely to introduce gender as one of the topics of decolonial criticism or as one of the aspects of domination in the model of coloniality, but instead to give it a real theoretical and epistemic status, as a central category able to illuminate all aspects of the transformation imposed on the lives of communities captured by the new modern colonial order.

(Segato 2012: 12, my translation)

However, in extending Lugones' arguments, Segato places in question not only Lugones' central supposition that gender and patriarchy are colonial constructs of the West, but also one of her primary sources for this argument: Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí. Lugones bases her supposition in large part on Oyèwùmí's text *The Invention of Women* (1997) and Oyèwùmí's contention that gender and patriarchy did not exist in African Yoruba culture but were introduced by the West as a tool of domination. Segato, drawing most especially from the expansion of Yoruba religion and cosmology in Brazil, maintains that the 'gender system is a structuring and crucial factor in the continuity of [Yoruba] tradition, the very core of it':

I deal with what could be called – not without a semantic margin of error – its homosexual and androgynous features, pointed out so many times as a recurrent element in the sociability and sexuality of the cults, not as a separate element but rather as a consequence of a particular construction of the gender system that is not merely a cult's associated attribute among many but constitutes a central and fundamental structure for understanding the universe of Candomblé.

(Segato 2008: 500)

As Segato goes on to say, “The use of gender terms and of family classification – in the pantheon as well as in the “family of saint” – constitutes an acknowledgement and formal acceptance of the hegemonic patriarchal landscape in force within the broader society, but transgressed and undermined by use’ (Segato 2008: 504).

The point here is not who is right; it is rather how to think not just against gender but maybe more importantly beyond its heterosexual and hierarchical ideological matrix, and with practices that destabilize, undermine, transgress and interrupt; with practices that create, construct and enable interplay, mobility and transits, and that call forth the spiritual and creative energies of the androgynous as gender’s ‘otherwise’.

Mobility, transits and the androgynous otherwise

Lugones makes clear the limits of gender accounts, including Quijano’s, that are overly biologized, presupposing ‘sexual dimorphism, heterosexuality, patriarchal distribution of power, and so on’ (p. 5). Sexual dimorphism is, for Lugones, an important characteristic of the ‘light side’ of the colonial/modern gender system (i.e., a characteristic of white bourgeois men and women), since those on the ‘dark side’ were not necessarily understood dimorphically with regard to the sexual binary. Challenging such ‘assumption characteristics’ is one of Lugones’ aims; such challenge pushes the question of ‘how sexual dimorphism served and serves Eurocentered global capitalist domination/exploitation’ (p. 7). And it invites reflection not only about the sexual binary itself but also, and maybe more importantly, about other imaginaries that disturb polarity, its antagonistic dichotomy, and its totalizing rationality constructed in and through gender.

As I have argued elsewhere (Walsh 2015), before the European invasion, gender constructions in the Andes and Mesoamerica were understood as dynamic, fluid, open and non-hierarchical. They were not based on anatomical distinctions but rather associated with performance, with what people do, and their ways of being in the world – ways that were not fixed but in constant movement, shift, modification and fluid equilibrium (Marcos 2006; Silverblatt 1990). Gender duality implied an interpenetration of the masculine and feminine, the existence of entities (real and supernatural) that incorporated female and male characteristics; nuances of combinations and of a continuum that easily moved between poles (Lopez Austin cited in Marcos 2006). The feminine-masculine in these ancestral cultures, and in many African ancestral cosmologies and traditions as well, is a signifier of wisdom and spiritual power, a fundamental component and metaphor of thought, the cosmos and universe, and of the individual body.

In his study of the complexities of Andean gender culture, Michael Horswell details the symbolic and performative role of the feminine and the androgynous,

and the 'in-between positioning' of what he refers to as third-gender ritualists and subjects who 'served the purpose of creating harmony and complementarity between the sexes and invoked the power and privilege of the androgynous creative force' (Horswell 2005: 4). This 'androgynous creative force' challenges male models of power and goes beyond gender as we know it. It is an energy present and imagined in many indigenous and African-descendant cultures that transcends biology and sexual orientation,⁶ recalls the cosmic force of creation (represented in androgynous creator deities), mediates between absolute opposites, and iterates a sacred-spiritual subjectivity and complementary whole. The androgynous creative force is not simply a cultural construction of the past; to extend Jacqui Alexander's reference to the spiritual, '[it] is lived in the same locale in which hierarchies are socially invented and maintained' (Alexander 2005: 310). It is a life force that empowers and calls forth a radically distinct desire and erotics of being, doing, feeling and knowing in relation.⁷

In this sense, Lugones' discussion of intersexuality falls short. Intersexuality is understood as having to do with sexual identity; intersexed individuals are generally considered as biologically both male and female. Yet while intersexuality denotes a disruption of the biological 'either or' that ties genitalia to the categories of man and woman, its conceptual sphere generally remains biological, anatomical and anthropocentric. Lugones' association of intersexuality with the gynocentric intends to go beyond biology and give presence to egalitarian, spiritual and female-centred modes of societal organization and relation. However, it leaves out a discussion of androgyny as the originary whole, the source of creation and the creative force central to Andean, Mesoamerican, Yoruba and Lucumi cosmogonies, spiritual thought, visions and practices.

The originary androgynous whole exemplified the symmetrical balance between the masculine and feminine,⁸ its ritually negotiated tensions, performative roles and creative-spiritual presence in deities, orichas, shamans and spiritual leaders. It ruptures the very idea of gender, and it displaces biology and its anatomical determinants as central components of conceptualization, debate and discussion. In so doing, the androgynous, then, and its manifestation as an energy force today, conjures forth gender's otherwise.

Drawing principally from Paula Gunn Allen and Oyèrónkẹ̀ Oyěwùmí, Lugones maintains that 'intersexed individuals were recognized in many tribal societies prior to colonization without assimilation to the sexual binary' (p. 7). Horswell's category of 'third gender' that 'opens other possible combinations than the dimorphic' (Lugones 2012: 11) is used as a further support of breaks with sex and gender bipolarity (although Horswell's interest is with trans-gendering and not intersexuality). However, these breaks and their otherwise are not the focus of Lugones' project. Rather they serve to show the modern/colonial construction and production of gender relations – that is, the coloniality of gender – and its heterosexual and patriarchal characteristics. In this sense, her analysis is of the colonial/modern gender system and not the

spiritual and creative energies of the otherwise that the androgynous denotes and calls forth, or to the mobility, transits and transitivities that defy this absolute system, and its gender- and biology-based definitions. Thinking with and from this otherwise and revealing the past and present how of its decolonial pedagogy, project, possibility and potential could sketch a very different path of inquiry and consideration.

Concluding reflections and questions

In 'The Coloniality of Gender', Lugones aims 'to understand the organization of the social so as to make visible our collaboration with systematized racialized gender violence, so as to come to an inevitable recognition of it in our maps of reality' (p. 16). Although gender, as race, is a powerful fiction, it is the departure and endpoint in this text of her ruminations. Making evident the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting both women and men of colour in all domains of existence, in disrupting practical bonds of solidarity, and in exerting a particular mode of global domination and systemic violence that serves the interests of Eurocentered capitalist power is her intention. In this sense, the supposition that gender and patriarchy are colonial constructs is valid to the extent that they mark a global model of power that began with the Western intrusion that was the Spanish invasion. However, as other feminists from the region have argued, patriarchal domination existed albeit in different forms pre-intrusion/invasion (Cabnal 2010; Paredes 2010; Segato 2012). In a then-social world characterized not by the static poles of gender (that essentialize men and women) but by a metaphorical, divine and corporeal duality, and a fluidity and flexibility of feminine-masculine energy and movement that impedes, or at least problematizes, definition, the modern genderized conception of patriarchy (but also of gender and sexuality) radically differed (Lozano 2010; Marcos 1995). In this sense it is important to recognize how modernity and coloniality underscore these very terms, and how they mark and limit our own imaginaries, conceptualizations, practices and understandings.

If, as Lozano (2010: 8) argues, the categories of gender and patriarchy are part of the master's arsenal of tools – of imperial reason – with which it is impossible to destroy his house, what might it mean to think with and from postures, perspectives and experiences that transgress, interrupt and break with the universalisms, dualisms and hegemonic pretensions that these categories announce and construct? How might we think with and from postures, perspectives and experiences that de-essentialize, debiologize and pluralize 'woman' without having to compare her/us to 'man'? And in what ways could such processes contribute not only to the decolonizing of gender but also, and maybe more importantly, to the recognition, past and present, of its otherwise? That

is, to the creative energy and life force of the androgynous that embraces us all and that empowers the erotic.

Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the very same weary drama. For not only do we touch our most profoundly creative source, but we do that which is female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal, and anti-erotic society.

(Lorde 1984: 59)

Notes

1. 'Abya Yala', meaning land in full maturity in the language of the Cuna peoples, is an increasingly preferred name for the continent baptized by colonial powers as 'Latin America'.
2. As Quijano reminds us, dichotomy is, in fact, a cornerstone of Western rationality, naturalized and accepted without question (see Aníbal Quijano (2000), *Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social. Journal of World-Systems Research* VI, 2 (summer/fall), 342–386).
3. For Cabnal, 'heteroreality' is the ethnic-essentialist norm that establishes that all of the relations of humanity, and with the cosmos, are based in principles and values of heterosexual complementarity and duality that harmonize and balance life:

The philosophic base of ancestral cosmovisions – and the naming of cosmic elements as feminine and masculine, where one depends on, relates with, and is complementary to the other – has been strengthened in these hegemonic practices of spirituality with which the oppression of women is perpetuated in the heterosexual relation with nature.

(Cabnal 2010: 16)

4. If gender complementarity was the fundamental basis for human interaction, cultural reproduction and nature's order in much of Abya Yala – as many argue – it is no surprise that it also became an essential tool of domination. Such was true not only of the Spanish but also of the Incas, for example, who used the Andean gender ideology scheme as a central strategy of imperial conquest, as a base to design and forge ties that would bind the conquered to them, ties that, with time, would also begin to mark asymmetries of class and gender (Silverblatt 1990; Walsh 2015).
5. Presentation by Lourdes Huanca at the Network of Women Defenders of Social and Environmental Rights (Red de mujeres defensoras de derechos sociales y ambientales), Quito, Ecuador, October 2013, cited in Walsh (2015).
6. I thank Raul Moarquench Ferrera-Balanquet for this observation.
7. I am using 'erotics' here in the sense of Audre Lorde:

When I speak of the erotic, I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives... The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all of our deepest knowledge.

(Lorde 1984: 55–56)

8. In the Andes, such symmetry was clearly demonstrated in various testimonial texts of the time, including Guaman Poma de Ayala's letters and drawings in *Corónicas de buen gobierno* (1615), and Francisco de Avila's contracted *Huarochiri Manuscripts* (16th century). In Mesoamerica, *Popul Vuh* (16th century) serves as an additional example.

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1.2

Gender and Equivocation: Notes on Decolonial Feminist Translations

Claudia de Lima Costa

Feminism and cultural translation

Latin American feminist theories, especially those articulated by subaltern/racialized subjects, operate within an epistemological referent that is distinct from the analytic models of critique historically based on centre and periphery, tradition and modernity dichotomies. An effect of transculturation and diasporic movements that create space and time disjunctures, the chronotope of these feminisms is the interstice, and its practice is rooted in cultural translation in the constitution of other forms of knowledge (*saberes propios*) and humanity. By replacing dichotomous approaches of social-political conflicts for complex analysis of the in-between spaces – *las fronteras* – of the social landscape – and, therefore, by emphasizing through the practice of translation relationalities between hegemonic forces and subaltern contestations, these feminisms are today in the forefront of discussions on how to decentre and decolonize Western knowledge formations. They are, in very creative ways, enabling alternative possibilities that go beyond those offered by feminist postcolonial theories.

The question I want to raise in this short essay – while addressing some of the provocations that Lugones' most instigating article 'The Coloniality of Gender' engages – is: How do Latin American feminist theories, articulated by subaltern subjects, translate and subvert the coloniality of gender? In what follows, I will try to map out, in a necessarily abbreviated and perhaps inconclusive manner, possible routes out of 'the coloniality of gender' for feminist decolonial studies in the south of the Americas. To accomplish this difficult yet expedient task, I will rely on the notion of translation.

I should begin by clarifying that my use of the term 'translation' is borrowed from Niranjana's (1992) deployment of the concept; that is, it does not refer exclusively to discussions about the strategies for semiotic processes in the area of translations studies, but to debates on cultural translation. The

notion of cultural translation (drawing on debates on ethnographic theory and practice) is premised upon the view that any process of description, interpretation and dissemination of ideas and worldviews is always already caught up in relations of power and asymmetries between languages, regions and peoples. Its logic refers to the process of shifting the notion of difference from its common understanding (as in 'difference from') to the Derridean concept of *différance*, which points to the undecidability and incompleteness of any process. Viewed as *différance*, translation is always deployed whenever the self encounters the radical, inassimilable difference of the other. Moreover, as Alvarez (2014) argues, 'Translation is politically and theoretically indispensable to forging feminist, prosocial justice, antiracist, postcolonial/decolonial, and anti-imperial political alliances and epistemologies because the Latin/a Américas – as a transborder cultural formation rather than a territorially delimited one – must be understood as translocal' (p.1). The translational turn, so to speak, shows that the translation process exceeds the linguistic transfer of meaning from one language to another and seeks to encompass the very act of enunciation – when we speak we are always already engaged in translation, both for ourselves as for the other. If speaking already implies translating, and if the translation is an activity of openness to the other (a displacement from one's location), then in such a transaction identity and alterity are inevitably intertwined, making the act of translating a process of continuous dislocation. To translate, therefore, means to be always in transit ('world'-travelling, for Lugones) to live in the *entrelugar* (Santiago 1978) in the contact zone (Pratt 1992) or in the border (Anzaldúa 1987). In other words, it means to reside in exile. Deploying both the trope of translation and the notion of equivocation – the latter borrowed from Amerindian perspectivism (which I will elaborate below) – I would like to reflect on the feminist decolonial turn in Latin America taking, as a starting point, the debates on the coloniality of power and the coloniality of gender carried out by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano and by the Argentinian emigré and philosopher Maria Lugones.

Power, gender and its colonialities

The coloniality of power, according to Quijano (2000),

is a concept that accounts for one of the founding elements of the current pattern of power, that is, the basic and universal social classification of the planet's population around the idea of 'race'. This idea, together with the (racist) social classification on which it was based, originated 500 years ago along with America, Europe and capitalism. They are the deepest and most enduring expression of colonial domination and were imposed on the

entire population of the planet in the course of the expansion of European colonialism. Since then, in the current pattern of global power, these two elements pervade each and every one of the areas of social existence and constitute the most profound and effective form of social, material, and intersubjective domination, therefore constituting the universal basis of political domination within the current model of power.

(p. 204, my translation)

In America, the idea of race was a way of legitimating the relations of domination imposed by conquest. The subsequent establishment of Europe as a new id-entity after America and the global expansion of European colonialism led to the development of an Eurocentric perspective of knowledge... Since then [the idea of race] proved to be the most effective, lasting and universal instrument of social domination, which, in turn, depended upon another one, equally universal but older, the intersexual or gender system of domination.

(Quijano 2000: 203, my translation)

Two points should be emphasized about the above citations. First, for Quijano, coloniality and colonialism are different, albeit related, phenomena. Colonialism represents the political-economic domination of some people over others and is, analytically speaking, anterior to coloniality, which refers in turn to the universal classification system that has prevailed for more than 500 years. Coloniality of power cannot, therefore, exist without the advent of colonialism. Second, and more significant for the purpose of my argument in this chapter, the coloniality of gender is seen by Quijano as subordinated to the coloniality of power when, in the 16th century, the principle of racial classification became a form of social domination. For Quijano, gender domination is subordinated to the superior-inferior hierarchy of racial classification.

The productivity of the concept of coloniality of power rests in its articulation of the notion of race as the *sine qua non* element of colonialism and its neocolonial manifestations. When we bring the gender category to the centre of the colonial project, then we can trace a genealogy of their formation and use as a key mechanism by which colonial global capitalism structured asymmetries of power in the contemporary world. To see gender as a colonial category also allows us to historicize patriarchy, emphasizing the ways in which heteronormativity, capitalism and racial classifications are always already intertwined.

For Lugones, the concept of coloniality of power still rests on a biological (and binary) notion of sex, as well as on a heterosexual/patriarchal view of power, to explain the way gender figures in power disputes for the control of sex, its resources and products. Hence, to limit gender to these controls

entails, in itself, the very coloniality of gender. In other words – and this is a fundamental criticism of Quijano’s understanding of gender – the imposition of a binary gender system was as integral to the coloniality of power as the latter was constitutive of the modern gender system. Thus, both race and gender are powerful and interdependent fictions.

Furthermore, anchored in the writings of both the Nigerian feminist philosopher Oyěwùmí (1997) and the indigenous feminist writer Gunn Allen (1986/1992), Lugones argues that both gender and race were colonial constructs racializing and genderizing subaltern societies. Both Oyěwùmí and Allen conclude, based on their respective studies of the Yoruba culture and Native Americans, that gender has never been an organizing principle or hierarchical category in tribal communities before ‘contact’. In Native-American communities, the sexual division of labour did not exist, and economic relations were based on reciprocity and complementarity. Drawing from the work of these authors, Lugones contends that the colonized non-human female was not only racialized but also reinvented as a woman through Western gender codes. Gender should be understood as an imposition of modernity/coloniality: ‘The suggestion is not to search for a non-colonized construction of gender in indigenous organizations of the social. There is no such thing; “gender” does not travel away from colonial modernity’ (Lugones 2010: 746).

However, Segato (2003), in her study of the migration of the Yoruba people to the New World, finds evidence of gender nomenclature, thereby arguing that these Afro-American and tribal societies reveal the existence of a clear patriarchal order which is, nonetheless, distinct from Western patriarchy. Segato calls it a lower intensity patriarchy or, in the words of the Aymara feminist communitarian Paredes (2010), an *entroncamiento de patriarcados* (imbrication of patriarchal systems).

Agreeing with the fact that gender in Yoruba culture is radically anti-essentialist (it is independent of bodies), hence very complex,¹ Segato contests Oyěwùmí saying that ‘gender terms function as an idiom for social relations and organize some aspects of social interaction’ (p. 341). It is the very malleability of its gender system that enabled it to translocate to Brazil and, later on, Argentina and Uruguay, while adapting its cosmology to the new contexts. As the author argues,

It would be possible to go on endlessly giving examples of a gender context that operates freely in relation to anatomy and in which the Yoruba notions described by Oyewumi can be vividly recognized. However, a clear gender scheme, far from being absent, provides a vocabulary for categories that are important in Yoruba social life, at the same time that it subverts the occidental [gender] system.²

(p. 342, my translation)

In short, for Segato the arguments presented by Oyewumi about gender being a colonial and colonizing category and absent in pre-colonial Yoruba culture reveals, at the end, a nostalgia for a world of pure authenticity. While vindicating for the difference of the Yoruba world, Oyewumi ultimately wants to assert her own difference *vis-à-vis* Western feminists.

I would like to intervene in the discussion about the existence or not of gender classification systems in pre-contact societies by bringing to the debate the category of equivocation. To this end, I introduce two authors whose works are inspiring for a decolonial feminism: de La Cadena's (2010) discussion of indigenous cosmopolitics and Jasbir Puar's (2012) criticism of the notion of intersectionality. After exploring the arguments of both authors, I will return to the question of coloniality of gender and the translational turn in feminist theories. By foregrounding the coloniality of gender as a recalcitrant factor in theorizing about the coloniality of power, an important space is opened up for the construction of 'oppositional politics of knowledge in terms of the gendered bodies who suffer racism, discrimination, rejection and violence' (Prada 2014).

Equivocation, translation and performative intersectionality

In her influential essay on cosmopolitics, De La Cadena (2010) examines Andean indigenous communities' articulation of the presence of earth beings, such as sacred mountains and animals, in social protest. In doing such a subversive gesture – that is, for the first time bringing other than human creatures into the human domain of politics – the Andean indigenous communities are undermining the ontological distinction between humanity and nature that has been a hallmark of Western modernity. Earth practices, such as considering the political needs and desires of earth creatures, enact the respect and affect necessary for maintaining webs of relationality between the human and its others (the non-human) in such communities. To introduce these earth practices into social protest (i.e., to express what earth creatures, such as sacred mountains, claim in the wake of the social protests), invites us, in the words of Stengers (2005), 'to slow down reasoning,'³ since it puts forth a very significant epistemic rupture. The political sphere has always been configured as ontologically distinct from the sphere of nature, and this difference was a key element conspiring to the disappearance of pluriversal worlds, understood as partially connected heterogeneous social worlds, politically negotiating their ontological disagreements (de La Cadena 2010). With the reintroduction of earth creatures into politics, we witness the emergence of what this author will call indigenous cosmopolitanism:⁴ we are able, first, to open up spaces for a type of thinking that allows us to unlearn/undo the ontological violence represented by the nature/culture dualism (hence allowing

us to 'slow down reasoning'), and, second, to understand that there are different perspectives from different worlds – not different views of the same world.

It is at this point in the argument that I want to invoke the notion of 'equivocation', a term derived from Amerindian perspectivism and theoretically articulated by Castro (2004). Equivocation signifies not only deception, misconception, but failure to understand that there are different understandings of different worlds. For example, class, race and ethnicity are categories that belong to the colonial division nature/culture. However, when deployed by indigenous peoples, they do not necessarily correspond to the meanings they have been given throughout (Western) history. They are, in other words, equivocations or equivocal categories: although they appear to be the same (i.e., to have the same meaning), in fact they may not be when signified by other communities. For the existence of heterogeneous worlds and equivocal categories, and the possibility of articulating partial connections between them, the work of translation becomes necessary. In other words, equivocation (in the sense of misinterpretation, error) calls for translation: it is from politically motivated and unfaithful translations that the plurality of worlds are interconnected without becoming commensurate.⁵

Through the notion of equivocation, the engagement with translation, and the practice of 'slowing down reasoning', we have the ability, therefore, to undo the perverse dualism between nature and culture, inculcated by Western epistemology and, in itself, the cause of the disappearance of pluriversal worlds. At this point in the argument, I would like to revisit the issue of intersectionality of gender and bring it to the debate on decolonial feminism. How to reconceive intersectionality in light of the discussion about equivocal categories and unfaithful translation?

As we may recall, Lugones, in criticizing Quijano's notion of coloniality of power, argues that this concept brings in its wake a misconception regarding the gender category. For Lugones, missing from Quijano's highly inadequate account of gender is a lack of understanding of the intersectionality of the categories that constitutes us as social beings. But how to interpret the intersectionality of gender in view of the fact that gender, race, class and so forth may be seen as equivocal categories? How to think about them from the notion of pluriversal worlds?

Puar (2012), in her scathing critique of the intersectional approach, so prevalent in today's feminist methodologies, argues, first, that although intersectional analysis has emerged as an intervention on the part of hegemonic (white) feminists to challenge the all-pervasive rubrics of race, class and gender in Western feminism, it actually recentres the very white feminism that it sought to decentralize. That is to say, the intersectional analysis, in seeking to stress the difference of the other, in the end constitutes this other

(woman) and gives her a colour (non-white). The non-white women – a result of intersectionality – is always the white woman's other. As Chow (2006) had already pointed out in relation to poststructuralist theories, the (post-structuralist) difference produces new subjects which, in turn, in promoting inclusions end up exacerbating exclusions from the self-referentiality of the centre.

Second, for Puar the privileged categories of intersectional analysis, being categories of equivocation, to recall De La Cadena (2010), do not travel easily across geopolitical boundaries without the work of translation. They have a genealogy that binds them to specific geopolitical places: for those located in the West, they are effects of Western modernist agendas and their regimes of epistemic violence. Third, and most significant for my argument, Puar (2012) notes that the main problem with intersectionality is its inability to deal with the non-representational referent, the material body. In the words of the author,

The literature on intersectionality has also been enhanced by the focus on representational politics... Rarely have scholars concerned with the impact and development of representational politics come into dialogue with those convinced of the non-representational referent of 'matter itself' – Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Grosz, Elizabeth Wilson, Karan Barad, Patricia Clough, Dianne Currier, Vicky Kirby, Miriam Fraser, Luciana Parisi, to name a few. Divested from subject formation but for different reasons, these feminist scholars in science and technology studies, inflected by Deleuzian thought, have been concerned about bodily matter, claiming its liminality cannot be captured by intersectional subject positioning. They prefer instead the notion that bodies are unstable assemblages that cannot be seamlessly disaggregated into identity formations. Elizabeth Grosz, for example, foregrounding its spatial and temporal essentializations, calls intersectionality 'a gridlock model that fails to account for the mutual constitution and indeterminacy of embodied configurations of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation.'

(Puar 2012: n.p.)

Bodies are therefore assemblages, and categories such as race, gender, sexuality and so on should be conceived as events, actions in their constitutive performativity – and not regarded as attributes of individuals. In other words, we need to get out of the linguistic system of representation (to escape its logocentric prisonhouse)⁶ to apprehend the fact that identities are events, assemblages, encounters between bodies in constant processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. At this point, and drawing on the notion of performative intersectionality (Barad 2003), I will return to Lugones' discussion

of the coloniality of gender and articulate it to the writings of some material feminists on the indeterminate and always already embodied configurations of gender.

Feminisms and the return of materiality

At this point, I would like to cogitate the following: Why not think about gender not as modern/colonial category but as equivocation – that is, as a category with different meanings and interpretations from different pluriversal perspectives? If we decide to go down this route, then we have to engage in the difficult process of cultural translation, avoiding the pitfalls of the coloniality of language and colonial translation. Second, according to Mignolo (2003), resistance to the coloniality of gender, as Lugones observes, implies linguistic resistance. I would add that it also involves opposition to Eurocentric representational paradigms, anchored on a dichotomous logic, through the practice of ‘slowing down reasoning’. I interpret these contestatory practices as the *sine qua non* elements for the project of decolonizing gender, being and feminist theories.

Without throwing the equivocal gender category away with the bath water, but articulating it in ways that challenge the modernity/coloniality binaries, we are able to perhaps take a more productive path, one that has already been partially trodden by many feminists – Latin American indigenous feminists and Western feminists of science – who are rethinking the boundaries between the human and the non-human, between matter and discourse, bringing other earth beings into the conversation.

In the West, the most recent and fascinating discussion about the necessity of a feminist return to some notion of matter and materiality is in the anthology entitled *Material Feminisms* (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). The set of essays published in this anthology, signed by renowned authors such as Elizabeth Grosz, Claire Colebrook, Karen Barad, Donna Haraway and Susan Bordo, and situated in widely different disciplinary places, argues strongly for an approach within feminism and studies of science that brings nature back into culture. These authors creatively explore the complex links between the material and the discursive so as to allow feminism to reclaim the materiality of the body and of experience without giving up the fact that bodies/experiences are culturally/discursively constituted, and that they do not exhaust themselves in such discursivity. In the words of Barad (2003),

Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semi-otic turn, the interpretive turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every ‘thing’ – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation. (p. 801)

The material turn, along with the ontoepistemological approach, points confidently to the fact that there is a world out there, even though our access to it is through language. It is through our concepts – always equivocations – that we know the world. However, the world also acts in the formation of our concepts, moulding and limiting them, with material/real consequences.

I see significant affinities between what material feminists are theorizing and the proposals of decolonial feminism. By introducing earth beings and agential materiality in Western epistemology – and subverting the colonial dichotomy nature/culture – these authors produce a ‘slowing down thinking’ that, in turn, in decolonizing perception, provides an opening to other worlds and other knowledges. In the following pages, I will return to the problem of cultural translation as a key element in the decolonization of feminist knowledges.

Feminism and translation: Towards the decolonization of knowledge

As Alvarez (2009) argues, a translocal feminist politics of translation is crucial to the decolonial turn and a key strategy in building ‘connectant epistemologies’ (Láo-Montes 2007: 132) in order to confront the equivocations or mistranslations that hinder feminist alliances, even among women who share the same language and culture, such as Latinas living in the US and Latin American women. Translation – based not only on a linguistic paradigm but also, more importantly, on an ontological one – therefore becomes a key element in forging political alliances and feminist epistemologies that are pro-social justice, anti-racist, anti-imperialist and decolonial. If women’s movements in Latin America and other parts of the global South share a common context of struggle, as Thayer (2014) claims, then ‘their conflicts with the “scattered hegemonies” represented by the states, industries development, global capital, religious fundamentalism and market relations create powerful, even if only partially overlapping, interests and identities that make the translation project between them possible and even more pressing’ (p. 404). According to Alvarez (2009), Ruskin, in her ‘The Bridge Poem’ that opens *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, reminds us that we all ‘translated more/than the damn UN’.

Moreover, in the interactions between Latina and Latin American feminisms, the travels of discourses and practices across geopolitical boundaries, disciplinary and others, encounter formidable roadblocks and checkpoint migration. As Klahn (2014) argues, to understand the coloniality of power, one needs to grasp the unequal travels and translations of feminist theories, texts and practices, as well as their reception. In a lucid analysis of the place of women’s writing at the time of *latinoamericanismo* and globalization, Klahn shows that testimonies (as well as autobiographical fictions, novels, essays and poetry)

written by women and linked to political struggles and social mobilization were instrumental in constructing a *sui generis* feminist practice. Klahn (2014) maintains that through cultural translation,

Latin American and Latina feminists readapted feminist liberation discourses from the West, resignifying them in relation to self-generated practices and theorizations of gender empowerment that have emerged from their lived experiences, particular histories and contestatory politics. (p. 39–40)

Taking the example of the testimony, Klahn shows how this literary genre was mobilized by subaltern subjects, such as Menchú and Chungara, aiming, from the intersection between gender, ethnicity and social class, to destabilize a Western feminism still centred on the notion of an essentialized woman. In deconstructing the dominant feminist discourse, Latin American testimonies not only constitute other places of enunciation but also break with the Hispanic surrealist paradigm (magical realism) in favour of a realist aesthetics that brings the referent back to the centre of symbolic and political struggles, documenting the violence and oppression of representation: life is not fiction. These texts, ‘translating/translocating theories and practices’, imagine forms of decolonization of the coloniality of power. I read Menchú and Chungara – through Klahn – as feminist and Latin American translations of the postcolonial that offer new epistemological proposals from the South.

Prada (2014), discussing the circulation of Anzaldúa’s writings in the Bolivian plurinational context, explains that any translation, without adequate mediation, runs the risk of becoming a double betrayal: first, that any translation already implies a betrayal of the original, and, second, a betrayal is also perpetrated to the extent that the translated text is appropriated as part of a sophisticated theoretical apparatus from the North. The work of mediation is necessary so that the translation of these texts – coming from other latitudes in the North – can engage with local texts and practices, thus challenging the ways in which the South is consumed by, and conformed to, the North, thereby placing postcolonial critique not only in North/South conversations but also South/South.

Prada (2014) undertakes an insightful analysis of how the Bolivian anarchist feminist group, Mujeres Creando – who describe themselves as *cholas*, *chotas* and *birlochas* (racist terms used in reference to indigenous migrant women in cities), and also adopt other designations of abject subjectivities (such as bitch, *rechazada*, *desclasada*, *extranjera*) – converse with Anzaldúa in transporting Borderlands/La Frontera to a context of feminist politics beyond the walls of the academy (where this author had originally been read), hence establishing affinities between the two political projects. Thus, the language of Anzaldúa, enunciated in the south of the North, was appropriated by the south

of the South, and 'in fact incorporated in the transnational feminism which (as *Mujeres Creando* since its beginnings stipulated) has no frontiers but the ones which patriarchy, racism, and homophobia insist on' (p. 58). As the author explains,

Translating, then, becomes much more complex. It has to do with linguistic translation, yes, but also with making a work available (with all the consequences this might have, all the 'betrayals' and 'erasures' it might include) to other audiences and letting it travel. It also has to do with opening scenarios of conversation and proposing new horizons for dialogue. It also means opening your choices, your tastes, your affinities to others – which in politics (as in *Mujeres Creando's*) can compromise (or strengthen) your principles. Translation in those terms becomes rigorously 'strategic and selective.' (p. 75)

Boldly trafficking feminist theories in contact zones (or translation zones), Latin American and Latina feminists residing in the USA, for example, are developing a politics of translation that uses knowledge produced by women of colour and postcolonial feminisms in the north of the Americas to cannibalize them, thus shedding new light on theories, practices, politics and cultures in the south, and vice versa.

Other places in the Latin American context occupied by these subaltern/decolonial subjects can be found in the testimonies of indigenous Guatemalan human rights advocate Rigoberta Menchú and the Bolivian miner Domitilla Barrios de Chungara. They can also be found in diaries of the Afro-Brazilian garbage picker Carolina Maria de Jesus, in the writings of Afro-Brazilian feminist activist Lelia Gonzalez, in the autobiographical novels by Afro-Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo, as well as in the poetry, graffiti and street performances of the Bolivian anarcho-feminist group *Mujeres Creando*, to cite just a few examples. A preoccupation with not forgetting, with our 'memory alleyways' (Evaristo 2006) and the telling of other stories, is undoubtedly one of the most important decolonial practices. Smith (1999), writing about decolonial methodologies among the Maoris, makes this clear when she argues that knowing the past is a crucial part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. According to her,

To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. Transforming our colonized views of our own history (as written by the West), however, requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes.

(Smith 1999: 34)

Performative translations, queer readings of colonial texts, dissemination of ontoepistemologies and *naturecultures*, invasions of the arena of politics by the most unusual earth beings, ‘slowing down thinking’, rewriting memories and histories, ‘world’-travelling, and translating with a vengeance – much in the same way as the Yoruba diaspora is doing in Brazil *vis-à-vis* the gender concept – are, therefore, ethical and political practices that decolonial feminists, in articulating other knowledges, have already initiated in many locations of our vast and dense Latin/a Americas.

Notes

1. For the Yoruba, both personality and sexual orientation are also independent of biology.
2. Segato argues that Afro-Brazilians have a codified, crypt way of criticizing and subverting the patriarchal foundation of the institutions that surround them, producing hybrid identities and ambivalent discourses. This practice denies the return to a pre-colonial pure state of affairs but uses double voicing to destabilize the language of the oppressor. It is the case of the subaltern who, in repeating the language of the master, undermines it, eroding the binaries between oppressor/oppressed, white/black, Christian/Afro-Brazilian.
3. According to Stengers (2005), to ‘slow down reasoning’ refers to the generation (might we say, engendering?) of a new space for reflection by decelerating, thus creating the possibility of a new awareness of the problems and situations that mobilize us.
4. Earth beings, in the political discourses of Western science, refer to beings or ‘natural resources’ that exist separately from the human sphere. In indigenous cosmology, the term refers to those other beings living in nature and who have always interacted with human beings, for they are a constitutive part of the latter. In de La Cadena’s article (2010), earth beings are the sacred mountains that demand respect from both humans and non-human others, including animals, plants and other smaller creatures, such as lakes, forests and mountains.
5. For a discussion about feminism and the politics of translation, see Costa (2006) and Alvarez et al. (2014).
6. For a discussion of non-representational paradigms, see Thrift (2007).

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1.3

The Coloniality of Gender as a Radical Critique of Developmentalism

Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez

Introduction

Co-writing this piece has meant our putting into words the deeply personal, painful and fruitful process that has meant engaging with the ideas of María Lugones – an ongoing process in which our subjectivities are shifting and some kind of joint perspective emerges from the vestiges of what is left in each of us as products of gender-specific developmentalist policies in Latin America. This pain allows us to feel/think/sense the coloniality of Eurocentric social sciences and of some feminisms (Icaza 2013a, 2013b). In this text, we co-construct an engagement from this troubled and ongoing process to think together about coloniality through a critical reconsideration of ‘gender’. We will show how ‘gender’ is an analytical category that has been widely used and misused in development discourses and interventions during the last three decades (Icaza and Vazquez 2013).

Our central aim is to explain why and in which ways the notion of coloniality of gender calls for a reflection on how we approach the epistemic grounds of white feminism, of development studies and also the modernity/coloniality debate. In particular, we understand that the notion of the coloniality of gender shifts the perspective of knowledge from the abstract disembodied position of male and Western-centred paradigms to a view from the historical embodied experience. This shift in the perspective of knowledge is enabling a move beyond the analytic of gender towards recognizing coalitional practices of liberation and resistance.

Gender is thus acknowledged as an important analytical category to understand the modern/colonial system of oppression, but it is also seen as what needs to be overcome by the decolonial practices of coalitional resistance. Thinking about the coloniality of gender means to think from an embodied experience, it is to think from the ground up, from the body. It is a thinking that averts the generalizations that are common to abstract modern thought. It helps us to understand the limits of feminist anti-essentialist discourses

that praise the performativity of identity as holding the only possibilities for destabilization. We see decolonial feminism as an invitation to thinking/being/doing/sensing that exceeds the dominant discourses about women, gender, sexuality and the body.

In order to develop these ideas, the text is divided into the following sections. The first section presents a historical background of the trajectory of the category 'gender' within development studies literature, including its mainstreaming with the emergence of the GAD paradigm.

The second section discusses three key ideas advanced by Maria Lugones in her text 'The Coloniality of Gender': (1) the ahistorical and universalist understanding of the category 'gender'; (2) the relevance of decolonial resistances to radicalize the category 'gender'; and (3) the limits of the category 'gender' in order to see decolonial resistances.

The final section is a concluding reflection that highlights some of our thoughts and intuitions on the possible implications for critical feminisms agendas aiming to question the cross-cultural relevance of gender analyses of developmentalism.

'Gender' in development

Feminism marked an important shift in development studies. The field was never the same after 'the woman question' was brought in to explain poverty and inequality some decades after the Second World War. What came to be known as the Women in Development (WID) paradigm included the ideas and practice of feminists such as Esther Boserup who investigated what happened to women in the process of economic growth in the so-called developing world (Boserup 1970).

Boserup and others found that economic development was indeed disadvantaging women by lowering their socioeconomic status relative to that of men (Boserup 1970). WID came to be known precisely because it flagged the absence of women in policy plans and acted upon it. For example, WID feminists worked to introduce sex-disaggregated statistics that addressed female unemployment and the gender-based division of labour.

Nonetheless, for those feminists who contributed to what would be known as the Women and Development (WAD) paradigm, it was not the absence of women in development but the lack of serious and systematic recognition of their contributions to development that needed to be tackled (e.g., Beneria 1982; Chant 1991). For WAD feminists it was crucial to identify the role of capitalist production in gender hierarchies in order to identify the structures of inequality that reproduced women invisibility and determine women inferior status in relation to men preventing equal participation in development. The WAD focus was on the sexual division of

labour and the hierarchical interactions between 'productive' and 'reproductive' spheres/activities of labour. It sought to develop theoretical notions and policy devices to reconsider women's work in the reproductive sphere or care economy (Elson 1995; Pearson 1998).

But if the field of development studies was never the same with the introduction of the 'women question' and its various explanations and policy devices, as we will see, the shift from women to gender brought another major transformation.

GAD: Origins, contributions and paradoxes

GAD has been a crucial contribution of feminists' thinking and practice to development studies: it brings 'gender', and not only women, into the analysis of development and its concurrent power relationships between masculinities and femininities. In a nutshell, GAD constitutes a paradigm that sought to identify how power operates and not only to incorporate women in development.

GAD's paradigm unfolded in a particularly rich context in feminist theorizing. On the one hand, the Chicana, black and postcolonial feminist critiques against essentialized views on 'women' (Anzaldúa 1987; hooks 1981; Mohanty 1986, 2002) became a crucial point of departure. On the other hand, their intersectionality was used as an analytical perspective to understand how multiple social oppressions are not only interrelated but bounded together and influenced by race, class, gender and ethnicity as social systems (e.g., Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1989).

By the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, GAD expressed a contestation to WID emphasis on women integration into the market as a way towards equality between men and women. Likewise GAD feminists developed a critique against WAD emphasis on the material valorization of women's contributions to the capitalist market as a solution to women's poverty and inequality.

What GAD feminists would promote was a reconceptualization of development from the perspective of gender relations, introducing the understanding of gender as non-natural nor fixed. From this perspective, gender was considered a social construction, which means that a human being becomes a 'woman' or a 'man' through processes of socialization at home and school, through state practices and policies, in the market and through the mediation of discourses (Bergeron 2006; Kabeer 1994). By highlighting this social construction of 'men' and 'women', GAD feminists brought attention to the dominant heterosexual social order that remained unquestioned in WID and WAD paradigms, and to how this dominant order erased diverse sexual identities.

In other words, disaggregating women in national or international statistics (the Gender Global Gap) left unquestioned a supposedly heterosexual order as the norm, hence as the 'normal' way things are. This has important

implications in policymaking – for example, in the promotion of land-titling policies/reforms that have largely been based upon the assumption of a male head in the household. This unquestioned heterosexual order is, for example, also present in World Bank's policy interventions in Africa, which tend to assume men as prone to sexually risky behaviour, and women as less prone to non-heterosexual practices (Bergeron 2006; Griffin 2007).

Another example of an untouched heterosexual order is in the promotion of girls schooling as a central goal in development policy. The underlying assumption is that education is one way through which gender-based discrimination against women in society, especially in the global South can counter the re-emergence of fundamentalisms around the world. However, this assumption is based upon the idea that male and female sexual identities are a given. This impacts on how access to education is conceived as related to a pre-established sexual order in which any other identities are not fully considered/thought (e.g., lesbian, gay, transgender, intersex kids).

Over the years, GAD engaged with state power and markets institutions, and for this reason the analysis of local, contingent and contextual conditions of patriarchal oppression turned out to be central to policy interventions. However, and in spite of GAD contributions for rethinking and practising development, the process of scaling it up through mainstreaming strategies brought the cooptation of 'gender' as an issue of efficiency – in the market or as in the state – rather than being addressed as a question of social justice (Razavi and Miller 1995).

Gender was introduced into policy through an 'add women and stir' approach, while at the same time for numerous feminists involved in development gender 'in development' became an unquestioned truth, a common sense point of departure for thinking and promoting 'development' in the global South (Baden and Goetz 2000). More recently, for some feminists in the North as well as in the South, gender is being seen as performance – as a reiteration of socially constructed roles. It has allowed them to consider the possibility of gender as a performative approach to identity, an approach that is variously qualified as nomadic, hybrid and always being negotiated. To date, the performativity of gender has constituted one of the radical frontiers in contemporary feminist thinking.

We consider that Maria Lugones' coloniality of gender contributes to opening up a set of questions that brings feminist thinking on one step further. To the atemporal¹ logic of performativity she counterpoises a historically situated understanding of gender. When was the dimorphic (male/female) idea of gender constructed, under which historical processes and by whom? Who was being gendered? Most importantly, who was being denied a place in the gender system?

The coloniality of gender: A geohistorical critique

Let us start with an example. For some feminists around the world who oppose capitalist development, patriarchy continues to be a quasiahistorical characteristic of society. 'Patriarchy has been known to reach back for at least 5,000–7,000 years . . . Capitalism has old and far-reaching patriarchal roots; capitalism is, in fact, patriarchy's latest expression. In this sense, capitalism and patriarchy belong together' (Werlhof 2007: 24–25). For some other critical feminists, heteronormativity – which asserts heterosexuality as the norm – cross-cuts contexts, times and experiences (Lind 2007). Meanwhile, gender performativity, as the recurrent acts that produce gender difference, is always bound to the empty present that is always changing, a logic that in its fleeting presence is always occurring and seems omnipresent, again across times, contexts and experiences. In practice, patriarchy, heteronormativity and gender performativity have been turned within some feminist analysis into normative ahistorical totalities.

The categories 'patriarchy', 'heteronormativity' and 'gender performativity' tend to be taken as an inherent element of the human condition across times and spaces, hence ahistorical. Mohanty voiced the peril of ahistoricity in 1991 with her seminal work that criticized universalism in Western feminism but that at the same time advanced the centrality of place-based (time-space-embodied) knowledges. Her strategy was that of drawing attention to what was unseen and undertheorized in the production of feminist knowledge, namely the reality of non-white and non-Western woman.

On the other hand, Oyěwùmí's (1997) ethnographic study on the Yoruba people in Nigeria undertakes an empirical examination to think what Mohanty had invited feminists to reconsider: place-based knowledge. In particular, Oyěwùmí's analysis manages to display ways of relating to the body that exceeds the category of 'gender' and that in the case of the Yoruba people is related to seniority. This visualization is possible once Oyěwùmí allows herself and her reader to consider the following: if gender is socially constructed then at some point in time there was no gender at all. From her point of view, this would mean that certain practices, regimes, ways of being and feeling were not gendered at all, but otherwise.

María Lugones' coloniality of gender (2014a and 2014b) extends this exploration by theorizing gender as a socialized sexual difference in a historically grounded manner. In this way she is able to think of gender as a mechanism of colonial domination over 'non-Western' racialized bodies. In this way, Lugones helps us to understand the historical moment in which this specific gender system became a form of subjugation, a concrete mechanism of transforming and governing everyday life through the control of the bodies and subjectivities of the colonized.

The implications of this consideration are multiple and complex: it would entail a radicalization of the notion of gender itself that locates its geopolitical, geohistorical, geoepistemic and body-political contexts. It would entail challenging the tendency in some feminists' analyses and practices that understand gender, heteronormativity, patriarchy, women, men, female, male and so on as cross-cultural and ahistorical categories of analysis. The decolonial shift that María Lugones is enacting implies a shift in our geographies of reasoning.

Lugones' coloniality of gender

Lugones introduces the 'coloniality of gender' as a modern/colonial system that was imposed over the racialized other and had the effect of dehumanizing indigenous and enslaved people, to the extent that they were animalized, by being denied a place in the women/men normativity. According to Lugones, in the colonial encounter the other had no gender because gender was a characteristic of humanity: 'Only the civilized are men or women.' The semantic consequence is, from her point of view, that there are no colonized women. The colonized were characterized as having sex but not gender.

If gender is then not considered to be a universal category/system ordering social life across times and cultures, then it is crucial to ask when it was imposed as a system, how it was implemented on control bodies, sexualities and subjectivities, and how as this implementation was internalized by the colonized and enslaved, other forms of life, being and sexuality were/are erased.

As the coloniality of gender was imposed, Lugones argues that it was intertwined with the control over territory, capital and subjectivities with profound implications for concrete lives.

From our point of view, Lugones' ideas offer a geohistorical account of gender as a mechanism of modern/colonial power. This means that 'gender' is presented as a regime that orders lives, sexualities, bodies, spiritualities and beings into hierarchical and dichotomic structures. It is a system that was violently imposed on non-Western peoples through colonization. Colonization meant the formation of a gender system that determined the borders of humanity contained within a normative heterosexuality and that denied socialization to those outside. The colonial difference where humanity and those being made non-human comes clearly to light is through the colonial gender system that imposed heteronormativity and denied gender to those who were animalized and those who were enslaved.

Moreover, the coloniality of gender allows a critical view of feminist analyses that by assuming the existence of a millenarian gender system have turned it into an ahistorical methodological and normative principle. This methodological heteronormativity has silenced other forms of embodied and social experience that do not belong to the geogenealogy of the West. For example,

numerous feminists' 'gender analyses' have often used the idea of 'gender regime' and 'gender equality' as a methodological and normative entry point to assess 'progress' or 'lack of progress' in relation to justice and equality between 'men' and 'women', levels of 'empowerment' and so forth.

Likewise, many analyses of patriarchy turn it into an ahistorical normative category, missing the current regime of gender as a modern/colonial production. The notion of gender and patriarchy are no doubt useful as an analytical toolkit to understand the reality of the modern/colonial society, but they are insufficient when it comes to uncovering the plurality of temporalities/experiences in this specific system of domination. These different experiences are surfacing today through resistances and by rescuing the pluralities that lie hidden in the dominant narrative of modern-colonial history.

Considering the coloniality of gender requires us to be specific about its genealogy – critical modern/Western philosophical thought – and hence its specific historical, geopolitical and geoeconomic location. From these locations, gender as an analytical device has been useful to understand aspects of power inequalities within a gender/sexual regime. For example, it is crucial to understand heteronormativity as one of the multiple social oppressions operating in the world.

However, gender cannot help us to understand the body experiences that were made invisible with the imposition of a specific gender/sexual regime that took place through colonization, genocide and dehumanization of certain racialized bodies. It cannot help us to understand that heteronormativity has been consolidated through the coloniality of gender.

The coloniality of gender brings a radical shift in the way we see and understand the world. It changes the location of thought from that of abstraction to vulnerability. It confronts the idea of universal 'women' of white feminism: if all the women are white and all the blacks are male, what does black women mean? This is the question that María Lugones addresses, stepping on the tradition of black feminism. To see non-white women produces an important epistemological shift. It not only brings to view the inseparability of race and gender but also reveals how the colonized subject has been subjected and dehumanized, and their sexuality animalized, while being denied the sources of communal and collective meaning.

In consequence, mainstream gender analyses cannot help us to fully understand decolonial resistances as those that exceed the imposition of Western, geo-, body and epistemic experiences as the totality of reality. For example, in Mesoamerica we would have to define masculine and feminine 'as indeed opposite, but also as fluid, open, in a unceasingly shifting balance, making and remaking themselves without ever reaching any fixed hierarchical stratification' (Marcos 2006: 16). Another example would be to listen to indigenous women's thinking as a thought of the communal – that is, not coming from

subjugated and colonized beings but from the possibility of being women otherwise (Lugones 2014b).

One of the problems that Lugones signals in the tradition of feminist thought is its closure to coalitional thinking, its way of suspending the communal and the permeability of the bodies by encasing its analyses in what we could call a methodological heteronormativity. To the logic of fragmentation and abstraction of the tradition of feminist thought, Lugones opposes a view, a sensing from the body. She invites us to see the modern/colonial system not just from above, from a position of abstraction that is not just as a complex matrix of interconnected systems such as Anibal Quijano's *The Colonial Matrix of Power*. Rather, she invites us to think from the body, but not from a fleeting performing body. She invites us to think from the historically concrete, embodied experiences of the women who have been subjected to the modern/colonial world, who have been forced into, incorporated into the modern/colonial gender system. This view from the incarnate subjectivity of those who have been made non-human, of those who have been enslaved and animalized, has the possibility of seeing that the modern/colonial gender system is not a universal but a concrete historical experience of subjugation. This realization allows us to think beyond this modern/colonial gender system, beyond the categories of gender and heteronormativity that are proper to it.

Thinking from the embodied experience of those who have been subjugated is also to recognize that they bring a grounded/place-based/embodied view where the modern/colonial system is not a historical totality but a centre of power that has always been surrounded by what it sought to deny: long traditions of resistance and a multiplicity of ways of inhabiting our bodies and the world.

To go 'outside' the assumed total reality of Western modernity is needed to enter the decolonial critique of gender. Let us be clear: the analytic of gender, patriarchy and heteronormativity are no doubt useful to understand the internal dynamics of the system of oppression, but they can blind us to the alternatives that come from outside the geogenealogy of the dominant system. To speak not of the analytic of the modern/colonial system but of the decolonial option we need to reach for an alternative vocabulary – one that is not grounded in the logic of oppression. This shift is what the thought of María Lugones is enabling, moving from the vocabulary of patriarchy, gender and heteronormativity to one of permeable bodies, coalitional resistances and communal selves.

Concluding reflections

What does all of this mean for teachers and feminists like us? First of all, it will instigate a different understanding and experience of our geohistorical and

body politics. For example, as authors of this piece, we can say that we are the products of our experiences within the intersections of multiple and differentiated forms of privilege oppression. It is from there that we are engaging with Maria Lugones' ideas. But what is more important is that from there we can then ask what it would mean to think about the world from the experiences of a black woman in Haiti who was born in a plantation or an indigenous Maya tzotzil today, how can we listen to their concrete/incarnated experiences? Maria Lugones thinking from the place of vulnerability decentres the dominant thinking from the nowhere of abstraction. She defies the thinking that generalizes and that turns the world into systems disconnected from concrete incarnated experiences.

In her main book, Lugones introduces the notion in Spanish of *tanteando en la obscuridad* which she uses in the sense of 'exploring someone's inclination about a particular issue' but also 'as putting one's hands in front of oneself as one is walking in the dark, tactilely feeling one's way' (Lugones 2003: 1). This notion as an embodied notion has been for one of us a powerful category for identifying the complex features of coloniality in international relations as a Eurocentric discipline that operates as a supposedly disembodied, hence universal and unrooted, thinking about the 'international' (Icaza 2013b). In particular, *tanteando en la obscuridad* has become a concrete way of working as an academic-activist in unknown social terrains when looking to identify new geographies of resistance and emancipation. As such, it has inspired and guided one of us to consider imperial notions of 'region' and 'regionalism' as belonging to an abstract disembodied position of male and Western-centred paradigms and which have been rethought from the historical embodied experience of indigenous women in Mexico (Icaza 2012, 2013b).

Moreover, Maria Lugones' thinking is inviting a revision of the notion of masculinity – masculinity not just as patriarchy, and not just as abstraction, but masculinities in the plural as concrete historical forms of subjectification across the colonial divide.

Another concrete experience that accompanies our engagement with the thinking of decolonial feminism is how we teach and we develop pedagogies around decolonial thought; how the students have to undergo a process of recognizing not just their location but also their being implicated in one or the other side of the colonial divide. In particular, during the Middelburg Decolonial Summer School (2010–2014), the strong presence of decolonial feminism has brought to light debates around the necessity of coalitions for liberation and transformation. It has shown us that only through thinking from the body can we recognize the full nature of the conditions of oppression and liberation that are inside us. Furthermore, decolonial feminism has allowed us to engage with aesthetic and emotional practices that would

have been seen as irrelevant in the systemic analysis of the modern/colonial world.

As joint writers of this piece, for us it is important to disclose some elements of the way we work together inspired by the ideas of Maria Lugones. First, there is an underlying amount of trust on the capacity that each of us has to engage in the written piece, as partners for 20 years. Our trust is one that is built upon small and never finished non-systematic conversations over dinner, cycling, caring for our children, cooking dinner, in bed. Second, this trust seems to be based upon years of struggle between each other and with ourselves to find the ways of learning and unlearning together from us and from our disciplines (international relations and sociology) while vividly engaging with feminist colleagues and friends within and outside academia. It is precisely these engagements in friendship that have been crucial for us in seeking 'tentative connections inside the walls of very strictly guarded, normed, repressive domains' (Lugones 2003: 1) and to realize the potential of coalitions and coalitional selves to reconstruct from the vestiges of what coloniality left. Our way of working is thus a painful but nonetheless also a joyful journey.

We would like to finish by mentioning that, in sum, the questions that are possible through Maria Lugones' thinking allow us to geohistorically locate the category/sexual regime gender in the West, imposed through the colonial history of the West, which has contributed to fracturing, neutralizing and making invisible other forms of relating to the world, of being with others, of being community. The challenge of decolonial feminism is the challenge to think beyond Western-centred categories and open up the possibility of thinking about the communal, of thinking about coalitional resistances producing a world otherwise.

Note

1. For a critique of the modern conception of presence that includes its atemporality, see Vazquez (2010).

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Section II

Institutions, Policies, Governmentality

2.0

Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business

Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay

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Introduction

This article is about taking stock of experiences of mainstreaming gender. It addresses two related concerns. First, that after three decades of feminist activism in the field of development – both at the level of theory and practice – most development institutions have still to be constantly reminded of the need for gender analysis in their work, policymakers have to be lobbied to “include” the “g” word and even our own colleagues need convincing that integrating a gender analysis makes a qualitative difference. Second, by constantly critiquing their own strategies, feminist advocates have changed their approaches, but institutional change continues to be elusive (except in a few corners). Gender and development advocates cannot be faulted for their technical proficiency.¹ Making a case for gender and development, developing and implementing training programmes, frameworks, planning tools and even checklists, unpacking organizational development and change from a gender perspective, have all contributed to building technical capacity and pushed forward technical processes for the integration of gender equality concerns in development. The literature also acknowledges that gender equality is as much a political as a technical project and efforts have been directed towards creating “voice” and influence, lobbying and advocacy.

So who are “we”? I situate myself among those of us who started out in the development movement of the 1970s in a Third World country. I was shaped by the feminist movement in India, was groomed by the international gender and development movement in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, and am now in a northern institution which does research, training and technical assistance in development policy and practice. My job involves

working with international organizations, national governments and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to integrate a gender perspective in policy and practice. In this article, I use my own experiences to interrogate how the concerns of feminists from similar locations with the political project of equality are being normalized in the development business as an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualized and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact. This normalization is happening at both the level of discourse and material practice.

Gender mainstreaming: The bold new strategy

Mainstreaming was the overall strategy adopted in Beijing to support the goal of gender equality. The political rationale for this strategy follows on from what feminist advocates had been struggling to establish – that rather than tinkering at the margins of development practice, gender should be brought into centre stage (Razavi 1997). Gender mainstreaming involves: the integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects; initiatives to enable women as well as men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision making across all issues.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) guidelines state: A mainstreaming strategy does not preclude initiatives specifically directed towards women. Similarly, initiatives targeted directly to men are necessary and complementary as long as they promote gender equality (OECD/DAC 1998: 15). In practice, there are two interrelated ways in which gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed: integrationist and transformative or agenda setting.

Integrationist

The aim is to ensure that gender equality concerns are integrated in the analysis of the problems faced by the particular sector; that these inform the formulation of policy, programmes and projects; that specific targets are set for outcomes and that the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes capture the progress made in the achievement of gender equality.

Transformative or agenda setting

The aim is to introduce women's concerns related to their position (strategic interests) into mainstream development agendas, so as to transform the agenda for change. For example, one of the ways of ensuring that gender equality concerns are integrated in agriculture is to make sure that extension services address both women and men and that technological packages are appropriate for both women's and men's roles in agriculture. However, the issue might be that women in their own right, and not as wives or dependents of men, have

no rights over land. Advocacy for women's land rights is thus necessary to set the agenda for change of mainstream programmes addressing gender inequality in agriculture. Integration and transformation require work at two different institutional levels. While integration involves working within development institutions to improve the "supply" side of the equation, a transformative agenda requires efforts to create constituencies that demand change. The latter requires an understanding of the nature of political society, state–society relationships, and the extent to which particular contexts the policymaking institutions are dependent on, or autonomous from, the influence of international development and financial institutions. Integration depends for its success on transformation. In order to build the accountability of policymaking institutions to the gender-differentiated public they are supposed to serve, the creation of the demand for democratic, accountable and just governance has to go hand in hand.

Much of the work in integration has been concentrated on institutions and involved improving the technical processes in development. Gender advocates have had to make a case for integration of gender issues by showing how this would benefit the organization and meet official development priorities. To do this, they have developed frameworks, checklists and tools for gender integration in policies and programmes and trained people in gender awareness and planning, monitoring and evaluation. The challenge that feminist advocates in development have faced and continue to face is that their work straddles both worlds – the technical and political – but the development business only tolerates the technical role.

Why is this so? Both integrationist and transformative versions of mainstreaming require explicit acknowledgement of equality goals. These entail redistribution of power, resources and opportunities in favour of the disadvantaged, which in the case of gender mainstreaming happens to be women. Many of the reasons why the development business barely tolerates any role for feminist advocates has to do with the understandings of the development process itself. The most influential and pervasive understanding of development is that it is a planned process of change in which techniques, expertise and resources are brought together to achieve higher rates of economic growth (Kabeer 1994).

From incorporation to rights

In recent years, concerns about the accountability of decision-making institutions to the public, respect for human rights and the need for enhanced voice and participation have tempered this economically defined development agenda. Even so, transformation – as signifying changes in relations of power and authority and growing equality between social groups – is hardly ever explicitly acknowledged as a goal, except where it is instrumental to the

development imperatives of poverty eradication, improvement in children's health, family welfare, intra-household equity and fertility decline. The international policy agenda throughout the 1960s, 1970s and much of the 1980s was less concerned with women's rights than with how to incorporate women into the development process.

Both scholarship and activism at this time was concentrated on convincing international development agencies about the importance of women's roles in development. Even though the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), set up in the early 1970s, functioned as the only international institution at that time devoted to addressing the issues of justice for women, it was more concerned with analysing and responding to the development-based economic and social issues concerning women, rather than defining and pursuing rights issues (Molyneux and Craske 2002).

It was not until the 1990s that the focus shifted to rights and led to the questioning of women's position in their own societies. This focus on rights was brought about by the burgeoning international women's movements struggling worldwide for the right to have rights and basic civil liberties. While the international conferences organized by the UN in the 1990s provided the spaces for organizing around rights and the forums in which to articulate demands, it was the growing strength of social movements, especially women's movements, which brought back issues of social justice, equality and rights into the development agenda.

Feminist scholars have argued that advocacy on behalf of women which builds on the common ground between feminist goals and official development priorities has made greater inroads into the mainstream development agenda than advocacy which argues for these goals on the grounds of their intrinsic value. The reason, they say, is because in a situation of limited resources, where policymakers have to adjudicate between competing claims, advocacy for feminist goals in intrinsic terms takes policymakers out of their familiar conceptual territory of welfare, poverty and efficiency, into the nebulous territory of power and social injustice (Razavi 1997; Kabeer 1999).

Even though it has not automatically secured accountability to women's concerns, explaining the world to policymakers has nevertheless driven the work of feminist advocates in development. These advocates have been kept busy with the technical processes of developing frameworks, planning tools and checklists and have become adept at using the language that development institutions recognize of social justice, rights and equality. Radical analytical and methodological tools become undermined, as when Molyneux's distinction between strategic and practical gender interests (1985) became translated in development planning language as needs rather than rights (Moser 1989).

However, there are other reasons why the development business can barely tolerate the technical role of gender and development advocates, while

rejecting outright the political project of gender equality. These have to do with deep-seated resentment of and consequent resistance to the project of equality between men and women and the language of politics that assertions of equality brings forward.² The language of women's rights is deeply disturbing because it involves separating out the identity of women as citizen-subjects from their identity as daughters, wives and mothers, the subject of social relations. It is threatening not only for development institutions, but also for communities and families who stand to lose when male prerogatives to rights and resources are in jeopardy. Feminist scholarship has devoted much attention to unpacking the inherent male bias in development processes (Elson 1991) and more recently male bias in the construction of rights and law and interpretation and implementation of law (Mukhopadhyay 1998; Goetz 2003). The cumulative impact of these resentments and resistance has been the silencing of the project of equality and its rendering into an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualized and technical project both at the level of discourse and material practice.

Gender mainstreaming means getting rid of the focus on women

While a mainstreaming strategy does not preclude initiatives specifically directed towards women, in the development business it has come to mean exactly the opposite. Initiatives specifically directed towards women are seen as a failure of mainstreaming. Since 2000, my department in the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, has been involved in a project in Sanaa, Yemen, financed by the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE). The objective of the project has been to support the rural women's directorate in the Ministry of Agriculture to reach out to women farmers. Earlier the RNE, under the leadership of the sector specialist for women and development, supported the Ministry of Agriculture in Yemen in developing a gender policy that would pave the way for a better deal for the majority of invisible tillers of the land and tenders of household cattle – that is, the women and girl children of Yemen. The Ministry of Agriculture in Yemen has a section called the Rural Women's General Directorate (RWGD). In each of Yemen's provinces, teams are attached to the provincial agriculture extension offices, which generally consider only men to be farmers, to serve the interests of this silent majority.

Our responsibility was to build the capacity of these units and to make sure that they served the interests of women farmers, who are responsible for a large part of the work that contributes directly to household food security. This project received strong support from the Minister of Agriculture, who strengthened the rural women's sections in the provinces, often upgrading them to directorates, so that they had more power within the bureaucracy. Responsibility for this project at the RNE has shifted back and forth from the sector specialist for women and development to the officer-in-charge of agriculture

and rural development, on the grounds that “gender had to be mainstreamed”. The sector specialist for women and development was keen for this project not to be seen as a “women’s project”, but as one that made a difference to the policies and practices of the agricultural sector and to the donor strategy. But this is not what happened. Negotiations between the Ministry of Agriculture and the RNE regarding future support for the sector continued to treat the rural women’s general directorates as marginal. Finally, faced with budget cuts, the RNE axed the project on the grounds that “gender had been mainstreamed” and thus there was no need to resource the special emphasis on women. This is in a country where extreme gender segregation means that women farmers cannot be approached by male extensionists, even if they wanted to, and where women workers of the Ministry are seen as illegitimate occupants of public office because they are women and not men.

Whose responsibility?

Gender mainstreaming means that nobody is responsible for getting it done. At an international conference held in 2002 entitled “Governing for Equity” and organized by my department in the Royal Tropical Institute, a panel of gender advocates from international organizations and donor bodies discussed the strategies and problems of their organizations in gender mainstreaming (Mukhopadhyay 2003a). The presentations highlighted the common experiences of international institutions in integrating a gender perspective. While there is recognition and acceptance within institutions of the importance of gender equality in development, the practice of incorporating a gender perspective in all programmes and policies is beset with difficulties that are not being overcome by present strategies. The main strategy has been to incorporate gender equality concerns in external policies, to demonstrate the importance of gender analysis as a tool for operationalizing the mandate of the institution, and in some instances the setting up of a gender infrastructure, such as gender focal points or departments. For the most part, however, the integration of gender equality in the work done by these institutions relies on committed gender expertise and the “good will” of colleagues. Accountability for ensuring that gender equality concerns inform policymaking and programme implementation on a sustained basis is hard to pin down.

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a tool for gender integration in the UN system by other multilateral institutions. This strategy raises two kinds of questions regarding accountability.

First, gender mainstreaming as a tool does not actually convey to those using it what exactly it is that they are responsible for ensuring. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) representative at the conference, it would be preferable to focus on women’s rights, children’s rights and men’s

rights because the rights focus actually tells one what has to be achieved. Second, gender mainstreaming as a tool is supposed to ensure that everybody is answerable for gender equity commitments. This has generally meant that nobody is ultimately responsible for getting it done.

The limited success of gender mainstreaming in international institutions is due both to the absence of professional and political accountability and the lack of institutional spaces for enforcing accountability. Who is going to hold UNICEF or the World Bank or for that matter DGIS (the Development Cooperation Directorate of the Royal Netherlands Government) responsible for not promoting gender equality? And how?

Gender mainstreaming = more women in organizations

While gender mainstreaming implies the integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects, in organizational practice this has increasingly come to signify that gender equality goals can be achieved solely by increasing the number of women within organizations and in positions of decision making.

This line is generally pushed by well-meaning donors.³ Most gender mainstreaming checklists mention this as an item that has to be ticked off in order to determine whether or not a client government department or an NGO has made progress on gender equality. For them, this is easier to measure than to what extent gender analysis has entered into the formulation of policies, programmes and projects. While it is important to push for equality of opportunity for both women and men within development organizations, this cannot be the be-all and end-all. If such measures are introduced in an ahistorical and de-contextualized manner, they can have serious consequences for gender politics within organizations.

This was evident in a workshop I conducted in Cambodia in April 2003, the theme of which was gender mainstreaming in human rights organizations (Mukhopadhyay 2003b and 2003c). During the workshop, the Director of the largest human rights NGO in Cambodia explained that increasing the number of women in his organization was what he interpreted as constituting gender mainstreaming. He had adopted a policy whereby 30 per cent of the staff would, over a period of time, be female. He has faced and is facing stiff resistance from his Board and especially from the one female member. She opposes the policy on the grounds that hiring women means lowering the standard of the workforce because women are generally less qualified. Asked what he had done faced with this resistance he replied that he was determined to make the policy work and had continued to hire and promote women. Representatives of the donors for this organization, who were also present at the workshop, saw his stand as vindication of their efforts to push gender equality in human

rights NGOs. The Director, a man, emerged as the champion of gender equality and the woman member of the Board, not present, as the villain. Male leadership is legitimized by the underlying message: attempts at introducing equality policies are opposed by women themselves (read backward) and men are far more open to liberal ideas (read modern). Even more sinister, however, was the account of how this very same NGO had performed “rather badly” a couple of years ago and that this coincided with the time that the gender policy was introduced. Members of the organization present at the workshop equated poor performance with the introduction of the gender policy and less qualified women in the workforce. Asked to give concrete instances of how having more women in the organization had led to poor performance, they were unable to do so. Nevertheless, it had become “common sense” understanding that the presence of more women leads to lowered standards of performance. The head of the Women’s Department kept quiet in this discussion. The adoption of gender quotas and the attempts at promoting women had started a gender war in the organization. This then helped reinforce the dominant culture of misogyny.

Gender equality in the absence of institutional mandate for promoting equality

To what extent is it possible to enforce gender equity commitments for institutions and within policy agendas whose main objective is not necessarily the promotion of equal rights and human rights? The main question is not how does one do it – feminists have been doing it all the time, creating a fit between gender issues and the organizational mandate/culture within which they operate (Razavi 1997). Rather we should ask whether it is possible in the long run to use instrumentalist arguments to persuade those not convinced of the intrinsic value of gender equality.⁴ What really is the efficacy of internal advocacy without supportive politics?

In 2002, I was requested to undertake a situational analysis of gender mainstreaming efforts in selected Ministries in Ethiopia. The report concluded that the Ministry of Education was doing far better than the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Health (Mukhopadhyay 2002). Each of these ministries has a Women’s Affairs Department (WAD). The commitment of the Ethiopian government to address gender equality and equity concerns in development is formalized in the “National Policy on Ethiopian women” issued by the Prime Minister’s Office in 1993. The policy draws attention to the main areas of concern, enlists strategies for implementation of the policy and sets up gender machinery within government. The National Policy on Women mandated the setting up of the WAD in the Prime Minister’s Office; Women’s Affairs Bureaux in the Regions and the WADs in the Ministries and Commissions.⁵

Why was the Ministry of Education succeeding, while the Ministry of Agriculture was not? The difference in performance on the gender front between the Ministry of Education and, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture seemed to be the main policy line promoted by the leadership and the political support that the WADs received from the leadership. The policy line developed by the Ministry of Education was based on a sustained analysis of the education sector in Ethiopia, which showed how achieving gender goals in education was essential to achieving overall goals. The WAD has been closely involved in the development of the new education and training policy which states clear support to girls' education and a strategy article for improving girls' education was adopted by the Ministry in early 1997 (Ministry of Education 1997). In July of the same year, the country embarked on an ambitious Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) which sought to increase the Gross Enrolment Rates and to reduce the gender gap in education and which incorporated the strategies that had been developed for improving girls' education.

In contrast, the main policy direction in the Ministry of Agriculture seems to be to work towards rural economic transformation that will entail agricultural commercialization and the development of marketable agriculture. A three-point agenda has been devised: creating an enabling environment for capacity building of farmers; formulation of technological packages for commercial agriculture and increased productivity; and revising the rules and regulations to be able to intervene in the world market. Where do poor women farmers or for that matter poor men farmers fit in here? The WAD is left scratching at the margins of this policy because equity considerations are ruled out by these policy objectives. The main policy line does not address how the effects of increased commercialization on the gender division of labour and women's work burdens and welfare will be minimized and how the marginalization of women farmers will be avoided, or how household food security will be maintained.⁶ The main lesson that can be learnt from this contrast is as follows. While the overall policy direction of the Ministry of Education was to promote equality in access to education there was political backing from the leadership to pay special attention to girls' education. Gender equality was an explicit goal of the leadership (interview with the author H. E. Genet Zewdie, Minister of Agriculture 2002).⁷ The WAD within the Ministry thus had considerable space for manoeuvre and enjoyed support from the political leadership for its advocacy and for suggestions as to how gender goals could be achieved. The political aim of the Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, was to build an agricultural sector that is internationally competitive and profitable.⁸ The political space for the WAD to intervene in the policy objectives was thus limited, since there was no support from the top for the relevance of any gender equity objectives. The gender guidelines produced by the WAD, based on data that showed the importance of women's roles in agriculture and food security and the gender

gaps in extension and support services, remained a cosmetic document with little or no power of enforceability.

Conclusion: Fighting back

These different examples illustrate how feminist concerns with the political project of equality are being normalized in the development business as an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualized and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact. Gender mainstreaming is being interpreted as getting rid of the focus on women, regardless of context. In Yemen, that context is of extreme gender segregation, which means that women farmers cannot be reached by male agriculture extension workers, and the interpretation of mainstreaming evades this and other questions of gender power relations. Wellmeaning donors and compliant organizations have reduced mainstreaming to a one-point programme of increasing the number of women within organizations and the political project of equality between women and men is being undermined by gender conflict within the NGO and by deeply demeaning images of women workers.

While most international organizations claim that there is recognition and acceptance within institutions of the importance of gender equality in development and there is a plethora of frameworks, tools and checklists available to aid these bureaucracies to integrate gender, there are no institutional mechanisms to check on failures. Gender mainstreaming in the absence of accountability becomes merely a technical exercise without political outcomes. As the Ethiopian example shows, integrating gender equality concerns within policy agendas whose main objective is not necessarily the promotion of equal rights is a near impossible task and one that reinforces the powerlessness of gender advocates and the gender equality agenda.

In repositioning gender in development policy and practice, we need to consider how to get back to the political project while not abandoning the present mode of engagement with development institutions. This was the goal of a three-year programme of work at the Gender Unit of the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam entitled "Gender, Citizenship and Governance". It aimed to develop a range of good practices to bring about institutional change – changes in institutional rules and practices that would promote gender equality and enhance citizen participation, changes that build the accountability of public administration institutions to the gender-differentiated public they are supposed to serve. In order to build good practice on institutional change from a gender perspective the approach adopted was to resource civil society institutions. Partnerships were developed with 16 organizations in two regions: Southern Africa and South Asia. Each participating organization undertook action research projects on a theme of particular national and regional

importance for gender equality. While these were on a range of issues, the initiatives undertaken can be categorized as follows:

- (1) enhancing and sustaining women's representation and political participation;
- (2) engendering governance institutions;
- (3) claiming citizenship and staking a claim to equal rights.

The activities, successes and failures of these action projects suggest the following lessons:

The importance of establishing citizenship as an intrinsic component of development, where citizenship is understood as feminists have been defining and redefining it to mean having entitlements, rights, responsibilities and agency.

This includes the right to have a right, to politicize needs, and to have influence over wider decisionmaking equality in development. A good example here is the release of women's agency in the efforts by Durbar to articulate the voice of sex workers by changing perceptions and by foregrounding their real experiences of exclusion from entitlements and rights that they face as women.

The importance of carving out spaces for articulation and citizen participation.

Just as rights have to be articulated, the space for articulation and citizen participation has to be constructed. In Pakistan, the government has set up the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) without consultation with civil society groups. Women's groups feared that without a truly independent status, enforcing authority or clear mandate, the commission would be unable to make any significant contribution towards changing the situation of women. Two civil society women's organizations (Aurat Foundation and Shirkat Gah), made the strategic decision to initiate a post-facto consultative process involving all stakeholders, government, commission members, civil society and experts. This reinforced the idea that critical decisions of this nature should involve all stakeholders and that citizens have a right to participate. The consultations with civil society and women's rights organizations at the provincial level served to introduce the members to their constituency and to listen to their expectations. The national consultation brought together all parties – civil society organizations and Commission members – in formulating the key recommendations for changes to the power, mandate and composition

of the NCSW. Government measures to enlarge the future role and mandate of the NCSW are underway.⁹

The importance of creating constituencies and “communities of struggle”.

Changes in institutional rules and practices to promote gender equality and enhance citizen participation require that women emerge as a constituency, are aware of their entitlements and are able to articulate these. Sakhi, a women’s rights organization in Kerala, found that despite the existence of regulations favouring women’s participation in the decentralized planning process and appropriate budgetary allocations, women could not take advantage of these to further their strategic interests. They did not have the organization nor the articulation of interests needed to intervene. Sakhi set about remedying this situation by helping women to organize. It provided information and training so that women could undertake a needs analysis and training and support for the elected women representatives, building a constituency that could demand gender-fair practices.¹⁰

The importance of establishing substantive equality as opposed to formal equality. The lived experience of specific categories of women (the most marginalised or those who are most affected by the specific lack of rights) must be honestly represented in constructing substantive citizenship as against citizenship as formal rights.

The end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 opened up new political spaces for legal reform. One concern of the Rural Women’s Movement (RWM) there has been that of customary marriage, which limited women’s rights. They linked up with the Gender Research Project (GRP) at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS), a university-based research unit, to research and advocate on this issue. When it became clear to CALS researchers that many rural women living in polygynous unions were concerned that outlawing polygyny would invalidate their unions and threaten their livelihoods, ways were found to intervene in the law reform process to address the key concerns of women living in polygynous marriages – their rights to property and custody of children.¹¹ By listening carefully to the worries and difficulties of particular rural women CALS brought the reform of customary law closer to the lived realities.

These emerging lessons suggest ways of getting back to feminist concerns with the political project of equality. The participating organizations have worked both within institutions to change norms and practices and outside institutions to build pressure on institutions to change, be more responsive and accountable to women’s interests. They reconfirm that political project

of equality requires engagement in politics – the messy business of creating voice, articulating demand, carving out rights, insisting on participation and mobilizing the women’s constituencies to demand accountability

Notes

1. The distinction between the technical, professional and scientific on the one hand and the political on the other, is often made in development institutions. The technical often refers to the processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects. It further refers to how to get things done in a specific timeframe and with set objectives. It relies on models, frameworks and tools for getting things done.
2. This resentment and resistance takes many forms, e.g. in 2003 there was a reorganization in the Royal Tropical Institute where I work. Our existence as a gender unit was called into question on the grounds that “gender” was too narrow a field and we should be working on wider development issues. As a result we renamed our unit as Social Development and Gender Equity and have constantly to prove our “social development” credentials.
3. Donor pressure on NGOs and governments to abide by certain conditions like civil society participation and/or gender integration has led institutions to apply “checklists” in a mechanistic way. Whitehead shows in her review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Articles in four countries, that in many cases governments have conducted national dialogue on poverty policy not out of a genuine commitment to participation in policymaking, but simply to fulfil this condition of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative and to access debt relief funds (Whitehead 2003).
4. Meer shows in her review of European Union (EU) and Department for International Development (DFID) gender policy in South Africa that while both have strong gender policies which link gender equality to poverty eradication these policies are located within an overarching framework of market liberalization which promotes policies that increase the burden on poor women (Meer 2003).
5. See reports cited in this section: Ministry of Education (1999, 2001); The Women’s Affairs Department of Ministry of Agriculture (1996, 2000); and The Women’s Affairs Department of Ministry of Education (1995, 1999, 2000).
6. According to a study done by the department of Planning and Programming of Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and mentioned in the gender guidelines, 48.3 per cent of labour contributed in agriculture is female.
7. The Minister of Education, Genet Zewdie, also pointed out to me that while a lot had to be done (and is being done) to improve the supply side of education, to maintain the momentum required the empowerment of women to challenge the education system to provide better and relevant services.
8. Whitehead (2003) makes a related point in her review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Articles (PRSPs). She shows that poverty analysis in the PRSPs is limited. The description of impoverished groups does not extend to analysis of why they are poor, so gender relations cannot be advanced as an explanation of women’s poverty.
9. Based on a case study prepared by the Aurat Foundation and Shirkat Gah Pakistan for the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) Gender Citizenship and Governance Programme and summarized in Mukhopadhyay (2003a).
10. Based on a case study prepared by Sakhi, India for the KIT Gender Citizenship and Governance Programme and summarized in Mukhopadhyay (2003a).

11. Source: Based on a case study prepared by Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs) for the KIT Gender Citizenship and Governance Programme and summarized in Mukhopadhyay (2003a).

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2.1

Mainstream(ing) Has Never Run Clean, Perhaps Never Can: Gender in the Main/Stream of Development

Sara de Jong

Introduction

It might be a daunting task in general to respond to Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay's insightful and influential article about the limited effects of gender mainstreaming in development. However, this assignment is especially formidable given the fact that her article, with the beautiful evocative title 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business', stood at the beginning of an extensive and rich debate that has unfolded over the last ten years since the article's publication in 2004. Concerns about the failure of gender mainstreaming to have the radical transformative impact it had been anticipated to offer post-Beijing have been expressed in numerous writings (Debusscher 2012; Lang 2009; Moser and Moser 2005; Parpart 2014; Walby 2005b) and in special issues dedicated to the topic (*Feminist Legal Studies* 2002; *Gender and Development* 2005; *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 2005; *Social Politics* 2005). Contributions to this debate have not limited themselves to diagnosing the (symptoms of the) problem and lamenting the dilution of gender mainstreaming once operationalized in NGOs and institutions, but consequently also discuss the possible reasons for its lack of success as well as potential solutions to make gender mainstreaming more effective.

As will be outlined here, Mukhopadhyay's article is structured in a similar way. She starts with an outline of two related issues that she has observed in her work to integrate gender in policy and practice, while based in an institution in the global North and also drawing on her history of engagement with social movements, such as the women's movement in India. She signals first that including gender is still not an automatism for development organizations, policymakers and NGO workers. Second, she notes that as a result of feminists' self-reflective and self-critical work (evidence of which can be found in the prolific literature on the topic), their own practices have changed but institutional transformation has not occurred. Her article draws on practice-based examples

to show that gender mainstreaming has come to mean either getting rid of the focus on women or, in organizations more committed to gender mainstreaming, it has taken on a reduced meaning, namely merely including more women in positions of decision-making. As Mukhopadhyay points out, while mainstreaming should imply a collective and shared responsibility, in reality this has meant that no one felt responsible. Finally, there is often no accountability due to lacking institutional mechanisms to evaluate successes and failures. Most importantly, gender mainstreaming, which was initially hailed as a radical approach for its all-encompassing scope, has, in Mukhopadhyay's poignant formulation, been absorbed by development circles 'as an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualised and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact' (2004: 95). As she claims, gender mainstreaming's technical disguise, as a series of toolkits, indicators and checklists, receives some toleration as long as it remains in line with the conventional goals of development, but its political dimension, which centres on struggles for gender equality, has been met with resistance. Mukhopadhyay's article concludes by suggesting that in order to both maintain the political in integrating gender and continue engaging with development institutions, feminist interpretations of citizenship should be a key element of development. This would include arenas for citizenship participation in which women can emerge as a constituency and institutionalization of substantive – rather than formal – equality.

In contrast with Mukhopadhyay, who witnessed (and might have participated in) the initial optimism with which feminists employed gender mainstreaming as a new strategy, at the time my own engagement with GAD started in 2006, gender mainstreaming was already widely recognized as 'an essentially contested concept and practice' (cf. Moser and Moser 2005; Walby 2005a: 321). Only a couple of years later, in 2008, Piálek described how both academics and practitioners in the field of development are in growing agreement that 'we are witnessing the death of gender mainstreaming' (2008: 279–297). Around the time of the supposed 'perishing' of gender mainstreaming, I conducted interviews in the context of my research on the positionalities of global North-based female NGO workers who supported women from the global South. Some of the women referred to gender mainstreaming despite the fact that it was not an explicit topic in the interview and echoed some of the common ideas and concerns. These stretched from an expressed commitment to gender mainstreaming as intervening in policy processes rather than policy outcomes, on the one hand, to concerns that in the absence of institutional back-up gender mainstreaming would come down on their individual shoulders or, more substantively, that the assumption that there is a shared notion of gender within gender mainstreaming should be interrogated, on the other hand (cf. Mannell 2012 and academic discussions on gender mainstreaming based on 'sameness', 'difference' or 'transformation' and 'inclusion', 'reversal' or 'displacement' in

Baines 2010; Squires 2005; Walby 2005a). It is therefore from a modest position that I see my task as teasing out some of the issues that emerge more implicitly in Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay's article and seek to trace the possible implications of her argument in a time when gender mainstreaming has matured. In the first section I will interrogate the differentiation between the technical and political dimensions of gender mainstreaming, and I argue in the subsequent section that the technical is political as well. The third section will discuss the political of the technical in more detail. In the fourth section I will further investigate the nature of the mainstream and connect this to the political possibilities of gender mainstreaming, which is followed by some concluding notes.

The political versus the technical

Key to Mukhopadhyay's argument is the distinction she makes between gender mainstreaming as a political and as a technical project (cf. Rees 2005; Tiessen 2004; Walby 2005a). As she explains in a footnote,

the distinction between the technical... on the one hand and the political on the other, is often made in development institutions. The technical often refers to the processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects. It further refers to how to get things done in a specific timeframe and with set objectives. It relies on models, frameworks and tools for getting things done.

(2005: fn1 102)

The article describes how those working on GAD have built an impressive technical expertise, expressed in capacity training, toolkits and checklists. This technical (gender) know-how stands at the service of making development, understood in a conventional and narrow economic sense, 'work better'. The political dimension, according to Mukhopadhyay, consists in creating gender equality, which evidently requires addressing power relations, privilege and marginalization. Important for understanding the failure of gender mainstreaming then is the realization that 'the challenge that feminist advocates in development have faced and continue to face is that their work straddles both worlds – the technical and political – but the development business only tolerates the technical role' (Mukhopadhyay 2004: 96). This influential distinction between the technical and the political aspect of gender mainstreaming has offered an important explanation of the failure of gender mainstreaming in generating real (i.e., political) change, despite its wide adoption. Originally, political gender mainstreaming was diluted into a technical depoliticized process. As Mannell writes about the South African context, 'While the issue of "gender" was previously conceptualized as a struggle over gender power

relations, it has now moved to become a technical concern of government bureaucrats. The process of gender mainstreaming is perceived as having played a key role in this “technicalisation” (Mannell 2012: 425).

The depoliticization of gender mainstreaming has been more widely associated with concerns about the fact that it has become increasingly detached from its feminist roots (Smyth 2007), also expressed in the subtitle of Mukhopadhyay’s article, ‘feminists [are] marooned in the development business’ (2004: 95). Once its feminist grounding is removed, it is feared that the category ‘gender’ lends itself more easily to being emptied out of political content, especially in the context of gender mainstreaming. ‘Depoliticization’ indeed implies the elimination of the political/politicized content that was previously present. This is, for example, expressed in Rees’ language of ‘degeneration’: ‘there is also a danger that gender mainstreaming can degenerate into a “gender proofing” system of “tick box” mechanisms’ (Rees 2005: 560–561 emphasis added). Or in Lang’s words, ‘The functional approach to gender mainstreaming turns the gender equality agenda into a merely “technical matter”. Gender mainstreaming opens the door to some sort of functional checkbox equality in which projects are being measured by how well they serve both sexes’ (Lang 2009: 338). Mary Daly refers to this phenomenon as a ‘funneling effect’ ‘whereby agencies adopt some of the components of gender mainstreaming, especially tools or techniques, often in the absence of an overall [gender equality] framework’ (2005: 436). Efforts to rethink gender mainstreaming have therefore concentrated on recuperating and strengthening the political dimension of the goal of gender mainstreaming. Nicholas Piálek intervenes in this debate based on his research study of gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB, suggesting that ‘the fundamentally political nature of gender mainstreaming’s needs to be acknowledged’ (2008: 295). His reading of what is political about mainstreaming introduces a new view, by stating that the process of mainstreaming is political rather than mainly its goal of gender equality, since it challenges the core values of peoples, rather than mere formal norms of organizations. Ultimately, however, he also maintains the common division between the technical and the political: ‘the distinction between the technical process of norm change and the political process of value change needs to be made and acted upon in the organization’ (Piálek 2008: 295).

The technical as political

I would suggest that while the distinction between the political and the technical was useful to understand why despite gender mainstreaming’s ubiquity, this had little normative effect, it might be fruitful for (re)thinking gender mainstreaming to interrogate and deconstruct this distinction between the technical on the one and the political on the other hand. This would open

the way for thinking the technical as political. It would thereby also challenge the 'depoliticization thesis' to account for the failure of gender mainstreaming. This 'depoliticization thesis' relies on the idea that gender mainstreaming consists of a technical component (the know-how and the tools of integrating a gender analysis) and a political component (the normative goal of gender equality) and that, consequently, depoliticization means the decoupling of the technical from the political. In this way the technical remains behind as the unpolitical. The distinction between the technical and the political can partly be mapped along two other categories implicit in much of the (critical) gender mainstreaming literature, where there seems to be a confusion (or conflation?) between gender mainstreaming as a tool and as a goal. Typically, gender mainstreaming is explicitly described as a tool or as a strategy, but implicitly emerges as a goal – for example, when gender mainstreaming is described as something that is only partly achieved. Mainstreaming as a goal also looms in the background, when in their well-quoted article Moser and Moser mention how UNIFEM emphasized that 'ultimately gender mainstreaming is a process rather than a goal' (2005: 15). Here, gender mainstreaming as a goal becomes imbued with the political meaning of gender equality, and gender mainstreaming as a tool becomes associated with the technical instruments employed. If, however, what normally goes under the label of the 'technical', the checklists, the training and the toolboxes are regarded as political, as I propose, new readings of gender mainstreaming might emerge. These overlapping alternative readings of the technical as political might include undermining, disarming and counterpolitical (neoliberal) effects.

The 'technical tools' of gender mainstreaming can be political in undermining or working against the political normative goal of gender equality. For example, as Mukhopadhyay writes with reference to her experience at a workshop in Cambodia, well-intentioned organizations focusing their work on gender mainstreaming checklists could result in reducing gender mainstreaming to the recruitment of more women. Interestingly, as she documents, this could create a (political) backlash, since employees 'equated poor performance [of the organization] with the *introduction of the gender policy and less qualified women in the workforce*' (Mukhopadhyay 2004: 99). Similarly, when technical tools are presented in order to show that attention to women is superfluous, as Mukhopadhyay illustrates in relation to a Dutch-Yemen partnership, this politically undermines a feminist project.

Thinking the technical as political could further be understood in terms of distraction, disarmament or sapping feminist advocates in the development field of their time, resources and energy by requiring them to invest in the development of these technical tools. In her article, Mukhopadhyay refers to how gender 'advocates have been kept busy with the technical processes of developing frameworks, planning tools and checklists' (2004: 97). This reading

could also include that the so-called technical elements of gender mainstreaming function as a smoke screen to cover up the limited interest in or resistance against transformative gender equality. Mannell, for instance, draws on interviews with South African practitioners to claim that gender mainstreaming ‘was perceived as... a set of checklists and tools that helped organisations separate themselves from the real work that is actually needed for gender equality’ (Mannell 2012: 427). Sara Ahmed’s work on diversity and equal opportunities policies in higher education might also be illustrative here. Her analysis of ‘what documents do’ could be applied to the technical tools of gender mainstreaming – for, example when she writes that a document ‘becomes a fetish object, something that “has” value, by being cut off from the process of documentation. In other words, its very existence is taken as evidence that the institutional world documented by the document [such as gender equality] has been overcome’ (Ahmed 2007: 597). In a similar vein, she critiques audit tools developed for measuring results by suggesting that there is a risk that those organizations that would do well ‘imply the ones that were good at creating auditable systems’ (Ahmed 2007: 597). Her critique recalls the conflation between gender mainstreaming as a tool and as a goal, in which organizations can consider themselves to have completed their job when gender has been (formally) mainstreamed, rather than when gender equality is achieved.

Seeing the technical as political in terms of disarmament can also be explained by reference to Elisabeth’s Prügl’s interesting work on diversity mainstreaming and gender mainstreaming as technologies of government. Her Foucauldian reading of gender mainstreaming as a form of biopolitics asserts that it creates new selves and subjectivities, ‘new managers capable of taming the negative productivity of difference through the application of techniques’ (Prügl 2011: 84). Bacchi and Eveline (2003) arrive at similar conclusions by understanding policies as constructing and constituting particular subjects rather than merely impacting on people. Prügl’s analysis also allows a third interpretation of the technical as fundamentally political, namely one in which the technical is (part of) an ideological counterpolitical project. As Prügl writes, when bureaucrats integrate gender equality in the mainstream, ‘they wage a battle against the negative productivity of gender while working to advance governmental ends, such as economic growth, free trade, security and urban infrastructure’ (Prügl 2011: 84 *emphasis added*). Some critics of gender mainstreaming have interpreted this in terms of a form of co-optation that specifically emerges from its engagement with the mainstream (Rees 2005; cf. Daly 2005). A Foucauldian interpretation, in contrast, would emphasize that ‘there is no pure feminist knowledge outside governmentality untouched by the workings of power’ (Prügl 2011: 85). If the technical is conceptualized as a particular form of (unpure) feminist knowledge (often referred to as ‘expertise’ in this context (Kothari 2005)), this supports an understanding of the technical

as political. Following from this analysis, I would argue that the components of gender mainstreaming that normally go by the labels 'political' and 'technical' could be seen as both equally political/ideological and as articulating the political in different forms and on different registers. If the technical is understood as political, the problem of gender mainstreaming is not depoliticization but a particular type of politicization of the 'technical'. In other words, gender mainstreaming simultaneously articulates another politics that has the potential to undermine, distract from or counter the goal of gender equality.

What kind of politics?

The different readings above of how the technical can be political has already suggested some of its ideological directions. This section will further consider what kind of politics could be articulated in gender mainstreaming's technical dimensions. It will continue with the task of locating and addressing some of the ideas present in the article 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away', which I think merit further exploration. Mukhopadhyay's text gives at least three clues about the politics furthered in and through the technical. Strikingly, as already signalled in the title of her article, she refers to the development world as the 'development business' (2004: 95). While this choice of words is not justified explicitly, it is probably not incidental. Earlier critical scholarship on aid and development – for example, Graham Hancock's 'Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige and Corruption of the International Aid Business' (1989) and David Sogge's 'The Business of Private Foreign Aid' (1996) – introduced the language of business to interrogate the financial interests at stake in a realm which had traditionally been seen in an altruistic light and as therefore lacking such incentives.

Second, as alluded to above, Mukhopadhyay observes how the development business only tolerated the technical dimension of gender mainstreaming as long as it served and remained in line with a particularly narrow conception of development, understood as 'a planned process of change in which techniques, expertise and resources are brought together to achieve higher rates of economic growth' (Mukhopadhyay 2004: 96). Many have by now argued (cf. Kothari 2005; Parpart 2014) that such a conception of development as economic growth is highly political, despite its attempts to pass as neutral and empty of ideology. As Parpart claims, 'for the most part, mainstream development organisations accept and support neo-liberal values associated with global capitalism and global democracy' (2014: 389). Coherent with this perspective, there is a silence on masculine global (capital) elites and, if men appear in the picture at all, it is in the context of marginalized men which poses a 'problem' for gender equality (Parpart 2014). The third, closely related, clue can be found in Mukhopadhyay's reference to the work of other feminist scholars who have

noted that feminist advocacy in development received a less receptive attitude when gender equality was argued for on the basis of its 'intrinsic value' (2004: 97) and was adopted more strongly if it could offer 'extrinsic value' (Daly 2005; Lang 2009). Women and girls, for example, feature as 'change agents' (Parpart 2014: 391). This reflects concerns that have been expressed even more strongly in relation to diversity mainstreaming, namely that the inclusion of 'difference' has increasingly become based on instrumental reasons rather than arguments of justice. These instrumental reasons could focus on increasing the 'success of development' by including women or on economically productive value in the case of arguments for more women on company boards. In this context, Elisabeth Prügl suggests that there is a difference (of degree) between gender mainstreaming and diversity management, where in the first 'neoliberal logics do not constitute the means to governing gender [as in the latter] but they help define the ends', including 'economic growth, free trade, security' (2011: 84; Debusscher 2012).

As early as 2003, Bacchi and Eveline suggested that 'certain continuities between dominant mainstreaming approaches and neoliberalism' might explain the enthusiastic embracement of gender mainstreaming by certain states and organizations. They locate these neoliberal continuities in the individualism and neoliberal administrative frameworks. Bacchi and Eveline's claim that it is imperative to reflect on 'the reasons particular versions and certain parts of feminist mainstreaming agendas have been taken up' (2003: 113) corresponds with interview quotes from Lang's study of European women's transnational advocacy networks, which allude to the fact that gender mainstreaming might have created a trap for itself in having to produce and prove added value (cf. Daly 2005). Their claim also resonates strongly with Nancy's Fraser more general unease with what she calls the 'selective incorporation and partial recuperation' (2009) of strands of second wave feminism, which she vocalized in 2009 in the *New Left Review*, and again in an adapted version in *The Guardian* in 2013. In the 2013 article, she traces three aspects where feminism and transnational neoliberal capitalism coincide and where the first has been adopted to the service of the latter. Two of those are most relevant to consider in the field of development – namely, what Fraser calls the 'one-sided focus on gender identity at the expense of bread and butter issues', as well as feminism's critique of the paternalism of the welfare state (2013). According to her, the first facilitated neoliberal attempt to cover up social economic inequalities, while the latter, for instance, gave rise to the (on GAD terrain all-too familiar) microcredit programmes (Fraser 2013). Fraser's notion of a *selective* incorporation shares similarities with the depoliticization thesis which argued that the technical and political dimensions of gender mainstreaming were split off from one another. However, the merit of Fraser's perspective is that it shows more explicitly that the appropriated so-called technical elements were not apolitical

in the first place, and that they have been imbued with new political meanings and attached to other political compounds, which potentially undermine feminist goals. Fraser (2013) emphasizes that feminists are not 'passive victims of neoliberal seductions', without concluding that engaging with the mainstream is inherently leading to co-optation. As she proposes that we 'need to become historically self-aware as we operate on a terrain that it also populated by our uncanny double' (2009), the next section will further explore this terrain of the mainstream on which we are operating.

Interrogating the main/stream

Critical literature on gender mainstreaming has arguably spent more energy on considering the (merits of different) conceptualizations of gender (Eveline and Bacchi 2005) than on interrogating the mainstream or mainstreaming. Of course, many articles begin by defining mainstreaming, either by referring to dominant understandings, like the one from the Council of Europe, or by proposing their own definitions (Lang 2009; Moser and Moser 2005; Squires 2005). However, the meaning of 'the mainstream' or what 'mainstreaming' entails exactly receives little attention. Walby has drawn attention to the significance of (understanding) the mainstream by positing that 'gender mainstreaming involves at least two different frames of reference "gender equality" and the "mainstream"' (Walby 2005a: 322). The relation between 'gender' and 'the mainstream' can be conceptualized, as Mukhopadhyay explains, in terms of either an integrationist or a transformative approach, of which the first is dependent on the latter (2004: 96). Integrationist refers to integrating gender concerns in the outline of and approach to particular issues – for example, in development. The transformative approach refers to changing the way problems are formulated in the first place by including women's needs in what she calls a 'mainstream development agenda' (Mukhopadhyay 2004: 96). That means that on the one hand, gender mainstreaming is inserting something that is normally marginalized in the mainstream. Or, in Smyth's words, 'gender issues should not remain marginal to the ideas and practices of development organisations, but should be central to them, and hence located in their "mainstream"' (Smyth 2007: 585). On the other hand, mainstreaming is transforming the mainstream itself. Tiessen – despite the equation of gender with women – nicely summarizes these two strands as follows: 'Gender mainstreaming involves both the integration of women into existing systems as active participants and changes to the existing systems to reduce gender inequalities stemming from women's disadvantaged position in societies' (Tiessen 2004: 690, emphasis added). Here, the mainstream emerges as (the location of) the dominant, 'normal' (existing system), and mainstreaming both as making something part of the dominant/normal and as normalizing marginal concerns

(Walby 2005b). The first, integrationist approach, as Mukhopadhyay outlines, has become associated with the technical tools of gender mainstreaming and has been more accepted than the transformative approach (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002).

Mainstream and mainstreaming have also become associated with the related meanings of across the board, including all policies, or including everyone/every part in the organization: 'Broadly, mainstreaming is a commitment to guarantee that every part of an organisation assumes responsibility to ensure that policies impact evenly on women and men' (Bacchi and Eveline 2003: 98). Or, gender mainstreaming has 'the ambition of subjecting *all policy areas* to gender equality practices' (Walby 2005b: 456). The comprehensive definition of the Council of Europe sums all of these dimensions up when stating that mainstreaming involves 'the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender equality perspective is *incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making*' (Council of Europe 2014). The relation between mainstreaming as addressing all topics (as well as calling upon all employees) and as addressing dominant structures (by both in integrating itself within and by moving it in other directions) is not illogical, but still less than straightforward. Power and power structures, which are so crucial for the transformative gender mainstreaming agenda, risk disappearing when there is just a focus on addressing 'all'. Mukhopadhyay's argument about the danger of 'normalization' might illustrate this when she states that 'feminist concerns with the political project of equality are being normalised in the development business as an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualised and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact' (2004: 100). This normalized version of feminist concerns might have affinities with feminism's 'uncanny double' that Fraser writes about. Conceptions of integrationist versus transformative approaches, as well as the tension between addressing 'all' and addressing 'the dominant normal', reveal something about the mainstream and the relation with the mainstream that is established through the process of gender mainstreaming, but remain limited in their understanding of mainstream(ing).

In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Spivak introduces some interesting reflections on the mainstream that could be constructive in (re)considering the mainstreaming of gender. Her reading of the mainstream employs a water metaphor, as also present in Mukhopadhyay's title 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away'. The mainstream becomes the main/stream. Reflecting on the role of postcolonial and colonial discourse studies, Spivak writes: 'In spite of the potential for co-optation, however, there can be no doubt that the apparently crystalline disciplinary mainstream runs muddy if [postcolonial/colonial discourse] studies do not provide a persistent dredging

operation' (1990: 1). If we replace postcolonial and colonial discourse studies with another critical intervention into the hegemonic, namely feminist gender mainstreaming, we can see the parallels in the danger of co-optation. Spivak describes how postcolonial studies risks 'becoming an alibi' and colonial discourse studies can 'serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge' (1990: 1). But what about mainstream's tendency to turn muddy if there is no dredging operation? This requires us to consider if gender mainstreaming has also come to serve as a dredger, if it has supported the clean appearance of certain conceptions of development that would otherwise run against its own contradictions, or if adding gender toolkits and training to the main/stream might have let it stream more smoothly.

In and of itself, 'the mainstream has never run clean, perhaps never can' (Spivak 1999: 2). Hegemony, or, in other ideological terms, 'normalization', has the effect of not observing this impurity, the inherent contamination of the main/stream, 'with a sanctioned ignorance' (Spivak et al. 1999: 3). Following from similar theoretical premises as Prügl, who earlier insisted that 'there is no pure feminist knowledge outside governmentality untouched by the workings of power' (Prügl 2011: 85), Spivak's intervention concentrates on going inside the mainstream, by engaging with texts by Marx, Hegel and Kant, and making visible the gaps in which the native informant is present but foreclosed inside those writings. Involving her readers in her interpretation, she states, continuing the water and mud metaphors: 'I keep hoping that some readers may then discover a constructive rather than disabling complicity between our position and theirs, for there often seems no choice between excuses and accusations, the muddy stream and mudslinging' (Spivak 1999: 3–4). Elsewhere, she expresses the hope that her position of critique entails a 'productive acknowledgement of complicity' (1999: xii). Feminists similarly face the challenge of positioning themselves between drifting along the (development) main/stream, thereby legitimizing its operation, and accusing it from a distance. In my work on positionalities of global North-based female NGO workers who supported women from the global South (de Jong 2009), I have tried to reflect on how such position of constructive or productive complicity could take shape in every day work practices. Gender mainstreaming, like other feminist practices, includes certain political complicities. If the mainstream cannot be pure, perhaps we should acknowledge that mainstreaming, with its double attempt to insert itself into the main/stream and its effort to change the course of the main/stream, can also never run clean. The recognition that the technical is not apolitical should be part of this acknowledgement. However, a realization that the main/stream itself never runs clean and cannot be purely hegemonic might also encourage a search for the cracks and interstices where gender mainstreaming could be placed as a productively complicit intervention.

Conclusion

This intervention and dialogue with Mukhopadhyay is written in the spirit of Aruna Rao's call to break down the 'insidious insider/outsider stereotyping' in which gender equality practitioners working inside mainstream institutions are cast against external feminist critics, following her argument that 'the complex process of turning policy into practice and intentions into outcomes requires both effective institutional insiders and strategic external critics' (2006: 66). This chapter has responded to Mukhopadhyay's article by exploring the implications of some of its central issues. It has also connected with the broader critical debate about gender mainstreaming that has unfolded over the last ten years, at a time when a 'rethinking and refocussing' is being called for (Parpart 2014: 387). I have tried to offer a rethinking by deconstructing the distinction between the political and the technical component of gender mainstreaming and suggesting that the so-called technical dimension of gender mainstreaming is political. This reframes the limited success of gender mainstreaming in achieving gender equality, moving away from accounts that understand its adoption into the main/stream in terms of watering down or dilution – interestingly enough in keeping with the metaphor (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002). By tracing the political expressions of the technical and interrogating the nature of the main/stream, this chapter has offered a refocusing of gender mainstreaming, which takes account of the muddiness of the main/stream and recognizes its complicities in its cleansing. While critical gender mainstreaming literature has arguably concentrated more on theorizing gender, this might inspire a shift towards conceptualizing the nature of the mainstream, its convergences with feminism as well as what mainstreaming means in relation to the main/stream. Given that gender mainstreaming has its roots in the field of development (Walby 2005a), GAD practitioners, activists and scholars are well placed to develop further reflections on this, and to consider the unique challenges of gender mainstreaming in the development main/stream as well as its parallels with other main/streams.

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2.2

Beyond Binaries: Strategies for a 21st-Century Gender Equality Agenda

Aruna Rao and Joanne Sandler

Introduction: Context is everything

Written ten years ago, Mukhopadhyay's article, 'Mainstreaming Gender or 'Streaming' Gender Away', sits at a fascinating juncture in relation to feminist pathways for changing development institutions to advance cultures of equality. The debates about gender mainstreaming as a conceptual framework and as a strategy had significant resonance during the first ten years of the new century. Gender mainstreaming had been hailed as a strategy of choice at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing held in 1995. Less than a decade later a slew of reports and meetings – from the Norway-sponsored meeting *Strategies for Gender Equality: Is Mainstreaming a Dead End?* (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002) to the metaevaluations undertaken by Norway and others,¹ – contributed to the growing chorus of voices proclaiming the questionable uptake, cost–benefit or results that most large development agencies had experienced with gender mainstreaming. The lack of accountability for implementing policies and strategies, the millions of dollars invested in watered-down gender training, the growing networks of gender specialists struggling with each other and their institutions for a shrinking pie was constantly interrogated by, what Prugl calls, an 'international cadre of gender experts who play a key role in translating feminist knowledge into policy applications... [becoming] instruments in the government of gender' (Prugl 2010).

And now – consistent with Mukhopadhyay's assertions from 2004 – we may be at a point where the voluble criticism of gender mainstreaming may have caused the pendulum to swing in the opposite direction, as we witness the transformative aspect of 'gender' disappearing down the development drain. There has been a notable shift in the strategies of choice for securing attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in large foundations and development institutions. We are in an era when the instrumentalist voices – the World Bank's 'investing in women as smart economics', the McKinsey study,

Gender Matters, and others – have a huge influence on the global gender equality agenda. We are in an era when ‘protecting’ women and girls has become a regular feature of Security Council resolutions. We are in an era of new ‘evidence’, with data on the reverberating benefits of girls’ primary and secondary school education on society leading newer players such as Nike and the Girl Hub to widely promote the alluring idea that investing in a 12-year-old girl and a cow can deliver health, wealth and security to all.² And we are in an era when it is barely possible to mention an issue or solution for women and girls without the knee-jerk refrain ‘and what about engaging men and boys?’. These ideas – many of them harkening back to the Women in Development (WID) approach that was popular in the 1970s – had not gained the prominence in 2009 that they have today.

The landscape has changed in other important ways as well. The AWID FundHer studies (Arutyunova and Clark 2013) suggest that there are far more resources for work on gender equality and women’s empowerment than there ever have been before, including from new private sector and individual sources.³ In a growing number of organizations⁴ there is a more direct focus on ‘women and girls’ and there are more results-oriented policies, including consequences for non-performance. At the same time, the notion of gender itself has evolved, with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) constituencies building momentum on much-needed global, intergovernmental recognition of their human rights and their location on the gender spectrum. Some organizations are now bringing LGBTI issues into their ‘gender’ units, structures that previously focused largely on issues related to women.

Interestingly, this changing landscape has not concurrently resulted in a significant transformation of the challenges faced by feminists working inside and outside development institutions. Quite the opposite: feminist voices, feminist and gender analysis, and feminist organizing are easily bypassed in this instrumentalist landscape. For instance, in spite of emerging research from respected academic institutions and individuals that attest to the value of women’s organizing and mobilization,⁵ the majority of increases in funding that AWID tracked are not being invested in women’s organizations. Rather, these resources are going to governments, large international development organizations and private sector companies to implement, scale up and report on programmes that are intended to provide women and girls with access to resources but will leave the neoliberal, patriarchal *status quo* intact. Public–private partnerships to achieve gender equality goals – from DFID investing in Nike to expand the Girl Hub or the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs contracting with Price Waterhouse Coopers to manage one of the most important funds for women’s rights, the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) fund – were new to the landscape when Mukhopadhyay’s article was written.

Mukhopadhyay's extensive experience, and her point that feminists working in 'the development business' must dislodge themselves from the institutional black hole of technocratic action and bring politics back into the pursuit of equality, are even more relevant today than they were five years ago. Her admonition for a focus on 'creating voice, articulating demand, carving out rights, insisting on participation and mobilizing the women's constituencies to demand accountability' are key to transporting feminists off the institutional merry-go-round. One key, as she points out early in her article, is the interrelatedness between feminists on the inside creating an opportunity structure, resources and an enabling environment (the supply side of the equation) and feminists on the outside organizing, amplifying their voice and agency to demand change and holding institutions accountable (the demand side of the equation) for women's rights and gender equality outcomes.

Blurring the inside–outside binary

While Mukhopadhyay usefully separates the 'technical' from the 'political', we would contend that when most effective, there is a blurring between the two. In essence, this is akin to the distinction between practical and strategic interests. Molyneux, the originator of those terms, pointed out that they were not offered as binaries and the practical interests can sometimes form the basis for political transformation. Whether they do or not 'is to a large degree contingent on political and discursive interventions which help to bring about the transformation of these struggles' (Molyneux 1998). Women's practical interests, such as access to electricity, water, transport and credit, are not only hugely important in their own right but resolving such issues can be implemented in a way that opens a door for political consciousness-building and organizing.

That this doesn't always happen is obvious. It is important 'to avoid conflating "feminist" and "gender expert" as many gender experts are not feminists, and most feminists are not employed as gender experts' (Sandler 2015). In our experience, effective gender specialists and femocrats are constantly strategizing about how to exploit the ebb and flow of opportunities and risks within their institution and the context in which those institutions are situated to advance a feminist agenda. The wins may be small but the process they engage in is highly political. The debates on the risks of pursuing a strong political agenda in bureaucracies, the images of how feminist bureaucrats engage with bureaucracy – from institutional entrepreneur to tempered radical – and the results they generate are rich in theoretical insights and practical examples. A recent publication, *Feminists in Development Organizations: Change from the Margins* (Eyben and Turquet 2013), compiles a wide-ranging set of stories about how feminists work politically to promote their organizations' gender equality goals. In her contribution, Eyben points out that, 'Feminist officials' potential

to support social transformative action depends on them having a feminist commitment and motivation combined with a political ability to operate strategically, both within and beyond the confines of the bureaucratic system' (Eyben 2013).

In Gender at Work's experience of strengthening gender equality work with the UN Gender Theme Group (GTG), for example, the clear political strategizing of the GTG in Morocco stood out. There, UN system femocrats strengthened links to the women's movement and the Ministry for Women to keep a large multistakeholder programme addressing violence against women on track and deliver results to women. Using a simple tool to help monitor participation in coordination meetings and assess whether participants were facilitating or blocking the discussion, the GTG was able to effectively map how power was practised as well as how it was gendered in that decision-making arena. It nudged participants to be conscious of their own roles and encouraged constructive engagement. This process built on the conception that power exercised to dominate or exclude needs to be effectively countered, and structures and practices should be built to allow 'transgressions'.

In the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), where Gender at Work was called in to conduct a gender audit and subsequently draft a gender equality and women's empowerment policy, integrate gender dimensions in FAO's work-planning process and strengthen the articulation of gender-related results in its planning and monitoring systems, two things were abundantly clear. First, the success of these initiatives depended as much on the joint political strategizing and networking of the bureaucratic insiders as on the technical savvy and political savvy of the outsiders. Second, as Rieky Stuart, who has worked with many large development organizations, says, changing current work practices such as planning, review and performance-management systems, are important places to make changes. This is a counter to pinning accountability on the 'goodwill' of sympathetic colleagues. Organizations that have a strong culture of managing results can more easily include gender equality among the dimensions they are managing than those that do not track results. However, while it is true that accountability for gender equality results is generally absent in the development business, it is also true that accountability for results in general is absent.

Large development bureaucracies are as much the problem as the solution and a political 'win' today can easily vanish tomorrow, for both insider and outsider feminists. What feminists in development institutions do varies widely by institutional context and current gender politics, as well as the individual beliefs, understanding of gender equality, skills and influence of the actors involved. Their choices can be quite circumscribed, both within their organizations and across multiple mandates, capacities and cultures of their network partners. Local contexts and gender politics as well as the priorities of key

stakeholders play a prominent role in determining what issues are articulated and how.

As an example, leadership changes often alter the space for femocrats to engage within their institutions, as is evidenced by the challenges faced by gender specialists in the FAO who are struggling to hold on to previous gains. Similarly, in Morocco, when the 2011 elections ushered in a more conservative government, leading to appointments of officials who were more interested in assuring adherence to sharia than the previous regime, the landscape of how autonomous feminist groups and femocrats engaged changed. Feminists were less likely to be receptive to collaboration with the government.

Mukhopadhyay gives us a few examples of how pursuing a gender equality agenda can be reduced to adding more women and stirring, ultimately harming the agenda overall. And there are many other pitfalls – essentializing women ‘out there’ and descending into decontextualized and depoliticized generalizations being among them (Eyben 2013). To avoid those pitfalls, Eyben concludes that the most important strategy of feminists who engage with bureaucracy is to build relations with feminist movements and networks. This will enable exactly what Mukhopadhyay is advocating for – ‘work[ing] both within institutions to change norms and practices and outside institutions to build pressure on institutions to change, be more responsive and accountable to women’s interests’.

The promise of feminist micropolitical strategies

While Mukhopadhyay focuses our attention primarily on political processes of constituency building that hold institutions to account, we contend that there is an important role for femocrats to play in this dynamic and complex process. We should be cautious about idealizing constituency politics outside of state and private agencies and delivery mechanisms – where most femocrats are not located – thereby deflecting attention away from what they can do from inside these institutions. Location determines, to a large part, what roles are possible in this complicated business. To advance work on gender equality, we each need to play our parts, guided by strong political radar. This means that it is as important to pay attention to the ‘how’ of development practice for gender equality as the ‘what’. As Eyben notes, the ‘micropolitical’ strategies of feminist bureaucrats are understudied and could offer important markers on the pathway to transformation.

Below, we turn to three organizational strategies that combine political, technical and pragmatic elements that have proved effective in advancing an equality agenda – uncovering unspoken biases, reframing, and strategic reflection and learning.

Feminists working inside development institutions know that there are no ideal places to start, only real ones. Opportunities for change come in all shapes and forms and in their initial iteration may not look like an opportunity for transformation at all. Before the Gender Team of BRAC (formerly the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), a development organization founded in Bangladesh in 1972, designed and implemented the Gender Quality Action Learning programme, which built staff capacity to plan, deliver and monitor gender equitable programming and worked with managers and staff to strengthen organizational systems in support of the organizations' gender equality goals, it had to first broaden the conception of what it was going to do and why. The initial instruction of the executive director was to develop a gender training programme for staff. Through a series of discussions the programme was reframed to ask questions such as: How did the dynamics of BRAC's organizational culture relate to the effectiveness of its programmes aimed at women's empowerment? What were the problematic attitudes and behaviours between female and male staff? What was the adequacy of the organization's response? What aspects of BRAC's target-driven organizational culture hindered advances toward empowerment of women members? What special provisions, if any, did women staff require? Despite a strong hierarchy of authority and seniority, BRAC instituted an organization-wide process of action learning in small groups to delve into its 'culture of silence' around power dynamics and gender inequality. As a result, a wide set of changes ensued – staff clarified and developed a set of BRAC values that were inclusive and gender equal; BRAC instituted a gender policy and an anti-sexual harassment policy and implemented various provisions to make it easier for women to work in field offices (e.g., women staff did not have to travel in the field during their menses; provisions were made for maternity and paternity leave, and breastfeeding); and it adopted a positive discrimination policy in relation to the recruitment of women. The process also enabled more open discussion of contentious issues that were previously swept under the carpet, and it forced managers to pay greater attention to the way in which they treated their staff. To facilitate cross-programme problem-solving, BRAC started a cross-programme learning forum and promoted staff training in gender analysis.

Getting the UN Security Council to change the way it responded to sexual violence involved a reframing of the issue. As Anne Marie Goetz, former senior advisor on women, peace and security at UN Women, noted,⁶

There has been a radical change in the way that the UN thinks of sexual violence... from being an inevitable fall out of fighting, to now something that can be understood as an organized tactic or warfare. To the extent that anything... is subject to command, it can be sanctioned and deterred.

There's been a complete change in...active peacekeeping, military and justice mechanisms.

To achieve this shift within the Security Council – and to ensure that Security Council members would move from a change in understanding to a change in action – Goetz explained that gender equality advocates needed to shift their focus from international human rights law to international humanitarian law, which ‘requires you to make the morally indefensible argument that sometimes war and violence are justified’. Faced with this difficult choice, Goetz and others advocating for a Security Council resolution on sexual violence made a pragmatic one – that UN peacekeepers could protect greater numbers of women if their mandates reflected this responsibility. As Goetz explains, ‘we made that argument because we had to speak a language that the Security Council understood. Given the limited tools in the real world, we have changed things for the better for women who need protection in conflict situations.’ The result has been agreement, within the Security Council, to a slew of resolutions on sexual violence⁷ which highlight UN peacekeepers’ mandate to protect women and girls from sexual violence, call for the accountability of perpetrators of sexual violence, and establish a UN monitoring and reporting system on conflict-related sexual violence in conflict.

Recognizing the dominant values and norms in an organizational culture and how they bias thinking and action for gender equality can trigger the creation of critical interstitial spaces for challenging them with unorthodox practice. The Dalit Women’s Accountability Program led by Gender at Work in collaboration with four local community organizations in Uttar Pradesh and funded by UN Women, for example, successfully challenged the unstated but operational bias of keeping poor, semiliterate Dalit women out of better-paid supervisory jobs in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) on the assumption that they were just not able to handle the ‘technical’ aspects of the job, such as measuring the work performed in order to calculate wages. This stereotype was challenged by training and installing Dalit women as worksite supervisors across five pilot sites, and in one case creating of an all-women’s worksite. Dalit women, along with women from other marginalized groups, through this programme learned about their rights to work, built a sense of solidarity through peer learning exchanges across the community organizations involved, and formed to a union to advocate for their right to food and livelihood security. Through these pilot innovations, not only did the technical skills and knowledge among Dalit women increase but their new capacities were acknowledged by the community. Men began to see these women in a totally different light and they have been asked to carry out earthwork projects, such as digging ponds, desilting canals and constructing embankments, by different caste groups in the locality. The training

programme was subsequently adopted by the MNREGA system, and by allying with other such innovations in the programme across India, this initiative also successfully advocated for policy change which resulted in guaranteeing 50% of all supervisory posts for women nationally across the programme.

Conclusion

Towards the end of her article, Mukhopadhyay poses a critical question: 'whether it is possible to use instrumentalist arguments to persuade those who are not convinced of the intrinsic value of gender equality'. At this time, when instrumentalist, evidence-based rationales for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment have intensified, this question has particular resonance. The issue of whether instrumentalist arguments have shifted the consciousness of those who deeply resist gender equality and women's voice and agency as a human right has not – to our knowledge – been studied specifically. It should be. But we have certainly seen how instrumentalist arguments can be used to secure improved policies and laws, to direct more resources to the most excluded women, and to change organizational practices to become more gender responsive. This may be inadequate but it is not inconsequential. Where this creates opportunities for women to gain greater voice and agency, the potential for transformation to occur may increase.

The binaries that often defined so much of the work of gender specialists in mainstream institutions in the past – men/women, practical/strategic needs, two-track approaches (mainstreaming or women-specific), activist/bureaucrat, insider-outsider politics – are being replaced by a much more complex set of considerations. The spectrum of gender identities, of strategies, and of players that are now part of this landscape has expanded considerably, requiring an intersectional response. While many of the challenges that Mukhopadhyay outlines remain relevant today, there are also new sets of challenges and opportunities that we must place higher up on our hierarchy of priorities for transforming development institutions to deliver on social justice and human rights obligations.

The 21st-century strategies that could replace the depoliticized gender training, the isolated gender specialists and the fragile advances that Mukhopadhyay so rightly bemoans are beginning to emerge. Her call for prioritizing citizenship (with rights, responsibilities and agency), constructing spaces of participation, expanding constituencies and communities of struggle, and ensuring substantive equality rather than a more limited formal equality remains relevant. Additionally, we would call on feminists engaged in development to reflect on three areas.

First, the 'F' word: We have seen time and time again that committed, experienced feminists with links to an activist constituency and an influential post in

a large bureaucratic institution can open up new channels for women's voice and agency. A feminist Minister of Women's Affairs in Brazil uses her political access and authority to push landmark laws and policies to create women's police stations, or a feminist head of a UN organization refuses to be deterred when the UN's network of gender advisors opposes work on women's rights in Afghanistan as being 'a cultural imposition'. These internal 'warriors within' are increasingly unwelcome in their own agencies. Mainstreaming has delivered leadership in gender units or divisions of large bilateral, multilateral and government development organizations that is sometimes hostile to feminist activists. The objectionable phrase 'We're recruiting managers, not feminists' is heard more and more by those of us who have lived and worked in these institutions. We need to track appointments to leadership positions on gender equality and question placement of individuals – men and women – who are chosen because of their long trajectory as bureaucrats rather than their experience or interest in gender equality and women's human rights.

Second, the 'C' words: Collaboration across locations – based on an assessment of challenges that require our collective action – is essential for success in this new landscape. This entails being at the forefront of using new communications technologies, as well as traditional methods, to increase connection, critical consciousness, mutual support and dialogue between feminists located within mainstream institutions, across mainstream institutions and transcending the boundaries of activist/bureaucrat and genders.

Goetz notes: 'Femocrats face serious criticism from their feminist sisters and live in an environment of toxic hostility from colleagues in their institutions. They navigate between a rock and a hard place in their inability to satisfy any constituency.'⁸ How we undermine and belittle each other – whether because of different ideological approaches to sex trafficking or by competing with each other to position our thematic priorities or programmes at the cost of others – has a boomerang effect, diminishing our collective impact. There is a profound need for deeper reflection and action on how, as feminist movements or networks of gender specialists, we can practise the politics of inclusion and justice that we demand from leaders and decision-makers.

Lastly, the 'I' words: How do we seed efforts to transform an instrumentalist approach to gender equality into an approach based on intersectional analysis that leads to universal human rights, social justice and cultures of equality? Mukhopadhyay's willingness to question what will lead to a transformative agenda is courageous. And the response should be equally fearless. We need new approaches to unleash the capacity of young, less experienced feminists, men and women who can learn about real-life strategies for change, moving from traditional gender training to training for transformation, coaching and mentorship programmes. We need links between less likely actors, creating multidisciplinary spaces where gender specialists, academics, artists, engineers, educators and others can join together to test new approaches to entrenched

gender discrimination. The effectiveness of social media and popular culture in mobilizing new constituencies for gender equality – from sites such as Everyday Sexism to the use of GPS technology to create local HarassMaps that provide women with information to avoid sexual harassment on the street – offer a huge opportunity. That is why Gender at Work is experimenting with ‘Collaboratories’ – spaces where individuals from different disciplines can develop partnerships to test innovative ways to unstick the deep structures that hold gender inequality in place.

There are spaces of convergence where the aspirations of domestic workers and sex workers organizing for better working conditions, of women’s human rights defenders exposing the horrors of unsafe abortion, of young girls insisting on their right to quality and safe education meet the day-to-day, micropolitical strategies of feminists in mainstream development institutions. These are the spaces that we all must expand and make visible, from whatever location we occupy. These are the spaces that drive our thinking about the 20-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda. They are the spaces that save feminists from the institutional merry-go-round and keep us connected to the politics of GAD. The feminists in mainstream institutions who cross the imaginary bureaucratic line to bridge those spaces can contribute to progress for gender equality and women’s rights for years to come.

Notes

1. See, for example, Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV) 2011; IFAD Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) (2013)
2. See, for instance, the Girl Effect at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlvmE4_KMNw&list=PL7565E5BC6A4C9FEE.
3. In *New Actors, New Money* (2014), AWID mapped 170 initiatives, tracking US\$14.6 billion pledged to support women and girls between 2005 and 2020. However, it observed that the current spotlight on women and girls has had relatively little impact on improving the funding situation for a large majority of women’s organizations around the world. In 2010 the median annual income of over 740 women’s organizations around the world was US\$20,000.
4. See, for instance, USAID policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, 2012, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf>.
5. For a range of studies on women’s empowerment, see <http://www.pathwaysofempowerment.org>; also see recent research findings Htun, Mala and Laurel Weldon (2012).
6. Personal interview 2013.
7. See UN Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 2106 (2103).
8. Personal interview 2013.

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2.3

Gender Mainstreaming: Views of a Post-Beijing Feminist

Anouka van Eerdewijk

Introduction

Let me first situate myself as a post-Beijing feminist. In 1995, at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women, I was a development studies student in a Dutch university. I remember the term ‘gender mainstreaming’ being introduced in one of the lectures, and what I remember mostly is that I did not really get what it was about. It was only 13 or 14 years later that I actively engaged with its theory, its history and its practice. By then, the notion of away-streaming had become fully mainstream terminology, and much of the theoretical and practical debates focused on how gender mainstreaming had failed to bring the transformation it had promised. I am recalling this personal history to situate my own position in the understanding of gender mainstreaming. I am not of the Beijing generation, therefore my engagement with gender mainstreaming has been a reconstruction exercise; over the past seven years or so, as I have tried to understand the context in which gender mainstreaming was launched, and the high expectations of as well as the disappointments in it. In this effort I have mostly been inspired, rather than disappointed or frustrated. Maybe it is because I have not lived the highs of the global get-together of women in the mid-1990s, that I also have not lived the disappointment in the same way as some of the Beijing generation. That does not mean that I do not recognize the critiques and the frustrations.

When rereading Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay’s article ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’, I realized how accurate and relevant her critical perspective is to today’s practice. Ten years after she published that article, the key concern for gender mainstreaming is indeed that

Feminist concerns with the political project of equality are being normalized in the development business as an ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualized

and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact.

(Mukhopadhyay)

There is 'a plethora of frameworks, tools and checklists available to aid [international] bureaucracies to integrate gender', but 'there are no institutional mechanisms to check on failures' and this leaves gender mainstreaming as 'a technical exercise without political outcomes' (Mukhopadhyay). It is surprising and somehow cynical how valid and accurate not only her but many of the earlier writings on gender mainstreaming's shortcomings and challenges of the mid-2000s are for today's struggle to realize women's rights and gender equality through engaging with policies and institutions. It is this continued accuracy and validity that has made my reconstruction efforts inspiring. One might also find it depressing that the world has not changed enough so that those analyses and reflections have lost their relevance. I will not go along that path, but instead I look at what we have learned in the last ten years. For me, the insights partly relate to a better understanding of what the mechanisms of away-streaming are. This enables both a reassessment of what went wrong in the way gender mainstreaming was and is practised, and a revisioning of future strategies. My journey has not only taken me into the practice and writing of feminisms, GAD, but also passed through feminist political theory, critical organizational studies, and draws from a substantial body of work on gender mainstreaming in the context of the EU. I did not travel alone, and I refer to the co-authored publications to give credits to the colleagues and friends with whom my thinking has evolved over time.¹

Diagnosis and displacement

By the time I came to the debate on gender mainstreaming, it was already being suggested to do away with it all together. I have never been in favour of completely discarding gender mainstreaming, and one main reason for that was that the diagnosis on which it is based is valid and correct: policymaking and institutions are part of the reproduction of gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming carries a transformative potential because 'it claims to address and redress the genderedness of systems and processes' (Verloo 2005: 347). In feminist political theory, the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming is understood by analytically differentiating between three political strategies: inclusion, reversal and displacement (Squires 2005). The strategy of inclusion, based on the principle of equality, 'aims at the inclusion of women in the world as it is' and 'seeks gender-neutrality' (Verloo 2005: 346). The strategy of reversal is based on the principle of difference and upholds a politics of

difference. This strategy acknowledges that pursuing equality in a patriarchal society *de facto* implies assimilation 'to the dominant gender norm of masculinity' (Squires 2005: 369) and therefore 'seeks recognition for a specific female gendered identity' (Verloo 2005: 346). The strategy of displacement can happen after acknowledging that neither sameness nor difference 'entail a transformation of the norms of equivalence themselves' (Squires 2005: 369). Displacement problematizes 'not (only) the exclusion of women, or men as a norm, but the gendered world itself', and seeks to move 'beyond gender' (Verloo 2005: 346):

The strategy of inclusion seeks gender-neutrality; the strategy of reversal seeks recognition for a specifically female gendered identity; and the strategy of displacement seeks to deconstruct those discursive regimes that engender the subject.

(Squires 2005: 368)

Gender mainstreaming has come to be understood as a strategy of displacement because it seeks to counteract gender bias in institutions, structures and systems. It carries the promise of aiming 'to transform organizational processes and practices by eliminating gender biases in existing routines' and countering 'the continuous reproduction of male norms in policy making' (Benschop and Verloo 2006: 19).

It is the diagnosis of institutional bias and exclusionary structures and practices that made my reconstruction journey an exciting and inspiring one. I would argue that the birth of the concept of gender has enabled a view and a hold on the inherently gendered character of policymaking and institutions (Davids et al. 2014; Goetz 2006/1995). Gender mainstreaming marked a recognition that substantial change in the position and condition of women could not be effected only through separate and relatively isolated women or gender projects and programmes, because women's wellbeing and justice were affected by all policymaking (Moser 1989). This then called for a transformation of policymaking institutions and processes themselves. In international development, gender mainstreaming came to be understood as 'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels' (UN 1997: 1). I have always liked the definition of the Council of Europe, which positions gender mainstreaming as the

reorganization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels, and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

(Council of Europe 1998: 15, in Verloo 2005: 350)

What is interesting in this definition is that gender mainstreaming is framed as a reorganization and improvement of the policy process. One implication is doing things differently, fundamentally differently in the sense of reprioritizing policy ends and means, and prioritizing gender objectives (Lombardo and Meier 2006).

The Council of Europe definition is also interesting because it exposes why gender mainstreaming is susceptible to failure: it relies on ‘the actors normally involved in policymaking’. And, indeed, gender mainstreaming has expected those actors that are actually embedded in and part of the reproduction of gender-biased and exclusionary hierarchies to bring about that transformation. This has been coined the diagnosis-prognosis paradox of gender mainstreaming:

The assumptions underneath the diagnosis seem to deny the agency of any actor involved (that is, the gender bias in policies is not represented as a consequence of deliberate and explicit actions, but rather as the inescapable result of being ‘trapped in gender discourses’), while elaborations of the prognosis seem to be based on assumptions of voluntarism (that is, policy makers or regular actors are seen as *easily able and willing to correct their gender bias*). In theoretical terms, the diagnosis is conceptualised in terms of absolute structure, while the prognosis is conceptualised in terms of absolute agency.

(Roggeband and Verloo 2006: 620, emphasis added)

This paradox helps us to understand how organizations can be simultaneously committed to gender equality in policy statements and objectives, and failing to translate those commitments into actual practice and tangible results.

Where did it go wrong?

There have been numerous evaluations, metaevaluations, and special issues of academic journals, conferences, e-dialogues and learning trajectories interrogating what happened to gender mainstreaming, and what its future could or should be (see Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014). The very short version of the critical evaluations of gender mainstreaming practice is that ‘lip service abounds, practice remains weak’ (OECD 2007: 11), and that with regard to implementation, ‘evidence is mixed’ (Moser and Moser 2005: 19). Gender-rich policies evaporated into gender-poor practice. One of key observations was that in many organizations, gender mainstreaming had not been taken up as the dual track strategy it originally entailed, encompassing both a stand-alone and an integration track (Moser and Moser 2005). Instead, mainstreaming was often adopted at the expense of the stand-alone track, and used as an argument to

reduce funding for stand-alone programmes, and for women's rights organizations. The misplaced emphasis on the integration track was accompanied by a breakdown of gender infrastructure, with, for instance, a reduction in gender expertise in organizations, the weakening of gender units, and dissolving links to universities and knowledge institutions.¹

A technocratic and depoliticized approach to gender mainstreaming has affected how development institutions relate to and engage with feminist organizations, actors, knowledge and agendas. The dwindling resources for women's rights work were put on the agenda with the Fund Her reports of AWID in 2007. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to this by establishing the so-called MDG3 Fund in 2008, which was renewed into the FLOW fund. Dutch development NGOs have also been important donors and strategic partners for many women's rights organizations worldwide (Van Eerdewijk and Dubel 2012). Yet, as Roggeband observes, relationships with 'partner organizations' have increasingly been governed through new public management techniques, centring on results management and upward accountability (2014). Rather than nurturing solidarity and contributing to downward accountability, these techniques focus on the accountability of 'partners' to the donor. This is not to say that these development agencies do not have relationships and contacts with women's rights organizations and external activists and/or experts. On the contrary, in the case of the Dutch Ministry and also the non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs), these external voices 'are consulted on an informal basis, but there are no formal procedures or mechanisms to integrate them in the policymaking process' (Roggeband 2014: 340). The downplaying of the activist role of feminist organizations means that there are no mechanisms through which the policy priorities and ways of working of donor agencies themselves can be subject to debate and interrogation. Yet a more deliberative-participatory approach is critical for realizing the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming because it counters top-down agenda-setting and problem-solving (Roggeband 2014: 335; Squires 2005).

The transformative potential of gender mainstreaming has also been undermined by the reliance on particular types of instrument through which it has been operationalized within development organizations. Common instruments are, for instance, gender targets (budget or outreach) and gender assessment tools. Staff members are expected to use such tools or reach targets, but very often within a programmatic setting where objectives and priorities are gender blind. No wonder such instruments cause frustration and create negative energy and resistance: staff members are caught in a catch-22 where they have to realize gender equality 'within the box'. Possible tensions between gender equality objectives and other development and institutional priorities are hence played out at the level of individual staff members. And what do these

staff then do? They deal with such tools in a superficial manner: by ticking the box. Such tools tend to individualize the responsibility for transformation and mainstreaming, while leaving the priority setting as well as the organizational values untouched. That means that, again, the gendered nature of the policy processes goes unquestioned and unchallenged (Van Eerdewijk 2014).

Making sense of where it went wrong

These are just two illustrations of how the choice and employment of particular techniques of governance affect the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming. In her article, Mukhopadhyay also noted that ‘the integration of gender equality in work done by [international] institutions relies on committed gender expertise and the “good will” of colleagues’. She also stressed the importance of ‘carving out spaces for articulation and citizen participation’ (p. 145). The conclusions of recent writings on gender mainstreaming are in that sense not very different from, let us say, ten years ago; yet recent thinking has pushed for a better grasp of the macro- and micropolitics of evaporation. In particular, the notion of governmentalities assists in a better understanding of the mechanisms of away-streaming because it looks at how the feminist politics is being governed within bureaucracies and development institutions. It sheds light on the regimes and mentalities in policymaking and governance – that is, on the disciplinary powers at work, which are usually taken for granted (Davids et al. 2011; Dean 2004). Placing what happened with gender mainstreaming in a governmentalities perspective allows an escape from what Subrahmanian had called ‘the mythical beast’ of gender mainstreaming (Subrahmanian 2007: 116–117). This governmentalities perspective is significant for two reasons. First, it allows one to dig deeper into what went wrong and why; it ‘makes it possible to see the *particularities* of gender mainstreaming practices and understand how these have been *shaped by* neoliberal practices’ (Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2011b: 300, emphasis added). Second, this understanding of how power operates has implications for envisioning change and hence for a future for gender mainstreaming strategies: it ‘generates a view on how to eventually contest and resist these’ techniques of governance (Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014: 308). Let me start with the first implication, and then return to the second.

In her reflections on the ‘depressing track record’ (2014: 387) of gender mainstreaming, Parpart challenges our expectations of policymaking and misconceptions of policy and organizational processes. She observes how evaluations were ‘looking for solutions in all the same places’ – that is, ‘within established institutional structures and practices’ (2014: 386). These solutions include stronger commitment from the top, a strong mandate for gender infrastructure, clear targets, the availability of resources and funding, better coordination

and planning, and, of course, gender training and capacity-building for all staff, including senior management. Yet is more or better policy really the answer?

When policies fail to produce expected/promised results, the blame is often put on inadequate design 'Good' policy is often the 'solution' of choice, yet provides few answers Recent scholarship questions the optimistic belief in the unproblematic link between 'good' policy and 'good' practice so common in development agencies and bureaucracies . . . Policy is a political process . . . Policies emerge out of political struggles over what can be said, what needs to be done and what kind of citizens are required to achieve particular goals.

(Parpart 2014: 383, 387, 388)

Gender mainstreaming fell into the trap of neglecting 'policy as a site for resistance and contestation' (Eyben 2010: 55). Indeed, gender mainstreaming

is an inherently contested process that is never simply about adopting a new policy . . . However, there is very little attention in research or development material on the competition of goals and the dynamics of the genderedness of organizations in the process of change. Most manuals depicts gender mainstreaming as a harmonious process, and any tension between the mainstream and gender equality is usually dealt with by advocating education, training and the involvement of gender experts.

(Benschop and Verloo 2006: 22)

Institutions are not neutral terrain: organizations are sites of struggle and contestation, and policymaking and implementation are political processes (Roggeband 2014; see also Mosse 2004; Wong 2013).

Gender mainstreaming strategies and practices have relied on specific technologies of governance. This reliance 'on more training, tools, frameworks, manuals and gender experts and units are expressions of the rational standardization of protocols, procedures and other technologies that are projected by neoliberalism' (Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014: 310). Gender has entered, and actually been institutionalized in, the mainstream, but not in the way that feminist activities, practitioners, policymakers and theorists would have liked (Mukhopadhyay 2014). In fact, the evaporation is to a large extent inscribed in the design of those instruments. Gender has been delinked of power relations and structures, and this has enabled an optimistic, yet problematic, notion of agency: women and girls are no longer victims of poverty and oppression, but active agents of change, catalysing solutions for world problems, including economic growth, peace and stability. This is 'a far cry' from recognizing 'gender inequality as a relational issue, and as a matter of structural inequality which

needs to be addressed directly, and not only by women, but by development institutions, government and wider society' (Chant and Sweetman 2012: 518; see Whitehead 2006/1979). This blind eye on gendered power relations carries a strong parallel with the overestimated agency of 'actors normally involved in policy making' to which I alluded earlier (see also Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014).

The narrow understanding of gender has been documented and contested in writings (Batliwala 2007; Batliwala and Dhanraj 2007; Cornwall et al. 2007). Recently, attention for social norms is regaining ground, even within mainstream development agencies as the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). In most organizations, the multiple meanings of gender equality are rarely recognized, let alone problematized. It is not only the meaning of gender that is subject to interpretation and negotiation. The political strategies of change for gender equality are also contested and interrogated. In that sense, Squires rightly pointed out that, whereas in theory gender mainstreaming is transformative because it can be understood as a strategy of displacement, its meaning is much more diffuse in practice: 'one can also find each of the strategies of inclusion, reversal and displacement *within* mainstreaming practices' (Squires 2005: 367). As Mukhopadhyay also argued in her original piece, gender mainstreaming can take on diverging meanings, many of which are incompatible with, or even contradictory to, its transformative agenda.

How gender is understood and interpreted is affected by the tools and frameworks for which the adoption of gender mainstreaming policies generated such a high demand. Techniques of governance affected gender knowledge; in the domain of agriculture by painting, for instance, the widespread use of the Harvard model of gender analysis has contributed to frozen representations of

rural women working in agriculture as victims, overburdened and under rewarded relative to men, vulnerable and poor; but equally, although less immediately evident, playing (willingly – heroically) a central role in providing food security and household well-being, especially in the absence (in perhaps more ways than one) of husbands and other men.

(Okali 2012: 7)

But tools not only affect the knowledge that is produced; they also affect knowledge production itself and who is legitimized or disqualified as knowledge producer. In her analysis of the status of feminist scholarship in Portuguese universities, do Mar Pereira identifies a 'yes, but...' mechanism that effectively both asserts and denies feminist knowledge (2012). The 'yes' suggests openness to feminist scholarship, however, the 'but' points to 'a dismissive recognition... through which feminist work is *simultaneously replenished and*

contained' (ibid.: 296, emphasis added). It implies that gender is relevant but 'can be better done with non-feminist theories' and scholars (p. 292). This then enables 'an epistemic splitting' of feminist scholarship that

enables and legitimates a selective engagement with feminist work, because it provides non-feminist scholars with a recognised epistemological rationale for taking into account the feminist insights which broadly fit mainstream frameworks, while simultaneously rejecting as epistemologically unsound the feminist critiques of those frameworks.

(do Mar Pereira 2012: 283)

Put differently, gender is taken in, but feminist knowledge as well as feminist actors are pushed out. The techniques of governance result in a narrow and hollow understanding of gender, and at the same time privilege the expert and policymaker at the expense of the activist and deliberative policymaking.

Making sense of transformational change?

I have learned at least two lessons about gender mainstreaming and transformative change. First, the 'stretching and bending' are part and parcel of the practice of gender mainstreaming. In the discursive politics of policy processes, institutional and civil society actors engage with the meaning of gender equality; its meaning is fixed, stretched, shrunk and bent (Lombardo et al. 2009). Second, the technologies of governance that shape the meaning of gender also affect which actors are included and which excluded from policymaking processes. It is probably for this reason that attempts to define the quality of equality policies encompass two dimensions, both the content and the process, of policies. The content dimension refers to a gendered, structural and intersectional understanding of gender. The process dimension points to empowerment and inclusion, as well as incremental and contextualized change (Kriszan and Lombardo 2012). Process is more than participation:

participation under conditions of inequality will be readily absorbed, and there is a chance to resist ongoing hegemonization only if there is space for subaltern counter-publics. To be transformative, gender mainstreaming should then be not only a strategy of displacement, but also a strategy of empowerment by organizing space for non-hegemonic actors to struggle about the (promotion of the) agenda of gender equality.

(Verloo 2005: 348)

That means not only a dual track to gender mainstreaming but a deliberative and participatory approach.

The governmentality perspective, which has gained ground to read and reread the practice as well as the evaluation of gender mainstreaming (Mukhopadhyay 2014; Parpart 2014; Prügl 2004), forces us to rethink what transformation is (Davids et al. 2014; Van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014). This perspective implies that there is not only a paradox between a diagnosis in terms of absolute structures which stands in stark contrast with a solution in terms of absolute agency. On top of that, we have come to terms with the understanding that power does not operate in absolute terms: there is no absolute structure, nor absolute agency. That has implications for what we expect of policy actors, or any other type of actor involved in or committed to advancing gender equality and women's rights. Bacchi has unpacked convincingly how many ways in which the term 'discourse' is used fails to recognize how power works. She warns against

placing too much emphasis on the ability to shape useful frames and too little attention to the *shaping impact* ... of dominant discourses. The larger point here is that feminists need to reflect on the discourses, in the sense of interpretative and conceptual schemas, operating within the ways they frame issues, and to consider the consequences of working within these discourses.

(2005: 204)

The overestimation of agency and undervaluing of structures in both mainstream conceptualizations of empowerment and in the expectations of policy actors to transform policymaking and institutions are key manifestations of how hegemonic schemas delimit the possibilities of feminist advocates, policymakers or practitioners to think and act differently. Yet we can escape discourses by 'intervening in the "contradictions it contains" ' (Bacchi 2005: 201). Put differently,

A first and necessary step in counteracting the force of any discourse is to recognise... its capacity to become hegemonic, 'to saturate our very consciousness, so that it becomes the... world we see and interact with, and the common sense interpretations we put on it'.

(Eyben 2013: 26, quoting Apple (1979) cited in Davies 2003: 102)

This means that gender mainstreaming is not only a two-level game working 'at two different institutional levels' – that is, both 'working within development institutions' and building 'constituencies that demand change' and 'democratic, accountable and just governance' (Mukhopadhyay, Chapter 2.0, p. 79). It is also a two-level game in terms of working with the mechanisms of

governance, and at the same time interrogating where they come from, how they frame our work, and redefining and transgressing them.

This potentially sheds a different light on the potential and risks of responding to the 'cry for tools'. Gender mainstreaming necessitated 'simplifying concepts related to gender equality and gender relations' (Subrahmanian 2007: 114), which Standing (2007: 110) suggests is not only 'perhaps unavoidable' but also 'not necessarily bad' in itself. And although Okali is very critical of the effect that gender analysis tools in agriculture and rural development had in producing women as 'cardboard victim or heroines' (2012: 6), she does not recommend completely abandoning them or propose an alternative framework. Instead she proposes a set of operating principles, which, for instance, include questioning and resisting hegemonic notions of farmers and households, acknowledgement that 'gender relations are dynamic', and that 'changes in gender relations are intrinsically ambiguous and cannot be simply read off from sex differentiated data' (p. 13). The two-level engagement with the mainstream also implies that knowledge production cannot be confined to policy processes and institutions, or to their imperatives. Again, some of these suggestions are not necessarily new and they have already been voiced in earlier discussions about gender mainstreaming. The governmentalities perspective, however, does place them in a specific light and give them a particular significance.

Transformative engagement in a fundamentally transformed world

Before my closing remarks, I need to point to one element that has profoundly changed since earlier reflections on gender mainstreaming, and that pertains to the centrality of the state. Many of the writings in *Feminisms in Development* centre on the role of bureaucracies (Eyben 2007; Standing 2007) and, for instance, rightfully argue that 'expectations of effecting social change through bureaucracies are overwrought' (Subrahmanian 2007: 119). These expectations have become even more misplaced due to what has been called 'the double devolution of the nation state' (Stone 2008: 24). The state is no longer the sole domain of public policymaking because it has lost or delegated authority to global and regional arenas, and simultaneously to the private sector. This has resulted in 'multilevel polycentric forms of public policy' (Stone 2008; Van der Vleuten and Van Eerdewijk 2014: 34). Neoliberalism has redefined the agenda and policies that governments pursue, has repositioned private sector companies as key actors and pushed for a shrinking state. This is the manifestation of neoliberalism as 'a macroeconomic doctrine... sometimes called "free-market fetishism", as well as "a regime of policies and practices" ... that have vastly enriched the holders of capital' (Ferguson 2009: 170).

In addition to that, neoliberalism has profoundly affected how government pursue their agendas, and indeed ‘what should be public and what private becomes blurred’ (Ferguson 2009:172). But that is not all. Neoliberalism has also profoundly affected how governments work through the pervasive impact of new public management techniques (Eyben 2013). Neoliberalism then also manifests itself as

a sort of ‘rationality’ in the Foucauldian sense, linked to... specific mechanisms of government, and the creation of recognizable modes of creating subjects... Key here is the deployment of new, market-based techniques of government *within* the terrain of the state itself.

(Ferguson 2009: 171, emphasis added)

The promotion of gender equality and women’s rights then implies an engagement with the privatization agendas of the government and the shrinking budget for social policy sectors, with the impacts and accountability of private sector companies on wellbeing and rights, as well as with the evidence-based way of policymaking, the tender mechanisms of how government relates with non-state actors, and the results-based management of those relations.

So where does that leave me as a post-Beijing feminist? Gone are the days when gender mainstreaming in state bureaucracies proved to be the answer. It is somehow cynical that the role of the state had been reconfigured by the time gender equality and women’s rights entered that mainstream space. While feminists were looking for transformation of the mainstream, the mainstream fundamentally transformed itself; today and tomorrow offer a very confined space for promoting gender equality and women’s rights. I do not see my generation living the days of widespread support and availability of resources for equality and women’s rights as earlier generations have experienced in the 1990s. We cannot escape the private sector, as an actor to engage with, and as a logic that pervades our daily lives and institutional practices and mechanisms. We have to be both inside and outside, but the inside has become more complicated; also, that inside does not govern us into citizens but into entrepreneurs and consumers. We have to engage with a multifaceted manifestation of neoliberalism. Gone are the days when the enemy was out there; a governmentality perspective also implies that we also are neoliberalism, as much as we might dislike it.

I would like to recall Eyben’s point that the first step is to see and recognize how ideas and practices become hegemonic. History is important for that, history of thinking, of practice, of activism. My journey, going back to the original texts, reconstructing the past and analysing the present, has been inspiring, even though the answers of earlier days are not equally applicable to what lies ahead, it gives me ammunition to engage with the future, and helps me

to move outside the present hegemony and look for the cracks. What I look forward to is an intergenerational dialogue of how earlier generations of feminists in development struggled and managed to create that breakthrough in the international development agenda of the 1990s.

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Note

1. For a discussion of Dutch development organizations, see Roggeband (2014), Van Eerdewijk and Davids (2011a, 2011b) and Van Eerdewijk and Dubel (2012).

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2.4

'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away' Revisited

Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay

Rereading Gender Mainstreaming

In rereading 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away' I am struck like Anouka van Eerdewijk (Chapter 2.3) by the similarity in the practices of gender mainstreaming then in 2004¹ and now. What has changed since then, as evidenced in the excellent chapters by my peers, is my (and indeed our) analysis of why and how gender got streamed away in development bureaucracies. And so rather than write a rejoinder to the contributions from Sara de Jong (Chapter 2.1), Aruna Rao and Joanne Sandler (Chapter 2.2) and Anouka van Eerdewijk (Chapter 2.3), I indulgently take this opportunity to revisit 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away' and frame some of the empirical instances cited in my earlier article and others more recent in the light of new theoretical and critical understandings, using some of their insights.

My revisiting of the article, like the article itself, focuses specifically on feminist practice in development by examining gender mainstreaming as just one of the practices of inserting gender knowledge in governmental and inter-governmental development policies, programmes, research and organizational practices. Since writing the original article, a large body of knowledge has been generated interrogating this and similar forms of feminist practice. It would seem that gender has entered into policy discourses of international and national institutions but feminist aspirations for social transformation remain unfulfilled (van Eerdewijk and Dubel 2012; Wong 2012). Feminists' dissatisfaction stems from the meanings that the concept of mainstreaming has taken on in its translated form in policy and practice (Cornwall et al. 2007). It would seem that feminist concepts have been increasingly refashioned to provide a fit with neoliberal understandings of gender relations, the role of women and what will empower them (Cornwall et al. 2008). In this process, international development governmentality has produced new female subjects that policy can more easily address.

Gender has been institutionalized in development organizations although not in the ways that feminists would have liked (Mukhopadhyay 2014). Since gender mainstreaming was introduced, a lot of soul searching has gone into trying to find answers as to why, despite the best efforts of gender specialists and feminists, a gap remains between the intention of development organizations to mainstream gender and their inability to implement this intent. As Sara de Jong mentions in her contribution (Chapter 2.1), ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’ was among the first articles to pose these questions. Since then we have learned that this so-called gap can be seen as characteristic of the institutionalization process itself and not evidence of failure or partial fulfilment. The questions that are being asked have therefore changed. Instead of asking ourselves what has gone wrong with the institutionalization process, enquiry is directed towards revealing the dominant set of practices and technologies of power that have structured and shaped the process and framed feminist practice. Thus while ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’ struggled to understand why the technical work of gender mainstreaming in the form of tools, frameworks, training manuals and so on was acceptable and the political message was not, the new forms of enquiry are helping us understand that this disallowance is in itself intensely political, its end product being our subversive complicity² in wider projects of governance.

Gender Mainstreaming seen through a ‘governmentality’ lens

These forms of enquiry owe an intellectual debt to the work of Foucault (1991), especially on governmentality, modern government and the non-coercive but nevertheless binding effect of governmental power in shaping citizen-subjects. Researchers who have translated conceptual tools into investigations have revealed the many and varied alliances between political and other authorities that seek to govern economic activity, social life and individual conduct.

In revisiting ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’, Foucault’s conception of ‘governmentality’ provides a fruitful way of investigating the workings of governmental power and particularly the diverse mechanisms through which the decisions and actions of actors and organizations across spaces are linked to political objectives. As a student of gender relations and of gender in development governance, the appeals of these concepts are several because they help me to understand the nature of the political beyond the received wisdom that limits the boundaries of politics to what political authorities do – for example, what the state does. In this way it is possible to decode the technologies of power that have structured and shaped the process of gender mainstreaming and framed feminist practice. Foucault’s governmentality (1991) draws attention to a certain way of thinking and acting embodied in all those attempts to know and govern the wealth, health and happiness of

populations (Rose and Miller 1992). Central to this thesis is the idea that governmental power is not necessarily about 'imposing constraints upon citizens but more "making up" citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom' (Rose and Miller 1992: 174). This is achieved through organized practices shaping subjects and determining how they will be managed, 'the ensemble of institutions, procedures, analyses [and] tactics that allow the exercise' of power (Foucault 1991). Above all, it is about the rational exercise of power which tends to make the fullest use of knowledges capable of the maximum instrumental efficacy (Gordon 1991). All this might seem to suggest that individuals lack agency, and indeed many feminists have problems with these notions of how power operates. However, governmentality also transforms subjective realities and desires, making it possible for individuals and groups, citizens and subjects to participate in the projects of power, and to reimagine themselves in the light of the political rationalities that have represented their realities.

In development speak and policy analysis, the exercise of political power and the act of ruling are reduced to the actions of one authority: the state. How often have those of us working on gender been told that if the state was willing, if there was a policy on this that or the other, all would follow as if the state was a coherent and sole authority. However, the notion of government draws attention to the act of ruling rather than solely to the activities of the state. This means that it gives one the possibility to investigate the 'diversity of forces and groups that have, in heterogeneous ways, sought to regulate the lives of individuals' (Miller and Rose 1990: 3). Conceptualizing the act of rule has great pertinence to gender mainstreaming. Thus governing or government is not just what states do but rather refers to the actions of all those authorities that seek to shape what should be done and how they should be done to a particular subject, problem, a population group. Gender was one such subject along with the category of third world women that intergovernmental and national authorities sought to govern in the wake of the drive for accelerated global economic integration and globalization over the last two-and-a-half decades. This period coincides with the Beijing Conference (1995) and the period of intense activity on gender mainstreaming from 2000 onwards which might make it seem as if feminist activism was the sole driver of this change in the international will to govern. Whereas feminist activism was important, it was not the sole driver. Rather, governmentality helps explain the diverse mechanisms through which the decisions and actions of actors and organizations across spaces are linked to political objectives.

Governing depends on a particular mode of 'representation' that involves the elaboration of a language that depicts reality in a specific way and thus delineates the domain that has to be governed (Miller and Rose 1990: 6). Such a construction of reality becomes the means by which the subject will be addressed, managed and changed. In this way the represented domain becomes

amenable to the programmes of government. It creates a shared discourse between actors and organizations as they influence and regulate the lives of others.

Governmental technologies are the mechanisms by which authorities have sought to shape, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of subjects in order to achieve stated objectives. These include mechanisms for computation and categorization; standardization of training systems; the setting up of professional specializations, and vocabularies and mechanisms that reify expertise. Expertise, in this process, refers to a complex mix of professionals, truth claims and technical procedures.

The field of GAD has been made 'real' and therefore governable in the past 15 years as the GAD discourse has entered global and national institutions. In the post-Beijing era, development institutions were mandated to mainstream gender (Mukhopadhyay 2014). But what were they supposed to be doing? What was this 'field' that had to be made governable? After all, government is all about intervention, it is programmatic. In the process of making gender governable, 'truths' about women's position and situation, and about gender relations, had to be generated through research and knowledge frameworks that were acceptable to the governance of gender. The entry of feminist knowledge in international and national governmental spaces and its rendition to the purposes of government have produced a whole new reality contributed to by bodies of knowledge. This knowledge is made up of the formalization of expertise on gender, the generation of information and the construction of intervention technologies, training, procedures and tools. In this way the governmental versions of what gender is and what has to be done about it has been normalized. And we feminists, gender experts, researchers inside and outside institutions are participants in these projects of government through our efforts to create a discourse and language of gender, build up regimes of truth about women's position, and render gender programmable. Gender experts are one force in the 'diversity of forces and groups that have, in heterogeneous ways, sought to regulate the lives of individuals'. Their authority draws, as Prügl (2011) explains, not from any political position but from their ability to bring feminist knowledge into governmental programmes.

Several feminist writings have deployed these conceptual tools to analyse the entry of feminist knowledge into governmental institutions and to what happens to that knowledge and to feminisms. Harcourt's (2006) analysis of the activism of international women's rights movements to find a place in global development institutions is particularly instructive. She shows that whereas feminist activism in three phases, from 1990 till 2000, had a great deal of impact in creating the acceptability of the GAD discourse in global institutions for development, the process of inserting this knowledge via UN official texts, background reports, statistics and evidence inevitably codified and simplified

the vastly different experiences of women around the world. It produced the generic gendered female body – the poor woman with an expertly understood set of needs and rights that institutions had to programme.

Prügl (2011) uses a Foucauldian analytics of government to unpack gender mainstreaming as a prototypical governmental technology embedded in an apparatus of gender. This apparatus does not have a particular intention, she clarifies, but has only one interest, which is to govern. Embracing a logic of bureaucratic governmentality, gender mainstreaming targets bureaucrats who integrate the mandate for gender equality while working to advance governmental ends, such as economic growth, free trade, security and urban infrastructure. In the process, neoliberal logics do not constitute the means to governing gender but rather define its ends. Thus, for example, policies and programmes to mainstream gender in agricultural research, policy and programmes have meant fostering entrepreneurship (value chains and microcredit) in an effort to give women equal access to income, while leaving untouched unequal gender relations in the agricultural sector. Prügl cites Bedford (2008) to show that efforts to mainstream gender into the policies of the World Bank has led to programmes encouraging men to share domestic and care responsibilities in private households at the expense of public investment into the care economy.

In ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’ I was struggling to find a language with which to analyse why the mandate of gender equality was an uncomfortable or rather unlikely fit to the governmental ends of business and entrepreneurship forwarded by the Ministry of Agriculture in Ethiopia which left untouched gender but also class and other inequalities in access to land, credit, marketing channels and so forth while claiming that all kinds of farmer would be able to earn income by producing marketable crops. In later writings and using these insights it was possible to analyse governmental power and understand that gender mainstreaming is a governmental technology that defines ends and secures wider projects of governance, which in this case as in many other contemporary development agendas follows a neoliberal logic as common sense.

In reviewing gender training at a conference in 2007, we found that whereas the relatively little success of gender mainstreaming training to influence the conduct of development agency personnel (in all sorts of sectors) often attributed to gender experts’ lack of skill/ knowledge/practical applicability, nevertheless it achieves its objective (Mukhopadhyay 2014). Gender as a set of technical skills delivered in short training workshops shores up or reconstitutes the main logic of the development mainstream. The ends of gender training thus get defined to provide a fit to the mainstream logic whether this is marketable agriculture, entrepreneurship in an economy of jobless growth

or public sector modernization, even if it means cutting down on health and education.

Governance feminism

For some of us who can claim the pre-Beijing and Beijing feminist identities, the struggles to get first women and then the concept of gender relations into development has a long history and has followed a different trajectory from other forms of feminist practice. First there were the struggles to get women recognized as agents of development (Boserup 1970), and then the critique that the subordination of women could not be divorced from an analysis of the political and economic structures within which women were located (Kabeer 1994). The intellectual and social movements that put gender in development on the map followed on from these critiques in the 1980s.

For almost a decade now we have as feminists in development created what Halley et al. (2006) call 'governance feminism'. In using this term she refers to

the incremental but by now quite noticeable installation of feminists and feminist ideas in actual legal-institutional power. It takes many forms, and some parts of feminism participate more effectively than others; some are not players at all. Feminists by no means have won everything they want-far from it-but neither are they helpless outsiders.

(Halley et al. 2006: 340).

In this sense, governance feminism is where feminists in development wanted to be.

In 'Mainstreaming Gender or "Streaming" Gender Away' I refer to the insider/outsider positions *vis-à-vis* mainstream institutions and my curious position as third-world feminist in a first-world institution. Whereas I would agree with Rao and Sandler (Chapter 2.2) that we have to go beyond binaries and that insiders in governance institutions are no less political than outsiders on the barricades, I suggest we do not confuse binaries with real power differences. Positions within governance institutions have made some of us more powerful because we are involved in the act of ruling – in operating the technologies of rule, selecting gender expertise, creating mechanisms, mobilizing and distributing resources, and setting norms about legal standards. Outsider voices have either to be filtered through the systems and procedures set up to govern gender or have to be generated for the purposes of policymaking. The so-called outsiders have little power over, or direct say in, matters. They cannot access the GAD staff in donor bodies or UN institutions directly. Procedures of tendering and the public management practices have ensured that results

which have little to do with what is happening on the ground and everything to do with what governance institutions wanted to hear is fed back. Even advocacy has taken on a highly stylized form that since the Beijing conference is orchestrated via national, regional and international forums on issues that are already more or less generated. Government is programmatic and advocacy is also a programme. When my independent knowledge institute had to privatize, the first casualties were independence and knowledge. The reward systems have also changed. We are praised today for winning tenders to further governmentalize feminist knowledge or undertake commissioned research that ties us firmly to the agenda of those who commission.

This has several consequences for feminist knowledge and for the diversity of feminisms worldwide. I begin with an example from van Eerdewijk's contribution (Chapter 2.3), from a developed country rather than a developing one. She cites Roggeband's work to show how gender mainstreaming and governance feminism have the consequence of radically changing the insider-outsider linkages and cooperation. Roggeband (2014) shows that, on the one hand, Dutch development organizations rapidly and extensively adopted gender mainstreaming strategies, with a range of innovative methods and tools which created new expertise and commitment at different levels and in new areas. On the other hand, the adoption of integrationist gender mainstreaming policies and practices also resulted in a depoliticization and demobilization of earlier feminist networks that had been the motor behind these changes. In the 1990s the Dutch government and NGOs were considered pioneers in incorporating a gender perspective into the field of development cooperation. The early successes were made possible because of the strong mobilizing network of activists and experts, both in and outside institutions, with close ties to international feminism that once existed in the Netherlands. The political thrust that came from the voluntary involvement and collaboration between activists, experts and senior staff members of the development ministry was sidelined by the gender mainstreaming approach. Experts had to devote their energies to processes within their organizations, thereby neglecting links with women's rights organizations, peers and other alliance partners. The external allies in turn found it difficult to continue their lobbying and other activities as they lost funding. Roggeband concludes that the technical process destroyed the feedback loops which made the Dutch Development Cooperation – NGOs and ministries – answerable to the political objectives of feminist networks and kept gender on the development agenda. Although the Dutch Government has set up large funds for women's empowerment in recent years, the feedback loops have not been recreated and have been actively discouraged. This implies that the involvement of women's initiatives in developing policies of the funding agent are ruled out. A similar process has decimated the link between NGOs and their constituencies.

The second instance is in Sri Lanka and involves the annihilation of the national feminist movement for peace and reconciliation in the event of the entry of global governmentalized conflict feminisms. The extent of the marginalization of national feminist movements and discourse as a consequence of definitional power shifting to global arenas is most poignantly illustrated by the experiences of the feminist peace movement in Sri Lanka analysed by de Alwis (2009) and Nesiah (2012). Both reveal in different ways how the assimilation of Sri Lankan feminists into the discourse and projects of global conflict feminisms while assuring funding, visibility and international support nevertheless pressurized national women's groups to negotiate their interventions in ways that produce, enable and constrain their own priorities, and to concede to global agendas. Nesiah contrasts these initiatives by international conflict feminisms to the 'motherhood' movements of the late 1980s and early 1990s, a cross-class social movement that thousands of women across ethnic lines identified with and which brought the government to its knees. No similar mass movements have been inspired by international instruments. Nesiah attributes the changes of national feminist priorities to their assimilation into the international conflict feminisms.

De Alwis (2009) shows how many early feminist interventions against militarism and ethnic chauvinism in Sri Lanka which were launched as long-term, oppositional campaigns in the early 1980s have gradually become dispersed, diluted and fragmented today into projects and programmes focused on 'women's empowerment', 'gender sensitization', 'mainstreaming gender', 'violence against women', 'good governance', 'conflict resolution' and 'conflict transformation', and documenting human rights abuses. She observes that at present there exists no autonomous feminist peace movement in the country, and the voices of feminist peace activists are rarely heard nationally. This is not because feminists are not involved in anti-war activism but rather because it is no longer the primary and sole focus of feminist organizations.

There are several consequences for feminist knowledge and its consumption. Feminist knowledge generation in development is today for the purposes of government. Moreover, there is the worrying trend that the more successful we are in installing and maintaining governance feminism the greater is the danger of assimilation of context-specific struggles and historically particular oppressions into the global discourses on governance. As Nesiah points out, these are part of the hegemony of liberal governance and neoliberal economics. Liberal rights for women and gender inclusion are fundamental to these agendas in so far as these rights release the subject 'woman' from her tradition-bound role and make her free to participate in the neoliberal economy. Addressing the structural causes of gendered citizenship in the developing world does not feature in this agenda. The socioeconomic and political changes

necessary to end poverty, enable distribution and ensure security are also not part of this agenda (Mukhopadhyay 2015).

Postscript

Academics have an advantage over development practitioners in that they do not have to suggest how things could be better, nor do they have to recommend a better future. My lifelong work in development has schooled me into ending papers with suggestions for ways forward. I would like to resist this urge but nevertheless leave the reader with some thoughts on feminist movements, including governance feminisms in the era of neoliberal governmentality.

The UN conferences of the 1990s, especially Beijing, which gave birth to the idea of gender mainstreaming, evoked hope and new beginnings, occurring as they did at a time when many parts of the world were witnessing the demise of authoritarian rule and the rise of citizens and democracy. However, these conferences also inaugurated those modes of governance in the subsequent decades in which transformatory ideas about citizen participation, the environment, sexual and reproductive rights and, most importantly for feminism, the politics of emancipation were increasingly governmentalized. And with it some of the most rebellious social movements, such as feminist movements demanding equality and justice, were disciplined into liberal projects, the end goal being to fill the gender gaps in education and health, and to help poor women to generate income. The lines between political feminism and developmental feminism became blurred, feminist knowledge in governance institutions became a form of 'expertise', and feminist themselves led divided lives, constantly policing their feminism when peddling their special expertise.

Nivedita Menon (2004), writing about the changes in the feminist movements in India, says that very few of the autonomous women's organizations of the 1980s which animated a third phase of women's movements remained funded in the 1990s. In the process, feminisms were professionalized and as a consequence there followed the production and promotion of activists who have no clear feminist perspective. "The compulsions of taking up and "successfully" completing specific projects has meant that that there is hardly any fresh thinking on what constitutes "feminism". It is as if we know what "feminism" is, and only need to apply it unproblematically to specific instances' (Menon 2004: 220).

Similarly, De Alwis (2009), writing about the feminist peace movement, shows that participation in the international conflict feminisms circumscribed the ability of Sri Lankan feminists to conceptualize and participate in political struggles which seek to question the very parameters of the political. 'This is particularly clear when one reflects on the strategies of protest that feminist peace activists, myself included, have mobilized in Sri Lanka, this past decade.

I have sought to characterize this as a shift from strategies of “refusal” to strategies of “request” ’ (De Alwis 2009: 91). She goes on to delineate the different strategies. Refusal would entail forms of non-cooperation which encompass the more risk-prone, vulnerable terrains of strikes, fasts, go-slows and other forms of civil disobedience, whereas strategies of request would include making demands through legal reforms, lobbying, signature campaigns, charters, or e-mail petitions and other forms of ‘virtual resistance’. She makes this distinction based on the difference that Étienne Balibar (1994) draws between insurrectionary politics and constitutional politics: ‘In other words, an insurrectionary or oppositional political practice would be distinct from a democratic practice which is reformist, regulatory or philanthropic, that is, indistinguishable from projects of governance’ (Balibar 1994: 91).

In order to re-energize the political, feminisms have to move to a ‘politics of refusal’. What form this will take will vary from region to region but it will not be the same as before. The important thing is to remember that projects of government are never complete. The most well-thought-out programmes never actually reach fruition and have unplanned, unintended consequences. Thus governing does not have a totalizing effect and there are always small and big insurrections undoing the perfect governmental project.

The ‘bigger picture’ that places mainstreaming as just one part of the logic of the operations of power in feminist politics allows for a different kind of strategy. It opens up the question of how power operates, and makes it possible to see, as Prügl (2011) has shown, following Foucault, that power is not only imposed vertically by oppressive forces but is also productive – for example, introducing feminist knowledge and analysis into the mainstream has produced empowerment in some forms as well as constraints. Power is also produced horizontally and embedded in language and practice, so allowing actors to challenge and change the ways in which things get done (Harcourt 2006). This increases the options for strategies to resist domination. These might include, as Mukhopadhyay (2014) notes, using the governmental meanings of gender or women’s position promoted by development agencies as categories to generate a politics of change. They might also include drives to producing subversive types of knowledge that ‘defy reinscription in the mainstream’.

Notes

1. ‘Mainstreaming Gender or “Streaming” Gender Away’ was first conceived for Gender Myths and Feminist Fables organized by the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex in 2003. It was first published in *IDS Bulletin* in 2004 (*IDS Bulletin* 35.4) and then in *Feminisms in Development* (Cornwall et al.) in 2007.
2. I have borrowed the term from a forthcoming article by Sohela Nazneen about subversive complicity because it conveys the sense of agency better.

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Section III

Globalization, Care, Economic Justice

3.0

Gendered Well-Being. Globalization, Women's Health and Economic Justice: Reflections Post-September 11

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I. Introduction

Let me start with the question we cannot avoid: Can war – and especially a globalized state of permanent war and ubiquitous police surveillance – ever be compatible with the goal of assuring equity and justice in access to health care and a healthy life for all? From both an ethical and an economic standpoint, will *retribution* devour the potential for *redistribution*, like the mythic god devouring his children?

I wrote much of what follows during the quiet summer months, the months of insularity and contemplation before 11 September 2001 and its aftermath transformed our world. Then it seemed not only possible but indeed imperative to critique global health care policies and their gender, class, and racial inequities, and to imagine the more hopeful alternatives that seemed to lie within their apparent contradictions. But the new "war against terrorism" asks us to put all our imaginings for a better world on hold – and to call this patriotism. As the United States (US) and the United Kingdom showered bombs on an Afghanistan already pummeled into dust – so dismal, repressed, and impoverished that it isn't even listed in the World Bank and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) development indices – and as President Bush challenged all the countries of the world to join a timeless and border-less war on terrorism or else be counted as "against civilization," I had to wonder if what I had to say as recently as August remains of relevance. More than anything, I fear that the efforts of transnational women's health movements and social movements mobilized around HIV/AIDS are destined to become part of this war's unseen "collateral damage." So what I want to do here is to reexamine

some of my earlier and, relatively speaking, more hopeful assumptions in the light – or dark – of our current situation.

To summarize briefly, my “innocent” manuscript expressed both critical concern about the constraints that a global capitalist, market-driven economy places on equity in health care, particularly gender equity; and cautious hope that a renewed emphasis on human rights principles and health as a human right was gaining ground. Such gains for a human rights perspective I attributed both to transnational feminist movements (of which I have been a part) that advocate a broad definition of reproductive and sexual health/rights, and to movements seeking equity in treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. A two-pronged ethical framework informed my thinking: feminist values about women’s empowerment and bodily self-determination, and a social justice approach to health rights. I was cautiously optimistic that recent pressures in opposition to globalization might bring us closer to a transnational consensus in favor of policies and institutional mechanisms that would realize those values.¹ Let me review some of my basic propositions and interrogate them from the new and grimmer global political and economic landscape.

Before 11 September

A. Proposition 1: Globalization, or the global hegemony of neoliberal capitalism, creates conditions that directly undermine health, particularly for women and girls.

I join many other writers in associating global capitalism with a number of features that, if not new individually, are new in their interconnectedness and massive scale. These include: hypermobility of capital across borders; integration of capitalist markets; liberalization of trade; use of electronic communications technology to accelerate cross-border financial, cultural, and informational flows; opening of national and regional boundaries to people, products, and pollutants; weakening of the modern nation-state in favor of transnational corporate and financial actors; a politically and militarily unipolar world, with the US as the lone superpower; and centrality of *privatization* – whereby the state abdicates its social welfare functions to the private sector and becomes a conduit (or occasionally a cop) to expedite the traffic in capital and goods.² Numerous analysts and UN reports have documented the meanness and inequality brought in the wake of these trends. National governments in both developing and developed countries, fearing capital flight and anxious to lure investors, succumb to pressure to enact structural adjustments, deregulate business, cut taxes as well as social spending, stabilize local currencies, and clamp down on trade unions. The results, compounded by huge burdens of national debt,³ are (1) the reduction of public sector programs, especially

in health and education, upon which working people and people in poverty depend; (2) rising unemployment, as the anticipated economic growth fails to “trickle down” or keep pace with the loss of public sector jobs, and local small producers (many of them women) become displaced by export production and foreign goods; and (3) the inability of the state to provide “safety nets” any longer, due to the shrinkage of public revenues from the lowering of tariffs on imports and taxes on capital.

Under such conditions, world poverty and the gap between rich and poor, both within and among countries, continue to increase. The presumed benefits of global market integration and liberalization accrue disproportionately to the most powerful countries and people. As the *Human Development Report* for 2000 bluntly states: “. . . the super-rich get richer” – and, I could add, they also get healthier and live longer, relative to the super-poor and even the not-so-poor.⁴ It may seem obvious that poverty exacerbates ill health, as Paul Farmer⁵ and others have demonstrated, but it is also true that privatization directly exacerbates poverty: “In India, the increased cost of medical care is the second most common cause of rural indebtedness.”⁶ Privatization, in turn, means commodification – of even the most basic elements of life. The World Commission on Water for the 21st Century reports that “the poorest people in the world are paying many times more than their richer compatriots for the water they need to live, and are getting more than their share of deadly diseases because supplies are dangerously contaminated.”⁷

Researchers and international agencies are only beginning to collect hard evidence of the deleterious – and racist, sexist – health impacts of global capitalism. In an interview with National Public Radio in 2000, World Health Organization (WHO) Director Gro Harlem Brundtland expressed dismay that the average life span in some of the world’s poorest countries today is the same as that in Europe 250 years ago. Life expectancy has fallen since 1970 in a number of sub-Saharan African countries while infant mortality has increased. In considerable part, this is due to both the AIDS epidemic and civil wars, but it is also due to development policies that stress growth and exports over human well-being, and foreign direct investment and loan policies that virtually red-line much of Africa (policies some call “global apartheid”).⁸ In Zimbabwe, the imposition of user fees for public health services has been linked to the doubling of maternal mortality, while structural adjustments have entailed layoffs of thousands of nurses and doctors.⁹ Severe shortages of public sector health workers and supplies and facilities contribute, in turn, to higher rates of death from infectious diseases (including those that are completely curable, such as tuberculosis and malaria) as well as to rising infant mortality and maternal mortality and morbidity.¹⁰ To complete the vicious circle, unaffordable charges for health care also result in greater malnutrition, hence worse health, especially under conditions of gender subordination for women and girls.

The uneven impact of global capitalism's harsher side is thus not only geographical but also racialized and gendered. Those who languish in the shadows outside the glitter of the global shopping mall (or the closed down hospital) are overwhelmingly Africans and dark-skinned and indigenous peoples in Asia, Latin America, and the urban ghettos of the North. Moreover, as so many feminist critics of mainstream models of development have noted, women "make up 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor."¹¹ Women are also those whose care-taking burdens multiply when public health and other social services are cut. Because they are more likely than men to be employed in the state sector, women suffer higher unemployment rates due to privatization and are also most vulnerable to prostitution, sexual trafficking, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as a consequence.¹² A recent UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) report on 27 countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union found that free markets have an adverse impact on gender equality, leaving women and girls worse off than they were before. Rising female unemployment and loss of income bring reduced life expectancy due to "increased smoking, alcohol consumption, drug abuse and unsafe sexual activity," and consequently high rates of HIV/AIDS.¹³

Women pay for the cumulative social deficits of global capitalism and privatization in another way as well, insofar as these trends subvert the very international instruments that were designed to promote gender equality. Legally binding instruments, such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

(Women's Convention) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), contain provisions for better protection through social security programs, health and safety regulations, child care centers, and accessible health care.¹⁴ Likewise, the nonbinding but morally compelling documents produced at the UN conferences in Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing in the 1990s call upon governments to take positive actions to implement gender equality, women's empowerment, the eradication of poverty, and access to health care, including comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services. Above all, they define "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" (including reproductive and sexual health) as a fundamental human right. But implementation of this right assumes the model of a strong interventionist state, based on principles of social rights and the common good – a model that, not only in its socialist but in its democratic welfare state version (Europe and Canada), is rapidly becoming extinct.

Even in the less gloomy days of summer, I had to conclude that global economic trends, with their regimes of privatization, debt service, and trade-conquers-all, were on a collision course with international agreements and social movements to implement health as a human right. In the era before the 11 September attacks and the War to End All Peace, I had written that "the

ubiquitous reach of neoliberalism and the globalization of economies have come to *replace military security* as the ‘comprehensive norm’ of global governance since the end of the Cold War.”¹⁵ I saw evidence for the hegemony of this econo-centric norm within the UN and the World Trade Organization (WTO), where most national governments, including those of developing countries, were scrambling for inclusion in the global economy and Secretary-General Kofi Annan was busy courting transnational corporate “partners” to join the UN’s Global Compact (a scheme to give corporations a kind of honorary membership in the UN).¹⁶ I saw it, too, in the prominence of financial institutions like the WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank – which lack any democratic accountability – in influencing the direction of global health policies. Finally, I saw it in the priorities of those policies themselves and the largely quantitative, efficiency-oriented methodologies used to arrive at them. Now, let me digress for just a moment to summarize where my thinking lay by mid-summer on the matter of *health sector reform*.

“Health sector reform” is an umbrella rubric that refers to a whole range of economies aimed at making national health ministries more effective, and investments in health and health delivery systems more efficient. Most analysts trace its origins – at least in its most recent incarnation – to the World Bank’s 1993 World Development Report (WDR), *Investing in Health*. The Bank has become the most powerful institution setting global and, in many cases, national policy agendas in regard to health care, having surpassed the WHO in this role.¹⁷ By its own estimate:

The World Bank is the largest single source of external funding in developing countries for human development – which includes health, nutrition and population (HNP), education, and social protection. These sectors are also the fastest growing areas of Bank lending, accounting for 20% of lending for the last three fiscal years, as compared with 3% a decade ago.¹⁸

In theory, health sector reforms have two main purposes: (1) restructuring state systems of health finance and delivery to facilitate private investment, greater efficiency, and access; and (2) providing health care resources in areas where “market incentives” are absent, that is, where the private sector sees no profits. On their face, these purposes appear reasonable in terms of both better health outcomes and achieving gender/race/class equality and human rights. Inefficient and wasteful health systems can hardly be socially just. In practice, however, what we know so far about the implementation of health sector reforms is not encouraging. Neoliberal economists at the World Bank and the WHO now seem to be determining health priorities using narrow calculations of the “global burden of disease” (GBD) based on aggregate formulae

for computing loss of healthy life years. Intrinsic to these methods is a bias favoring utility and cost effectiveness over prevention and social inclusion.

It is not possible in the scope of this essay to present a detailed critique of the DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) methodology or the problems of so-called “sector-wide approaches” (SWAPS) but only to summarize my main concerns – the concerns I was so preoccupied with in the summer and that now seem rather trivial and far away.¹⁹ First, as any recent WHO report immediately reveals, this economic regime is expressly aimed at replacing the broad emphasis on primary health care, universal access, and multisectoral programs embraced in the famous 1978 Alma Ata Declaration.²⁰ In fact, health sector reforms and SWAPs move us *backward* to the vertical, disease-oriented focus that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s; to a reduced concept of “public health” as immunization campaigns and limited expenditures on a narrowly defined “package of services” for the poorest; and to a major emphasis on privatized care, private financing for all but “catastrophic” illnesses, and user fees to contain social costs.²¹

Second, reflecting the fallacy in its claims to objectivity and neutrality, the “DALYs/GBD” approach to setting priorities contains an inherent gender bias. This is not to deny that its methods have yielded policies that can benefit women and children as well as men. For example, since the methods compute disability as well as deaths, they give priority to addressing both maternal mortality and maternal morbidity, often ignored in the past. Further, they have resulted in aggressive campaigns by international agencies and private donors to wipe out such deadly but curable diseases as river blindness, malaria, and tuberculosis, and potentially to find a cure for AIDS. On the other hand, the focus on not only diseases but “catastrophic” diseases – those presumed to take the greatest toll on *productive* life – completely ignores conditions that cause so many women, especially poor women, the most endemic pain and suffering and that have been the focus of women’s health movement advocacy for years. Chronic conditions such as menstrual disorders, reproductive and urinary tract infections, genital mutilation, obstetric fistulae, domestic violence – to say nothing of the lack of sanitation and clean water, or harassment or abuse by doctors and family planning clinic workers – are completely absent from the health economist’s radar screen.²²

The reason why the quantitative, narrow methods being used by global health economists to determine health policies is problematic at its core is because of the underlying assumptions about what matters for a “healthy” life. Those assumptions rest entirely on a capitalist patriarchal ideology that privileges *productivity* above all else. This means that their framework ignores the kinds of daily suffering and ill health that women, especially the poorest and most vulnerable women, often see as the inevitable pains of life, to be endured without stopping their normal work and domestic tasks. It also provides no

way to evaluate the quality of health care services as women experience them. Yet that experience may have a direct bearing on the “burden of disease,” since we know that practices such as disrespectful or abusive treatment, lack of confidentiality, and cultural insensitivity discourage many women from returning to clinics and, therefore, function as de facto barriers to access.²³

Finally, the main problem with neoliberal economists determining global health policies is philosophical. It has to do with their underlying concept of justice as the distributive outcome of free markets, and their unquestioning belief that markets, while imperfect, can solve most of the problems of curative health care.²⁴ As the World Bank put it in proposing that the state abandon the business of operating public hospitals and clinics, “if government does not foot the bill, all but the poorest will find ways to pay for care themselves.”²⁵ The end result of this approach is that vast areas of the social sector are now opened up for private investment and profit, a good part of which comes from public revenues through subcontracting. Public hospitals are defunded, privatized, or shut down. The market becomes the source of most services for most people, and those who cannot afford to pay (“the most vulnerable”) are left to be protected by (often nonexistent) “safety nets.” In other words, as the US system with its millions of uninsured and uncared-for so shamefully illustrates, health care becomes a two-tiered system – a commodity for many (“health consumers”) and a form of public assistance, or an unattainable luxury, for the rest.²⁶

Why is this so bad? By putting so much social need into the hands of the private sector – “marketizing” the state’s social welfare functions – it obviates any systematic, democratic mechanisms of *accountability* regarding standards of quality and access. The market is an ethically closed, or self-regulating, system. It measures value only by supply and demand. In practice, then, *ability to pay for services* becomes the ethic governing distribution, rather than principles of human rights and social inclusion. A human rights approach differs fundamentally from a market-oriented model because it provides (a) a normative ground on which people can feel entitled to make social justice claims; (b) standards for evaluating programs and services from the standpoint of the needs and well-being of those whom they are designed to benefit; and (c) mechanisms of accountability for enforcing those standards. It relies on a community consensus, arrived at through democratic processes, for determining health needs and priorities,²⁷ rather than on marketing surveys or letting individual consumers simply “shop around.” And it does not accept the neoliberal economist’s model of scarcity, so obscene in the face of exorbitant wealth, budget surpluses, and massive military spending (\$1 billion a month and expected to grow geometrically for the “war against terrorism” alone).²⁸

Now let me back up and ask what was wrong with this picture? From the vantage point of the “new war” front, I see at least four challenges to my

earlier critique of the politics of global health. First, as globalization furiously goes military, it becomes all too obvious that militarism as a “comprehensive norm” is alive and well and quite ready to displace economic rationality. We are reminded that no country, least of all the US, ever seriously contemplated demilitarizing after the Cold War ended. “Terrorism” was always standing in reserve as the incarnation of evil – an empire without borders – to replace the supposed threat of communism. “National security,” now escalated into “global security,” trumps all the other logics of power and, in the name of sheer survival, silences all the demands for a decent and healthy life.

Second, my cursory review of the health deficits wrought by global capitalism was much too focused on middle and low-income countries, neglecting the deterioration of health systems here at home. In the face of bioterrorism and several deaths from anthrax, officials admit that the US itself suffers from “inadequacy of our public health infrastructure” (due, of course, to two decades of privatization and cutbacks in public funding); and that “many of the nation’s hospitals lack necessary equipment – in some cases even simple tools like fax machines – to receive or report information in an emergency.”²⁹ (One wonders how public hospitals have coped with many other kinds of emergencies until now.) In short, the harsher health impacts of global capitalism are perhaps more evenly spread than I had imagined. Will the prescribed antidote be the militarization of hospitals and clinics?

Third, the current scenario calls into question the analysis of the state as weakened, much less in decline. Just as the US has been the global model of commodification and markets, it is also likely to set the parameters of the permanent security state and the globalization of militarism. For now, it appears that this means not only the federalization of airports but also the expansion and centralization of state agencies for policing and intelligence-gathering (the so-called “Department of Homeland Defense”); the presence of uniformed and armed state agents in many public venues (as is currently the case in Brazil, Israel, and Egypt); the continual surveillance of communication and transportation networks of all kinds; and the restraint of civil liberties and mobility for all citizens, but particularly for immigrants. The USA Patriot Act, passed hastily and almost without opposition in Congress in October 2001, provides extraordinary powers to the Attorney General to conduct surveillance through floating wiretaps; to eavesdrop on communications between lawyers and their clients in federal custody; and to pick up and detain indefinitely any foreigners he has “reasonable grounds to believe” are “engaged in any activity that endangers the national security of the United States,” without providing any information about their whereabouts or the charges against them.³⁰ In addition, President Bush ordered the establishment of a system of secret military tribunals to try “terrorists” without any of the usual due process protections or the public disclosure of proceedings that accompany criminal or even court-martial

trials under US law.³¹ All of this is justified by the “emergency” conditions of “wartime” – in a situation where Congress (the only governmental body constitutionally authorized to do so) has never made an official declaration of war.

Clearly, there is nothing to suggest that the refurbished security state will give any priority to provision of social services, including even the minimal forms of preventive health care and “safety net” packages for the poor recommended in the pre-September 11 era by the World Bank. Quite the contrary. The security and anti-terrorist apparatus (not only in the US but in all countries that join the “anti-terrorist coalition”) will devour enormous public funds, while helping to reconstitute the strong centralized state – now under the lead of the very conservatives who long complained about “too much (federal) government.” Further, we cannot help noticing the deafening silence of those international institutions that only months ago were recognized, or hated, as the most powerful managers of global capitalism – the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank. They have either been conscripted as auxiliaries to America’s war, as in the convenient and sudden timing of the IMF’s generous loan to Pakistan,³² or relegated to inconsequentiality. No one worries that they will be targeted for terrorist attacks.

Finally, I register with some alarm what is already happening to globalization’s much vaunted porous boundaries. Borders are tightening everywhere, as our security-obsessed nations – particularly in North America and Europe – increasingly perceive the flows of information, people, drugs, arms, and viruses as sources of deadly danger. As in some medieval garrison town, the policing of borders and boundaries (not the provision of social services) becomes the defining signifier of the state. Whether we are observing the fleets of police helicopters and military personnel who now patrol New York’s ports of entry or the televised footage of throngs of starving Afghan refugees pushing up against the sealed Iranian and Pakistani borders, we seem to be staring at globalization’s future. A future of segregation rather than integration, and none of it – including the packets of “humanitarian” veggies and antibiotics dropped into the barren, land mined dust – has anything to do with health. The UN Population Fund announced an emergency programme to provide Afghan women refugees – some 10,000 of whom have high-risk pregnancies – with desperately needed reproductive health care, only not abortions.³³ Whether this was in deference to the Muslim fundamentalists in Afghanistan or the Christian ones in Washington, I do not know. Otherwise, health, including reproductive and sexual health, has almost disappeared as a public issue – unless the bioterrorist threat ironically succeeds as a wake-up call.

B. Proposition 2. Whether despite or because of the growing inequities and negative health indicators that have accompanied global capitalism, the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st also brought new

possibilities and new ways of thinking in international arenas about the links between poverty, health, and human rights.

At the midsummer solstice, I saw many rays of hope shining out of the contradictions between global capitalism's promise and its realities. In almost classic dialectical fashion, these grew out of some fairly dismal shifts signifying *new configurations of global power*. By the late 1990s, serious chinks had developed in the global capitalist armor, bringing division in its inner circles and new power constellations challenging its hegemony. The failure of the "Asian tigers;" chronic economic and health crises in Russia and other "transitional" economies; and the onset of recessions and widespread layoffs, bankruptcies, and downsizing in many of the leading capitalist countries sent shock waves through the central institutions that manage the global economy. These unanticipated economic downturns, along with the mounting size and visibility of mass protests, muffled the optimism of globalization's champions and triggered a period of self-searching and ideological revision. Even the unipolar configuration of global power seemed fractured and unstable. Although the US remained the world's single most powerful country economically and militarily, by 2001 and the G-8 summit meeting in Genoa in July, it had also become the world's chief outlaw and rogue nation, refusing to comply with international legal and normative standards on just about any issue. It was isolated from its closest allies in Europe and Japan, derelict in paying its large backlog of UN dues, voted off the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, rudely walked out of the World Conference Against Racism in South Africa, and widely distrusted for its cowboy, go-it-alone political posture.³⁴

The sequel was the revision of the neoliberal agenda. By the turn-of-the-millennium, critiques of neoliberal dogma, even from within the World Bank, and the undeniable evidence of its failures, had induced international organizations to reframe their growth-oriented policies and begin addressing issues of systemic poverty and ill health. A shift to a kind of "neo-Keynesian moment" has been particularly evident in the policies of the World Bank (thanks mainly to its former chief economic advisor, Joseph Stiglitz, who left the Bank but also won a Nobel prize). Amidst the 1998–1999 global economic crises, World Bank leaders were outspoken in questioning the orthodoxy of the past decade and, to some extent, separating themselves from both the IMF and the US Treasury and Federal Reserve chiefs on global economic priorities – a turn that many commentators characterized as a "breakdown in the Washington consensus."³⁵ Rejecting the orthodox assumption that economic growth alone will eliminate poverty or that markets can be relied on to ensure health, education and gender equality, especially for the poor, the Bank embarked on a campaign encouraging states to redistribute resources in order to create "pro-poor" public goods. In the most recent WDR, it states boldly: "Poor people have few assets in part

because they live in poor countries or in poor areas within countries. They also lack assets because of stark inequalities in the distribution of wealth and the benefits of public action."³⁶

Of course, this shift to an emphasis on poverty reduction and redistribution is partly a response to strong protests against Bank policies and projects in many developing countries as well as in countless anti-globalization demonstrations.³⁷ But the Bank's new "global welfare state" policy is not just an attempt to give capitalism a more human public face. It represents, arguably, a real change in outlook and priorities. Conceding that "markets do not work well for poor people," the Bank in 2000 began to urge redistributive policies targeted especially to health, education, and infrastructure. It praised countries that have chosen to spend more on better rural roads, sanitation, health, and education and *less* on "debt service, subsidies to the nonpoor... and the military." Military spending and paying off foreign debt receive particularly strong censure as "regressive" and "unsustainable" fiscal policies in the Bank's revised outlook.³⁸ In contrast, the 2000/2001 WDR cites this glowing example: "Mauritius cut its military budget and invested heavily in health and education. Today all Mauritians have access to sanitation, 98 percent to safe water, and 97 percent of births are attended by skilled health staff."³⁹ Before 11 September, it seemed we had come a long way from the Structural Adjustment programs of the 1980s and 1990s.

There also arose new and vigorous transnational social movements and coalitions. The underside of globalization – aided by instant internet communication – brought new forms of coalition-building and new popular movements joining labor groups, farmers, students, environmentalists, social development activists, and feminists. One has only to look at the waves of mass protests at the WTO and G-8 meetings in Seattle, Prague, and Genoa; or the unprecedented gathering of 10,000 opponents of global capitalism and advocates of social democracy at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil; or the occasional resistance by some developing country governments (notably, Malaysia, South Africa, Brazil, and, always, Cuba) to the dictates of the North. These growing sites of opposition pointed to fissures in the global capitalist regime and the power of both popular movements and Southern states to contest it. In July, I was unaware of the full portent of my words when I wrote, "*These ruptures may have destabilizing effects, unleashing in their wake reactionary, patriarchal nationalisms,*" for I was also hopeful that they could open up spaces for alternative visions and liberatory social action.

Feminists have been at the center of such alternative visions and activism. From the standpoint of transnational women's health movements seeking to empower women as reproductive, sexual, and political actors, recent economic crises and cuts in public health services have brought home that "macroeconomic issues can no longer be left off the table when sustainable

development, women's rights, the environment and health are discussed."⁴⁰ Feminists have condemned the ways that multilateral donor institutions, donor countries, and developing country governments have allowed debt service, military expenditures, and free-market priorities to override the desperate need for public investment in health care and other social needs. Along with other groups, they have called for demilitarization, debt forgiveness, transparency and accountability in the decisions of transnational corporations and international financial institutions, and international regulation of unsustainable, unhealthy economic practices through such devices as "Tobin taxes" on speculative capital flows.⁴¹

Women's health activists from the global South and from Eastern Europe have sounded the alarm about reproductive and other health threats from not only environmental and industrial toxins but also unfair trade practices. Two examples are the US embargo on Cuba that prevents women there from receiving mammograms, and unregulated drug prices that prevent people with AIDS in Africa and Asia from receiving life-prolonging but economically unaffordable medications. Women's groups have participated in demanding a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth and resources, and have helped to create people's (and specifically women's) budgets. They have also been instrumental in forming new kinds of transnational coalitions working effectively to promote human rights, gender equality, and development principles within UN forums. Such coalitions have for the first time brought together women's health, human rights, and development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with certain women-friendly UN agencies (such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP) as well as sympathetic governments in the "Group of 77" (G-77).⁴² They have not only given voice to a powerful if still embryonic global civil society but also provided a base of strength and authority for the UN itself and for principles of international law.

Also generated was a broader acceptance of human rights approaches linking health, equality, and social development. All of this activity and organizing at the global level in the 1990s was based on a feminist ethical framework developed over many years by women's health activists in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as well as in North America and Europe. It was a framework that both privileged a woman's right to control her own body, fertility, and sexuality, and, in the words of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), placed that right "within a comprehensive human development framework."⁴³ Thus, it implied a vision of human rights as inseparable from basic human needs, in accordance with the principle of indivisibility that sees personal rights, socioeconomic rights, and civil rights as completely interdependent.⁴⁴ From this perspective, even the Cairo definition of reproductive rights as the right "to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so"⁴⁵

becomes very complex and expansive. How can a woman or girl avail herself of this right if she lacks the financial resources to pay for health services or the transportation to get to them; if she is illiterate or given no information in a language she understands; if her workplace is contaminated with pollutants that have an adverse affect on pregnancy; or if she is harassed by parents, a husband, or in-laws who abuse or beat her if they find out she uses birth control? The “means to do so” contains a universe of freedoms and capabilities out of reach for many women and girls.

The necessary enabling conditions to exercise one’s reproductive rights go well beyond an individual’s or a household’s financial resources. They also involve freedom from cultural constraints and infrastructure deficiencies.⁴⁶ Even the minimal components of vertical family planning programs – contraceptives, safe abortion, and STD prevention – are often inaccessible to women and girls, especially unmarried adolescents, even if they have the means to pay, due to oppressive traditions and codes enforced by religious authorities, the media, and conservative groups as well as family members. A community’s lack of clean water, sanitation, or decent, uncrowded housing compromises reproductive and sexual health and well-being for millions of women and girls. The absence of such basic infrastructure – for example, being able to use a condom or deliver a baby safely or avoid sexual abuse – puts women in untenable dilemmas. Another conundrum is faced by HIV-positive pregnant women who must choose between breastfeeding and exposing their infants to the risk of AIDS, or bottle-feeding and exposing them to deadly bacterial infection from contaminated drinking water.⁴⁷ Even the antiretroviral medications that can prevent perinatal HIV transmission are still too often unaffordable or unavailable due to a lack of political will.

Thanks to the efforts of transnational women’s health and HIV/AIDS organizations, this holistic, integrative concept of the right to health has received recognition from UN committees and treaty bodies. In May of 2000, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the treaty body responsible for interpreting and enforcing the ICESCR provisions, issued a comment clarifying “the right to the highest attainable standard of health” contained in Article 12 of that document. This right, it said, “is not confined to the right to health care . . . [but] embraces a wide range of socio-economic factors . . . [extending] to the underlying determinants of health, such as food and nutrition, housing, access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, safe and healthy working conditions, and a healthy environment.” Not only material conditions but also a wide range of civil and political rights, such as “education, human dignity, life, non-discrimination, equality, the prohibition against torture, privacy, access to information, and the freedoms of association, assembly and movement” are also “integral components of the right to health.”⁴⁸ What this means in practice is that implementation of the right to health requires

multisectoral approaches like those called for in the old Alma Ata Declaration (those that global health economists wish to shelve), and that it can only be addressed effectively through a vision of gender equality, anti-racism, and human development.

I must also highlight the successful campaigns asserting the rights of health over the prerogatives of corporate patents and global trade. In 2000, during the five-year review process for the UN's World Summit on Social Development (WSSD+5), a little known but groundbreaking event occurred: the achievement of historically unprecedented language linking trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS),⁴⁹ access to essential medicines, and the fundamental human right to health. In large part, this achievement became possible because of the new kind of alliance among transnational women's groups, development groups, and certain friendly country delegations within the UN The Women's Caucus had proposed the following language in regard to a paragraph on TRIPS:

Recognize that intellectual property rights under the TRIPS Agreement must not take precedence over the fundamental human right to the highest attainable standard of health, as provided in many international human rights and other multilateral instruments, nor the ethical responsibility to provide life-saving medications at affordable cost to developing countries and people living in poverty.

The Caucus saw this as a wedge issue that might raise the awareness of governments and development NGOs of the connections among health, human rights, and global trade. The issue also had important gender implications because of the plight of HIV-infected pregnant women in poor countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa, and the greater susceptibility of women and girls to HIV infection generally. But there was little optimism that the proposal would be accepted, especially given the staunch commitment of the US and European Union governments to TRIPS and WTO authority. Thus, women's rights NGOs were both surprised and elated when the South African delegation took over their language verbatim and succeeded in winning its adoption by the entire G-77 and China.

Given the concerted opposition of Northern governments, led by the US, it was remarkable that the conference adopted a compromise paragraph putting the "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of...health" *first*, before the intellectual property rights of companies. The paragraph also recognizes "the critical importance of access to essential medicines at affordable prices," including the right of countries to bypass TRIPS through cheaper imports or local manufacture "in an unrestricted manner." The political and strategic importance of this moment for the politics of global health is unmistakable:

- For the first time in any international multilateral agreement, global trade, human rights, and health were connected – with important implications for women’s health.
- A precedent was set in international norms for the principle that intellectual property is not more valuable than human life, and that access to affordable medicines is a matter not only of exceptions to patent laws and trade as usual, but also of fundamental human rights.
- For one of the few times within UN debates (the right to development being a notable exception), the G-77 and China adopted a human rights framework as the basis of their position.
- By taking the initiative to introduce this language, the Women’s Caucus showed its concern with linking gender and health issues to macroeconomic policies and global trade.

Access to medicines is deeply embroiled in international conflicts over trade inequities and the alleged prerogatives of transnational pharmaceutical companies and their Northern government patrons to monopolize patents and markets. It lies at the heart of globalization and the ways that globalization is always already about class, race, gender, and human rights. No wonder it has been such an effective wedge issue for anti-globalization coalitions. Seizing front-page attention in the mainstream media, the sequel to the hidden story of WSSD+5 is now well known. The giant pharmaceuticals continually lowered their prices for HIV/AIDS drugs in sub-Saharan Africa, in response to international pressure (led by groups like Doctors Without Borders and Act-Up) and the competition of generic manufacturers. In addition, the drug companies finally dropped their patent case against South Africa, after angry demonstrations by AIDS organizations and trade unionists in the streets of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Following suit, the US dropped its patent case against Brazil, and the Brazilian government persisted in its exemplary HIV/AIDS policy to manufacture locally the AIDS “cocktail” of drugs and provide full treatment to everyone who needs it free of cost.⁵⁰ Most recently, the WTO ministerial meeting in Qatar, in autumn 2001, adopted a compromise declaration that, while not changing the language of TRIPS, opens the way for “promoting access to medicines for all” through allowing poor countries to manufacture or import cheap generic versions, patents notwithstanding. The language is that of public health, not human rights, but the principle now has a global mandate.⁵¹

By the spring of 2000, then, access to essential, life-prolonging medicines, especially in regard to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, had become the most visible example of “the human right to the highest attainable standard of health,” when “attainability” is a matter of affordability and supply. Moreover, because of the greater vulnerability of women and girls to infection and the tested

effectiveness of antiretroviral drugs such as AZT and Nepinephrine in preventing perinatal transmission, this issue could be seen as an integral component of reproductive and sexual rights for women. It thus illuminates the intersection of gender justice, reproductive rights, and sexual rights with issues of poverty, class, and racist and regional exclusion.

After 11 September

There I was in midsummer, feeling relatively optimistic that health and social justice movements were winning some real victories inside the regime of global capitalism. Now all I see is the grotesque spectacle of Bush telling the Afghans that this is a “humanitarian war” and to prove it we’re dropping packets of food and medicine into your rubble along with all the bombs. There is a striking resemblance between the two “phantom towers” of Jihad and Crusade, with their apocalyptic rhetoric, their masculinism, their rush to violence – even their rivalry over who works the media best.⁵² One could take this further and argue that *corporate tribalism* – the allegiance to oil and gas and military hardware industries based in the southwestern and western US states – bears a certain resemblance to ethnic and warlord tribalism. The Bush administration, mirroring its jihadist enemies, thrives on war, a permanent state of war. But the war it seeks is not only *against* terrorism but *for* Unocal, the Carlyle Group, Aramco, cheap crude, unlimited SUVs, and a president whose image finally looks manly.

Meanwhile, the regimes of international law and human rights and the multilateral UN agencies responsible for global health, such as WHO, ECOSOC (United Nations, Economic and Social Council), and even the World Bank, are consigned to irrelevance. Indeed, multilateralism and international cooperation seem buried beneath the wings of the phoenix superpower that issues ultimatums in return for rubber-stamp approvals. In this climate, ideas like “health security,” “human security,” and “social security” become shadowy relics in the face of the far more compelling realities of “national security” and “global security.” The welfare state and the democratic state are ghosts in the citadel of the total security state. And what about the popular movements and coalitions of “global civil society” that were becoming such powerful advocates for social justice, gender justice, health, and human rights? They (we) have no choice now but to organize marches and teach-ins and to dig in for the very long battle to reestablish sanity and peace.

Returning to my original question: Can war—and especially a globalized state of permanent war and ubiquitous police surveillance – ever be compatible with the goal of assuring equity and justice in access to health care and a healthy life for all?⁵³ In the present context, the basic health care packages and SWAPs of the health economists, and the revisionist neoliberalism and poverty reduction strategies of the World Bank, don’t look so bad. At least they

took global health issues seriously. Beyond the destructive war, the terrorist attacks, and the anarchy and starvation threatening to replace the Taliban's brutal repression of the Afghan people, the real danger now is that all the resources that might have been marshaled toward reducing misery, eliminating maternal mortality, finding a cure for AIDS, and promoting women's equality, will be diverted into military and police projects – the waging and deflecting of violence. In November of 2001, senior administration officials anticipated that the \$1 billion a month spent on war costs so far would grow “geometrically,” taking into account all the costs of upgrading Central Asian airfields, paying for National Guard and reserve forces, patrolling US cities, and defending the nation's borders.⁵⁴ With the Taliban apparently routed, official pronouncements from Washington increasingly used the language of “*this phase* of the war,” clearly laying the groundwork for a next phase and a next (Somalia? Iraq? Airfields and pipelines in Uzbekistan?).⁵⁵ This endless war and all its ancillary security production, in the midst of a global recession, will erase the agendas and sap the budgets for health, education, and economic, racial, and gender justice for years to come.

Wouldn't it actually be easier and cheaper to end poverty and contagious disease everywhere?

During March 2002, in Mexico, another UN conference will take place. Called Financing for Development, its aim is to identify international and national resources to implement all the human development, health, and gender equality commitments of the past decade. What can that conference realistically do at this moment? At the General Assembly meeting on HIV/AIDS in July 2001, the UN pledged to raise \$10 billion to provide a fund to combat AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, but a mere fraction has been raised.⁵⁶ The same amount of money, according to a recent WHO report, could provide safe water and sanitation throughout that poorest of regions, only no one seems to know where such funds can be found. Meanwhile, the US Congress managed to come up with \$15 billion almost overnight to bail out the sagging airline industry and then authorized a \$200 billion contract for the Lockheed Corporation to produce an endless supply of fighter planes.⁵⁷ In the global arena, the World Conference Against Racism ended only a few days before the September 11 attacks and revealed for the first time in history the linkages among so many different forms of racism against, for example, Romas, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Palestinians, and Africans. It now seems a distant memory, as Arabs or Muslims become the primary *Other* still visible. In this context, how can claims for racial justice, to say nothing of reparations, be heard?

Still, we have to explore whatever alternative paradigms for constructive action may be possible, beyond merely seeking an end to the useless, terrible cycle of retaliation and violence. To borrow Auden's words, can we find any “ironic points of light” in all this darkness that will “Flash out wherever

the Just/Exchange their messages"?⁵⁸ First, I think it's urgent to stop the bombing and the cycle of retaliation; nothing, *nothing* can be done before we do that. Women's peace movements like Women in Black – in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Bosnia, Sierre Leone – have understood for a very long time that violence only breeds more violence; and this is infinitely truer in the age of total annihilation. Women's movements have struggled for years against the viciousness and misogyny of fundamentalisms – in Algeria, Iran, Afghanistan before and under the Taliban, Pakistan, and right here in the US I remind you that Timothy McVeigh was a homegrown American Christian; that Christian anti-abortion terrorists in this country continue to firebomb clinics, threaten bioterrorism, and target doctors and clinic workers for assassination; and that the immediate response of the Reverends Falwell and Robertson to the 11 September attacks was to blame "the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians . . . all of them who have tried to secularize America."⁵⁹ But women opposing fundamentalisms know well enough that we adopt their methods at our peril. As Zillah Eisenstein says, "I wish to foil each and every attempt of terrorist actions but not simply by the use of more terror."⁶⁰ Addressing the root causes of anger and violence is the only healthy weapon we have.

This brings me to a second constructive paradigm. We should perceive a common ethical failure behind both the pre-11 September regimes of global capitalism and global apartheid, and the current regimes of fundamentalist terrorism and anti-terrorist global militarism. They all raise the question: Should some lives count more than others? Isn't health about the preservation and enhancement of life, and isn't the viewing of whole groups of people as lesser – whether as "infidels," "bad risks," or expendable "collateral damage" – basically unhealthy and anti-life?⁶¹ Do massive violations of civil liberties and fundamental freedom from FBI harassment and punishment, without proof of crime, matter less because their targets are "foreigners"? Do they make anyone safer or rather feed the climate of danger, insecurity, and arbitrary power they are alleged to prevent?

In this rare moment of US media attention to the world outside the nation, we can discover a time of challenge and even opportunity for us as Americans. We can urge Congress to conduct a special investigation, not only into who and where are the terrorists, but also into the painful question: Why did so many people in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East agree with the Pakistani accountant who said after 11 September, "America bullies everybody; now they know what other countries suffer"? We can learn more about how others see us and begin to take responsibility for our immense power. We can demand respect for the civil and human rights of all persons within our borders, whether citizens or not. We can insist that those who commit crimes against humanity (the legal name for terrorist acts) be apprehended and tried through

multilateral mechanisms and the rule of international and constitutional law, not unilateral, secret tribunals; and that the US immediately ratify the Rome Statute establishing an International Criminal Court, the logical body to try such cases in the future.

But no amount of international penal action, however cooperative, can stop terrorism without addressing the conditions of misery and injustice that nourish and aggravate terrorism. The US has to undertake a serious reexamination of its values and its policies with regard not only to the Middle East and Central Asia but also to the whole world. It has to take responsibility for being in the world, including ways of sharing its wealth, resources, and technology, and democratizing decisions about global trade, finance, and security. It must assure that access to “global public goods,” like health care, housing, food, education, sanitation, water, and freedom from racial and gender discrimination, is given priority in international relations. What we even mean by “security” has to encompass all these aspects of well-being, and has to be universal in its reach. The US has to want less and to develop humility.

There are hopeful signs. As I finished revising this essay, the US Congress authorized the Bush administration to direct some of the funds appropriated for relief of the 9/11 victims to Afghan women and children, for food and health care. After six full weeks of bombing and well over six years of transnational feminist pleas that fell on deaf ears, the politicians and media started to pay attention to the plight of Afghan women, confined like prisoners to their homes and *burqas*, banished from work and schooling, and denied basic health care. This opened a public space for American women to support the courageous Afghan women’s organizations in their demand for full participation in all efforts to reconstruct their government and society.⁶²

And yet, the cynicism of a First Lady and a President who suddenly discover women’s rights just in time to legitimate an ever-widening war under cover of a rescue mission for Afghan women (or to garner more women’s votes in the next election) is sobering.⁶³ Again, I quote Zillah Eisenstein’s wise and cautionary words: “It is unconscionable to wrap US bombs in women’s rights discourse. Do not make a war against terrorism in our name when women make up the greatest numbers of the new casualties and refugees of this war.”⁶⁴ Yet this discourse is happening, and maybe, just maybe, Americans will start to hear the contradictions between the rhetoric and the reality, and to demand a politics that embraces all humanity.

Postscript

A last image: as US bombs continue pulverizing the area in the eastern part of Afghanistan around Jalalabad, supposedly near the caves and tunnels where bin Laden and Al Qaeda are hiding, we learn that at least three villages have been

hit, “killing dozens of civilians.” A man lies in a Jalalabad hospital, one of the very few (and poorly equipped) hospitals still standing in the entire country, his head almost fully bandaged. He tells reporters through a translator: “The village is no more. All my family, 12 people, were killed. I am the only one left in this family. I have lost my children, my wife. They are no more.” And he weeps.⁶⁵ On CNN, I see a child, or what remains of a child, lying in the same hospital, his face shrouded in bandages, one arm and the other hand gone, only stumps dripping blood. He doesn’t weep; he is silent. Health care and a healthy life for all are very far from this place, but the place seems very near, in my living room, and always before my eyes.

Notes

1. See *Globalizing Bodies: Gender, Health and Human Rights* (London: Zed Books, forthcoming 2002), chapters 1 and 4, from which this essay has been adapted, for a fuller discussion.
2. Analyses of globalization are developed more thoroughly, though from diverse perspectives, in works by Appadurai (1996); Barker and Mander (1999); Bauman (1998); Bello (2001); Brecher et al. (2000); Eisenstein (1998); Hardt and Negri (2000); Houtart and Polet (2001); Sassen (1998); Smith (1997); and Tabb (2001).
3. “Nigeria’s external debt exceeds a full year’s GNP”; Tanzania spends nine times as much on debt service as on health care and Ecuador eleven times as much. (WEDO 1999a: 10; UNDP 2000a, Table 5.3). It is still unclear how much of this burden will be lifted by agreements of the G-8 countries to extend debt relief to certain “heavily-indebted poor countries” (HPICs), since qualifying for such relief is in most cases linked to future economic reforms and other conditionalities. Nor can we know how much, if any, of the resources made available through debt relief will be used to finance health care.
4. UNDP (2000a: 82).
5. Farmer (1999).
6. WEDO (1999a: 11).
7. Crossette (1999: 15).
8. Epstein (2001: 35); MacKintosh (2001); Booker and Minter (2001).
9. Epstein (2001: 35), citing Gaidzanwa (1999).
10. Farmer (1999); Stillwaggon (2001).
11. WEDO (1999a: 7).
12. For further analysis of the impacts of globalization and structural adjustment policies (SAPs) on women, see Wichterich (2000); WEDO (1999a); General Assembly (1999); Eisenstein (1998); Sassen (1998); and Sparr (1994).
13. The gendered impact of global capitalism may in some settings fall more heavily on men. Field et al. (2001) show that declining life expectancy among young and middle-aged Russian men took a sharply worsening course in the years following imposition of neoliberal market “reforms” and was directly caused by premature deaths from alcohol abuse, murder, and infectious diseases. They persuasively link this trend to the psychosocial and behavioral impacts of the abrupt transition to capitalism, including high rates of crime, suicide, unemployment and despair. Life expectancy has declined much more sharply for men than for women (58.3 years

- vs. 71.7 years in 1995): "Russia is on its way to becoming a country of widows and fatherless children," they write. "At present rates, about half of all males now aged 16 will not reach the official retirement age of 60." However, in these same years, the *increase* in "loss of working potential" from suicides and alcohol-related deaths (though not from murders) has been much higher for women than for men.
14. O'Neill (1995).
 15. Stienstra (1999: 269).
 16. For substance and critical analysis of the Global Compact, as well as a list of companies supporting it, see TRAC 2000 (Bruno and Karliner), available at <http://www.corpwatch.org/un>.
 17. DAWN (1999); Koivusalo and Ollila (1997); and Parker (1999).
 18. World Bank/HNP (1999: 14).
 19. For more detailed discussions of SWAPs, DALYs, and HSRs in general, see AbouZahr (1999); Anand and Hanson (1997); Elson and Evers (1998); Evers and Juárez (2000); Koivusalo and Ollila (1997); Murray (1994); Murray and Acharya (1997); Nanda (2000); Nygaard (2000); Paalman et al. (1998); Petchesky (2000, 2002); Salm (2000); and Standing (1999).
 20. This was the Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Primary Health Care held in Alma Ata in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. For a good review of its history and substance, see Koivusalo and Ollila (1997).
 21. Standing (1999); and Evers and Juárez (2000).
 22. AbouZahr (1999).
 23. Petchesky and Judd (1998).
 24. Nygaard (2000).
 25. World Bank (1997: 141).
 26. Schrecker (1998).
 27. The rudiments of this kind of democratic model can already be found in Brazil, whose universal health system (SUS) provides free coverage for many basic treatments and services, with priority going to primary care and reproductive and sexual health care, including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Priority-setting and monitoring of the Brazilian system is highly decentralized, based in part on citizens' health councils at the national, state and local levels. See Corrêa (1999) and CNDP (1999).
 28. Dao, *New York Times*, 2001.
 29. Stolberg, *New York Times*, 2001.
 30. The law restricts detention to seven days, after which charges must be filed, but does not require any public disclosure of the charges. By early November, well over 1,000 people – nearly all of them Muslims or Arabs from the Middle East – had been so detained; after November 3, 2001, however, the federal government refused to release any more numbers. (Purdy, *New York Times*, 2001): B4–5.
 31. Purdy, *New York Times*, 2001.
 32. Kahn, *New York Times*, 2001a.
 33. Apparently the UNFPA's provision of "life-saving reproductive health care services" does include emergency contraception, or the "morning-after pill," much to the discontent of the Vatican and other anti-abortion groups. See www.un/unfpa.org.
 34. At this writing, the US was: the only major industrialized country to refuse signing the final Kyoto Protocol on Global Climate Change, despite compromises in that document designed to meet US objections; one of only a small number of countries that has failed to ratify the Women's Convention and the only country besides

- Somalia that has not ratified the Children's Convention; an active opponent of the pending International Criminal Court and the treaties banning land mines and germ warfare; a subverter of a new multilateral treaty to combat illegal small arms trafficking; the sole country in the world to threaten an unprecedented space-based defense system and imminent violation of the ABM treaty; and a persistent defender of protectionist policies for American farmers despite constant trumpeting of "free-trade" rhetoric by US officials.
35. See Stiglitz (1998); Wolfensohn (1998); and *Business Week* (2000).
 36. World Bank (2000/2001); and A. Sen (1999).
 37. During the 1990s, successful NGO pressure on Bank policies resulted in its decision to pull out of several dam projects, such as the proposed Narmada Dam in India, which community and environmental groups warn will destroy local livelihoods and ecology. Likewise, a transnational coalition of development NGOs, working mainly over the Internet, defeated Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) negotiations for a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). (G. Sen 1998). Other influential transnational campaigns to influence World Bank policies are the "50 Years Is Enough" network and "Women's Eyes on the World Bank". In the case of the Narmada Dam, however, the Indian government decided – against advice from the World Commission on Dams and the Bank – to go ahead with its construction.
 38. World Bank (2000/2001: 79–82).
 39. World Development Report (2000/2001: 5), Box 2.
 40. WEDO (1999a: 11).
 41. See *Dawn Informs* 2000–2001; Richter (2000); Petchesky (2000a).
 42. The G-77 "is an intergovernmental group established in 1964 to represent the interests of the developing countries in the United Nations" (UNIFEM 1995). Today it consists of nearly 150 member states that differ vastly in culture, economic conditions, domestic politics, and power positions within the UN and in the global arena.
 43. Corrêa (1994: 58).
 44. Petchesky (2000a, 2000b).
 45. ICPD (1994), paragraph 7.3.
 46. Corrêa and Petchesky (1994).
 47. Berer (1999).
 48. ECOSOC (2000).
 49. The TRIPS Agreement was enacted as part of the Uruguay Round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the pre-cursor to the WTO) in 1994, and is binding on all WTO members. Its purpose is to advance the inviolability of patents across national borders – that is, the globalization of property. See C.M. Corrêa (2000), World Intellectual Property Organization (1999), and WEDO (1999b).
 50. For an excellent review of the politics of "Trade, AIDS, Public Health and Human Rights," see DAWN (2001); also, Crossette, *New York Times*, 2001; Rich, *New York Times*, 2001; Donnelly (2001); Petersen and Rohter, *New York Times*, 2001; and Myers, *New York Times*, 1999. Unfortunately, this victory and South Africa's leadership in it has been marred by President Mbeki's baffling denial that HIV causes AIDS and his government's distressing lag in providing antiretroviral drugs, now available at very low cost, to pregnant women. (See Swarns, *New York Times*, 2001a, 2001b; COSATU 2001; and McNeil, *New York Times*, 2001.) Brazil, on the other hand, has "the most

- successful AIDS treatment program in the developing world.” (Brazil Ministry of Health 1999; Crossette, *New York Times*, 2001; Parker 1999).
51. Kahn, *New York Times*, 2001b; Dugger, *New York Times*, 2001; and Bello and Mittal 2001.
 52. Petchesky (2001).
 53. A new and important collection that addresses this question on a much broader scale is Taipale et al., *Physicians for Social Responsibility*, 2002.
 54. Dao, *New York Times*, 2001.
 55. This kind of extended war language was especially prominent on the part of the National Security Advisor, Condoleeza Rice, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his next-in-command, Paul Wolfowitz; others in the Bush administration, however, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, have seemed less bellicose (See Keller 2001).
 56. For further information, go to www.un.org/ga/aids/coverage/FinalDeclarationHIVAIDS.html.
 57. Alvarez and Labaton, *New York Times*, 2001.
 58. This is a line from W. H. Auden’s widely quoted poem, “September 1, 1939.”
 59. Niebuhr, *New York Times*, 2001.
 60. Eisenstein (2001a).
 61. Eisenstein (1996); and Hammad (2001).
 62. Bumiller, *New York Times*, 2001; Erlanger, *New York Times*, 2001; “Twelve Points,” 2001. “Twelve Points: Stop the War, Rebuild a Just Society in Afghanistan and Support Women’s Human Rights” demands, among other things, that “the United States and its allies . . . halt all military action in Afghanistan” and “not carry out any military attacks in other states;” that the UN “take the lead in peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building in Afghanistan;” and that “the full participation of Afghan women and Afghan women’s organizations in all stages of peace negotiation and post-war reconstruction,” and their ability “to fully exercise their human rights” be secured. At this writing, over 1,000 individuals and organizations from around the world had signed the statement, which is posted at the website of the Women’s Human Rights Network (www.whrnet.org).
 63. As many critics have pointed out, this cynical turnaround is made doubly bitter by the history of US support for *mujahedeen* fighters against the Soviets, including those who would become the Taliban, and the certain knowledge of the Bush administration that the Northern Alliance warlords resurrected by its bombing campaign are just as brutal and misogynist as those they now deem “the enemy”.
 64. Eisenstein (2001b).
 65. Weiner, *New York Times*, 2001.

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3.1

Reclaiming Gender and Economic Justice in the Era of Corporate Takeover

Alexandra Garita

Introduction

Since Petchesky wrote *Globalization, Women's Health and Economic Justice: Reflections Post September 11*, George W. Bush led the US through six more years of waging a global War on Terror whereby he enshrined the US as a saviour 'riding the world of evil'. After 9/11, George W. Bush continually portrayed the world in binary terms: a 'grand conflict between the forces of good and evil, freedom and terror, with the United States as God's appointed agent for the universal spread of liberty' (Urban 2007). US democracy and radical extremism were in constant opposition, and few words appeared more frequently spoken in his speeches following 9/11 than 'evil' and 'evil-doers' with reference to that opposition (Urban 2007). Terrorism and terrorists clearly replaced the old Cold War rhetoric of communist enemies as the evil to overcome, and evil entered the nation's strategic plans. Even after the change in administration to Barack Obama, the US Government continues expending the lives of US military men and women, as well as military drones and other weapons, against the women, men and children of Iraq and Afghanistan, and surely others who are deemed to be 'evil'.

It is no news that wars significantly exacerbate death and disease, perpetuate sexual violence, lead to forced displacement and migration, decimate local productivity, and create environments of fear and augmented psychosocial harms. According to a recent article in the *American Journal of Public Health*,

since the end of World War II, there have been 248 armed conflicts in 153 locations around the world. The United States launched 201 overseas military operations between the end of World War II and 2001, and since then, Afghanistan and Iraq. During the 20th century, 190 million deaths could be directly and indirectly related to war – more than in the previous 4 centuries.

The US also accounts for 41% of the world's military spending – in annual spending amounts of US\$1 trillion; the Department of Defense manages global

property of more than 550,000 facilities at more than 5,000 sites, covering more than 28 million acres, and maintains 700 to 1000 military sites in over 100 countries (Wilst et al. 2014). The draining of domestic resources that could be used for social spending both in the US and abroad are instead systematically used to uphold distorted notions of freedom and democracy.

In 2011 the world spent US\$1,738 billion on weapons, and world military expenditure in one year (US\$1,747 billion in 2013) is greater than would be required to fulfil all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 (SIPRI 2013). When those of us involved in various social movements had thought the global War on Terror was coming to an end, in June 2014, Barack Obama sent hundreds of ‘irregular forces’ into Iraq to ‘help’ the Iraqi failed government fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). These are wars that act in very specific ways against women – where the legacies of US occupation result in greater conflict and humanitarian crises, and where male populations are often decimated and women are expected to pick up the pieces within homes and communities. Healthcare is a distant dream in the face of so much poverty, lack of basic services, violence, death and suffering.

Nonetheless, the global health debate continues with or without US military intervention and a permanent state of war in many regions and countries of the world. In fact, while Obama decides to continue spending billions in military defence and sending drones into Asia and Africa, at home he risks his entire political capital to pass what I see as the most forward-looking, pro-poor and pro-women social policy that the US has undertaken in decades: the Affordable Care Act (ACA). ‘Obamacare’, as it has come to be known, has the potential to change the lives of all people living in poverty in the US, but specifically impacts low-income women, often of colour, allowing them to access essential healthcare services that will allow them to live longer and healthier lives.

If only the US government and other powerful and rich governments had the political wisdom to shift their spending from military defence to programmes such as the ACA aimed at addressing the root causes of war and conflict – poverty, quality of health and education, the environment – maybe our yearning for redistribution instead of retribution would manifest. I am hopeful that feminist social justice and environment activists will contribute to rebalancing the scales, eventually.

The global health architecture and the depoliticization of sexuality and reproductive rights

As Petchesky brilliantly foresaw in 2001, the efforts of transnational women’s health movements and social movements mobilized around HIV/AIDS were indeed destined to become part of the war’s unseen ‘collateral damage’. The US president’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) committed

US\$15 billion over five years (2003–2008) to end AIDS, the largest health initiative ever initiated by one country to address a single disease. The programme has managed to put over 5.3 million people on anti-retroviral treatment (ART) since its inception. However, the Abstinence-Only and Anti-Prostitution Pledge policies attached to the programme and sent to the countries were hugely detrimental to preventing new infections, particularly among young women, and harmed peer prevention programmes for sexworkers because of these morality clauses. In several countries that I visited over those years while working with local women's and HIV movements – including Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago, and Belize – I noticed that the real transformative work that would turn the tide on the HIV epidemic – namely human rights and sexuality work – was not happening because of these US-funded programmes.

PEPFAR prided itself on working to improve the health and lives of women and girls as long as they were in heterosexual marriages and, more often than not, were pregnant. In addition, the PEPFAR prevention approach towards young people was centred on abstinence and being faithful instead of the proven strategy of comprehensive sex education that would have taught correct knowledge about HIV transmission and where to access condoms, as well as the skills to negotiate safe sex. As a result of six years of these programmes, numerous countries instituted abstinence-only education in schools, primarily in Africa, which may have had detrimental effects in challenging unequal gender power relations, as well as a failure to reduce HIV infection rates among young people. In addition, the social movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America that had successfully managed to prioritize HIV and AIDS on national, regional and global policy and funding agendas were at times pressed to ignore the prevention, gender and human rights dimensions of the epidemic because scientists and epidemiologists believed they could end the epidemic purely through treatment, including treatment as prevention. What I saw ensue was a massive political burial of the social, power and gender dynamics that fuel the epidemic and continue to fuel it among poor women (whether they are sexworkers or not), adolescent girls, and men who have sex with men.

During the first decade of the 21st century, the global health architecture changed. Funding for health grew significantly beyond bilateral government aid due to Global Health Partnerships, led by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Clinton Global Initiative and the Health 4+ (UNAIDS, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, the WHO and the World Bank). These private actors have significantly invested financial and political capital into the creation and distribution of vaccines, medicines and, most recently, hormonal contraceptives through the Family Planning 2020 initiative. These are all welcome schemes to the extent that they will probably make more services available for more people and eventually at cheaper

prices. Politically, however, they have all but marginalized the transformative health and population policy goals enshrined in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (Fonn and Ravindran 2011). The ICPD went far beyond the idea that quick-fix technical solutions such as a particular medicine or a contraceptive pill could transform societies. It recognized that developing health and population policies that considered the social determinants of health and the provision of integrated sexual and reproductive health services free from violence, coercion and discrimination were critical to development. Today's global actors, however, are influenced in large part by corporate mentalities and quick results-based ideologies that often focus on delivering vertical and disease-specific programmes, which, in my view, are often at the expense of women's health and human rights, and strong health systems in resource-poor settings.

Throughout the last 13 years, maternal mortality rates have not fallen as much as had been hoped and very few developing countries are set to meet MDG 5 on improving maternal health by halving maternal mortality and ensuring universal access to reproductive health. In order for this goal to be met, health systems must be strengthened significantly, taking into account social determinants of health, maternity care must be delivered properly, including emergency obstetric care, unsafe abortions must end, enabling women to access a range of fertility control options, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, must be treated and prevented. The successful delivery of these services requires strong community-based health programmes, including the deployment and training of midwives and other community health workers, to reach women with these services close to where they live or to put in place referral systems that might do so.

Funding for global health has increased dramatically in the last decade with unseen investment. In 1995, development assistance for health lingered around US\$8.3 billion. By 2012 it had reached over US\$28.2 billion (IHME 2013) – a striking contrast with the hundreds of billions spent on military aid. The focus of the health aid, however, has not been the comprehensive and integrated women-centred health programmes envisioned at the 1994 ICPD or even the three health goals of the MDGs which were essentially the ICPD ones but rather vertical programmes. Of all global health funds, over 40% were allocated to HIV/AIDS between 2000 and 2006 (Piva and Dodd 2008). More recently, there has been recognition of the need to strengthen health systems and to deliver multiple services through primary healthcare. But the exclusive and dominating vocal and financial support for technical fixes and magic bullets – thank you Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – continues to drown out the long-term and preventative systems most people require. Sadly, most aid commitments are nowhere near meeting the requirement for delivering sexual and reproductive health and rights in countries (calculated at US\$30 billion annually by

Population Action International). A lack of donor government commitment has led to strengthening of global public-private partnerships such as the Every Woman Every Child initiative launched in 2010 by the UN secretary general. This initiative aims to 'save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015', and over US\$40 billion has been pledged by 'governments, philanthropic institutions, the United Nations and multilateral organizations, civil society, the business community, health-care workers and professionals, and academic and research institutions' (EWEC 2010). The commitments are not, however, new money, and many of the business commitments appear to be focused on selling various products and services to low-income women in developing countries under the auspices of promoting maternal and child health. From my perspective, this practice is clearly placing profit over people. These public-private initiatives tend to see women and people generally as consumers of products, not as human rights holders. There is a trend towards commercializing health. This is manifested in private companies and large foundations making deals with governments under the auspices of generating greater 'efficiency' and reaching more people. It is dangerous for (poor) people's health and lives and can eventually create more crises than solutions.

The move towards universal health coverage

In the last few years there has been a concerted effort by certain private foundations, the WHO, the World Bank and some donor governments to concentrate global health efforts on achieving universal health coverage (UHC). The WHO defines UHC as 'ensuring that all people obtain the health services they need, of good quality, without suffering financial hardship when paying for them'. This would presumably increase access to health services while ensuring financial protection. But what, then, can be done to ensure equity in healthcare and non-discrimination, especially for poor and/or marginalized women? What about prioritizing sexual and reproductive rights? Which people are covered and what services are included in its essential package? What controls are in place to ensure accessibility, affordability, acceptability and quality? These are critical questions that will define whether the right to health is guaranteed or not, particularly for women and adolescents.

Ensuring UHC is critical. Because of women's and adolescent girls' reproductive needs and their social reproduction roles, women tend to suffer more out-of-pocket expenses than men, which may prevent their access to critical services. In many resource-poor settings, costs related to sexual and reproductive health, including maternal and newborn healthcare, are often completely out of their reach and may entail huge risks to their health and lives. In countries where user fees have been removed for reproductive and neonatal healthcare, women's access to health services and thus health outcomes seem to have

become better (e.g., in Ghana, South Africa, Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda; see Boudreaux et al. 2014).

However, a focus purely on the financing of healthcare can obfuscate the need to take into account the social determinants of health and the enabling environments that can encourage people to claim their right to health and respond to these adequately through stronger health systems. Prioritizing UHC at the expense of who needs services (e.g., poor and marginalized women, men and adolescents) and which services will be provided (sexual and reproductive health, malaria and TB, early childhood diseases, and/or non-communicable diseases such as treatment for diabetes, cancers and obesity) is what must be avoided. Further, the successful implementation of UHC will require strong health systems that address multiple forms of inequality, including gender inequality. Strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms must be in place to guarantee substantive equality, human rights and non-discrimination for all in access to healthcare.

To make matters more complex, there is a combination of public and private sector financing and service provision within already existing UHC regimes, although all are theoretically supposed to make healthcare accessible and affordable. However, in Mexico and Brazil, for example, public-private partnerships in healthcare have often been cited as having poor regulatory frameworks and often result in poor quality of care and reinforcing what Petchesky calls 'marketizing the state's social welfare functions'.

Those who promote UHC must also remember that creating the enabling environments and paying attention to power relations are crucial for success. As has been shown in countries of Latin America with UHC, demand-side financing has hugely increased the demand for services, but it has not translated to quality of care or respect for human rights, as evidenced by the increasing amount of obstetric violence reported in Mexico and Brazil, for example (see GIRE 2012). It is important to take into account the experiences of many poor and marginalized women in countries that have undergone UHC, such as Turkey, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil and, most recently, the US, to ensure that gender, race and income-based inequalities are addressed in the development and implementation of programmes and services. In many of the countries that already have UHC in place, poor women continue to die outside hospitals in childbirth because there aren't enough beds or doctors to receive them; unsafe abortions continue to claim the lives of thousands of women; and adolescents still do not have the power to claim their rights nor the access to the sexual and reproductive health information and services that would allow them to make informed choices about their health and their lives.

It is worrying that the WHO, which seems bent on pushing countries to move towards a UHC approach, appears to be out of sync with its prior commitments to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

(SRHRs). By taking the approach to bury SRHRs under UHC, the institution is ignoring its reproductive health and rights strategy adopted in 2004 as well as four decades of work by the Special Programme of Research, Development and Training in Human Reproduction. It is almost certain that the next international development agenda, the successor to the MDG post-2015 – now named Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will include a goal to ‘Attain a healthy life for all.’ Within this goal, one of the targets will be to ensure UHC (largely pushed by the WHO) and, it seems, at the expense of having a stand-alone target on universal access to sexual and reproductive health. The first iteration of the draft SDGs had a target on universal access to sexual and reproductive health. After the WHO published its paper on post-2015, it magically disappeared, prioritizing UHC above all. Women’s human rights activists are strongly advocating for this target to be included at all costs, and we are struggling to insert the term ‘rights’ after health to ensure these very critical aspects of equity, quality, accountability and non-discrimination. However, it is my opinion that we are missing strong leadership from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UN Women to make the case for this to governments. The role that the WHO is playing on focusing on UHC as well as non-communicable diseases as priorities for development and health post-2015 has also taken over SRHRs priorities.

The stalemate 20 years after ICPD

Global political processes such as the conferences of the 1990s (Vienna, Rio, Cairo, Beijing and Copenhagen) or even the early 2000s with the Millennium Summit and the Financing for Development Conference, seem to me like the golden era of multilateralism for gender, social and economic justice. In the last few years, transnational feminist and human rights activists working at the global level have witnessed the erosion of the human rights agenda, including women’s human rights, and sexual and reproductive rights in particular. Nothing was clearer than the 2014 intergovernmental negotiations of the 47th UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD). Women’s advocates and dozens of countries from Europe, Asia and Latin America strongly pushed for (1) recognizing the term ‘sexual rights’; (2) ending all forms of discrimination and violence due to real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity; and (3) ensuring women’s access to safe and legal abortion as both a human rights and public health imperative.

Although there were strong champions for advancing human rights in the development agenda (strong statements were made by Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the EU, El Salvador, Mongolia, Nepal, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Vietnam, South Africa, Suriname, the US and

the Pacific Islands governments), last-minute ‘deals’ were struck between these and a few, highly vocal Arab and African countries that refused to recognize the importance of human sexuality and human rights in population and development policies (RESURJ 2014).

The 1994 Cairo paradigm – the centrality of respecting women’s reproductive and bodily autonomy within population policies – was reaffirmed 20 years later. This is a triumph that we must continue to celebrate and strive to continue to achieve in many countries. However, we must also recognize the growing hostility and opposition to sexuality and to understand this opposition in terms of human rights. With the recent laws criminalizing homosexuality in Uganda and Nigeria, there is clearly a tendency towards backtracking on the gains made by various sexuality activists in recent years around the world.

The right to health, decision-making autonomy, bodily integrity and freedom from violence and discrimination for all people with full respect for their sexuality is still clearly a threat to many. Nearly two months after the CPD, a resolution tabled by Bangladesh, China, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Qatar, Russia, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Uganda was adopted at the Human Rights Council through what is called ‘hostile methods’ on the ‘Protection of the family’ – defined as composed between a man and a woman and their children. The use of global policy fora at the UN to legitimize discrimination and violence is increasing. We witness this in the Human Rights Council wherein a few powerful governments legitimize their discrimination towards LGBT communities who are engaging in same-sex marriages and constituting different types of family. In discussions around the SDGs post-2015, we are also seeing it against those resisting land-grabs and other violations of peoples’ lands and territories by powerful corporations in the name of ‘economic growth’. Recently, the behaviour of many governments at the UN is challenging the very foundation of the organization: to preserve peace, security and human rights for all.

The corporate takeover of the UN

Petchesky’s concern in 2001 over marketizing social welfare is, in my view, even more relevant today in the context of the UN as the multilateral intergovernmental negotiation space for global policy-setting as well as all its agencies and secretariat. The World Economic Forum’s ‘Global Redesign’ report, written for the Rio +20 Summit on Sustainable Development, envisions a globalized world ruled by a coalition that includes not only nation states (through the UN) but also transnational corporations and civil society organizations. It implies that states no longer have the power, resources or mechanisms to be effective, and that international decision-making should be expanded to allow for a new agenda that is public-private (WEF, p. 8). We see clear indications of this as UN agencies such as UN Women, UNAIDS and the WHO already have ‘advisory

councils' made up of private corporations or philanthropists, and some of them could eventually receive more money from these corporations and foundations than from voluntary contributions by member states. In the case of UN Women, the advisory council includes the CEOs of L'Oreal, McKinsey, Goldman Sachs, Chanel, Anglo American, Tupperware, Ogilvy, Publicis, Coca-Cola and Unilever. The WHO has the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as one of its biggest donors. UNAIDS and the WHO are also hugely influenced by so-called 'philanthrocapitalism', such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, whose commitment to social justice and equity in health can be questioned and whose accountability is non-existent, yet it exerts enormous influence in funding for global health and the politics that come with it (Global Health Watch 2008).

Entrusting the UN to corporations and philanthropic organizations that have profited from the accumulation of individual wealth and have contributed to perhaps the most unequal time in history is damning to social justice, peace and security, gender equality and human rights worldwide. Many transnational corporations have seemingly been involved in operations in low- and middle-income countries that often engage in massive human rights violations against individuals and communities: Coca-Cola in India and Anglo American in Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Peru, to name only a few. The implications are grave for equitable and human rights-oriented global (health, gender equality, development) policies when these are shaped not only by government but increasingly by transnational corporations and philanthropic organizations that have no accountability to the people.

The links Petchesky wishes for in international arenas between poverty, health and human rights continue to be the same ones today that were made then. Particularly seen in the post-2015 sustainable development discussions, activists are calling for a reconfiguration of power at all levels to ensure the wellbeing of people and the planet. The financial crisis of 2008–2009 deeply exacerbated inequalities not only in the global South but also in the North, giving way to the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US and throughout many other countries. The Arab Spring that began in Tunisia and Egypt in 2012 toppled dictators and sent clear messages to leaders about the consequences of keeping the majority of people oppressed and hungry. Although none of these movements has managed to enable a new international order yet, I think the transformative and social justice changes will emanate from young people, particularly young women, in the decades to come.

Social movements aim to rebalance power relations for justice post-2015

I've spent a decade working to influence global policies and programmes in order to better serve women's human rights in the areas of health and gender

equality. What I see now is a world that is slightly upside-down and needs to be put back upright again. The gains that were made by transnational feminist and human rights movements during the 1990s and to some extent in the 2000s within global policy settings are increasingly being dismantled, sidelined and marginalized in UN hallways. Some of this is due to our own movements strategies of focusing more on national-level work. But others have to do with the hostile international climate that consistently fails to challenge unequal power relations at all levels – whether in terms of social, economic or environmental development. Nothing illustrates this better than the current discussions about the post-2015 development agenda, where people’s movements and local, grassroots NGOs (including those marginalized in the rich countries of the North) whose views have been systematically ignored in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development (mandated to present a set of SDGs and targets).

Aside from the global consultation conducted by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) in September 2013 with regional civil society networks and social movements, the voices of these autonomous movements working on the ground in their countries have fallen on deaf ears in New York. This is probably due to the strong criticism that all of these groups have of the current economic system that perpetuates inequalities and maintains the *status quo* through the continuation of ‘blanket policy prescriptions, such as indiscriminate financial and trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization, export-and foreign investment-led growth, and a reduced role of the State, which have led to tremendous concentration of wealth and power, exacerbated inequalities, and increased poverty’ (UN-NGLS 2013).

Hundreds of groups and movements are demanding a transformation in current power relations for justice, the fulfilment of human rights and overcoming exclusion, ensuring equitable distribution and safe use of natural resources, and establishing participatory governance, accountability and transparency (UN-NGLS 2013). These are the claims being made by feminist and other political social justice movements from countries of the global and economic South, to create alternative models of development post-2015. There is still some hope that some of this transformation can happen through the adoption of certain goals, including one on ‘inequalities’, which includes targets on addressing all forms of discrimination in law and policy, as well as a goal on achieving sustainable consumption and production, achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment, and through the adoption of strong means of implementation that places the responsibility on governments and limits the role of public-private partnerships in meeting sustainable development objectives.

There is tremendous concern among social movements that unaccountable groups such as the G-8 and G-20 are setting global policy agendas, when what needs to happen is a redemocratization of the global policy architecture, particularly in the areas of trade, finance and macroeconomic policy, and subjecting the international financial institutions to UN oversight. For women's human rights advocates, it is even more worrisome that these global groupings, largely dominated by the corporate sector, are using the instrumentalization of women in popular slogans, such as 'Invest in women – it pays' and 'investing in women is smart economics', as an ultimate deciding factor of economic growth, the eradication of poverty, and human development. The World Bank and the World Economic Forum have even published annual reports devoted to the gender equality equals economic growth paradigm. But as many have critiqued before, these essentialist views propagate women's roles as caregivers, increasing their workload both inside and outside the home, instead of addressing the structural factors that continue to assign static gender roles to men and women in labour terms, and challenging men to contribute to the care economy through equal sharing of responsibilities. These approaches aim at including more and more women (in numbers) as a form of labour at the expense of capital, encouraging the free-market neoliberal economic policies that have led to such tremendous income inequalities in both developed and developing countries, and obfuscating the power differentials that keep women disempowered. Further, gender and economic justice will not be achieved unless women's bodily autonomy is ensured, all forms of violence and discrimination end, and the structural drivers of these are addressed.

Conclusion

It is deeply disturbing that in an increasingly militarized world, the UN is not delivering on its mandate to promote peace, security and human rights. It is also worrying that diverse megaprojects of extractive industries, such as oil, gas, coal, minerals and hydroelectric power, pose serious threats to the ecology of those lands as well as to those that defend them. It is hard to watch young people's movements for human rights, development and equality being squashed by the *status quo* from New York to Pakistan, Egypt to Quito, to Johannesburg. But their messages are reverberating throughout the world: struggles for a world that acknowledges and addresses its endless greed, in every corner of the world. Feminist and social justice movements working globally, regionally and nationally are mobilizing in all corners of the world, demanding structural changes to meet the development and social needs of our times (see the Feminist Declaration for Post-2015). So although these seem to be some of the worst of times,

the pendulum inevitably swings. The incessant threats, deaths and arrests of women's human rights activists in many countries over the last few years are not in vain. Today's social movements, largely comprising young and diverse women and men, are aware of what needs to change and are acting accordingly. These actions are often very local and might not receive much media attention, but the resistance is palpable, and the solutions will come, with time. Movements for peace are gaining strength around the world, even in the face of multiple conflicts in all regions of the world. Many governments, the international financial institutions, and some foundations in the philanthropic sector are increasingly paying attention to creating development that seeks to eliminate not only poverty but also inequalities – among men and women, the old and the young, the abled and the disabled, the rich and the poor. I think there is reason to be hopeful. The collective consciousness among our social movements will continue to grow and to deepen. And the redistribution of wealth and of power, as well as gender, economic and ecological justice, will ensue.

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3.2

Rethinking Care and Economic Justice with Third-World Sexworkers

Debolina Dutta

Conversations across borders

Borders suggest both containment and safety.

(Chandra Talpade Mohanty 2003)

It is the double-bind of the border – as matter and metaphor – that accompanies the travels of feminist ideas and politics across time and place.¹ While on the one hand this travel can be a form of transcendence, where struggles in disparate locations gain strength through building friendship and solidarity across borders, at the same time, ideas that can travel because of the historical privilege they carry can, in fact, exacerbate experiences of captivity.

Borders, in the wake of neoliberal militarism, have also undergone strange mutations, and with it the forms of ideas, the methods of their travel and their consequences have also mutated. While on the one hand neoliberalism and its attendant technologies have manufactured the illusion of a borderless world, where capital and knowledge can flow unbridled; on the other hand, neoliberalism's militarized vicissitudes have ushered in a new world of hypersecuritization in which border control of people, the secretization of intelligence and torture, and the indeterminate detention of the 'docile bodies'² of asylumseekers have become the primary performances of masculinized state sovereignty.

Are borders, then, an intractable double-bind? How can feminist solidarity be forged across borders – jurisdictional, political, ideological, identitarian and affective – that are caught between the promise of safety and the threat of containment? Is the idea of feminist solidarity, in itself, a romantic impossibility today, given the emerging intimacies between certain feminisms and neoliberal militarisms? One way of negotiating this double-bind is to engage in conversations as a form of ethical and political conduct in feminist methods of solidarity-building.

Penny Weiss notes: ‘in conversation the process by which we arrive at our positions is more visible than it is when we only present formal arguments in support of our already arrived-at conclusions’ (Weiss 1998). It is with this understanding that I engage with Rosalind Petchesky’s important essay. My chapter is a conversation with her text. I mention this at the outset because it is this conversational spirit that informs the conduct of my engagement. This piece is not a response to her ideas but a collaborative effort at feminist knowledge creation about the events and experiences that concern us as feminists across locations. It is an attempt to think with her ideas at a different time and in a different place. My conversational engagement with Petchesky is not to agree or disagree with her, but to hold on to some of her central arguments to see how they are playing out today in 2014, over a decade after she published her article in a 2002 issue of the journal *Mercalaster International*.

Petchesky’s essay acknowledges the importance of conversations in two ways. First is her design of writing – it is conversational in style, taking the reader along her journey of ideas at a particular time in history; and second, her ideas are in conversation with feminisms from other parts of the world, which are engaged with different forms of the same struggles against patriarchy, heteronormativity, imperialism, neoliberalism and militarism.

Conversation as ethical feminist conduct demands another acknowledgement: that of location. To engage in a conversation is to also take account of and responsibility for the location from which we speak, write and hear, as both scholars and activists. As with Petchesky who locates her ideas to changing seasons and a particular time and place – that of pre- and post-September 11 USA – my conversation with Petchesky’s text will be an engagement and acknowledgement of speaking/writing as a feminist from India, a postcolonial location that is caught in the double-bind of simultaneously living with neoliberalism and Hindu right-wing fundamentalism.

Petchesky’s concerns are urgent. She asks two extremely important questions in the beginning of her essay that I will return to in my conclusion:

Can war – and especially a globalized state of permanent war and ubiquitous police surveillance – ever be compatible with the goal of assuring equity and justice in access to health care and a healthy life for all? From both an ethical and an economic standpoint, will *retribution* devour the potential for *redistribution*, like the mythic god devouring his children?

She then goes on to reflect on these questions by looking at the way neoliberalism and militarism have impacted on women’s health and economic justice globally, marked specifically by the transitions before and after the temporal break of 11 September 2001. For Petchesky, this transition is an important one: it inaugurated a new and perverse alliance between

neoliberalism and militarism, which has continued unabated since. In her pre-September 11 reflections, Petchesky notes that despite neoliberalism's onslaught on health and human rights of women and girls, there were still hopeful signs of resistance against global capitalism. However, post-September 11, when neoliberalism joined hands with militarism, this onslaught started to be justified in the name of humanitarianism, and has since received support not just from the right but also from liberal middle classes and elites in most parts of the world; and I would add from certain kinds of feminism too.

The recent outcomes of elections in Australia, India and Europe, bringing into power conservative and right-wing governments, is a direct consequence of the workings of this state–market–military complex. These moments of aggressive right-wing resurgence are also cause for grave concern given that these were preceded over the last couple of years by spontaneous collective action on the streets – from Tunisia, to Egypt, to Greece, to Wisconsin, to New York, to New Delhi and Dhaka³ – against despotic governments and economies across the North/South divide. While these non-violent people's uprisings – in which women were also at the forefront of organizing – offered glimpses of renewed left-progressive vigour, they were short-lived and couldn't do much to restrain the onslaught of the rise of right-wing power.

If September 11 is the precipitating temporal moment for Petchesky's analysis, for me it is postcolonialism. To understand neoliberalism and militarism today, an analysis of their historical antecedents in colonialism seems imperative. By colonialism, however, I do not refer to a limited period in history that has gone by; my understanding of colonialism is arrived at, rather, through the postcolonial moments that we are living through. The postcolonial does 'not simply mean ... *after* colonialism but as the discourse of oppositionality that the encounter with colonialism brings into being – postcoloniality thus begins from the very first moment of colonial contact' (Menon 2006: 207). The operation of the logic of colonialism is an ongoing process, which is still under way.

Postcolonialism, understood thus, can add a further layering onto Petchesky's analysis and enables us to see how colonialism, in fact, is an antecedent of neoliberalism and militarism in the postcolonial present; a sort of old-wine-in-a-new-bottle story. Colonial occupation in the postcolony has now been replaced by occupation by corporate capital, and military might. Yet, interestingly, it was the East India Company, a corporate formation, that acted as the front office for British colonial occupation in India.

In the postcolonial present, states thus colonized are allowed to maintain a semblance of sovereignty controlled by this new colonial logic, as if it is only about economics, and not ruling a people. But, in reality, the original logic of colonialism – that of imperial domination over the savages to civilize them – is still at the foundations of neoliberal militarism. Only now, civilizing has been

replaced by the latest buzzwords in 'democracy', 'secularism', 'development' and 'human rights'. Patriarchy and heteronormativity have also mutated in tow: while for the purposes of liberal political correctness they remain 'bad' words, the new civilizing tactics of neoliberal militarism embody and employ these structures unabashedly.

Two major constants that animate the continuities between colonialism, neoliberalism and militarism are gender and sexuality. The ideological discourses of these structures of domination work in two ways by instrumentalizing gender and sexuality: first, non-Western states have been effeminized and thus rendered penetrable (Ruskola 2010), and, second, women and the sexually marginalized in the non-West have been considered victims in need of saving to justify colonial saviour interventions. Gayatri Spivak's classic statement – 'saving the brown woman from the brown man' as the legitimizing logic of colonialism – still remains at the heart of current missions of neoliberalism and militarism, as was evident, for instance, from photographs of 'unveiled' Afghan women in the Western media that stood as markers for the liberation that the West's military interventions had ushered in after the fall of the Taliban (Fahmy 2004; Kapur 2002, 2005).

The difference in the combined operation of these structures of domination today, however, is no longer as neat as one which could earlier be described as 'the West and the rest'. For the present conditions of the operation of the state-market-military complex, it is more aptly described as 'the crest and the rest': the circuits of power are controlled almost entirely by the elites of the world, irrespective of their location. The tragedy of this faux democratization of power in the hands of the world elite is that the poor and marginalized continue to be the worst affected, more so in the non-West. Women, girls and the sexually marginalized continue to bear the perverse onslaught of this new proliferation of power in all its racist, casteist and sexist avatars.

It is in this context that I wish to provide some of my feminist reflections on care and economic justice. Petchesky's essay has taken us through a range of instances regarding how the 'global hegemony of neoliberal capitalism', both pre- and post-September 11, has materially affected women's rights to health and economic justice. I am building on her discussion to understand care and economic justice from the vantage point of belonging in the non-West, and looking at the present assaults on women's wellbeing through my association, learning and work with sexworkers collectives in India.

I intend to complicate the notion of 'care' by understanding it differently, as a concept that has become part of the 'victim narrative' of some feminist, development and human rights discourses, and thus can be made to easily align itself with the logics of colonialism and neoliberal militarism. I am especially interested in discussing how the appropriation of care as compassion has also been a result of forms of elite feminist activism that employ the same

saviour tactics that drove colonial interventions. This is, as Janet Halley, Prabha Kotiswaran and their colleagues have termed it, the workings of 'governance feminism', which 'accedes to a newly mature engagement with power' (Halley et al. 2006: 340). This intimacy between feminism and (dominant) power, and its particular mutations in the neoliberal militarized times that we live in, led to Nancy Fraser lamenting about how feminism has today become 'capitalism's handmaiden':

In a cruel twist of fate, I fear that the movement for women's liberation has become entangled in a dangerous liaison with neoliberal efforts to build a free-market society. That would explain how it came to pass that feminist ideas that once formed part of a radical worldview are increasingly expressed in individualist terms. Where feminists once criticised a society that promoted careerism, they now advise women to 'lean in'. A movement that once prioritised social solidarity now celebrates female entrepreneurs. A perspective that once valorised 'care' and interdependence now encourages individual advancement and meritocracy.⁴

Although this article by Fraser was aptly taken to task for her non-recognition of a very long history of black and Third World feminist critique of capitalism,⁵ I share her concerns. However, I would add a little more to her comment about 'care', above. In the way the state-market-military compact works in deep intimacy today, the performance of 'care' by welfare states (whatever is left of them) follows three specific scripts. First, the state to continue to project itself as caring is always in a state of legislative overdrive. Legalism (especially through the passage of criminal laws) has become the magic mantra, with many feminists and leftists also joining in this process, which ultimately strengthens the state rather than empowering marginalized citizens (Brown and Halley 2002). Second, as Petchesky has argued and discussed quite compellingly in her essay, the privatization of health and education, in the name of providing better services, has in fact made access to these prohibitively expensive. Third is where the idea of human security has increasingly been replaced by national security, resulting in hyped-up concerns for guarding against terror, which has led to states at best torturing and at worst killing its own citizens (of course, those who belong to marginalized religious, ethnic, race, caste or peasant communities) with impunity. Certain forms of feminism have either participated in scripting these new narratives of 'care' or have chosen not to resist them.

Clearly, then, feminism is in crisis, and one of the important tasks of having feminist conversations across borders is to acknowledge this crisis and account for feminism's failures. Building feminist solidarity through a cry for

a borderless universal sisterhood is a suspect strategy in these times because of the deep fractures that exist across feminist interventions for women's rights and wellbeing. I will engage in this discussion by focusing on the problematic consequences of anti-trafficking laws and policies that impact on sexworkers' rights in the Third World and specifically India, due to the growing clout of what can be called the 'global rescue industry' (Agustin 2007), which claims legitimacy by projecting itself as 'compassionate' and 'caring' for sexworkers, who are helpless victims in need of rescue. The political economy of this 'caring' rescue industry thrives on the very anxieties of terrorism and securitization that inform border control and surveillance under neoliberal militarism (Kapur 2010).

What hope is there for feminist work in these times of neoliberal militarism and governance feminism then, where many feminist interventions for women's human rights are complicit with the very states and corporations that exacerbate gender- and sexuality-based inequalities in the name of progress and development?

The cunning of 'care' and compassion

compassion is nothing other than the narcissistic desires of an exploitative bourgeoisie to feel good about itself.

(Sznaider 1998, quoted in Hoijer 2003: 20)

A set of terms that effortlessly coalesce in the way I want to read 'care' in times of neoliberal militarism, and in the specific context of compassionate saviour narratives on Third-World sexworkers, are 'feminist', and the three Rs of anti-trafficking laws and policies: 'raid', 'rescue' and 'rehabilitation'. The urge to rescue Third-World sexworkers from their utter helplessness is what caring has come to mean in the discourse of abolitionist and anti-trafficking governance feminist work. In the linear logic of it all, rescue is carried out in three clear steps: first, by militaristically raiding brothels on a war footing (armed with the media, the police and the works); second, by lifting sexworkers (and their children) – which is called rescue – out of that space on the fabled pretext that they have all been trafficked; and, third, organizing rehabilitation by forcibly detaining the rescued sexworkers at a 'safe house', where they are disciplined into 'respectability' by providing vocational training in alternative means of livelihood, such as sewing. That the three Rs are based on a conceptually flawed conflation between sexwork and trafficking has been adequately and convincingly argued by many sexworkers and their academic and activist allies. These terms are most trenchantly defined – with a fair dose of biting hilarity – in the *Bad Girls Dictionary*, a bilingual advocacy tool (Thai–English) published

by the Empower University Press, which is the publishing house of Empower Foundation, an organization run by and for sexworkers in Thailand:

Feminist *n.* **Feminism** *adj.* A middle to upper class academic woman who opposes our work, denies our choices and ridicules our decisions; believe our work is disgusting and that accepting sex work, and sometimes marriage, is accepting rape and sexual abuse.

Raids *n.*, **Rescue** *n.* A hero or rescuer's job, taken action by police in cameras, reporters, where many women are shown sitting on the floor and hiding their faces from camera, or their eyes inked out like criminals – when the job done, most of us end up in debt and return to pay it off after we are released.

Rehabilitation *n.* Another kind of prison for people who are minors, children or women who have committed petty crimes – loitering or prostitution; or migrant women before being deported. Activities required so you can be called rehabilitated are hobbies like sewing, crafts, weaving, gardening, hairdressing, flower or basket making, but nothing that guarantee jobs afterward.

The definition of 'feminist' in this case is quite purposefully and provocatively malleable one. Anyone who is pained by the plight of Third-World women trafficked into sexwork – oh, it's never work, it's at best prostitution,⁶ or at worst sexual slavery – self-interpellates as a feminist who then goes on to express 'care' for these hapless souls by supporting policies and laws that sanction not only the three Rs, but also violent criminalization of sexwork, and internationally funded saviour missions. This practice of self-interpellation can be read as the intended affective response to the plethora of melodramatic images of suffering of Third-World sexworkers that have saturated news media circuits the world over.

A Google image search for 'trafficking' results in a surfeit of images that show the tied up hands, gagged mouths and bruised faces of darker-skinned women. These images are primarily part of anti-sex trafficking campaigns that almost singularly represent the women as mute victims of trafficking, and consequently 'prostitution', which is equated with slavery. The women in these campaigns, as one commentator has noted, are depicted as 'beautiful, dead bodies.' The words 'save', 'rescue', 'innocence', 'bought', 'sold' and 'slavery' appear in a repetitive loop in these images, 'combining and recombining', as Carole Vance writes, 'like mutant DNA' (Vance 2012: 203) This narrative of horror is now part of a massive assemblage of states, corporations, funders, academics, journalists and NGOs (including feminist ones) that churn out image after image through not only campaigns but also award-winning films, best-selling books and investigative journalism in the news media.

Documentary films such as the Oscar-winning *Born into Brothels*, or the Emmy-winning *The Selling of Innocents*; or the sensationalized embedded reporting on brothel raids in Cambodia where the poor victims are shown being rescued in the film *Half the Sky*, by the likes of the Pulitzer prize-winning *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristoff, are classic illustrations of this sexphobic, moral panic-raising narrative of care. It is useful to quote Vance at length here, where she comments on the deployment of ‘melodrama’ in anti-sex-trafficking videos:

These films are a form of propaganda that succeed through an appeal to visceral emotion as well as the use of a particular narrative device that overdetermines the ways facts can be organized... anti-sex trafficking videos employ myths and sleights of hand. They relentlessly focus on horrifying (and sometimes true) examples of abuse, as if these fully describe the diverse and complicated situations of sex trafficking. Melodrama achieves maximum effect through the equation of parts with the whole, severe decontextualization, the juxtaposition of tangential or irrelevant examples that aim to shock, and a sustained effort to mobilize horror and excess. On the one hand, they are familiar in that they draw on a one-hundred-year old tradition of melodrama to structure their narratives, using images of female sexual innocence virtually unchanged from late nineteenth-century European, British, and American social purity campaigns in their crusades against white slavery. On the other hand, these videos are innovative, in the way they appear to address, yet defer, questions of globalization and inequality.

(Vance 2012: 203)

These images, as Ratna Kapur notes, are ‘strikingly reminiscent of the colonial construction of the “Eastern” woman... constantly in need of care and protection from her Western counterpart’. (Kapur 2010: 115). Jo Doezema in her scathing critique of Western feminist angst about the ‘injured’ bodies of (existentially trafficked) Third-World sexworkers identifies this care narrative as produced by feminist ‘discourse masters’ about ‘sex slaves’. Laura Agustin calls the hugely funded manufacturing of these images and their agendas ‘the soft side of imperialism’ (Agustin 2007).

Abolitionist scholarship by white Western feminists such as Catharine MacKinnon, Sheila Jeffries, Kathleen Barry and Gloria Steinem have been hugely influential in not only lending legitimacy to these images of suffering but also informing the framing of anti-trafficking laws and policies, which violently abrogate the rights of sexworkers in the name of caring for them. Many non-Western feminists and NGOs also happily form part of the same bandwagon.

Mackinnon's abolitionist arguments against sexwork in particular have been extremely influential not only at a global level but have also travelled to India through her own visits in support of the work of the hugely funded non-sexworker-run feminist abolitionist organization Apne Aap Worldwide. This organization has been carrying out abolitionist work in India for a long time, and has now found an ally in MacKinnon, who can lend international legitimacy to its work. Apne Aap has been lobbying to get the Indian state to import the Swedish legal model of criminalizing the client that MacKinnon was also actively involved in framing. It was also through Apne Aap that Steinem flew into India in 2014 to speak for the mute victims of sex trafficking, who for her were the same as sexworkers. She chronicled her Indian experiences in a series of articles in *The New York Times* (NYT). As Svati Shah notes when critically analysing Steinem's India trip,

The NYT series gives a glimpse of how the anti-trafficking message is being put together, with creative uses of both the age-old idea of Indian women being fundamentally oppressed, as well as a newer idea that there is a feminist movement there positioned to resolve sexism, in part by abolishing prostitution... This was the second of two high profile trips Steinem has made to India over the last few years. Her last trip in 2012 was also focused on spreading the message of stopping trafficking, and of repeating the conservative feminist adage that prostitution *is* trafficking, because how could anyone possibly consent to selling sex, under any circumstances?⁷

Celebrity Western feminist academics and activists such as MacKinnon and Steinem, during their visits, have never met with, or spoken to, the members of the thriving sexworkers movement in India, as if they are not even aware that there is one. Or could it be that they have wilfully decided to censor any opinion about the demands of the sexworkers movement in India, despite knowledge about them? Or did they not consider worthy the voices of the sexworkers movement because, for their bleeding liberal hearts, sexwork-ing women in India, who demand the right to sexwork, do not even possess the capacity to have opinions and choices because they are poor, helpless victims from the Third World? Mariana Ortega, writing in the context of white feminist arrogance in the US, refers to this kind of feminist work as 'being lovingly, knowingly ignorant' – when you will engage with the 'other', based on a pretext that you are culturally superior to her. 'It is a kind of "arrogant perception" that produces ignorance about women of color and their work, and at the same time proclaims to have both knowledge about and loving [and caring] perception towards them' (Ortega 2006: 34).

The victim-saviour ideology of care and compassion that the work of feminist intellectuals such as MacKinnon and Steinem have propagated have had

far-reaching consequences for sexworkers' rights to livelihood and health in India, and in many other parts of the non-Western world. These consequences have taken shape, most prominently in the form of abolitionist laws and policies – namely, PEPFAR, implemented through the US Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act, also known as the Global AIDS Act; and the notorious US Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000 (TVPA).

Governance feminists ably sustain the ideological culture of moral panic that abolitionist feminist work has created. They tirelessly work with inter-governmental agencies, states and corporate capital-supported global funding organizations to continuously produce statistics to justify the use of laws and policies to criminalize sexwork, and therefore stop trafficking. Both sexwork and trafficking, because of such an approach, are only considered as a law and order issue, and not one that considers questions of labour rights and women's right to safe migration, among others. The trouble with an approach like this is that it thinks of sexwork as the only logical end of trafficking, and in effect instead of targeting trafficking trails it ends up targeting sexworkers. As Ratna Kapur notes,

It is extremely difficult to determine the real dimensions of the trafficking phenomenon due to the lack of both qualitative and quantitative research in this area. Most of the information currently available is anecdotal and based on small-scale surveys and studies. There is also a tendency to accept unverified statistics and data that are available without further interrogation.

(Kapur 2010)

Kamala Kempadoo writes:

Accurate figures about trafficking do not exist, and only extreme cases make for interesting journalistic reportage... There is an acute underutilization or lack of reliance on some sources and overreliance on others... newspaper stories created by visiting journalists or case studies collected from a handful of 'rescued' girls by eager social workers are commonly seized upon as 'facts'.

(Kempadoo et al. 2005)⁸

Trafficking statistics have created a moral panic that attracts huge international evangelical funding for anti-trafficking work which conveniently piggybacks on HIV/AIDS as a close second on the 'worst-things-affecting-women' list.

Most of the paranoia around sex trafficking in the global South is connected with something called the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), which is released by the US Department of State annually. While the TIP ranking is ostensibly

meant to indicate how well countries are tackling trafficking, in reality it is used by the US as a means to make erring countries fall into line with what the US believes is the best way to combat trafficking – that is, banning sexwork. Countries such as India that do not meet the US standards by putting in place strict anti-prostitution laws or securing convictions of traffickers are threatened with funding sanctions. An uncritical reading of the TIP report would indicate the inability of many southern countries to combat trafficking, but at the same time it also renders invisible the exemplary anti-trafficking efforts by sexworkers groups. Just as the way in which trafficking statistics are churned out without participation by stakeholder groups such as sexworkers and HIV/AIDS peer educators, exactly in the same way evaluation of anti-trafficking efforts is documented by only looking at inadequate indices, such as ‘rates of conviction’, ‘stringency of criminal laws’ and laws banning sexwork.

The US policy on trafficking and prostitution, which is ideologically backed by neoconservative evangelical groups and governance feminists, has had devastating effects on the lives of sexworkers across countries in the Third World. This is more so because of the way in which paranoia around trafficking and prostitution has got complicatedly intertwined with the fear of HIV/AIDS spread. Anti-trafficking measures are meant not only to stop women (also men and children) from being deceived into moving across international borders and coerced into prostitution – it is also meant to stop the ‘diseased’ prostitute from the South from crossing borders to ‘contaminate’ countries in the North. Nowhere was this more apparent than the controversy surrounding the International AIDS Conference held in Washington DC in July 2012. Close to 30,000 people were attending the conference. However, due to restrictions in US laws, sexworkers from other countries, one of the most important stakeholder groups in the fight against HIV/AIDS, were not permitted to attend the conference.

To counter the Global AIDS Act’s restriction on the travel of sexworkers to Washington DC, the Network of Sex Work Projects, a global coalition of sexworkers and sexworkers’ rights activists, in collaboration with the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, one of India’s largest sexworkers collectives with over 65,000 members, organized the Sex Workers’ Freedom Festival, the Alternative HIV Conference in Kolkata a few days ahead of the Washington meeting

This Global Eradication of Prostitution project of the US has been implemented since 2003 by USAID, which imposes funding conditionalities on organizations in the Third World that work on HIV/AIDS and sexwork. Organizations receiving USAID funding must sign a certificate of compliance called the ‘Prohibition on the Promotion and Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking’, popularly known as the ‘Anti-Prostitution Pledge’ or the ‘Anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath’.

In keeping with the 'anti-prostitution pledge', all organizations receiving US government HIV/AIDS funds must adopt an organizational policy 'explicitly opposing prostitution' even if they are trying to arrest the spread of HIV by working directly with sexworkers to combat their vulnerability and create access to information and healthcare. In fact, the Bush administration stipulated that all HIV/AIDS funding-related documents must change the language from 'sexworkers' to 'prostitutes'. This policy excludes sexworkers collectives and groups that work on HIV/AIDS prevention without an abolitionist stand on prostitution, and has gravely affected the intervention efforts carried out by sexworkers themselves. As a report by the Centre for Health and Gender Equity in the US points out, 'Such funding restrictions force organizations working in public health from Southern countries that heavily rely on US funding to comply with an ideological litmus test that often runs counter to both public health practice and human rights standards.' For instance, in 2005, when VAMP (Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad), a sexworkers' collective in the Western Indian state of Maharashtra returned a US\$12,000 grant from USAID because it did not wish to be bound by such conditionality, through an organized conspiracy it was accused of engaging in child trafficking. The funding was specifically meant to support VAMP's HIV/AIDS work – to bring peer educators together to formulate strategies, transport condoms from district health centres to the sexworker community, and admit sexworkers to the hospital when they fall ill.

A short film entitled *Taking the Pledge* made by the Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Centre in the US documents case studies from Thailand, Cambodia, Bangladesh, India and Brazil to show how the 'anti-prostitution pledge' has been deeply detrimental to the work done by sexworker organizations. Brazil, backed by a very powerful campaign run by Davida – a sexworkers organization – was the only country that officially opposed the policy. The pledge requirement was challenged in US courts as violative of its first amendment rights and also received a court injunction only as far as its implementation in the US was concerned. The pledge remains established policy for USAID funding outside the US, despite the Obama government coming to power.

Sexworkers are one of the most marginalized communities and they already bear the burden of stigma and moral panic. Yet they have shown great courage to resist stigma, demand labour rights, and effectively combat HIV/AIDS and trafficking. There have been remarkable developments in the area of sexworkers collectivization in India, with two of the world's most well-known sexworkers collectives – the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in Kolkata and Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad (VAMP) in Sangli – that have established exemplary best practice regarding sexworkers' rights to health and healthcare. These collectives have been unanimously campaigning for the decriminalization of sexwork, to put an end to police brutality and, among others, demand

rights to better working conditions. The process of forming these collectives has happened through rights-based approaches where the voices and demands of sexworkers have been primary.

While it cannot be denied that many women are trafficked into sexwork and many sexworkers are vulnerable to HIV, anti-trafficking measures and HIV/AIDS interventions funded by USAID seldom privilege the experiences of sexworkers. Sexworker groups such as VAMP and Durbar in India and the Empower Foundation in Thailand have built extremely effective anti-trafficking programmes that don't compromise on the rights of sexworkers. The Sonagachi project in Kolkata, India, has reached more than 60,000 sexworkers at risk of HIV through peer-based outreach services and has set up self-regulatory boards to counter sex-trafficking. The project has been cited by UNAIDS as a 'best-practice' model of working with women and men in prostitution. VAMP has set up 'Mohalla' (neighbourhood) committees that regulate the entry of underage girls into sexwork, provide support services to sexworkers, and tackle abusive clients and brothel owners. 'Programmes like these face the threat of being labelled as supportive of trafficking and the spread of AIDS because of current US laws and policies,' says Melissa Ditmore, editor of the journal *Research for Sex Work*.

If care and compassion, as practiced by the governance Feminism-neoliberal militarism nexus, has resulted in what I have described in this section, it is imperative that as feminists in solidarity across borders, we stop and rethink what care and compassion have come to mean in the postcolonial present, in the light of the two most repeated slogans of the sex workers' movement: 'save us from our saviours' and 'nothing about us without us'. May be, there is a need to stop practicing care and take seriously the ethical practice of conversations with sex workers. As non sex working feminists (allies or otherwise) we must do this not with the intention of treating them as subjects of information retrieval, but to learn from and with them about their lives.

The impossibility of redistribution?

As I have learnt through my conversation with Petchesky's piece, for any vision of redistributive feminist politics, intellectual solidarity-building can be a valuable strategy to put knowledge to transformative use. This is because it not only works towards building a nuanced understanding of how hierarchies shape the world around us but also enables 'working together to transform what we know'.⁹ However, how does one forge intellectual solidarity to work together, as ideological borders, even among feminists, increasingly become hardened, especially in neoliberal times? For example, in a world where violence against women is getting more brutal by the day, how can sex-positive feminists foreground sexual pleasure while radical feminists highlight

sexual violence? At a time when the global War on Terror is so successfully equating Islam with religious fundamentalism, how can feminists come together to powerfully oppose religious fundamentalism, and at the same time advocate for women's rights to practice their religion and wear religious attire (if they wish to) as a mark of their identity? When Western capitalist powers like the US continue to invest millions of dollars into the global anti-trafficking/anti-sexwork industry, how can feminists who take abolitionist and sex-positive positions on sexwork participate in a dialogue on an equal footing?

In this closing section I want to return to the concerns with which Petchesky began her essay. To quote one of her questions again: 'will *retribution* devour the potential for *redistribution*?' In answering this question she makes four recommendations towards the end of her article. These recommendations, in the form of economic policy reforms, she argues, will be the way to think about alternatives to the violent *status quo* of neoliberal militarism.

While the importance of these macrorecommendations cannot be overstated, thinking with sexworkers, I would like to rephrase her question in the light of what I have discussed above: When retribution against sexworkers becomes the consequence of a neoliberal regime of feminist care, what hope is there for thinking about redistribution at all? If a certain dominant version of feminism has in itself become retributive against sexworkers from the Third World,¹⁰ what other kinds of feminism do we hold on to for imagining redistribution differently? Could this be a failure pointing at the impossibility of feminist visions of redistribution in times of neoliberal militarism?

Like overzealous 'caring' feminists, we need not feel alarmed by this question and rush to provide solution-oriented answers to it. Rather, this question should be an invitation to think of the historical specificities of what redistribution and economic justice might mean at a given place and time, that acknowledges feminist differences. Even if inadequate, a way to think with this invitation is to consider how traditions of feminist thinking and politics across borders might differently engage with redistribution in their emancipatory pursuits.

It might thus be instructive to conclude, even if tentatively, by taking note of what Chandra Talpade Mohanty suggests is a way of forging feminist solidarity across differences: 'a way to theorize a complex relational understanding of experience, location, and history ... [through which] we can put into practice the idea of 'common differences' as the basis for deeper solidarity across differences and unequal power relations' (Mohanty 2003).

Acknowledgements

I thank Oishik Sircar for his comments on this chapter.

Notes

1. As a non-sexworker feminist, the use of 'with' in the title and text of this essay is deliberate and of political significance. It is meant to distinguish the act of speaking in collaboration 'with' sexworkers as opposed to the act of speaking 'for' them. Although I have written this piece, I must acknowledge that my understanding of the issues dealt with here have been shaped through my association with the sexworkers movement in India.
2. 'One that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved and that this docile body can only be achieved through strict regiment of disciplinary acts' (Foucault 1995).
3. For example, the Arab Spring, anti-austerity protests, Occupy Wall Street, post-Nirbhaya and Shahbag.
4. See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>.
5. See <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/10/21/white-feminist-fatigue-syndrome/>.
6. I do not use 'prostitution' and 'sexwork' interchangeably. 'Prostitution' is used when referring to the way in which abolitionists characterize it. My use of the term 'sexwork' draws from the activism of sexworkers and how they choose to describe themselves and their work.
7. See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/american-anthropological-association/gloria-steinem-vs-prostit_b_6198614.html.
8. See also the newsletter *Breaking the Shackles*, 5, July 2012. http://www.cpiml.in/home/files/Breaking%20the%20Shackle/5_July_Breaking_the_Shackles.pdf.
9. Mary Zournazi (1998) in *Foreign Dialogues*. <http://works.bepress.com/mzournazi/4>.
10. It is not only in the Third World; there is recent legislation in Canada, for instance.

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3.3

This Solidarity of Sisters

Rosalind P. Petchesky

An invitation to reflect on writing that one did over a dozen years ago is inevitably a post-mortem about memory, time, the despair of nauseating repetition, and the delight of rediscovery and surprise. Everything that seems old is also new, or open to new interpretations; and what might seem new is inexorably haunted by the (colonial, patriarchal, nationalist, racist) burdens of the past. 'Globalization, Women's Health and Economic Justice: Reflections Post-September 11' originated as a plenary address to the Macalester International Roundtable of October 2001. It was written partly during the summer preceding the Roundtable, while I was also writing a book on this topic (Petchesky 2003), and then completed in the weeks following the September 11 attacks on the US; hence its conversational style, its disjunctive (before and after) structure and its sombre tone. Going back to look at it, so many years and global disasters later, made me weep because little has changed on the geopolitical landscape. At the end of 2014, the US is more immersed in war than it was in 2002 – the same wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, now extended to Syria, Yemen and Pakistan – and more committed to a limitless 'War on Terror', now involving unmanned drone attacks killing untold numbers of civilians, as well as continued detention without trial of 'enemy combatants' and ubiquitous surveillance of citizens and foreigners alike.¹ Since 2011, Washington has spent US\$4 trillion on this security and military behemoth, also a boondoggle for a handful of corporate contractors: 'one of the largest transfers of wealth from public to private hands in American history' (Risen 2014). How many countries could US\$4 trillion have supplied with state-of-the-art health, sanitation and water systems? How many epidemics, infant and maternal deaths, and famines could have been prevented? Global madness.

And, of course, all the ratcheting up of the war machine has simply compounded and multiplied the 'terrorist' forces it was meant to contain. At this writing, the Taliban has recaptured control in much of Afghanistan; Al Qaeda clones have surfaced across the Middle East and North Africa, including the

Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabab in East Africa; young Muslim recruits – women and men – from all over Europe and North America as well as traditionally Islamic countries have rallied to the cry to defend Islam from what they see as a massive crusade by the West. Meanwhile, the brief uprisings for democracy and free expression in 2011–2012, from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, have been smashed in favour of autocratic police states and militarized policing, all in the name of restoring ‘order’ and fighting ‘terrorism’, read most often as Muslim. The Israeli siege on Gaza in July of 2014 – destroying Gaza’s infrastructure (for the third time in a decade), killing over 2,000 civilians, many of them children, and leaving tens of thousands more wounded, maimed and homeless – should be seen as an integral part of this globalized system of military policing. Operation Protective Edge was not only intended to consolidate Israeli power over a single apartheid state and to weaken Hamas; it also functioned once again as a laboratory for the surveillance and population-management technologies that Israel has developed in its research institutions, deployed in Palestine, and used in its training of police forces and intelligence agencies across the globe. If the police in Ferguson, Missouri, Los Angeles or New York City function like an occupying force, it is because they have been trained to (Cironline 2014; Johnson 2009). Occupation is an age-old colonial practice refashioned anew in the service of Islamophobia.

Jasbir Puar (2014) describes the situation in Gaza as a sovereign biopolitics of ‘not letting die’, of keeping entire populations in a state of debilitation, deterioration and effective incarceration short of death but enough ‘alive’ to provoke acts of resistance and therefore justify the continued expansion of the security state. This new-old model of colonial-imperial power affects not only Palestinians in the Occupied Territories but also black and brown people, especially youth, facing police brutality every day in US cities; undocumented immigrants throughout the US, Western Europe and Australia; and young dissidents, and sex and gender non-conforming people in Egypt, Bahrain, China, Uganda, Cameroun, Russia, Kyrgyzstan – the list goes on. If this is what power today looks like, can global health and social justice be more than pipedreams? More than ever, as I wrote in 2001, “‘national security,’ now escalated into “global security,” trumps all the other logics of power and, in the name of sheer survival, silences all the demands for a decent and healthy life’.

Yet, if the context seems depressingly similar, Garita’s and Dutta’s readings of it offer new vantage points for critique, resistance and hope. What a decade ago appeared overwhelming and hegemonic now reveals cracks on the surface, fissures and rumblings from below – especially from previously marginalized groups, such as young feminist advocates in the global South; coalitions of sexual and gender non-conforming people and sexworkers across North and

South; and protesters against militarized policing and occupation tactics ‘from Ferguson to Palestine’.

Garita’s contribution (Chapter 3.1), at first glance seems to offer little evidence to ground the optimistic note on which she ends. Her very astute analysis of the global health environment takes us in an arc from the promises of ICPD – for ‘health and population policies that considered the social determinants of health and the provision of integrated sexual and reproductive health services free from violence, coercion and discrimination’ as ‘critical to development’ – to the largely privatized, corporatized and profit-driven health systems that prevail in most countries 20 years post-Cairo. She persuasively argues that the tendency to focus health reform initiatives on ‘public-private partnerships’ and financing mechanisms ‘can obfuscate the need to take into account the social determinants of health and the enabling environments that can encourage people to claim their right to health and respond to these adequately through stronger health systems’ (although her rosy assessment of the Obama administration’s ACA, a public-private financing scheme par excellence, seems inconsistent with this structural analysis).

What Garita’s chapter understates is her own role as a leading organizer of the very groups of young reproductive and sexual health advocates from the global South – especially in the dynamic organization RESURJ – who are embracing this radical, holistic and potentially transformative critical perspective and bringing it fiercely into the deliberations of national governments and UN conferences. The tireless work of groups such as RESURJ and Advocates for Youth, year after year, in itself is living testimony that ‘structural changes to meet the development and social needs of our times’ are part of a new global imagination that in time will burst into real policies at national, regional and global levels. Just take in these words from the historic statement, ‘Gender, Economic, Social and Ecological Justice for Sustainable Development – A Feminist Declaration for Post 2015’, signed by 343 civil society organizations from all regions of the globe, and drafted at a meeting in Mexico convened by Garita and her RESURJ colleagues at the same time as Gaza was burning:

As the United Nations decides on the future course of international development post 2015, women of all ages, identities, ethnicities, cultures and across sectors and regions, are mobilizing for gender, social, cultural, economic and ecological justice, sustainable development and inclusive peace. We seek fundamental structural and transformational changes to the current neoliberal, extractivist and exclusive development model that perpetuates inequalities of wealth, power and resources between countries, within countries and between men and women. We challenge the current security paradigm that increases investments in the military-industrial complex, which contributes to violent conflict between and within countries.

Aimed at influencing the 2014–2015 cycle of post-millennium meetings on population, sustainable development and climate change, the statement strongly opposes militarism, neoliberal economic models and the root causes of social injustice and inequality in all their forms. Above all, it analyses these ills in a completely holistic way, calling for a new transformative paradigm that will ‘tackle intersecting and structural drivers of inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, place of origin, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status and abilities’. This is precisely the analytical and critical perspective I have called ‘deep intersectionality’ (Petchesky 2012, 2014), and it breathes and shimmers in this transnational feminist document.

Debolina Dutta’s contribution (Chapter 3.2), also presents an analysis grounded in deep intersectionality, from a distinctly postcolonial feminist perspective. While Dutta remarks that September 11 was ‘the precipitating temporal moment’ for me in 2001–2002, we are now in a different moment. The politics of location she invokes is important because it allows us to shift our location even as we must acknowledge our origins. As a pro-Palestine solidarity Jewish feminist, I fully share her insistence on starting with *colonialism* and understanding it as ‘an ongoing process, ... still underway’. Alongside her exquisite insight about ‘the operation of neoliberalism and militarism as a sophisticated, mutated form of colonialism itself, a sort of old-wine-in-a-new-bottle story’, we should register the Nakba, or colonizing of Palestine by Jewish settlers, like the conquest of Puerto Rico and Native American lands by Hispanic and Anglo European settlers, as not singular ‘events’. Rather, these are ‘ongoing processes’. perpetuated and materialized through occupation, military force and economic domination. Dutta accurately states that these forms of power ‘embody and employ’ patriarchy and heteronormativity. But at the same time, in a perverse kind of irony, they also deploy the very forms of imperial and ‘rescue’ feminism she repudiates as well as the ‘pinkwashing’ strategies – campaigns of symbolic support for LGBT rights – that US, UK and Israeli officials use to brandish their human rights bona fides in the global arena (Puar 2007; Papantonopoulou 2014; Schulman 2012).

In her brilliant, detailed and well-documented critique of feminist ‘abolitionism’, or what she nicely calls the ‘sex phobic, moral panic raising narrative of care’, Dutta echoes arguments made previously (see Amar 2013; Corrêa et al. 2008; Kapur 2005; Miller 2004). However, she goes beyond these, bringing the analysis up to date and linking the more nefarious aspects of anti-trafficking legislation and PEPFAR’s ‘prostitution pledge’ to the widespread militarization of sexual policing at many sites across the globe – and particularly in the politics and policing of border crossings. The example of PEPFAR’s operation in India recalls other situations in which sexuality becomes inextricably bound up with militarization, urban policing, global markets – whether in sex and

reproductive tourism, sports tourism or disaster clean-up – and the intensification of state and corporate power over the lives of marginalized groups. This is what Paul Amar, writing about Cairo and Rio de Janeiro in his groundbreaking book *The Security Archipelago* (2013), calls ‘a human-security governance regime’ – something I have written about as well with regard to interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and cholera epidemic (Petchesky 2012), and Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill (Petchesky 2014). According to Amar, such a regime ‘[aims] to protect, rescue, and secure certain idealized forms of humanity identified with a particular family of sexuality, morality, and class subjects, and grounded in certain militarized territories and strategic infrastructures’ (2013: 6). As Dutta reminds us, some contemporary forms of self-styled feminism – imperial, neoliberal, abolitionist – both flourish within and abet such regimes: ‘If a certain dominant version of feminism [what she calls “the governance feminism-neoliberal militarism nexus”] has in itself become retributive against sex workers from the Third World, what kind of feminism do we hold on to for imagining redistribution differently?’

Here, I think, is where some space for hopefulness opens up – in what Dutta points to at the end of her chapter as new forms of solidarity but ones that not only coalesce around diverse locations but also express the linkages across multiple issues. There is hope in her suggestion that we ‘take seriously the ethical practice of conversations with sex workers’, not only because that is a more ethical way of engaging but also because sexworkers have much to teach other feminist social justice activists about the ways in which struggles for rights of sexual and gender expression cannot be separated from those for economic rights, decent housing, healthcare and freedom from police brutality. Groups such as VAMP and the Sonagachi Project should be seen not as victims but as inspiring models of intersectional organizing. Likewise, the Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights, representing an array of LGBTI organizations, expresses an intersectional, multi-issue perspective when it urges its partner groups in the global North to reject aid conditionality by their governments as a strategy for opposing homophobic laws in Africa in favour of a broader approach – one that links all human rights and redistributive justice:

In a context of general human rights violations, where [heterosexual] women are almost as vulnerable as LGBTI people, or where health and food security are not guaranteed for anyone, singling out LGBTI issues emphasizes the idea that LGBTI rights are special rights and hierarchically more important than other rights... aid cuts also affect LGBTI people. Aid received from donor countries is often used to fund education, health and broader development. LGBTI people are part of the social fabric, and thus part of the population that benefit from the funding. A cut in aid will have an impact

on everyone, and more so on the populations that are already vulnerable and whose access to health and other services are already limited, such as LGBTI people.

(Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law 2011)

Sexworker organizations in India and elsewhere, the Civil Society Coalition in Uganda, and the coalition among groups such as MADRE, Sérovie, KOVAFIV (Commission of Women Victims for Victims), and Partners in Health in Haiti around gender-based violence, sexual rights, healthcare for HIV-positive people and economic justice (MADRE et al. 2014) reflect the kind of polyvalent, intersectional work that refuses the deadly blinders of single-issue politics. We all have much to learn from these examples.² In writing about the anti-homosexuality assaults in Uganda, I commented on the catastrophic consequences of separating body and sexual politics from their macroeconomic and securitized contexts:

Homosexuality and gender non-conformity become available as decoys to deflect from systemic crises... precisely because they are seen, by advocates as well as opponents, as isolated and disconnected from the conditions of economic distress, militarism, trade inequities, and structural violence. Conversely, the militarization of humanitarian relief efforts and the conversion of armed conflict zones into impoverished, dangerous, semi-permanent camps, become... [inevitable consequences of neoliberalism] only when their catastrophic effects on gendered and sexual bodies disappear from view.

(Petchesky 2014)

Today as I write, in the streets of the US, young people and old, black, brown and white, are marching to protest against racist policing and occupation, demanding the right to 'breathe' and a living wage for low-end workers – from Ferguson to Gaza to Walmart. And people everywhere are marching to insist that the health of the planet and sharp cuts in carbon emissions are part of our economic, social and reproductive rights; that the body and the biosphere are intimately connected. I hear Kadiatou Diallo, the mother of Amadou Diallo – a young, unarmed West African man who was mowed down by the New York City police ten years before – as she stands up at a huge rally in Washington, DC, to show her support of other mothers, mostly black women, whose children have been murdered by the police and salutes 'this solidarity of sisters'. Perhaps her persistence is one kind of answer to the question of what kind of feminism we may hold onto in dark and contradictory times – the kind that says: 'This stops today.'

Notes

1. President Obama renounced the use of torture and secret CIA rendition to 'black sites' when he took office in January 2009. However, a summary report issued by the US Senate Intelligence Committee on 9 December 2014 made public what the world already knew – the long and hideous record of brutal, depraved and sometimes deadly methods of torture, in blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international law, used by the CIA under the Bush administration. What remains silent here are the 127 detainees still held under grisly conditions in Guantánamo Prison, many of them without any charges and after being cleared for release years ago. Most shameful of all is the fact that all this will have happened with impunity – no one, from the torturers to the highest officials, has been made to account for their crimes (Mazzeti 2014; Savage and Risen 2014).
2. Some US-based organizations have applied this polyvalent, intersectional politics in extraordinary ways. For example, NESRI (National Economic and Social Rights Initiative – www.nesri.org) works with its grassroots partner groups – including immigrant farm workers, inner-city parents of public-school children, and state-level movements for single-payer healthcare plans – to bring an international human rights perspective to their diverse struggles. JFREJ (Jews for Racial and Economic Justice – www.jfrej.org) works in solidarity with domestic care workers, LGBT youth, sexworkers, and communities fighting racism, Islamophobia and police brutality in New York City. The term 'polyversal' comes from my dear friend Zillah Eisenstein, whose thinking about race, feminism and politics is a beacon for whatever I write (see, among many other writings, her *Against Empire* (2004)).

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Section IV

Gender, Science, Ecology

4.0

Rooted Networks, Webs of Relation, and the Power of Situated Science: Bringing the Models Back Down to Earth in Zambrana

Dianne Rocheleau

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We all live in emergent ecologies – complex assemblages of plants, animals, people, physical landscape features, and technologies – created through the habit-forming practices of connection in everyday life. We both inhabit and co-create these ecologies of home, often without being able to “see” them clearly. We live in networks of the sort defined by Bruno Latour (2005) as in the assemblages above, yet we are also rooted in specific territories and geographic locations, often several simultaneously and in series. We are both denizens and artisans of the hybrid geographies described by Sarah Whatmore (2002). Human beings are likewise entangled in several related formulations of contemporary nature/culture (Braun and Castree 1998), described variously as meshworks (Escobar 2001, 2004, 2008), rhizomes (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the network society (Castells 2000), relational places (Massey 1994), complex ecologies (Botkin 1989; Haila and Dyke 2006), and generic models of networks and complexity (Barabasi 2002; Kauffman 2000).

Using selected tools from political ecology, science and technology studies (STS), human geography, ecological science, and complexity theory, we can learn to recognize and to re-imagine these everyday ecologies of home, as seen from the multiple standpoints of complex actors. We also need a prism that reflects the combined light and patterns of “social” and “biotic” life, in a way that helps us to get beyond the nature/culture binaries that suffuse our thinking.

While we inhabit our own everyday ecologies, sometimes we can see the outlines of structure and function more clearly in “the field,” that is, someone

else's home, workplace, and habitat. The experience and insights of people in the Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey in the Dominican Republic played a major role in my own formulation of network metaphors and models applied to social movements, biodiversity, and landscapes. Along with three research colleagues and several Federation members, I documented and analyzed the process and results of the collaboration between this representative people's organization and an NGO as they advocated sustainable farm forestry and social justice. By the end of the first study, I was seeing multiple. My own vision was refocused through the everyday experience, the perspectives, and the data provided by multiple Federation actors, as well as my immersion in the rich, diverse ecologies of their networked lives and landscapes.

In this chapter I make the case for a model of rooted networks, to encompass the complexity of viable, mixed forest and agrarian ecologies. After an overview I summarize several network concepts and models developed in political ecology, STS, geography, and complexity theory and outline an expanded network approach. A return to the field in Zambrana illustrates selected elements of this synthesis and demonstrates the practical origins and applications of rooted networks in political ecology, STS, and conservation ecology.

The Challenge of Zambrana

In October 1992 I joined with three colleagues to conduct a four-month study on a farm forestry project in the rolling hills south of Cotuí in the center of the Dominican Republic.¹ The Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey (a regional grassroots organization formed during the land struggle of the 1970s and 1980s) and ENDA-Caribe (Environment Development Alternatives Caribbean, a regional branch of an international nongovernmental organization) were collaborating on several joint efforts.² The Forest Enterprise Project promoted planting of *Acacia mangium* trees for timber as a lucrative cash crop on smallholder farms (Geilfus 1995). ENDA had negotiated with the National Forest Service, a division of the army (Dirrección General Forestal) to secure permission for legal cutting of this species with special permits from the project. National laws otherwise prohibited the felling of trees, even planted trees on private property. The Federation and ENDA were in the process of constructing a cooperative sawmill with external funding support. The Federation as a whole had embraced the project and supported the formation of a spin-off subsidiary group, the Wood Producers Association, a rising economic and political force within the Federation and the region. Our agenda was to document this case as a model of community-based forestry, and to analyze the interaction of this initiative with gender and class relations in landscapes, livelihoods, and organizations across scales.

We grounded our study in the region, the landscape, the Federation, its members (men and women), their households, and the connections between

them. The Federation formed the base for our research on social and ecological dynamics of farm forestry, and was the focus of our systematic, random, and network samples for social and ecological surveys, oral histories, and participant observation in 1992/93,³ 1996, 1997, 2005, and 2007. Throughout the course of these activities, we encountered braided strands of social and ecological history that linked every feature in this patchwork of farms, forests, gardens, and homesteads to stories of individual lives, families, communities, and social movements.⁴

Zambrana-chacuey as a region

Zambrana-Chacuey is a hilly farming region comprising two administrative districts, nestled in the Yamasa Hills near the provincial capital of Cotuí and the Barrick Gold Mine (formerly Rosario Dominicana). In 1992 most of the twelve thousand residents were smallholder subsistence and commercial farmers with one-half to two hectares of land. Land use and cover ranged from pasture and field crops to tree crops, gardens, and forests. Farmers cultivated tobacco, citrus and other fruit trees, shaded cocoa and coffee, *patios* (forest home gardens), and *conucos* (diverse plots of root crops, vegetables, and medicinal crops). Some farmers planted and harvested trees for timber, woodworking, and charcoal. Most households relied on some income from off-farm wage labor (Rocheleau and Ross 1995).

During the 1980s and 1990s Zambrana-Chacuey exemplified simultaneous national trends to strengthen environmental protection and agricultural exports, reconciled under the umbrella of sustainable development. During the Selva Negra (black forest) Anti-Deforestation Campaign, armed troops with helicopters directed enforcement against smallholder farmers, who suffered arrests, fines, and worse for clearing farm plots, making charcoal, and harvesting trees for home use. The state simultaneously encouraged land speculators, ranchers, and agribusiness corporations to acquire and clear more land for agriculture (B. Lynch 1996; Raynolds 1994), an egregious social and ecological contradiction that some authors have overlooked (Diamond 2005). Smallholder farmers increased tobacco and cassava (*yuca*) cash crops in order to survive the decline in coffee and cocoa prices and the suppression of charcoal and woodworking activities.

From 1992 to 2007 farmers relied increasingly on income from off-farm employment, shifting away from tobacco and coffee. Cocoa, coffee, and pineapple prices rose and fell in cycles. A net retreat from coffee was matched by a resurgence of cocoa, based on organic markets and certification. In 2007 pineapple surged in price and in popularity among farmers. During the early 1990s food crops fell in total acreage, production, and diversity, then began to bounce back (upland rice, beans, and root crops) based on higher food prices and market demand. The net result was still a large decrease in food acreage from 1992 to 2007. Timber, in contrast, was a major cash crop by 2007,

yet the Association of Agroforestry Producers (APA, formerly Wood Producers Association) grew more timber on fewer farms than in 1993.

The Federation

Throughout the surveys ran the chronicle of “the Federation” and the undercurrents of resistance, resurgence, and complex relations of power spanning centuries. In 1992 the organization consisted of fifty-nine farmers, housewives, and youth associations from thirty-one communities, with over seven hundred individual members in five hundred households. The Federation directly served over four thousand people and provided broad support to many of the twelve thousand residents in the region. The associations held separate local meetings and sent representatives to the Federation governing assemblies. The organization was rooted in three separate wings of a very broad movement: farm co-operatives; Catholic liberation theology and human rights; and traditional Catholic advocates of “basic needs” (Rocheleau and Ross 1995). Women figured prominently in each, and constituted a fourth, invisible force within the broader peasant movement.

Nurtured in underground grassroots networks and formally founded with the support of the Catholic bishop of La Vega in 1978, the Federation was one of seventeen such regional groups in the larger Confederation *Mama Tingo*, named for an elder peasant woman leader⁵ assassinated during a land redistribution campaign in 1974 (Ricourt 2000). It was part of a wave of land-struggle movements that grew to international prominence in the 1970s, propelled by the convergence of Catholic liberation theology and poor farmers’ campaigns for land throughout Latin America. The Federation, like the broader movement that spawned it, adopted the empowerment approach of Paulo Freire (1970) as the prevailing method of training and organization, with a strong focus on encouraging voice and action on the part of those who had long been silenced.

The nonviolent land-struggle movements appealed to long histories in place and the rights of rural people to maintain their lands or to regain lands lost to the U.S.-based sugar corporations, the Trujillo and Balaguer regimes, and their clients. The movement also proclaimed the right and the profound need to create space for displaced and landless people who had migrated from other regions to make new homes and new communities based on a shared sense of purpose, respect, and mutual support (Lernoux 1980). People were not so much claiming ownership as making a statement about the proper use of land, the nature of an agrarian landscape, and their own place in it, through the re-creation and performance of a complex, rooted network, shot through with power, anchored in the soil as well as history and a shared vision of the future.

Most Federation farmers had participated in campaigns for land, free speech, and the right to organize, as well as for schools, clinics, roads, and marketing support for farmers. Men and women used nonviolent civil disobedience, ranging from occupation of underutilized largeholder lands to highway blockades.

They faced armed soldiers and police, jail terms, beatings, and campaigns of intimidation and harassment. Over the years the Federation also served as the main vehicle for popular organization as people in Zambrana struggled through drought, floods, hurricanes, absentee landlords, and boom-bust markets for coffee, cocoa, pineapple, and tobacco.

Over time the Federation emerged as a major actor in the daily life and political development of the region, restructuring social relations as well as the landscapes and ecologies of the region. It acted first through the land struggle and later through the agricultural and sustainable development projects with ENDA, which eventually spawned the Forest Enterprise Project, the Wood Producers Association, and the Federation/Wood Producers Cooperative Sawmill. The people of the Federation also acted individually and collectively, through their everyday farming and forestry practices, to continually remake the rich regional agroforest and the social networks that sustained them.

The Zambrana story in search of a better explanation

Several contradictions and paradoxes surfaced in our studies of the Federation, the changing composition and pattern of the regional agroforest, and the official maps of forests, deforestation, and reforestation. Among the most striking findings was the multiple nature of the Federation, beyond the formal structure of the Farmers' Associations, Housewives' Associations, and Youth Associations. The Federation was not a mere organization, but rather a specific flexible, dynamic, and self-organized manifestation of much deeper and wider webs of relation, both in the social sense and in terms of actor-network assemblages crossing "natural" and "cultural" lines. Relations of power ran throughout the Federation network, within the membership as well as between the group and other entities (forest service, largeholder farmers, the church, ENDA, the mine, and the new commercial foresters' group [Agroforestry Producer's Association]). Networks, roots, and territories were highly entangled and did not fit within the confines of socially or ecologically focused polygons mapped on two-dimensional Cartesian grids. Multimodal conversations and encounters with a large proportion of the Federation membership about the regional agroforest and the social landscape also provided us with the beginnings of a situated-science perspective. We brought the multiple visions of different actors to the table, based on qualitative and quantitative assessments of the same phenomena from distinct positions in complex networks. To make sense of all this required a model we didn't yet have. The rooted network as a tool offers a way to understand the complexity of the Zambrana story, using existing formulations of networks as a point of departure.

Network models, metaphors, and theories

In general, formal models present networks as existing beyond space and place, above the mess of land, water, blood, and soil. Some social scientists treat

network structures as inherently recent phenomena (Castells 2000), contrasting high-technology, postmodern, postindustrial conditions with prior organic, pre-modern societies. Networks in STS have arisen from social and cultural studies of information and biotechnologies, while much of political ecology has been in the trenches (literally) of rural life. Yet the actor networks postulated by Latour (2005) can allow us to jump scales and to combine humans, plants, animals, machines, and nonliving elements of the planet, from bedrock and hillslopes, to rivers, rain, and sunlight. Political ecology can bring these models “down to earth,” to reconcile networks with energy flows, nutrient cycles, and movements of people and other beings in territories and ecosystems.

The convergence of political ecology and STS can bring power into network models of assemblages of people, other living beings, technologies, and artifacts. While STS has focused on the power of technologies and the workings of science within societies, political ecology has focused on relations of power between state and corporate structures and local communities whose livelihoods and cultural integrity are threatened by eviction, invasion, resource theft, and environmental degradation (Blaikie 1985; Peet and Watts 2004). Political ecology has also been about popular resistance to this oppression, as well as organized popular movements to protect their home ecologies, reassert their own worldviews, and reconstruct their own integrated arts and sciences of “production” and “conservation” (Brosius, Tsing, and Zerner 2005; Escobar 1999, 2008; Peet and Watts 2004; Robbins 2004; Rocheleau 2008; Zimmerer 2000), as in the forestry, agroforestry, and ethnobotany work of the Federation.

Ant as artifact, subject to recruitment and reinvention

The network, as an enabling metaphor, allows us to reconcile our thinking about cooperation, communities, and local knowledge, with structural explanations of power in national and international structures of economies and politics. Actor-network theory (ANT) offers a way to conceptualize the relationships between humans and the disparate elements that we normally classify as part of “nature” or “culture.” It is a conceptual tool to break binaries and explain the power of connections in assemblages of humans and other living beings, technologies, artifacts, and physical features of their surroundings. Actor networks are often represented through a central human actor, augmented and expanded by the number of connections and the weight of the other elements that constitute nodes in the net. The assumption that all connections are positive and can be treated as assets has been the dominant metaphor. Variations of ANT in social science and policy, including social capital analysis (Putnam 2000) and sustainable-development applications (Bebbington 1997) often present all connections as assets. The framing of actor networks as growth engine and robotic augmentation begs the question

“Whose network is bigger?” or “What’s in *your* network?” (with apologies to a raft of credit card and cell phone commercials on U.S. television).

In contrast, we can transform ANT to fashion complex, polycentric network models that both complicate and clarify our visions of possible futures. We can expand ANT to incorporate the distinct positions and perspectives of multiple groups of people and various species and assemblages of plants and animals, along with artifacts, technologies, and physical elements of their surroundings. It’s not just a matter of getting closer, to get the one true story. It’s about “getting it” through the eyes of a diversity of actors in distinct positions, in complex actor networks, that are best described as rooted networks and relational webs. As part of a search for viable alternatives to “sustainable development,” I propose to recruit the network construct and stretch it, building on selective elements relevant to social and biological science: power and polycentricity, situated knowledge(s), roots and territory, self-organization, and complex constructs that mesh nature and culture.

Networks are ecological and material as well as social, and carry power relations in both the patterns and processes of connection. The combined lenses of ecosystems, networks, and cultural studies can help us to see embedded, uneven, and dynamic relations of power. Explicit models of the type, terms, and degree of connection can incorporate multiple dimensions, including positive, neutral, and negative connections (as seen by a particular actor), strong to weak links, continuous to erratic connections, and dense versus dispersed patterns of connectivity. While many network models focus on hierarchies of degree and pattern of connectivity (Barabasi 2002), the terms of connectivity are a major arbiter of power. They can vary from coerced to voluntary, encompassing relations from slavery to partnership and free association (Rocheleau and Roth 2007).

Place and territory are, at best, underdeveloped in STS and political ecology. To address the entanglement of people in the biotic and physical elements of the material world, and the construction of new ecologies, we need to tie networks to land, to locate them, put them in place(s), though not in simple polygons. Relational spaces and theories of place (Massey 1994) as well as meshworks and territories (Escobar 2001, 2008) tie networks to place, yet we need to further engage the material relationships in socioecological networks linked to multiple territories of extraction, production, circulation, consumption, and transformation.

We can think of “network” and “root” as verbs rather than nouns, to visualize the diverse rooting strategies that connect webs of relation to the surface(s) of the planet, as well as technologies of internal connection within complex entities. Several well-known plants illustrate the varieties of rooting and webbing: taproots in pine trees; the perching of epiphytes (“air plants”) in tree canopies; the profusion of new plants produced by “spider plants” outside the pots or the

main rooting zone of the parent plants; the soil-building habits of coastal mangroves around their woody stilt roots; and algal mats, which create their own floating worlds from microflora and -fauna, making a seafaring macro-being from microconstituents. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) elaborate specifically on the underground metaphor of rhizomes⁶ to describe the entangled realities of connectivity and the complex dynamics of social change.

Community ecology and systems ecology, respectively, model relations among and between species, and flows of energy and materials between living things and their physical surroundings (Botkin 1989), from ecosystems (Costanza et al. 2001; Odum 1994) to ecological networks (Fath 2007). Horizontal flows as well as vertical “roots” tie individual nodes or whole networks to resources in territories of activity, extraction, residence, identity, and influence. We can model terms and pathways of movement of matter, energy, and living beings between nodes in networks and between whole networks to illuminate processes of mobility and circulation as well as extraction, production, consumption, and the terms and types of rooting, and being, in place.

Neural-network models and theories from biological and computational sciences contribute explicit models and robust metaphors to study dynamic self-organization from below as well as the role of already existing structures (Barabasi 2002; Kauffman 2000). Repeated actions create habit-forming practices of connection between neurons in the brain, which create or modify structures, which in turn predispose but do not determine future action. These models also describe dynamic and self-organized phenomena from social movements and organizations to biodiversity in plant and animal communities.

Polycentric governance structures (V. Ostrom 1997; E. Ostrom 2001) provide a point of departure to visualize multiple actors as simultaneous centers of power, influence, and action, rather than single structures, central actors, and simple linear hierarchies. Theories of power and knowledge from feminist poststructural scholarship add two powerful concepts to the mix: situated knowledge and positionality (Haraway 1991; Harding 1986). Each actor (individual or group) has a distinct vision of any given network, based on their position, and their experience of shifting terms and configurations of connection over time.

The resulting artifact, what we might call a poststructural rooted network, incorporates the views from individual nodes (as distinct standpoints or subject positions), to provide a powerful tool for “situated science” in political ecology, STS, and conservation ecology. This networked vision can contribute to critique as well as to the construction of viable “alternative” hybrid sciences that transcend local and global scales, erase nature/culture dichotomies, and join theory and practice. This eclectic tool helps us to “make sense” of complex assemblages of humans, other living beings, and their things, their

surroundings, and technologies from distinct subject positions and diverse knowledge perspectives.

As a first step in this process I suggest several specific tasks required to embark on this project: mapping power in networks; mapping rooted networks onto territories; tracing relations of connectivity, autonomy, and sovereignty, as well as mobility, circulation and rootedness; and reconciling complex systems and networks to include assemblages of humans and other beings, their habitats, technologies, and artifacts. Some prerequisites include complicating and expanding our typologies of power; complicating territories beyond fixed polygons; developing a typology of rooting systems and strategies; and integrating hierarchies and self-organization (Rocheleau and Roth 2007). The brief case study below incorporates these various elements through a discussion of women's changing position in the Federation, and the ongoing construction of a complex regional agroforest by multiple actors.

The workings of networks in the federation

An organizational diagram of social networks in the region readily demonstrates the role of the Federation as a clearinghouse of information and a center of influence in a crowded field of government, church, and civil-society organizations over three decades (Figure 4.0.1). The Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey and the region it calls home also embody the kind of multidimensional assemblage described by ANT. It includes the relationship of people to each other (from family and neighbors, to trade and church affiliations, political and social organizations) and incorporates a long list of plant and animal species (wild and domesticated) and physical features of the landscape, ranging from mountains, valleys, rivers, and soils, to springs and groundwater. The network also encompasses technologies, artifacts, and infrastructure: technologies of production, processing, resource management, communication, and transport; infrastructure, such as roads, water collection and distribution systems, residential, commercial, and community buildings, and energy and communication grids; and tools, from plows and tractors to sewing machines, cell phones, and motorcycles. Social technologies and practices also form part of this list of actors in the Federation/campesino network, including practices of organization, education, empowerment, resistance, solidarity, and self-governance.

The Federation also exemplifies a network-based entity in the more expansive sense of the rhizome metaphors of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and the characteristics of rooted networks cited above. The organization explicitly addressed the relationships, and the terms of connection, between rural farmers as a group with each other, the land, other living beings, the national political process, and civil society. It tackled the terms of connection to markets for farm products,

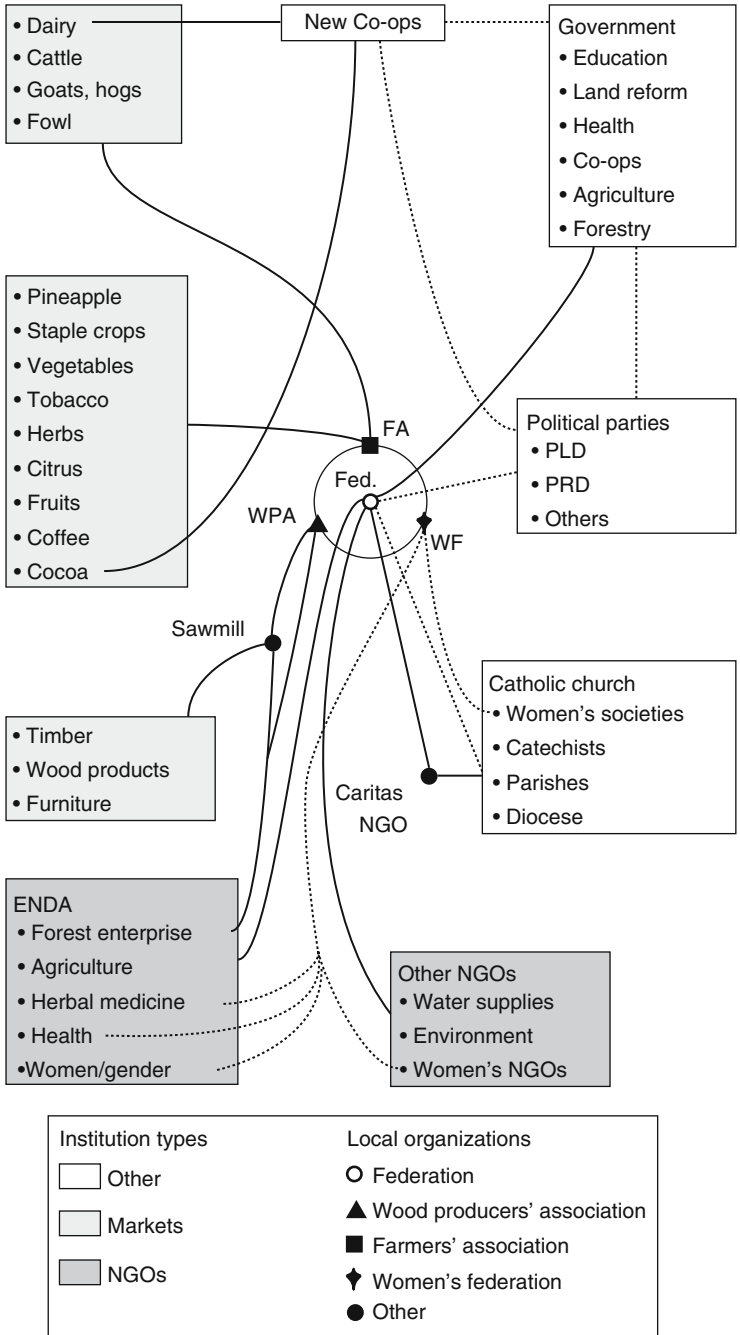


Figure 4.0.1 The Federation embedded in social networks in the region

wood, and agricultural inputs. The Federation sought to shift several relationships toward fair trade, equal exchange, equal rights, and full participation. The members' relationships to each other, national political processes, and markets also hinged on, and impinged upon, the ecologies of their smallholder farms and their connections to land, plants, animals, and the surrounding landscape (Figure 4.0.2).

The politics of the Federation have been explicitly webbed, networked, and rooted, even as they addressed (and sometimes embodied) relations of power. They dealt directly with roots, but included lateral roots in relations of solidarity as well as vertical roots to land, and incorporated roots of different types at multiple scales. The entire Federation was rooted in the twin districts of Zambrana and Chacuey as a regional territory, communities set their roots in local landscapes, and individuals and households drew on roots in small farm properties and specific plots within those. A profusion of tangled roots also crossed each of these scales of social and ecological organization. The plants and animals associated with the households and communities of the membership encompassed both lateral and vertical rooting as they connected to each other, the people of the region, and the soil, water, and landforms. The following examples illustrate selected elements of rooted networks in the experience of the Federation and its members: gender and power in polycentric networks; and reconciling roots, networks, and territories in the regional agroforest.

Gender and power in polycentric networks

The Federation consistently used the structure and process of networks (*network* as noun and as verb) to address issues of power and difference. The group had its origins in the politics of resistance against oppressive, unjust, and repressive forces, from a highly militarized national state to hostile agricultural markets and unequal access to land from the local to national level. The founding of the formal organization provided a platform from which to speak truth to power, to enforce the members' own demands, and to resist military and police intimidation through mass mobilization (see Lernoux 1980; Ricourt 2000).

The Federation dealt explicitly with relations of power within the organization itself, in terms of both structure and process. During the 1990s women and men participated through the Housewives' Associations (100 percent women), the Farmers' Associations (4 percent women, 96 percent men), and the Wood Producers Association (>95 percent men). Since that time women in the Federation have twice reorganized themselves and renegotiated the terms of their connection and participation, and the Wood Producers have redefined and repositioned themselves as well.

There was a conscious strategy to rely on the diversity of the membership to link with myriad other actors in the organizational landscape (as allies, in solidarity, as clients, or in bargaining mode). An informal division of political labor

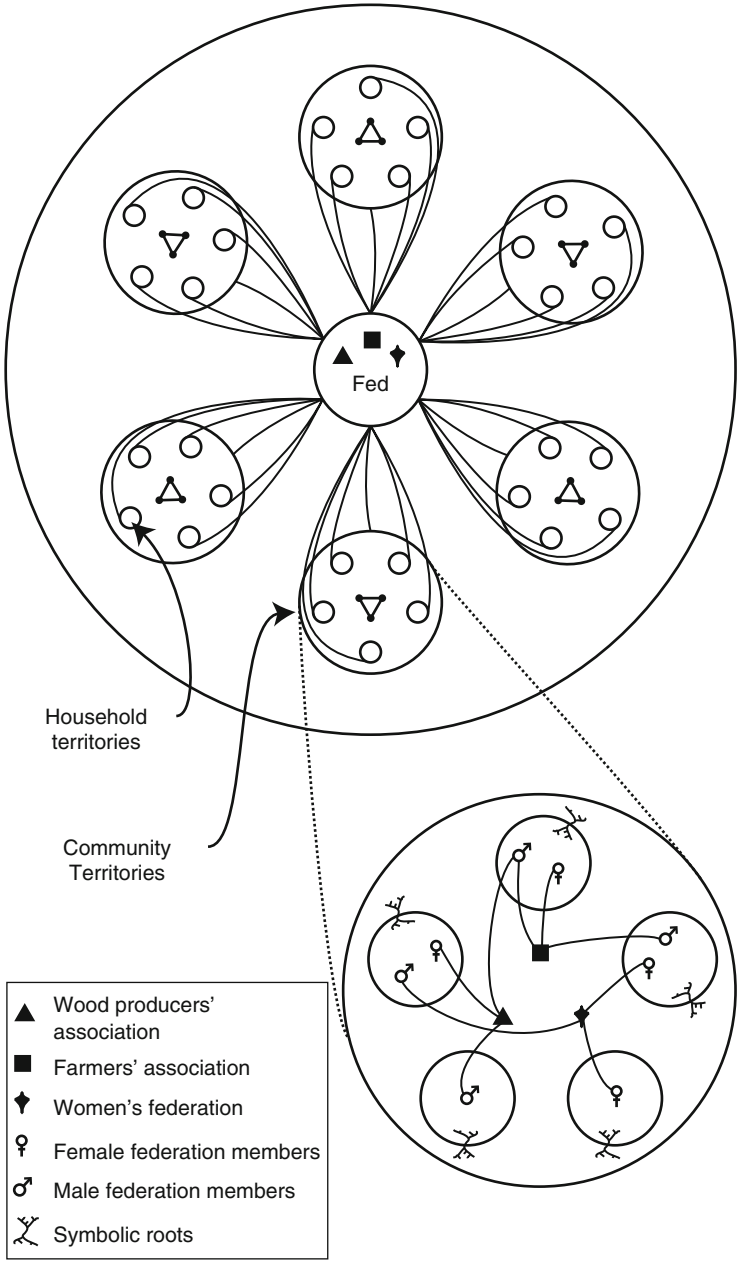


Figure 4.0.2 Rooted networks and territories of the Federation across multiple scales

and social affiliations provided a thick web of connection, communication, and circulation of influence in various church, social movement, government, political-party, and business circles. The membership spanned all three major political parties and more. The hard-won (and ongoing) battle to maintain Federation neutrality with respect to political parties was balanced by individual members with informal connections to ongoing conversations, programs, and government resources linked to party politics. Members likewise bridged various circles within the Catholic church, marketing and commercial networks, and professional and occupational affiliations.

This everyday mobilization of distributed power in polycentric networks had far-reaching consequences. Beyond the land struggle, public services and infrastructure were developed through collective demands (including nonviolent protest and mobilization) to convince state agencies to engage in collaborative efforts with local communities and the regional Federation. Women members of the Federation played a major part within the movement, participating in the active circulation of information and acting to reconstitute places for viable, just, and democratic communities.

The history of women in the regional Federation exemplifies the complexity of the organization, its ideals and contradictions, and its ability to deal with difference and distribute power in networks. From the outset the Federation had a base in women's groups and women's politics of place. Tito Mogollon, one of the founders, noted that the bishop of La Vega commissioned him and three other organizers as human rights promoters in 1974. They approached two women's groups, one in a nearby community threatened with eviction by the Rosario Dominicana (now Barrick) Gold Mine and another in Chacuey. From these efforts emerged the Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey as a collective voice and advocacy organization and simultaneously as a center of countervailing power and empowerment.

Women's stories led us beyond the confines of organizations and movements into the realms of sacred space and everyday connections, between humans and other beings, their technologies, artifacts, and physical surroundings. Women's lives in Zambrana-Chacuey led beyond and beneath visible and formal organizations to the web of relationships that predated and gave rise to the Federation. Women did not need permission to join and to govern, or recognition as members and leaders in the Federation, to wield power. Many already had that, in parallel domains of knowledge and authority illegible to more powerful actors (from men at home to government officials). Yet the recognition of women as Federation members and leaders, and their struggles for more equitable structures (1978–2007), enabled a powerful synergy between women and men, and between economic, political, cultural, spiritual, and ecological domains of authority and power.

Our surveys in 1992–1993 indicated that 20 percent of the households affiliated with the Federation were connected exclusively through a woman in the Housewives' Association, with no corresponding memberships of men in the household. Women in local associations often brought new initiatives (such as the Forest Enterprise Project) to the attention of the men in their communities and encouraged their participation. The women's groups also maintained continuity of activity, while the Farmers' Association membership and activity tended to rise and fall with cash crops and commercial activity (Rocheleau and Ross 1995). By 1996 some of the women leaders formed a new, explicitly feminist women's board (*junta*) with a focus on economic and political rights for women. Membership surged, and they formed the Women's Federation, as a parallel entity within the original organization. When they encountered resistance to their new status, the Women's Federation broke away to form an independent organization. In 2006 they negotiated with a new slate of Federation officers and re-entered the Federation with greater representation on the board and a stronger role in political and financial decisions. The continuing evolution and revolution of the women's organization within the Federation illustrates the management of power in polycentric networks, from above and below, including power with, power alongside, and power in spite of, rather than the well-worn confrontational models of power over and power against.

The experience of women in the Federation also raises the issue of legibility and the invisible web of relations beneath and beyond the formal organizational structures and recognizable movements. The roots that sustain Federation networks of solidarity and affinity are made and maintained through the continuing performance, affirmation, and creation of positive alternative cultures expressed in values, landscapes, artifacts, rituals, and daily practice that draw their legitimacy from a domain beyond the control (and even the gaze) of recognized, dominant power. This story of women in the Federation is a tale of rhizomes rather than taproots, of a subterranean root mat, a relational web of exchange, extraction, and circulation.

This expanded vision of complex, and sometimes creative, entanglements with power has allowed women in the Federation to imagine and create more just, viable, and humane economies and ecologies, and new ways to be at home within them, while still struggling with unequal and unfair distributions of property, political office, and legal authority. The experience of the evolving, self-organizing women's structures in the Federation also suggests neural networks, habit-forming practices of connection, and struggles over the terms of connection, rather than simple stories of open conflict between diametrically opposed or competing groups.

Reconciling roots, networks, and territories in the regional agroforest

The relationships of Federation members to national political process, human rights movements, and markets (from local to global scale) also hinged on, and impinged upon, the ecologies of their smallholder farms and their connections to land, plants, animals, and the surrounding landscape as well as production and resource management technologies. The politics of the Federation explicitly addressed relations of power in the ways that people are connected to land, as well as to other people, multiple species, and a variety of technologies and artifacts. They made a strong appeal to “roots” but not a classic “blood and soil” argument for exclusive rights to a fixed territory by a specific group, based on identity and a long history in place. The Federation incorporated lateral roots in relations of solidarity as well as vertical roots to land. They also combined roots of different types at multiple scales (Figure 4.0.2).

The Federation reconciled networks and territories in daily practice and in history. It linked people “horizontally”, between people and other living beings, and vertically, between people and other species with their physical surroundings and, literally, the ground beneath them. The people of Zambrana-Chacuey also brought together notions of fixity and long histories in place, with the experiences of displacement, migration, mobility, multiple complex identities, flexibility, and fluidity. The Federation resolved this paradox by jumping scales, joining people to each other based on co-presence in specific geographic locations and in networks of people linked across separate spaces by shared interests (Women’s, Farmers’, and Wood Producers Associations) and common values (the Federation and the Confederation Mama Tingo).

The politics of place, power, and changing human ecologies in this context were and are about more than gender, class, racial, ethnic, or anti-imperial struggles over “environment” as a collection of resources in a specific location. Environmental movements as well as rural farmers’ land struggles in this region were about the terms of connection between people, and between groups of people, land, other species, artifacts (houses, gardens, tools), and the surrounding physical world. They were also about the terms of connection between local and larger places, both earthly and spiritual. Land was not treated as “real estate,” as an exchangeable and interchangeable commodity, but as the ground where body, home, community, and habitat joined in everyday experience as well as in history (Rocheleau 2005). Place was treated not as a container, but as a nexus of relations (Massey 1994), a patterned logic and ethos of contingent connections, rooted in a particular way, anchored in a given space and time.

The bedrock of solidarity among the various groupings within the Federation was and is the shared sense of place, with a common commitment to basic political and human rights for all, as well as land, basic infrastructure, and support services. The material space for community was created through regional and local collective struggles for household plots as private property.

In our field-data collection and subsequent statistical analysis of tree and crop biodiversity, we encountered an invisible, species-rich, regional agroforest,⁷ the same patchwork landscape of forest and farms that was being treated by the state as a deforestation crisis zone. A dominant focus on forest as land cover and a selective version of the sciences of conservation and land-use change were being mobilized against the very people who had groomed the biodiverse, culturally rooted agroforest. Their farms, and the surrounding landscapes, including a profusion of forest trees, were almost always mapped into the “deforested” polygons on official maps.

The Forest Enterprise Project, with its eventual focus on a single Australian pulp and timber tree that readily invades cropland, gardens, and riparian forests, was heralded as reforestation. It was actually a successful project for producing smallholder commercial timber, linked to a broader effort to promote agroforestry, medicinal plants, and sustainable agriculture. The expansion of on-farm timber plantations sometimes replaced tobacco or pasture, but it also encroached on the pre-existing diverse mix of native and naturalized trees in the patchwork landscape, and threatened tree diversity in patio gardens, coffee and cocoa stands, and riparian forests.

We made the invisible, species-rich regional agroforest legible to science when we changed the frame of our scientific gaze and the logic of our sampling to see the relational networks of people and plants in place(s). The story of this landscape was very much the story of the Federation and men’s and women’s politics of place within it, and as such it was embodied in situated knowledge, revealed by multiple land users. This framework provided a countervailing vision to the powerful images of forest and not-forest in neat polygons on standard maps of land use and cover at scales that erased these finely networked human ecologies.

As we proceeded with the sketch maps and surveys of tree and crop species, it became apparent that the patio (homestead) gardens constituted a polka-dot forest. The mainstay of this species-rich agroforest, the patio garden, was largely a women’s domain, and equally impressive, the seeds of forest past and forest future were literally wrapped around peoples’ homes. The highest biodiversity was found close to – not removed from – the focal point of human habitation. Our surveys also revealed that seeds crossed land-use categories and property lines with impunity, riding on the wind, livestock, or people, or sometimes through purposeful planting by farmers. Our intensive biodiversity surveys in 1996 and 2007 confirmed the existence of a dynamic regional ecology above, below, and beyond the property lines and land-use/cover categories in the maps of resource management and conservation professionals.

The Federation example stands as a formidable challenge to simplistic advocacy for state, common, or private property models as the exclusive precondition for tenure security and strong roots, to enable biodiversity conservation

and sustainable resource management. Network models and specifically the notion of rooted networks help to explain the basis and the success of the Federation's approach to roots and territories, mixing a variety of strategies and treating *root* as a verb as well as noun. The land struggle was about more than land, and land was about more than private property. Roots mattered, as well as a place to plant them, but both took many forms that coexisted in complex ecologies.

Conclusion

The case study in Zambrana-Chacuey demonstrates the need to develop new models and analyses of rooted networks, relational webs, complex assemblages, and emergent ecologies, reconciled with territories. Self-organization from below is newly legible to formal science through network and complexity theories, and can be modeled along with hierarchical structures. The challenge is to mesh social, ecological, and technological domains in theories and models of rooted networks, relational webs, and self-organized assemblages, all shot through with power, and linked to territories and larger systems. Integrative network models and theories can be powerful tools for thinking and acting in place and across places, to identify instances of viability in actually existing human ecologies and to imagine and foster just and humane alternative futures. The ongoing experience in Zambrana demonstrates promising ways of knowing and being in rooted networks, webs of power, and complex landscapes, past, present, and possible.

Notes

1. The team consisted of me; Laurie Ross, then a graduate student and now a professor at Clark University; and two Dominican colleagues, Professor Julio Morrobel (then professor of forestry at the Instituto Superior Agrícola in Santiago) and Ricardo Hernandez (then a graduate student and local historian and now a professor in Cotuí). We eventually recruited several additional colleagues from the Federation and ENDA to join us in conducting the study. In 1996 and 2007 Professor Luis Malaret, research associate at Marsh Institute, Clark University, joined me to conduct the ecological surveys with forest technical experts from the Federation.
2. The Federation and ENDA (as of 1992–1993) sponsored several other projects, including Ethnobotany and Herbal Medicine, Agroforestry for Soil Conservation and Soil Fertility, Small Livestock Production, and Vegetable Gardens, as well as Woodworking, Rattan Furniture, and Metal-Working Workshops.
3. Over the course of four months in 1992–1993, we visited and interviewed thirty-one local associations (farmers, housewives, and youth groups) in sixteen communities (out of a total of fifty-nine Federation-affiliated associations in thirty-one communities, each association comprising roughly twelve to thirty people from a farming community in a specific locality).

4. In 1992–1993 we combined ethnographic, standard-survey, and feminist methodological approaches, including participant-observation, group interviews, key-informant interviews, life-history interviews, community and organizational histories, detailed sketch mapping, land-use history, land-use simulation board games, and a formal questionnaire and mapping survey (land use, tree species and crops) with a gender-stratified random sample (45) of the more than 700 Federation members in Farmers' Associations and Housewives' Associations, respectively (Rocheleau 1995; Rocheleau and Ross 1995). In 1996 and 2007 we conducted follow-up biodiversity surveys, using a rigorous ecological sampling framework and survey methods in a subsample of the Federation household lands. In 2007 we conducted oral-history, focus-group, and key-informant interviews with Federation members on the history and trajectory of the regional Federation, livelihoods, and landscapes.
5. Florinda Soriana Munoz led and supported peasants in campaigns for land and social justice in nearby Yamasa.
6. Rhizomes are usually horizontal subterranean plant stems, distinguished from true roots in possessing buds, nodes, and usually scalelike leaves.
7. *Agroforestry* refers to the purposeful combination of trees, crops, and animals in managed ecosystems to enhance production as well as conservation, for economic, cultural, and ecological ends. *Agroforest* refers to the resulting socioecological formation as an entity in the landscape.

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4.1

Being and Knowing Differently in Living Worlds: Rooted Networks and Relational Webs in Indigenous Geographies

Padini Nirmal

Entering relational webs, digging for roots

Dianne Rocheleau's theory of rooted networks illuminates a discordant truth – despite the abstractions made central through centuries of Euromodernity, there continues to be a material interdependence between people, place and other entities that is fundamentally responsible for the building and continuation of what is often referred to as 'living worlds'. Rocheleau reminds us that the worlds we inhabit are indeed alive (as living worlds of animate and inanimate beings), and that networks are not floating threads of connection but are in fact rooted in place and central to the livingness of worlds.

By situating her work at the nexus of political ecology studies and science and technology studies (STS), Rocheleau makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of relationships between people and places by bringing power and culture into the study of networks. She insists that 'The combined lenses of ecosystems, networks, and cultural studies can help us to see embedded, uneven, and dynamic relations of power' (Rocheleau, Chapter 4.0, pp. 213–231), thus revealing the terms of relations within networks, determined by sociocultural-ecological norms and laced with power. Rooted networks and relational webs underscore the intricate flows between nature and culture, pointing to the complex relationality that binds the two in what Haraway (1994, 2007) terms 'natureculture'.

Contributing to a Deluzian 'geo/bio philosophy' (Whatmore 2006), Rocheleau offers a study of relationships binding beings and things together in a web of relations that are rooted in place. By bringing networks to ground and reinforcing their materiality, the binaries between a supposedly biological nature and structural culture are challenged – philosophy and action are both reconciled with their roots.

By seeing in rooted networks and relational webs, Rocheleau's work successfully complicates political ecology, adding significant new dimensions to her previous work on feminist political ecology (FPE; see Rocheleau 1995). FPE was born out of an urgency to draw attention to the asymmetry in political ecology studies that was a result of its blindness to difference. By noting that differently classed, raced, sexualized and gendered beings have different relationships to nature – in other words, by showing how culture has everything to do with nature and vice versa – FPE positively contributed to a field previously dominated solely by political economy questions.

In fact, one of Rocheleau's most significant contributions is to foreground relationships in the study of networks and ecologies, and therefore encourage and make possible practices of solidarity. In her work, the material is recentred, in the true sense of real, tangible connections, practices and problems; the material is redefined as that which is made of matter (and the matter that matters), making it an egalitarian approach that is dependent on a fluid, dynamic structure – and not inhibited by the rigidity of structure – where agency is both possible and necessary.

Rooted networks and relational webs showcase the promise that FPE bears to decolonizing theory and knowledge practices within and outside the academy. In Rocheleau's own words, 'thinking in rooted networks belongs with other attempts to legitimize and validate being differently in the world' (Rocheleau, personal communication). By being differently she does not refer to identity politics but a politics of solidarity that is based in an affirmation of difference rather than a distrust and disenchantment with it. By simultaneously challenging the rigid bounds of science and theory through her work, she joins those decolonial activists within social movements and the academy whose primary goal is to stand squarely in the way of an ever-expanding empire by not simply pointing to the silhouettes of those who are being differently, but more importantly for identifying the urgent need for being differently in the world.

Other nodes in rooted network theory

In her timely essay in cultural geographies, Juanita Sundberg (2014) argues for decolonizing thinking practices especially within STS by accepting the plurality of worlds, left unexamined and unaccounted for within modern/colonial systems of thought:

Ultimately, decolonizing posthumanist geographies implies making political choices about the worlds we wish to enact, choices for some ways of living together over others. Although decolonizing demands political choices, it is not an individual act; as both posthumanist and Indigenous theorizing suggest, we take steps and chart new paths in relation to and alongside a

multiplicity of beings at all times. The exciting and challenging task ahead involves walking and talking the world into being as pluriversal. A world in which the multiplicity of living beings and objects are addressed as peers in constituting knowledges and worlds. (p. 42)

Rocheleau's work is nested within such a methodological and theoretical frame that binds theory and practice together in its making/enactment. In doing so, it is situated within, and informed by, a dynamic theoretical niche occupied by anthropologists, feminist, STS, and indigenous scholars, such as Arturo Escobar, Mario Blaser, Marisol de la Cadena, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Margo Tamez, Maria Lugones, Winona LaDuke, Tim Ingold and John Law, to name but a few.

Thinking with Escobar

While Rocheleau and Escobar share a long and diverse history of thinking together, I draw only from Escobar's work on the politics of place, on 'territories of difference', to highlight their theoretical relationship. Escobar (2008) conceptualizes 'places as sites of dynamic cultures, economies, and environments rather than just nodes in a global capitalist system' (p. 67). Rocheleau's networks go to root in places, and places also produce, and are sites of politics. To Escobar, politics of place is a 'discourse of desire and possibility that builds on subaltern practices of difference for the construction of alternative socionatural worlds...' (ibid.). Rooted networks make such alternative socionatural worlds visible as living worlds, showing how places and their politics are embedded in the world and, significantly, emphasizing the multiplicity of worlds.

While Rocheleau's work brings the study of networks under scrutiny of a double vision of power and culture, rooted networks and relational webs are ultimately a way of understanding these varied politics of place, particularly the defence of particular places – and hence, a theoretical study of resistance. To Escobar

the goal of many of today's struggles is the defense of place-based conceptions of the world and practices of world making – more precisely, a defense of particular constructions of place, including the reorganizations of place that might be deemed necessary according to the power struggles within place.

(Escobar 2008: 67)

And

The defense of the territory entails the defense of an intricate pattern of place-based social relations and cultural constructions; it also implies the

creation of a novel sense of belonging linked to the political construction of a collective life project.

(ibid.: 68)

Rocheleau's work can be used to understand contemporary politics of place, especially those emerging from indigenous and other 'marginal' (the politics of which are explored later on in this chapter) groups, as Escobar does, as the defence of such living worlds. In this vein I use these imagined conversations between Rocheleau and Escobar to reimagine the relations that people (and other beings/entities) in these places have to their land, as particular places of meaning- and knowledge-making, where networks go to root.

Escobar's (2001) work on meshworks integrates the politics of place with the study of networks, showing how places meet networks. Meshworks, in this case, are 'self-organizing, non-linear and non-hierarchical' networks that produce 'flows linking sites that enable diverse couplings with other sites and networks'. Hence, 'the meaning of the politics of place can be found at the intersection of the scaling effects of networks and the strategies of the emergent identities [inherent in place politics]' (p. 169).

Thinking with Tim Ingold

Rocheleau's work brings together networks and webs much like Ingold's (2011) ANT (Actor Network Theory) meets SPIDER (Skilled Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness) – where network thinking meets meshwork thinking. In a conversation between ANT and SPIDER, the nature of meshworks and networks emerge, particularly highlighting the materiality of relations in networks, and therefore the nature of relational webs:

[ANT vs. SPIDER] The lines of my web are not at all like those of your network. In your world there are just bits and pieces of diverse kinds that are brought together or assembled so as to make things happen. Every 'relation' in the network, then, is a connection *between* one thing and another. As such, the relation has no material presence. For the materiality of the world, in your view, is fully comprehended in the things connected. The lines of my web, to the contrary, are themselves spun from materials exuded from my own body, and are laid down as I move about. You could even say that they are an extension of my very being as it trails into the environment – they comprise, if you will, my 'wideware'. They are the lines *along* which I live, and conduct my perception and action in the world. (p. 91)

The webs of relations become very much a part of the matter of relations, where materiality is embodied and embedded, but also enacted, through the relations themselves.

Thinking with indigenous scholars

Indigenous activists, scholars, thinkers and collective bodies have contributed much to the general understanding of place, particularly the politics of place, both directly through their writing and speech and indirectly through their particular histories and cultural renditions of relations to settled and ancestral places.

The centrality of land to indigenous being has been explored extensively by scholars in Native American and indigenous studies, and by some anthropologists (e.g., Coulthard 2010; Deloria 1994; LaDuke 2002). Land is seen as the base that holds indigenous beings and cultures in place (Escobar 2008; Salmon 2000). It is also seen as 'resource central to...material survival; land-as-identity, as constitutive of who we [indigenous] are as a people; and land-as-relationship... ' (Coulthard 2010: 81). Attributing the highest cultural value to land, Deloria sees land as that which provides an ontological framework for understanding the relationships between different animate and inanimate beings (Coulthard 2010; Deloria 1994). Hence land is the source of a relational ontology based on principles of interdependence and interbeing (characterizing the interdependent nature of the universe) (LaDuke 2002). These are made evident in creation stories and other ontological narratives highlighting deep structural ties between relations to land, epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies (Tuck and Yang 2012).

Within indigenous theory, practice and politics, land and decolonization are inextricably linked. As Fanon (1963) writes, 'For a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and, naturally, dignity' (p. 9). Owing to different yet similar histories of colonization, land is central to indigenous politics, especially indigenous struggles that foreground decolonization.

In her study of rooted networks, Rocheleau (2011) writes that the land struggle is often about more than a piece of land construed as private property, but that 'Roots mattered, as well as a place to plant them, but both took many forms that coexisted in complex ecologies' (p. 225). Land as particular place is both rooted and networked, meeting nodes of affinity and hostility. Hence indigenous land politics is about both material and epistemological decolonization. Here decolonization is about 'recognizing the primacy of land and Indigenous sovereignty over that land' (Sium et al. 2012: v), and about changing the resource relationship to land imposed by colonization through various property regimes. The habit of seeing land as property within modern frameworks is fundamentally contested within indigenous studies and emergent discourses within anthropology as incumbent to continuing colonization practices (Blaser 2010; Escobar 2008; Tuck and Yang 2012).

Relational ontologies based in land are, on the other hand, about living well in the world (Sium et al. 2012: v). They signify the entanglement of the material

(land) with the spiritual, ecological and cultural, producing knowledges about the world – decolonial knowledges that stand in opposition to colonial violence that removes the indigenous from the land and destroys the land. As Winona LaDuke (2002) writes, ‘Native communities are not in a position to compromise, because who we are is our land, our trees, and our lakes’ (p. 62).

While these claims of embodiment can be read as abstractions by those immersed in linear, compartmentalized ways of thinking, they demonstrate the actual tying of networks to land. To some, the movement against empire is not the other network but, as it iterates the multiplicity of worlds linked by networks of power and resistance (because as Foucault repeatedly reminds us, there cannot be one without the other)...

We declare: That we will make a collective network of all our particular struggles and resistances. An intercontinental network of resistance against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of resistance for humanity.

This intercontinental network of resistance, recognizing differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world.

This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organizing structure; it doesn’t have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist.

(Notes from Nowhere 2003: 37)

Thinking with feminists (in STS)

Contributing centrally to the study of both knowledge politics and resistance is feminist and gender studies. The feminist position at this thematic juncture can be captured in Donna Haraway’s (1988) provocative stance:

We don’t want a theory of innocent powers to represent the world, where language and bodies both fall into the bliss of organic symbiosis. We also don’t want to theorize the world, much less act within it, in terms of Global Systems, but we do need an earth-wide network of connections, including the ability partially to translate knowledges among very different – and power-differentiated-communities. We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance of life. (pp. 579–580)

The questions of who produces (valid and legitimate) knowledge, whose knowledge matters, how knowledge is produced, what counts as knowledge and why knowledge politics are significant are, in fact, quite centrally placed

within political ecology studies. When Rocheleau speaks of being differently she is also addressing these different knowledge practices and worlds, extending horizontal links between the knowledge worlds within empire and those without.

That knowledge production is always political is central to feminist/political ecology studies. That knowledges are always produced within an enmeshed world – that there is no complete objectivity, or fully objective science, but only partial objectivity and partial knowledge, is inimical to feminist science studies, FPE and to several indigenous and other non-European knowledge systems – thus the emphasis on positionality (of the theorist/researcher/scientist) in determining the politics of meaning-making practices in the world(s). That there are no innocent positions (positions outside the reach of power) is something Haraway (1988) compels us to think about when she extends her analysis of positionality and situatedness to the theorized/researched/subjugated:

The positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation; that is, from both semiological and hermeneutic modes of critical inquiry. The standpoints of the subjugated are not ‘innocent’ positions. (p. 584)

Haraway is not alone in making this claim. Sandra Harding (1990) insists that there are no *a priori* knowledges, and there is no sterility in knowledge production; on the contrary, ‘epistemologies serve as justificatory strategies’ (p. 87). And just as the theorist is situated in a complex, differentiated world, so is the theorized.

Rocheleau’s work draws quite centrally from these two theorists, as much as from anthropologists and STS theorists who identify the centrality of plurality to understanding the complexity that lies beneath the socionatural worlds. Hence, to her, much like her feminist/indigenous/activist counterparts, it is always about multiple knowledges, as it is about multiple peoples and multiple worlds. In that sense there is no ‘One truth’, no universal rational man, no enlightened man and no ‘God’ in the singular. There is, however, commonness, as there is in plurality, and there is relationship, as there is interweaving among multiple worlds, evident in relational webs and rooted networks.

As Haraway (1988) notes in her explanation of ‘standpoint theory’, which interrogates the positioning of the knower in an uneven social setting (p. 598), the goal of feminist exploration is to produce engaged, responsible accounts of the world that take positioning and politics quite seriously (p. 590). Feminist standpoint theory, in every sense, is an act of resistance, a conscious and intentional political act of meaning-making, one that has explicit goals beyond the production of additional or different knowledge. To Harding (1990) it bears the normative goal of demystifying societal conditions particular to the

genders, in order to create an active resistance against all forms of subordination (of women, in particular) (p. 90). It is this aspect that Rocheleau's work particularly addresses, combining analytical rigor with serious political commitments to correcting the uneven effects of power structures on sociocultural-ecological bodies and places.

In her own words, Rocheleau (2011) identifies her work as directed towards addressing the

the entanglement of people in the biotic and physical elements of the material world, and the construction of new ecologies, we need to tie networks to land, to locate them, put them in place(s), though not in simple polygons. Relational spaces and theories of place... as well as meshworks and territories... tie networks to place, yet we need to further engage the material relationships in socioecological networks linked to multiple territories of extraction, production, circulation, consumption, and transformation. (p. 215)

To do so, it is necessary to examine flows and roots, and therefore the nature of relations in networks:

Horizontal flows as well as vertical 'roots' tie individual nodes or whole networks to resources in territories of activity, extraction, residence, identity, and influence. We can model terms and pathways of movement of matter, energy, and living beings between nodes in networks and between whole networks to illuminate processes of mobility and circulation as well as extraction, production, consumption, and the terms and types of rooting, and being, in place.

(Rocheleau 2011: 216)

Understanding the nature of being in place, and simultaneously of knowledges produced in place, makes this work of particular relevance to my own research interests and broader political commitments.

Encountering rooted networks and relational webs

As a young masters student, I encountered Rocheleau's teaching and philosophy while I was working on a research project attempting to understand the politics of translating indigenous ethnobotanical knowledge into English and making it available indiscriminately through the web. Having read Vandana Shiva's (2001) raging critiques of biopiracy alongside theorizations of indigenous knowledge as traditional ecological knowledge (Agrawal 1995; Shiva 1988), I was beginning to understand the fundamentals of knowledge politics

surrounding indigenous knowledges. Yet I felt dissatisfied with my own ability to understand what seemed to be a fundamental discord between indigenous knowledge spaces and those produced and imposed by non-indigenous, predominantly capitalist-modern worlds. While I was drawing mathematical set diagrams depicting two philosophy circles that don't intersect in the universal set, trying to locate what it was that was missing in my understanding of the nature of indigenous knowledges, I failed to see the cross-pollination, and the fluidity of thought and action between the two circles. All I could envision was the break between an intimately animate ecological worldview and an anthropocentric, technocratic, mechanical one.

It was engaging with Rocheleau's rooted networks thinking through our many public and private exchanges over the years that enabled me to see beyond these constructed dualities. I was able to understand that my frustration with the failure of translation between two different language worlds (so to speak) had everything to do with the theoretical fluidity between the two, and my own philosophical positioning and cultural upbringing could not normalize the nature-culture binary so commonplace in Euro-American traditions. Crows cawed to tell us of the arrival of visitors, peacocks danced to warn of rain, the sea spoke human languages, trees housed spirits, stars signalled cosmic positioning, their alignment determined the fate of humankind and, in the end, all knowledge was exchanged and produced in relation to other beings and entities. Such was the reality that could not be replaced by a Euro-American education, or cultural conditioning – I too went to root somewhere, and in a world that although connected with the one I was situated in, was only spatially and temporally bound to it on contingent terms.

Not only was the incomplete break between science and social science evident, so was the presupposed distinction between nature and culture as differentiated entities.

Using rooted networks and relational webs to engage with indigenous geographies in Southern India

In my work on contemporary indigeneity and indigenous politics in India, I have come to find iterations of rooted network thinking quite fitting because of its decolonial leaning. Although the Indian context is presented as postcolonial with the departure of the British, the 'post' hides the very contemporaneity of the coloniality experienced by indigenous groups – from various corners. Taking a decolonial stance is not only fitting but also inimical to expanding current understanding of the politics of contemporary indigeneity in India.

The alternative vision that Rocheleau offers enables me to see connection and similarity in a world coloured by structural confinement and difference. While

I began by seeing difference between indigenous and non-indigenous groups as the fundamental reason for epistemic and material violence and subsequent resistance, I have come to understand the world as an interconnected space mediated by systems of relations (of power and culture). That there are similarities between indigenous groups around the world is no revelation, yet it is in highlighting these similarities rather than differences that solidarity is made possible, and, more importantly, that indigenous philosophies and the struggles they inform are in fact as 'universal' as the 'global' capitalist modernity they often oppose is made evident.

Rooted networks and relational webs successfully theorize and therefore make visible the multiple ways in which many people (including, but not limited to, many indigenous peoples) conceptualize their relations to each other, beings and places in their living worlds. My current research goes to root in a valley in the Western Ghats, an ancient mountain range that is rooted in every geological sense, recently accorded one among eight hottest biodiversity hotspots by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and historic home to (physically and spiritually) two ancestrally grounded indigenous peoples. While attempting to understand the continued indigenous resistance in the region against land-grabbing efforts, the following was made visible – that the indigenous communities in question (Adivasis) were engaging in a particular ontological politics, seeing land as one among many related entities/beings, existing within the relational web that makes indigenous being possible. Their struggles for land are informed by their ontological politics that are deeply entangled with their economic and material needs – that is, their sociocultural values do not solely inform their politics and practices regarding land, but are, in fact, interwoven with their ecological and economic values. While dominant understandings of land struggles and land politics tend to obviate these philosophical underpinnings as non-material, and therefore irrelevant to understanding contemporary indigeneity and indigenous politics, I posit that any understanding of contemporary indigeneity that does not take their particular ontologies of land seriously is lacking critical depth (following Mario Blaser's (2010) work in particular).

To start at the beginning, it is important to note that, much like elsewhere in the world, in India, Adivasi land politics is fraught with contention. The pressures of both public and private development, and biodiversity and forest conservation, converge on Adivasi lands, producing struggles for land on the one hand and state policies aiming to reconcile differences in land use, ownership and access among different groups on the other. However, the majority of these policies, beginning with land reforms in the early postcolonial period, have failed to recognize the legality of Adivasis' relations to their ancestral lands, and have hence been unable to prevent further displacement. A recent

conversation with a land rights activist in the Western Ghats region sums up the contradiction nicely:

Padini: 'You said it is not about land, it is about this land. What do you mean?'

Unnamed Activist: 'Where you are born, you have to die. That is our way. What I mean is, our ancestors are in the roots that lie beneath this soil, that connection will be broken if we leave. So it's not about land, it is about this land.'

(Translated from Tamil, June 2014)

In this conversation, the activist identifies fundamental differences between Adivasi and modern state-society conceptualizations of land, bringing attention to the particularity of Adivasi lands as homelands and ancestrally rooted territories (Rocheleau 2011). Within modern state-society, land is reduced to a commodity, its specificity replaced by universals, whereby Adivasis become movable pieces subject to public and private intervention and displacement. Seeing Adivasi lands as spaces where people are rooted in place and connected ancestrally questions the validity of laws and worldviews that only address issues of access, use and ownership in general, and fail to see the particularity inherent in Adivasis' ancestral relations to land.

In their origin stories and oral histories, the Adivasis in the region (unspecified for reasons of security) identify the Bhavani River as a central source of life, and look to the mountain Malleeswara Mudi as their source of spiritual and cosmic direction. The mountain figures predominantly in their conception of the sacred, and all life is connected through the mountain. Hence they speak of mining and hydroelectric projects that impact the mountain and its surrounding ecosystem as fundamentally destructive actions that destroy these historical relationships to land. While they have historically been open to sharing their land with rural settlers who have even made the Adivasis' sacred groves their own by introducing elements of Hinduism, they oppose those intrusions that destroy their present, past and future relations to their lands. It is my understanding that the social metrics by which communities come to accept some changes in their existing relations to land, and reject others, are a product of their particular ontological relationships to land.

The Adivasis identify a certain rootedness in land, which serves as the basis for their ontological relationships to it. They express deeply rooted ancestral ties to particular lands through their socioecological land-use practices and cultural histories, which are central to their physical and cultural continuity. The powers that be, most significantly the state, on the other hand, conceptualize land as a commodity/resource to be used and exploited for the economic growth

of the nation, and as property to be owned and exchanged. The meeting of these different ontological relations to land results in conflicts, in the strategic defence of particular rooted places against enveloping webs from the global capitalist network.

Hence, in an attempt to protect against social, cultural, political, ecological and spatial losses, and therefore a break in the continuity of life from their ancestors to the present, the Adivasis strategically express their relations to land using the language of 'rights' within political discourses. In doing so, they both identify with and participate in the larger land-rights movement in the country that challenges colonization and land loss using the legal channels provided by the Forest Rights Act to defend their lands and 'living worlds' (field notes 2011).

Indigenous resistances for land, especially in the region, have been historically laced with subterranean messages conveying the particular ontological politics at play, revealing the terms of relations between indigenous peoples and their places. Yet much discourse surrounding contemporary indigenous politics in India is embedded within the discourse of dispossession that fails to question whether at all 'possession' in the sense of ownership is relevant in the Adivasi case. The central hypothesis in this research addresses this problem, postulating that within Adivasi worldviews there exists an ontological relationship to land, governed by a principle of mutuality where land, river, mountain, animal, plant and spirit are all entwined as an interdependent community of beings (field notes 2010–2011); and, therefore, it is this relationship that is at the foundation of resistance against the loss of land, not an intrinsic claim to own and use land (as presupposed by popular/state discourses). Surely the forces of modernity have reached deep into Adivasi lands and forests. Yet to undercut all relationships that are beyond the comprehension of the modernist framework as 'romantic' and promoting the image of the ecological savage is a gross misrepresentation of different realities, and a failure to see and understand the nature of being differently.

While being differently can be articulated as active acts of resistance, active refusal to participate in resistance actions can also be an expression of being differently. Concurrently, being differently can be encountered by colonial acts of physical destruction and degradation of indigenous people's livelihoods and ecosystems, thus provoking resistance, and also continually by coloniality that erases and invisibilizes a particular ontological relationship to land. Hence indigenous resistance against such colonial acts, for the defence of place, of particular ancestral lands, can be seen as decolonial praxis.

Thus an ontological understanding of Adivasi relations to land is made possible, and visible while using a decolonial framework rather than a postcolonial one. As Alfaisal (2011) writes, indigenous resistance is dichotomized by postcolonialism into two modes – those that are acceptable to the modernist frame, and those that are 'considered retrograde and archaic because they

belong to an indigenous epistemology' (p. 26). By adopting a decolonial stance, the multiple colonialities experienced by the Adivasi are brought to light, and simultaneously the multiplicity of knowledges prevalent in indigenous and activist circles, and their relationships to academic knowledges and knowledge practices. These decolonial knowledges, much like Rocheleau's theory of rooted networks and relational webs, challenge the rigid bounds of science and theory by going to root in land.

Rocheleau's work makes a significant methodological contribution as well, opening the door to a more intentional, relational research experience. Following her, I foreground feminist research methods in an effort to undertake an informed and intentional exploration of rooted networks and relational webs. In my work, this has meant asking two kinds of methodological question: What philosophy and politics inform the method and why? And what form does a method that takes the practice of politics seriously take on the ground? In drawing heavily from scholar-activist research methods (Buckles et al. 2013), Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) work on decolonizing methodology, and Lugones' (2003) account as a theorist of resistance, I imagine research as a relational process that is fluid, complex and ever-changing. Hence, feminist research as (1) a relational encounter between two differently queered subjects – that of this brown female researcher within a largely white academy, and that of indigenous peoples and their allies within a predominantly nonindigenous world; (2) a practice of solidarity that takes seriously indigenous epistemologies and methods, emphasizing a collective and relational knowledge production within living worlds. By taking into account the power differences between researcher and research subjects, this method emphasizes reflexivity and respect in all research settings.

In the doing of research, I position my argument from the perspective of an embodied decolonial feminist. This might mean different things to different folks – I use the term 'decoloniality' following scholars/academics/activists such as Arturo Escobar, Maria Lugones, Walter D. Mignolo, Maile Arvin, Paolo Bacchetta, Leanne Simpson, Winona LaDuke and Harsha Walia. Hence I see being a decolonial feminist as an enactment of a radical politics that allows me to both be in a scholar-activist relation with the Adivasi communities I am engaged with and imagine my own relative-marginal self in the ideas I express, in the worlds I imagine and in the politics I embody. In an effort to enact a decolonial feminist politics within my research, I draw equally from social movements, feminist studies of resistance and science, decolonial theory and decolonial methodology, indigenous studies, critical development studies and, significantly, feminist political ecology studies.

Thinking in rooted networks speaks truth to power, opening up new spaces for philosophy and action by breaking the nature/culture binary, and questioning the dominance of modernist ideas of space-time linearity, Cartesian order,

gender hierarchy, value as limited by use and exchange and so on. In doing so, it brings knowledges down to earth, identifying the materiality of knowledge production practices and politics, thus revealing that knowledges may indeed be situated in marginal spaces and bodies. In my work, these bodies and spaces are often indigenous, and the indigenous knowledges encountered and produced by rooted network thinking (while tainted by colonialism, and at times colonial) are fundamentally decolonial in nature.

By seeing the material as the matter of relations, rooted network thinking highlights the livingness of worlds (living worlds) and, in doing so, also reiterates the place of land in poststructural feminist studies/FPE. Seeing land as that which provides context and place for understanding relationships between different beings – an ontology of land – and by focusing on the interconnections between land as place, and land as place of knowledge and theory, within decolonial frames, my research is an attempt to recognize and contribute to the coming together of indigenous politics with other attempts at decolonizing the modern, Eurocentric frame of academia.

This, like Rocheleau's work, is situated among those responding to the increasingly loud call for decolonizing existing knowledges, while simultaneously recognizing decolonial indigenous knowledges as theory from scholars (Alfaisal 2011; Arvin et al. 2013; Cajete 2000; Deloria Jr. 1994; Grosfoguel 2007; Grim 2001; Mignolo 2011; Quijano 2000; Sium et al. 2012; Shaw et al. 2006; Walsh 2012), and activists and social movements (see Walia 2012; Idle No More). As Blaser (2009) writes,

As a political project, engaging with indigenous ontologies becomes synonymous with partaking in decolonization. To engage thus, is to endanger the modern:

... it is important to stress that the political implications of engaging Indigenous ontologies seriously necessarily goes beyond the immediate politics of a given project or institution to involve the inherent coloniality of the modern ontology. Indeed, if Indigenous worlds and ontologies were taken seriously, the modern constitution would collapse. (p. 18)

By challenging the divide between the space in which things happen and that in which such things are translated into theory, in other words, by engaging squarely with knowledge politics as they unfold in the world, Rocheleau's theory challenges the coloniality of imposed differences between nature and culture, questioning whether one can even truly understand the world when that world is seen not as a mattered, webbed space of relations but as an abstract floating entity made of different, not similar, beings bound solely by structural networks. For in the end, nodes move and places may morph, but relations sustain.

A final few webbed words

Springing out like tentacles,
Spanning nodes like spider yarn,
Pushing through like aging veins,
Making roots like Banyan arms –

Run invisible threads,
Making elaborate weaves,
of stunning shades
of sparkling waves
of cobweb patterns.

And there you were,
dreaming of isolation,
of buying islands,
of burning bridges.

And yet you are you,
you and the frog,
you and the land,
you and the quiet sea.

You are everything,
and everywhere,
bound and unbound,
rooted and networked,
tethered and free.

In rooted networks
no maps can see.
Relations, relations,
these threads they be.

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4.2

Responding to Technologies of ‘Fixing’ ‘Nuisance’ Webs of Relation in the Mozambican Woodlands

Ingrid L. Nelson

Awkward webs of relation

In August 2010 I hurried down the sandy road in a woodland locality in Maganja da Costa District in Zambézia Province, Mozambique. Having just delivered eggs to an ailing friend, I wanted to prepare for a long bicycle journey to a neighbouring *povoado*¹ to investigate several fields where I had heard that a tractor hauling hardwood logs had destroyed a family’s crops. As I passed by the *mwene*’s house, I noticed that one of the timber bosses, Simão,² was in the middle of a heated meeting with select *régulos* (local leaders).³

‘Ingrid! Come and join us!’ hollered Simão in English.⁴

I approached the group of men, stopping to greet the *régulos* in hierarchical order in the Nyaringa and Elomwe languages before greeting Simão.

‘Ingrid, we have a problem . . .’ Simão said in Portuguese. He explained that he was insisting on walking with the *régulos* along the boundaries of the area indicated on his logging licence, the boundaries of a pending community-run forest concession⁵ and several other legal and illegal timber bosses’ territorial claims (see Nelson 2013a).

‘Can you help us walk together with your GPS to resolve this confusion about who can take timber from where?’ he asked. Frustrated, he desired the supposed certainties of GPS technology, which he hoped would fix the grave errors that he and others had committed when he first approached one of these leaders several weeks earlier.

Logging disputes were already intense by the time Simão first appeared there. The provincial directorate of forests (SPFFBZ) had given Simão a simple licence to cut specific hardwood species on 1,000 hectares of land bordered by a river and the pending 33,000-hectare community-run forest concession that I had been studying since 2007. The provincial authorities gave Simão a map with the *mwene*’s name written over the licensed area. Simão conducted the obligatory ‘community consultation’ ceremony – known locally as *mukutu* – with

representatives of the district government and with the *mwene* named on the map, but the *mwene* argued that he did not have the right to give permission for that area, which was controlled by another leader from a different lineage (Nelson 2012: 158). During the *mukutu* ceremony, the district administrator told the *mwene* to 'shut up and stop making things difficult'. Later, when Simão encountered resistance while cutting logs in his licensed area, he approached the correct leader. That leader demanded a formal *mukutu* ceremony as well, requiring Simão to pay again to transport the district administrators from their offices in Maganja, and for alcohol and other offerings typical of *mukutu* ceremonies. Simão refused to do a second *mukutu*, accusing the local leaders of trying to bribe him, and he was barred from logging in the licensed area on his map. He began stealing timber from the pending 'community-run' concession and from other logger's concession areas, insisting that he was a responsible *patrão* (patron or boss) who would soon build a school for the community.

When Simão asked me to help resolve the situation with GPS, I cautioned that the state authorities would not recognize my unlicensed GPS work. Using a stick, I drew an explanation of how GPS produces errors when under thick forest canopy cover. But most importantly, I drew groupings of overlapping and oddly shaped bubbles in the sand. I explained that the leaders and the residents of the various *povoados* here do not see territory as distinct bounded areas (see Hughes 2006: 142). In this sparsely populated woodland (about nine people per square kilometre), the boundaries between *povoados* depend upon where the families living on the 'frontier' of a particular chiefdom cultivate crops or tend gravesites, sacred forest groves, fruit trees and other sites, and which leader's labour demands they recognize and obey (Hughes 2006; Nelson 2012). The local leaders examined and added to the overlapping bubble drawing, but I noticed that they were deliberately silent about the key areas that I knew were particularly contested. Certain relationships were too risky to translate. The leaders agreed that walking with the GPS would not solve the core problem and nodded when I declined Simão's mapping request. They indicated that repairing relations previously broken in the first *mukutu* and performing a second *mukutu* would be best.

What were the effects of this meeting and the rejected attempt to fix these 'nuisance' webs of relation at the centre of one of the most intensely sought-after woodland areas in Mozambique? Where did this leave Simão, competing local leaders and timber bosses, and the damaged family fields that I visited further down the road? Not surprisingly, Simão later admitted that despite my refusal, the information gained in that meeting helped him to illegally extract timber without a second ceremony before his licence expired. Others managed to steal timber and supplies from Simão while he worked in the area. The school was never built, reparations were never paid to those who had trees stolen and fields damaged, and the community forest concession leaders sent a letter of

complaint to provincial and national authorities, who never responded. Members of the Mozambican environmental justice organization, *Justiça Ambiental*, continue to work with the communities that are part of the forest concession project, and they assist in bringing national and international attention to illegal logging in the area, but Simão has managed to avoid fulfilling his promises and proceeded to repeat his actions in neighbouring communities.

Kinship, community and webs of relation

I remembered these awkward webs of relation involving myself and Simão as I read Dianne Rocheleau's (2011) chapter 'Rooted Networks, Webs of Relation, and the Power of Situated Science: Bringing the Models Back Down to Earth in Zambrana'. Her focus on how rooted networks and webs of relation demonstrate the need to understand 'territories beyond fixed polygons' (p. 217) resonated with the myriad frustrations expressed to me by timber bosses, log haulers, local leaders, government officials, NGO staff and environmentalists with whom I work in the miombo woodlands of Zambézia. While Rocheleau is careful to articulate the unequal power dynamics and interpersonal complexities at play in the Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey in the Dominican Republic, I think her work provokes many questions about what kinds of scientific practice, activism and voicing of findings are ethical in the workings of poststructural rooted networks (PRNs). In this brief response piece, I discuss three interlinked issues that I think require analytical attention. First, beyond carving territory into polygons, many modernist development interventions are attempting to 'fix' – both in the sense of 'improving' and in forcing into one space–time – contested and political kin relations. Second, in not wanting to experience similar situations to those of Simão, individuals and companies hoping to operate 'legally' are seeking to intensify the technologies (beyond GPS) utilized in order to 'fix' 'nuisance' kin-based webs of relation in Mozambique. Third, articulating the complexity of webs of relation as part of 'bringing the models back down to earth' raises important non-normative ethical questions in need of reflection and innovative dialogue.

Beginning in 2007, I have studied, observed and participated in the practices, discourses and rumours that make woodland and forest landscapes in Mozambique. I also examined the performance of masculinities, and other social dynamics in forest conservation, afforestation 'land grabs' and international illegal timber trade activities. Rocheleau's illustrative diagram (Figure 4.0.1: p. 222) displayed similar institutions and social links to those at work in Mozambique. Through all of my ethnographic analysis, however, I did not encounter any institution resembling the Rural People's Federation of Zambrana-Chacuey in the Dominican Republic, described by Rocheleau. Instead, I worked with the *Associação Comunitária de Defesa e Saneamento do*

Meio Ambiente do Muzo (ACODEMUZO),⁶ an association established in 2005 through multiple interventions by the Mozambican rural development organization ORAM-Zambézia (funded by the European Union). One of the primary goals of ACODEMUZO was to manage a proposed 33,000 hectare forest concession that straddles portions of two localities (Muzo and Aliua). ACODEMUZO exists partly as a response to technical requirements in the 1999 Forest Law and 2002 regulations (República de Moçambique 1999b, 2002), and a long history of outside intervention through colonialism, a 16-year civil war and decades of neoliberal international development projects. ACODEMUZO's 'community-run' concession claim is one of only two ever attempted in Mozambique. The cross-locality association and forest concession claim encountered constant challenges by local government, local residents, licensed and unlicensed loggers, and others. Some of the core challenges relate to interpretations of and efforts to weaken the 1997 Land Law and its flexibility for accommodating ever-changing webs of kinship relation and their links to actual practices on the ground.

I first visited and began reading about Mozambique in 2003 when I became interested in accounts of supposedly one of the most innovative land laws in sub-Saharan Africa. As I began my research in Mozambique I was initially swept up in accounts of the process of civil society engagement that produced the 1997 Land Law (see Tanner 2002). After living in the woodlands of Mozambique and interviewing those working in many institutions dealing with land issues, I now have a sense that the 1997 Land Law and subsequent regulations and annexes (República de Moçambique 1997, 1998, 1999a) were actually an unprecedented negotiation and compromise between a socialist approach to government-owned land and a neoliberal approach to private property in Mozambique, with some input from ethnographic research and civil society contributing to the creation of the new law (Tanner 2002; Waterhouse and Vijfhuizen 2001). Neither of the dominating ideological sides 'won' in the negotiation. The state continued to own all land. Rural peasants held usufruct land rights with no need for a paper title, but mechanisms were established for 'investors' to negotiate with 'communities' to map part of their land through a detailed participatory mapping methodology outlined in the 1999 annex. Since the passage of the law, state claims over the territory of communities and rural populations have intensified for major extractive or infrastructure projects, and political and financial elites are 'buying' private plots outside the major cities in prime tourism and agriculturally productive areas. Private and state-owned foreign and international investors are chipping away at peasant land claims, uses and rights. Organizations such as ORAM-Zambézia are attempting to intervene through 'win-win' negotiations between private investors and peasant farmers. 'Complicating' these questionable intrusions and encounters is the overlapping nature of family lineage and diverse land usage.

There are contradictory stories that forestry projects, such as the ACODEMUZO initiative and simple and concession forest licences, introduce. In the ACODEMUZO case, a new community association (acting as a business) will run the project and provide jobs and income for local residents. Based on past experiences with historical and more contemporary companies and patrons, the promise of benefits to everyone falls short of real benefits and suspicions about association members filling their pockets spread easily. Kinship and connections to people with connections matter more than lofty ideals of ‘community equity’ (see Ferguson 2013). The idea of sharing resources with ‘the community’ is an invention of the government and international development donors, and written as a fundamental unit in the 1997 Land Law. The law is groundbreaking because it recognizes that communities overlap – just as in the bubbles that I drew in the sand – but investors and others constantly push back against this ‘open boundary’ concept of community. To the multitude of consultants and others engaged in land issues in Mozambique, a fixed and closed polygon fits modernist development mindsets, not simply because of the ‘ease’ of counting discrete polygons but also because of the supposed necessity of ‘fixing’ messy webs of relation into place in the broader project of transforming land into a commodity.

The notion of ‘community’ is one more tool of governing and organizing the labour of and controlling populations in rural areas (linked to historical colonialism, socialism and in the post-conflict interventions of many NGOs). Many people in the community already share and work together for mutual benefit, but this primarily occurs within hierarchical structures and through connections in church and through kinship networks (especially beyond the household to aunts and uncles), not in the sense of the ‘whole community’, and this form of ‘distribution’ (see Ferguson 2013) sustains certain networks and leaves others hungry. These kinship relationships should not be understood as unchanging traditions. These relationships frequently shift, and can facilitate or impede illegal loggers, community projects and other interventions.

I want to turn to Rocheleau’s Figure 4.0.2 (p. 224) where she includes small circles representing lands occupied by families within and contained by a broader community. In many areas of Mozambique, not only would each community overlap in key places but family territory would cross into different communities as well along lineage or other connections. A family could have more than five circles or plots of land to take care of, taking advantage of different soils and growing conditions within and beyond their broader community (with informal permissions to cultivate rice a day’s walk beyond the area of their local leader’s territory). Figure 4.0.2 utilizes closed circles for conceptual clarity, but it might unintentionally reinforce an image of fixed polygons around relations that look more like layer mosaics. Rocheleau’s writing clarifies that the networking and rooting that she analyses includes horizontal and vertical

rooting and connecting, not fixed polygons, which might be a more helpful way to visualize connections across even institutional or conceptual ‘polygons’. What I see through the stories and walking/working visits to fields and homes in Zambézia is a mosaic of people with diverse ecological and agricultural needs and the constant push by private investors and others to pinpoint a single family to a single field contained within a logical community polygon. But family relations do not function in this way, nor are they mappable onto a two-dimensional surface in a diagram such as Figure 4.0.2, nor in a typical map developed by consultants. When adding forest dynamics to these land dynamics, the complexity intensifies as Rocheleau has demonstrated with Hoek in their work in Kenya (1984).

What I found to be underemphasized in the particular piece about the Dominican Republic by Rocheleau (2011), and that is critical to understanding the links between science and technology, and GAD, is that there are a variety of combined technologies being integrated into rural ‘development’ contexts that pose particular challenges to the broader project of understanding land, people and ecology in a more networked and relational way. What’s more, the strength of these ‘messy’ relations is in their refusal of the technologies and assumptions, which attempt to nail them down on the map or in a spreadsheet row in an accountant’s database. The frustrations that these dynamics yield in the development sector are generating further technological interventions that avoid or attempt to work around the challenges of family, politics and life-worlds.

Fixing ‘nuisance’ relations with more than polygons

How do rural development institutions respond to the ‘nuisance’ of one too many *mukutu* demands, maps and GPS units that are never quite ‘accurate’, and the reality that the terms ‘noble peasant’ and ‘local community’ do not quite capture the extent of both caring and exploitation among kin and strangers? In order to avoid similar outcomes to those experienced by Simão, and amid a rise in ‘legal’ large-scale land and natural resource deals in Mozambique (see Fairbairn 2013; Oakland Institute 2011), some national and international ‘investors’ and international donors supporting rural development projects are attempting to combine mapping techniques with other technologies for ‘fixing’ – in the dual sense of ‘improving’ and forcing into a static category of space-time – what they perceive to be ‘nuisance’ or ‘corrupt’ relations. Shifts in local leadership, kin networks and other dynamics can render useless expensive mapping efforts, and they can be frustrating for outsiders to navigate, engage and understand.

In 2013 in Maputo, I had an informal conversation with a man working for the international organization TechnoServe (tagline: Business Solutions to

Poverty). He described the types of service that his organization offered to boost international and national investor confidence and trust. He explained that in addition to offering high-resolution soil-mapping services, the organization provided another service, which involved providing video and audio technology support to investors to ensure that communities could not easily accuse investors of failing to conduct free, prior and informed consent meetings concerning land transactions and permissions. Familial disputes and contested authority among chiefs or kin would have a harder time undermining investor activities if investors had video proof of the meetings. Would video footage taken with a cell phone from a different angle be accepted in a formal court in Mozambique? Who would 'own' and control these recordings, and whose narratives of those meetings would be believed, and backed by whom?

Technological intensifications in meetings with 'local communities' do more than fix land into polygons. They also attempt to fix the relationships linking people and resources to those abstract polygons. Such efforts could be helpful in defending the claims of those vulnerable groups and individuals that are excluded from kinship networks. But replacing those networks with contracts, community associations and other structures also produces unintended effects, and winners and losers. The issue is how combining technologies 'fix' such relations, and to what effect and for whom? I think that the participatory consultation/meeting in rural development interventions is going to receive reinforcement not only with more documents, uses of GPS and other audiovisual recordings, but also new practices of violence and surveillance (including the use of drones) (see my discussion of participatory consultation meetings as rehearsed practices of closure in Nelson 2013d). The awkward encounter with Simão highlights how relational territorial politics challenges 'outsiders'⁷ to understand and engage them. But typical responses include dominating, suppressing or sidestepping them through neocolonial technologies for fixing webs of relation, partly because consultation meetings often do not reveal enduring 'natural', 'factual' or negotiated boundaries in the logic of land title documents or digital GIS vector polygons. Mozambique's national-level embrace of neoliberal logic amid broader trends in global financial speculation, the whittling down of the openness in the Land Law (see changes to the regulations in 2007) and the renewed investments from USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation and other groups in finding 'win-win' projects with local communities means that the moments when these fixing attempts are practised are multiplying. When caught in the middle of these awkward and loaded encounters, how should refusals to 'fix' relations and polygons be performed? How should relations and overlapping bubbles be articulated, shown and enacted, and what are the effects of 'bringing the models back down to earth'?

What does 'bringing the models back down to earth' do?

When I read debates in Gender and Development (GAD) literature – and in the offices of rural development organizations – between those arguing for more women to have individual land title and those emphasizing more communal or mixed land-tenure approaches, I think of a passage written by Clifford Geertz (1980) after he observed the workings of power and politics in 19th-century Bali. Geertz (1980: 123) expressed his frustration with scholars who 'reduc[ed]' social relations to 'the worn coin of European ideological debate', as this hides key practices and effects on the ground. Lamenting this unrelenting dualistic analytical approach, he argued: 'Whatever intelligence it may have to offer us about the nature of politics, it can hardly be that big fish eat little fish, or that the rags of virtue mask the engines of privilege' (ibid.). Rocheleau's focus on poststructural rooted networks offers a different way of looking at the effects and workings of power, 'rooting', and making and remaking webs of relation. Her approach provides more than what a 'big fish' eating 'little fish' analysis or a romanticized account of the victories and setbacks experienced by social movements can do. 'Bringing the models back down to earth' elucidates the workings of shifting kinship relations and other crucial practices performed by members of the federation in Zambrana-Chacuey or others living and working in Mozambique and elsewhere. I would like to reflect and discuss more with scholars and activists, and address the non-normative ethics required in engaging and participating in these webs of relation and connection as they encounter persistent and insistent attempts to fix relations and territory into polygons and variously recorded consultations or meetings.

Rocheleau (2011: 214–215) has already pointed out some of the limits and perils of connection, the power imbalances within networks and the problem of exclusion from certain networking practices. This also applies to kinship relations as many scholars have examined long-term processes of connecting to kin and making kin into strangers (examples from southern Africa include Cliggett 2005; Ferguson 2013; Peters 2002; Waterhouse and Vijfhuizen 2001). Part of the work of understanding networking and rooting practices also entails examining 'positive' forms of power operating in these networks (following Foucault 2007). What are the technologies of the federation, the ever-changing *povoado* and the video-recorded 'community consultation' (Koch 2013a, b)?

Carefully elucidating these networks and 'positive' forms of power is important for the feminist political ecologist/activist hoping to be a more effective ally in addressing positionality, coloniality and other core issues. However, I am concerned that these observations and insights are just as helpful to timber bosses such as Simão and so-called 'investors' for extracting resources and labour more efficiently and cheaply, and for performing the role of *patrão*. I have argued that the banal and daily connections (e.g., working with 4×4

drivers and shared bodily comportment) across NGO staff, environmentalists, researchers such as myself and timber bosses can and has contributed to those living in rural Mozambique seeing these ideologically different actors as one and the same (Nelson 2013d). My writing about these dynamics can be just as 'useful' to the community association asserting logging rights, the environmentalist attempting to support community-based forest management and to timber bosses such as Simão. This raises serious questions about the ethics of researching and writing with and sharing findings from poststructural rooted network analysis (see my collaborative publications with Justiça Ambiental: Nelson 2013a, b, c).

The utility of fixed identity categories has its limits, and highlighting those limits may invite further onslaught of technologies for 'big fish' to fix the relations among 'little fish' and for 'hero figures' – rural development staff, activists, researchers and others – to claim that they are helping 'little fish' defend themselves from 'big fish'. The federation in Zambrana-Chacuey is a powerful example of a rooted effort built on a history of liberation ideology and organizing. In Mozambique, such 'from the ground up' practices are extremely rare, and it is more common to find awkwardly grouped 'communities' or 'associations' formed as part of a rural development methodology trying to navigate kinship, authority and other dynamics in addition to confronting figures similar to Simão. I do not have a single or simple answer for navigating and addressing the ethical issues of 'bringing the models back down to earth' in Mozambique, but I am increasingly aware that loggers absorb and take up new models just as fast as Mozambican environmentalists. I am increasingly turning to decolonial, African and queer ecology scholars, as well as examining the role of other forms of analytical lenses, such as the work of the rumour in landscapes (inspired by White 2000) for guidance and insight, in addition to practising feminist political ecology as a critical alternative and response to conducting science as usual. Rocheleau and her colleagues continue to question, inspire and rework these conversations, and I am looking forward to finding ways of articulating responses and responsibility (see Massey 2004) amid so many awkward and substantial webs of relation.

Notes

1. A *povoado* – formally known as *células* – are overlapping territorial units run by local leaders called *mwenes*, *régulos* or *chamassuas* (Buur and Kyed 2006 and West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999 explain these categories). I discuss the localized nuances of the *povoado* and local leaders in Nelson (2012, 2013a, b).
2. I use pseudonyms for all those engaged in logging activity.
3. I normally try to avoid overemphasizing 'loggers in the forest and their meetings with local leaders' (Nelson 2013d: 424) because of what these moments sensationalize, and because more banal encounters can often elaborate key nuanced connections and

political processes. However, I think the research encounter that I recount here highlights the layered practices of ‘fixing’ kin and other relations that pose questions for feminist political ecologists who work to identify these practices and who perform alternative practices of inquiry.

4. He had received a university degree in the US. He spoke to me in English, Portuguese and Nyanja at different strategic moments in front of local residents and officials to perform his connections abroad, his access to investment and to political figures.
5. Under the 1999 Forest Law and 2002 regulations, two types of ‘regimes of forest exploration’ are allowed in non-protected areas. These two regimes are the simple licence and the forest concession (Article 14). Simple licences are only allocated to Mozambican nationals, and are limited to 500 m³ of allowable cut for no more than one year and require a management plan (Article 15). Concessions are for individuals, communities or other groups to exploit on a large scale but they must have the capacity to industrially process timber (ibid.). Concessions can last for 50 years with the possibility of a 50-year renewal (Article 16).
6. Translation: The Muzo Community Association of Environmental Defense and Sanitation.
7. I frequently heard the term *aqueles que vêm de fora*, or those who come from outside to refer to many different individuals who do not live in or who do not have family living in this locality. The definition is inconsistently applied.

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4.3

Dianne Rocheleau: The Feminist Political Ecology Legacy and Beyond

Lyla Mehta

Introduction

When one thinks of the key writers on FPE, gender, biodiversity, social movements and environmental politics, Dianne Rocheleau immediately comes to mind. Her work with colleagues on FPE has changed the nature of debate. She has also consistently and creatively drawn on different disciplinary approaches to enhance understandings of complex situations around the world and to seek out hidden perspectives with a view to advancing social and gender justice and reversing unequal power, and colonial and imperial relations. The article 'Rooted Networks, Webs of Relations, and the Power of Situated Science: Bringing the Models Back Down to Earth in Zambrana' is a very good example of such engaged and creative engagement that makes a difference to both scholarship and activist concerns. Rocheleau's consistent dual commitment to both is something I have also tried to achieve throughout my professional career, and I have been inspired when following her work and journey.

My entry point into development studies was through gender and environmental issues. As a master's student in the early 1990s, I set out to study the gendered impacts of displacement and resettlement associated with the controversial Sardar Sarovar (Narmada) dam, then under construction in western India. This led to over two decades of research and engagement with displaced people in the submergence villages as well as activists (both rural and urban middle class) protesting the dam and their inspiring protest movement, the Narmada Bachao Andolan (see Mehta 2009). The movement has consistently questioned the high social and environmental costs of the Narmada dams, the wider development paradigms they represent, and also the lack of debate regarding more socially and environmentally just alternatives. For my doctoral research I continued to focus on the dam while studying the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics and narratives of water scarcity in western India where gendered access to and exclusions from water, as well as gendered responses

to scarcity, were key to my analysis and fieldwork in Kutch, Gujarat (Mehta 2005). Here too my project was explicitly political, seeking to unravel how dominant notions of water management largely privileged powerful actors and justified costly top-down solutions, such as large dams at the cost of silencing the priorities and interests of poor marginalized women and men across the state. Gender has remained a cross-cutting dimension in most of the research projects that I have been involved in as part of my professional work, some of which have also focused on sub-Saharan Africa and some countries in Asia. In most of these projects I have been concerned with issues relating to access and rights to resources and how they are socially differentiated as well as challenging knowledge – power interfaces in dominant discourses, be they around scarcity, land acquisitions, water management or development and environment debates. More recently I have also co-authored a conceptual piece on gender and sustainable development for Un Women (Leach et al. 2014).

My reflections on the Zambrana piece thus draw on my own past engagements and situated knowledges, gained through ‘field’ experiences in Asia and Africa, but also on my own privileged position in academia (largely UK-based), as well as a range of Indian and European contexts. In this piece I reflect on how Rocheleau successfully brings together different approaches to unravel perspectives about landscapes and their interactions with culture, gender, history, power and politics, often very hidden to powerful policymakers and scientists. I argue that FPE analysis and thinking could strengthen how women’s contribution to forestry, the federation and the movement is portrayed in the piece. The chapter then examines Rocheleau’s contribution to FPE, its legacy and beyond, and the challenges of decolonization.

Understanding rooted networks in Zambrana

Zambrana-Chacuey in the Dominican Republic is a hilly farming region with about 12,000 smallholder subsistence and commercial farmers. It is considered to be a deforested area and local people have been subjected to anti-deforestation campaigns that have led to arrests for using the forest for domestic purposes. At the same time, however, the state has encouraged commercial agriculture and promoted the interests of agribusinesses and so on. Thus the story of Zambrana-Chacuey is also one of resistance drawing on land struggle movements inspired by liberation theology, highlighting the need to maintain and protect the rights of rural people to their lands, or regain them from powerful actors and reverse complex relations of power spanning centuries.

Rocheleau first went to the Dominican Republic for her PhD, which focused on the relationship between physical watersheds and their relations to rural and urban inequalities and class. Gender was not her original intention of

focus but it emerged due to several contradictions around gendered rights and access in her field experiences. This made her shift her original technical focus on soil and water to ask questions that denaturalized women's invisibility in property rights and take a more explicitly gendered focus while viewing landscapes, lands, livelihoods, resource management and relations of production and economies and how these intersected with issues such as race, class and other axes of difference. She had similar experiences as a forestry expert in Kenya where she learnt how easy it was to misread the historical and institutional contexts of local practices as well as ignore the feminization of farming and drought within the context of survival. Her experiences were complemented by inspiring encounters with women's movements and charismatic leaders such as Wangari Mathai in Kenya in the early 1980s. All these insights, experiences and local 'apprenticeships' made her aware of the range of multiple knowledges, development alternatives and gendered practices that ultimately became articulated in FPE.

In particular, the Rural People's Federation of Zambrana played a major role in Rocheleau's thinking on social movements, ecologies, landscapes, networks and models. It is inspiring to read how, instead of the intended assessment of biodiversity in the forests, she and colleagues found nature and society mixed in creative ways on people's front yards and gardens such that it was difficult to separate out the 'social' from the 'ecological'. Due to her insistence on highlighting the interconnectedness and rootedness of the social with the ecological, it was possible to uncover a rich tradition of agroforestry and landscape shaped by colonial history, class, race, gender, power and spiritual traditions. Unlike in parts of Asia and Africa, women were properly acknowledged as farmers. This chapter thus highlights the importance of hybrid knowledge productions to the local livelihoods and 'emergent ecologies' of people. These are also 'complex assemblages' of people, soils, plants, politics, histories, ecologies and technologies created through daily practices of daily life (Rocheleau 2011: 209), which she calls 'ecologies of home' (*ibid.*).

Bringing together STS and political ecology

The article brings together Rocheleau's own knowledge of forest ecology and biodiversity with feminist concerns, STS and political ecology. It is located in the genre of work around environmental politics, highlighting the politics of knowledge and how claims around resources are contested both in terms of meaning and in terms of access and control.

Despite the separate origins of political ecology and STS, Rocheleau shows us in this piece and in other writings how they can overlap and develop interesting synergies. As argued by the authors of *Knowing Nature* (Goldman et al. 2011), an edited collection that brings together political ecology and STS in which this chapter is located, both the relatively new and interdisciplinary fields of

political ecology and STS can be brought together in fruitful ways to open up new areas of enquiry around environmental politics. Political ecology has largely looked at the politics of access to and control over resources. It has also been concerned with how local users view and perceive environmental change. STS, in turn, has highlighted how scientific and expert knowledge are always situated in local cultural and historical contexts and how scientific knowledge is equally situated in wider social and power relations (Goldman et al. 2011; Jasanoff 2004). Political ecology is rooted in environment and development whereas STS is traditionally deployed in northern contexts in order to study northern processes of decision-making within the realms of science and technology, and this piece is an example of how these two traditions can and must engage with each other.

The importance of ‘seeing multiple’

A longstanding interest and engagement of Rocheleau, which draws on both feminist epistemology and political ecology, is the importance of ‘seeing multiple’ and situated knowledges. Feminist critiques of science have done pathbreaking work in highlighting multiple ways of knowing and being (e.g., Haraway 1988). These also allow for multiple visions of the future that allow for new conceptions of politics and justice, and alternatives to dominant development models and trajectories. The chapter also builds on a long tradition in political ecology that has convincingly shown how the same piece of land has multiple meanings for different actors and people, and is often linked to their social positioning and the power they command in a given society. Thus Rocheleau draws on an eclectic body of work (namely, political ecology, STS, radical geography, complexity theory, feminist epistemology and ecology) to conceptualize these ‘everyday ecologies of home’ as seen from multiple standpoints, giving rise to a range of situated perspectives that help us to understand the natural and social worlds in Zambrana. Such an approach also calls for drawing on hybrid methodologies – that is, seeking out multiple emic and situated perspectives alongside reviewing quantitative and qualitative assessments of the same phenomena to make sense of the different positions.

Challenging dominant narratives

The article also draws on a rich and established tradition in both STS and political ecology to challenge dominant narratives and perspectives – be they of scientists, policymakers or politicians – and thus challenge dominant knowledge–power equations. This serves to make

the invisible, species-rich regional agroforest legible to science when we changed the frame of our scientific gaze and the logic of our sampling to see the relational networks of people and plants in place(s). The story of

this landscape was very much the story of the Federation and men's and women's politics of place within it, and as such it was embodied in situated knowledge, revealed by multiple land users.

(Rocheleau 2011: 224–225)

Such an approach builds on rich field-based experiences and observations, and forms the basis for Rocheleau and many others such as Fairhead and Leach (1996) to challenge state-based policies, often backed by 'conservation' science that assumes that landscapes can only be protected if local people and practices are kept out. It has powerful implications for the scientific enterprise, for policy and practice with an aim to encourage powerful actors to expand and reverse their visions to accommodate difference, diversity and new directions. It also necessitates the questioning of authoritative sources such as land use, degradation, biodiversity maps and biodiversity hotspots, as well as notions of visibility/invisibility and legality/illegality. Such work is also important to counteract the contemporary processes of land and water grabbing taking place around the world, an issue with which Rocheleau is also currently engaging.

Network models and roots

The article draws on the history of the federation in order to challenge simplistic binaries of state versus private versus common. Rocheleau proposes a network model. The federation and region are seen to embody multidimensional assemblages encompassing relationships of people to each other and networks, plants and animal species, physical landscape, technologies, artefacts, infrastructure and buildings. Here she draws on ANT to propose polycentric network models that are made of different social groups, assemblages of plants and animals, as well as material artefacts and technologies. In this sense, networks are not just ecological and material but also encompass social and power relations. This also means drawing on powerful metaphors such as 'roots' that connect webs of relations and technologies of internal connection and not just as ways to firm up plants. The piece also draws on the plant metaphors of others (Rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari 1988), resulting in a 'poststructural rooted network' providing an opportunity to construct a 'viable 'alternative' hybrid science that transcends local and global scales, erase nature/culture dichotomies, and join theory and practice' (p. 217).

Understanding power in polycentric networks

The article's contribution lies in its analysis of gender and power in the polycentric networks described above. On the one hand, the federation formally challenged power structures as represented by the military, the police or powerful landowners. On the other, it sought to build a range of networks and

draw on its members' affiliations with a range of groupings in the wider organizational landscape, allowing for connections and influence in a host of wider organizational and institutional processes. At the same time, Rocheleau argues that power structures and processes within the organization have been constantly negotiated and challenged by women, resulting in changes to the terms concerning their participation and engagement. The article also focuses briefly on the history of women in the federation, and the challenges and complexities to deal with power and difference in networks. We are informed, though not extensively, that women did not need to seek permission to govern or recognition to wield power because they already had this authority in informal parallel domains of knowledge and authority illegible to more powerful actors (both their menfolk and government officials). The article also describes how struggles for equitable structures have led to 'powerful synergies' between women and men, and also between 'economic, political, cultural, spiritual and ecological domains of authority and power' (p. 222). Furthermore, the expanded vision of complex, and sometimes creative, entanglements with power has allowed women in the federation to imagine and create more just, viable and humane economies and ecologies, and new ways to be at home within them, while still struggling with unequal and unfair distributions of property, political office and legal authority (p. 223).

Underexplored dimensions

Romanticism?

This is a very powerful and evocative article but could perhaps be criticized for being romantic about women's participation in the movement, a criticism also made of FPE writing on social movements. As discussed above, the article stresses women's leadership and visions for more just futures. We also learn that women have played a key role in initiating new activities and also introducing their menfolk to the federation.

It is important not to romanticize or overstate these issues as they could hide unequal gender relations and the double or triple burdens – or even domestic violence – that women may have to deal with over and above their participation in the movement. Such issues have been problematized in the wider literature on gender and social movements (Agarwal 1994; Ortner 1995; Sen 1994). For example, younger women heavily involved in household chores, childbearing and childcare may face constraints in participating in movement activities and may not be able to engage in the same way as older or single women. Many progressive movements around the world around land often tend to assume that the household is a homogenous economic unit and may not seek to provide separate property rights to women. Furthermore, gender relations within the family, and problems such as violence against women and male

alcoholism, tend to be seen as a personal or social issue, not something that should be addressed upfront the same way as class issues are (see Agarwal 1994 for the Indian context). Stephen (1997) observing in the Latin American context notes that the experiences that women gain in participating in movements can challenge existing gender relations and can result in either accommodation or conflict in the wider society. I would have liked some unpacking of these various dimensions and issues in Rocheleau's analysis of women's participation in the federation.

Why are these double or triple burdens and tensions rarely brought up explicitly by movement leaders or the analysts of movement? Sympathetic scholars rarely acknowledge cleavages in movements, simply because we are keen to empathize with the overarching goal of emancipation and social justice. Still, as Ortner (1995) has argued, many studies on resistance are ethnographically thin on the internal politics within the movement and on issues concerning subjectivity (intentions, fears) (Ortner 1995: 170). Analysts also find it difficult to write about the politics of dominated groups, in part due to the problems of representation or due to the fear of appearing culturally imperialist in writing about the other.

When I first went to the Narmada Valley, I spent time in the *adivasi* (tribal) belt of Gujarat and Maharashtra directly affected by the dam. Ecofeminist and women, environment and development (WED) thinking dominated then, largely focusing on the special relationship between women and nature. However, in the 'field' I was surprised to see how silent most tribal women were about their natural environment and that it was often the older men who spoke with eloquence about their relationship with the forests, river and land. Over time, however, I realized that many *adivasi* women had tacit knowledge of their situation and that articulating this was difficult in non-tribal languages, whereas many men were more comfortable about speaking in Gujarati or Hindi. By contrast, caste Hindu women, especially older mothers and grandmothers not burdened by childbearing and childcaring duties and who had had a longer period of time to develop relationships in their marital homes, were far more articulate about their relationships with their lands, rivers, forests and so forth. I was then not familiar with the more critical literature on gender and the environment.

It was not straightforward to write about women's participation in the movement. In my early years of engagement with the Narmada movement, I found that many activists often ignored or even silenced gendered interests due to the focus on the notion of 'collective interests' and a movement united to stop the dam. My criticism often led to vehement rejection, also of my own lofty role of an outside student/academic. Over time I found as the movement matured, it was more open, both to such discussions and also, more importantly, emphasized the creation of 'movements within movements' and the specific interests

of women to be articulated. But this was not easy. On one occasion in 2002 in the Maheshwar area of Madhya Pradesh, which is a largely caste Hindu area in the plains, I found some middle-aged women taking direct action against the alcohol consumption of their menfolk but this was resisted by both many male members and some other women who did not want too much conflict to be unleashed in their village.

On many occasions I also felt that women were clearly more visionary than men and thus can also identify with Rocheleau's evocative and positive descriptions of women's role in the movement. Chittarooma Palit, a senior activist of the Save the Narmada movement, also endorses the view that women play positive roles in the movement. She has stated that women are more rooted in wider social networks than men and also more connected with the resource base, by virtue of the socially and culturally determined gender-based division of labour. Consequently, women bring two strengths to protest movements – namely, imagination and courage. They can often grasp the harmful impacts of displacement better than men and have the imagination to anticipate future problems around the shortages of food, fodder, cash and so on. Their imagination also allows them to realize immense potential, including the courage to challenge the state at the risk of arrest and state-sponsored violence, and the imagination to aspire to a reality free from dispossession and based on social and environmental justice (Palit 2009).

Linking local with global dimensions

Other areas that are underexplored in this piece include being more specific about global, regional and national influences and their impacts on lives, ecologies and livelihoods in Zambrana. While the article discusses local-level politics in terms of solidarities and committees, there is not much about links to national, regional and global politics. It is also silent about the current situation and various dynamics shaping the region. Political ecology explicitly asks us to link micro- and macro- as well as local and global contexts. Thus I was keen to answer the following questions: What is happening in terms of dispossession and how are these linked to wider national and global processes? Who are the powerful non-state actors shaping politics and the economy? How do global processes concerning trade, commodity prices, carbon markets, corporate control and so on shape local property relations, and change access to and control over the forest? And are land and water grabs taking place, given the history of commercial agriculture and its displacement of local lands and livelihoods?

Intersectionality and difference

Finally, even though the article talks about complex identities, I was left wondering what exactly these were. While we are informed about the politics of

place and their links with gender, class, race and so forth, there is not sufficient elaboration of the key dimensions of intersectionality, neither empirically nor at the theoretical level. I also noted many generalized slippages concerning 'women', 'men', 'farmers' and so on rather than unpacking differences within these social groups, something that is self-understood in the wider GAD literature, including FPE. Thus I didn't find clear and consistent analysis of intersectionality and feminist analysis. I also did not find clear analysis of intra-household dynamics, power dynamics around negotiations between different groups of women and men around a range of issues in the federation, as well as questions of intersectionality and difference linked to age, ethnicity, social positioning and so forth. Such a focus on intersectionality is common in both the FPE and new feminist political ecology (NFPE) work.

FPE and beyond

These absences in the article are surprising given Rocheleau's pioneering work in the late 1990s on advancing FPE and gender analysis of environmental relations. In the 1990s, alongside scholars such as Bina Agarwal (2002), Cecile Jackson (1993), Joekes et al. (1996), Mary Mellor (1997) and Charkiewicz et al. (1994), she advanced social relational perspectives on issues concerning gender and the environment, drawing on feminist and GAD scholarship. These were a strong reaction to the then prevailing static WED as well as romantic ecofeminist perspectives which had argued earlier that women *a priori* tend to have a special relationship with the environment and largely tended to focus exclusively on women, not men. By contrast, FPE and other GAD scholarship paid close attention to gender identities and subjectivities, understanding women and men as diverse social groupings that encompass multiple identities – as spouses, co-workers, parents, siblings, members of particular ethnic groups and so on, all of which operate and are negotiated in relational ways. Thus different women and men have very different interactions with water, land and trees mediated by issues such as class, age, race and ethnicity. Also, unlike WED that focused on roles, importance is given to relations of tenure and property, and control over labour, resources, products and decisions. These shape people's environmental interests and opportunities as her article demonstrates.

FPE draws on GAD debates, and it grew in opposition to the WED and ecofeminist debates of the 1980s. It is also based on a gender analysis of women and men's relationships and interactions with the environment. However, unlike earlier approaches, the environment here extends beyond natural resources to encompass all historical processes of political and economic change that shape ecological change and people–environment relations. FPE as a framework of analysis builds on political ecology to include gendered power relations

across a range of scales: between local, intrahousehold and intracommunity processes and those that extend up to global scales. The basic tenets of FPE underscore the contingent and structuring nature of gender in environmental knowledge; access to and control over resources, and in emancipatory social movements that aim to empower women in community struggles for resource control and environmental protection (Nightingale 2006; Rocheleau et al. 1996). A particular focus has been to be critical of romanticized visions of 'community' that side-step questions of class, gender or other social divisions (Agarwal 2001; Resurreccion 2006; Rocheleau et al. 1996).

Within FPE, gender relations between women and men are seen as socially constituted and embedded within the social relations of production and reproduction that are shaped by dynamic economic and political processes (Rocheleau et al. 1996). FPE represents feminist challenges to epistemology, objectivity and rationality while embracing the gendering of knowledge, human embodiment, subjectivity and political agency (Wright 2010: 819). While building on GAD, FPE adds new critical dimensions – namely, feminist critiques of science – and also draws strength from indigenous, feminist and social movements evident in the analysis of Zambrana. In this sense, FPE analysis challenges the basis of power and knowledge in gender relations and economic systems that structure development pathways.

FPE highlighted some key dimensions missing from GAD scholarship of the time. Drawing from feminist critiques of science (Haraway 1988), it opened up attention not just to gendered rights but also to multiple gendered ways of knowing and being, and visions of the future which allow for the articulation of new ways of being as already discussed in the Zambrana Federation and women's role in it. Building on political ecology, FPE also emphasizes different scales – from local to global – and highlights the implications of changes at one scale for others, something I found missing in the Zambrana analysis. And, as already discussed, in some conceptions of FPE there are dangers of romanticism (and sometimes essentialism) in ideas of 'the indigenous' and protest movements, and what they embody and represent.

In recent years, new dimensions have been added to the debates in GAD and FPE through NFPE. This builds on the notion that gender is 'performed' in different contexts, and thereby encompasses multiple and complex subjectivities (Butler 1994; Elmhirst and Resurreccion 2008). It recognizes that gendered subjectivities and identities are performed, embedded and contested through people's actions in experiencing, creating and using environments, requiring attention to 'the entangled processes of the production of nature and subjectification/subjectation as this relates to gendered roles, landscapes, bodies, livelihood strategies...' (Hawkins and Ojeda 2011: 250). A performative approach to gender draws attention to the processes by which the 'gendered subject' is continually constructed and reconstructed, as performativity is 'the

vehicle through which ontological effects are established' (Butler 1994: 33; Hawkins and Ojeda 2011: 8). Gender is not a pre-given fact but is a constructed phenomenon that is reproduced in and through practices, policies and actions associated with shifting and changing environments.

NFPE draws on feminist and poststructuralist concerns of the 2000. It helps highlight the importance of the performative, intersectionality and identities in the ways in which different pathways coconstruct each other and how gendered subjectivities, ideologies and identities are produced, contested and employed around the governance of livelihoods and environments (Nightingale 2011; Truelove 2011). As Elmhirst (2011) notes, these concerns have arisen with the advent of new economic reform programmes which have on the one hand shaped a market-oriented approach to natural resource management and on the other, resulted in changing patterns of resource use among rural populations due to greater mobility – all of which have called for new forms of intervention and environmental governance. However, due to the strong focus on intersectionality and the performative nature of gender, there could be a risk that the focus on gender becomes somewhat blurred. While NFPE authors have stated that NFPE arose because FPE needed a revival and there was a long silence, Rocheleau would argue that she and others build on the FPE lens while embracing the new challenges outlined in the article, namely complex assemblages, resource grabbing, resistance movements and decolonialization.

The long road to decolonization

Perhaps the most admirable aspect of Rocheleau's work is her ability to combine academic rigour and rich empirical insights with a strong commitment to social change and justice. She describes her long journey of analysing everyday ecologies in a range of places in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Rocheleau 2015). The analysis, she argues, is also sharper in 'the field' – somebody else's home and place rather than one's own (Rocheleau 2011). Thus her own situated and partial knowledge on this journey, undertaken whether as a graduate student, donor, NGO worker, researcher, professor or activist, have been part and parcel of the research and in all these different roles she has been, at different times, activist participant, scribe and analyst. All these efforts have led to the emergence of new fields and areas of enquiry, be they about rooted networks and complex assemblages, the focus on this article, or the emergence of the field of FPE. They also draw on the feminist tradition of reflexive praxis.

These journeys are also part of the larger effort of the 'decolonization' of oneself, one's profession, and one's special history and geography (Rocheleau 2015) given the privileged context within which she largely finds herself in – namely, the dominant and often imperial context of the US. She describes moving her own contradictory experiences of confronting and reversing those

relationships of power and privilege. In part, this can be done by being an 'apprentice' with local people and their landscapes in a range of countries and contexts with the aim of changing dominant paradigms and achieving social justice in environment and development.

As a privileged member of the US academy, Rocheleau is clearly aware of the problems of representation and the contradictory role of an outside researcher/participant documenting women's narratives, experiences and challenges in a range of countries, something I discussed earlier in this chapter. As she writes, her work has moved some women to tears and other to rage (due to her being a white woman eloquently documenting the lives of 'others' in distant places and contexts). Thus academic writing such as FPE can also serve as a colonizing act, despite its lauded intentions of challenging orthodoxies, seeing multiple and unravelling hidden realities of local women and men (see Rocheleau and Nirmal 2015). Her concern is thus to consciously 'decolonize' through an engagement with resistance, movements, grabbing processes, politics and political economy.

Critical academics will share her concerns about 'decolonization'. After all, most of us operate in exclusive and privileged academic contexts and/or countries with historical colonial or imperialist legacies. As we write about oppression and injustice in the 'field' and seek to make a difference by working towards a fairer and more just world, we are also painfully aware of the daily contradictions around us: conflicts due to ethnicity, militarization, imperialism; new forms of 'othering' across the world; the increasing influence of corporate power and control over our lives, our water and lands, giving rise to new insecurities; and the militarization of aid in the name of 'security'. I live with these contradictions constantly, being based at a development studies institute in the UK. What is the scope of 'decolonialization' activities beyond critical academia where opinions are highly polarized and traditional imperialist imaginaries are being recast in new ways (e.g., around immigration in Europe)? Also there is a strong rise of the Right across the world, which does not leave much space for critical thinking or criticisms of dominant practices in mainstream discourses and practices. Even though the financial crisis of 2008 offered possibilities to reimagine finance, the economy, society and prevailing relations between women and men, rich and poor, business as usual has followed very quickly and inequalities in rich, middle-income and poor countries are increasing, not decreasing. Thus I wonder if a decolonial process can take place just through critical writing and engagement, while the political and economic processes that allow these inequalities to take place continue to persist?

These questions notwithstanding, engaging with Rocheleau's pieces reveals an inspiring lifetime's work on social relations of power and justice linked to cultures, ecologies and economies. Her work has helped build new kinds of scholarship and also a new generation of scholars and scholar activists. Her

current effort at decolonialization also helps us radically rethink environment and development issues, and reimagine new and just futures.

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4.4

Crossing Boundaries: Points of Encounter with People and Worlds ‘Otherwise’

Dianne Rocheleau

In response to the combined comments of Padini Nirmal, Ingrid L. Nelson and Lyla Mehta, and their own considerable contributions to feminist research on political ecology, I have found myself thinking of several paradoxes and contradictions that we all face in doing FPE. I do not have time to go into all the issues that their responses suggest but I would like to take this space to explore some of them.

In our work we all have to cross the language and conceptual cultures of multiple academic audiences with distinct networks, paradigms and literatures (feminist, environmentalist, ecological, cultural studies and social science). All of us in FPE are combining elements of different schools of thought that normally do not mix (critical and applied; political economic and cultural; policy and resistance). We also negotiate the even trickier border crossing between academic and activist audiences when seeking to narrate and visualize complex, non-linear realities within the pages of journals and books that rely on, or even require, linear narratives and two-dimensional graphic conventions. Each of us has engaged in extended field studies and immersion with people in social movements and/or organized farmers and forest-dwellers with whom we have shared many insights and observations, in both directions. Much of that exchange is in verbal form. Yet we have the unique privilege, professional mandate and perhaps moral hazard of writing about them and their worlds for various readers near and far. Sometimes it is all about them, and sometimes it is about theory or about an environmental context in which they are embedded.

I have long been plagued by doubts about the validity of the entire enterprise, which it is in part, after all. Meanwhile, I have worked hard to learn about and deal with differences, convergences, shared aspirations and multiple worlds at points of encounter (in space and time) with people and ‘worlds otherwise’. This has involved stumbling into minefields of power, and stepping back and acknowledging complex relations of privilege and subjugation across multiple dimensions of intersectional identity and affinity. This has also

meant ‘muddling through’ the morass of paradoxes and contradictions within and between various academic worlds, as well as between all of them and the communities and social movements making theory, policy and practice on the ground. This becomes particularly acute as I go back and forth between writing for, about, and with rural organizations and social movements. The piece included here was written about the federation in Zambrana to advance academic understanding of rooted networks as ecologies and communities otherwise, through a combination of feminist, ecological and rhizomatic thinking by academic and social movement actors. In contrast, I have taken rooted networks further in a recent article on Chiapas where I illustrate and analyse the enmeshed networks of both land-grabbers and those resisting land grabs, to invite and inform academic and social movement discussion, yet with very little discussion of gender (Rocheleau 2015a). In another case I have presented rooted networks, with references to gender and other elements of complex identities, in four vignette cases tracking the development of the idea through encounters in multiple times and places (Rocheleau 2015b). Nirmal and I have co-written three forthcoming essays on gender and environment that address the issues of intersectionality, complex identities and decolonial approaches to gender. In my own work, and perhaps this is true for all three commentators, there is the difficulty of walking across the lines between women-focused, gendered-focused and feminist-informed research and writing. Nelson’s very explicit claim to feminist political ecology, in her recent dissertation, which is not ‘about gender’, motivated me to more explicitly reclaim as FPE my work that is not focused on gender but is feminist-informed political ecology. I see myself as a feminist working in political ecology and environmental justice at the intersection of science, justice, ecologies and cultures. I have a feminist curiosity about networked power, identity, affinity and difference between humans and other beings within and across territories. This curiosity leads me to study landscapes, ecologies and assemblies of people in relation, always marked by intersectional identities of humans and other beings, their technologies, artefacts and the patterned processes of the living worlds in which they all exist.

While I dream of working to maintain and grow the ecological basis for worlds where many worlds, and their peoples, can thrive, based on diverse examples of non-capitalist, feminist, indigenous and postcolonial approaches, I have been drawn into observing and describing complex networked powers in territories. Inspired by the imperfect but hopeful and imaginative social innovations of various social movements and indigenous people being, differently, I seek to understand the relational basis for those networks of humans and others beings connected to each other, in living worlds, in place and across places. There are elements of the geometries and geographies of power that I need to explore with readers in order to be able to think differently and to

be differently as an engaged researcher. This is usually about writing more for, rather than just about, social movements and communities, yet sometimes it seems useful to take a step back and write from those encounters with worlds otherwise, to engage thinkers across academic and social movement lines. But, as Ingrid notes, writing about people and places and 'fixing' them in place and time, making them legible for state and other actors, can cause real harm.

So in relation to the article, the federation leaders and assembly long ago asked Laurie Ross and me to write a book about the federation (Rocheleau and Ross 1995). We wrote articles, methods papers and training case studies. The book has proved to be a long-term work in progress, now back on the table. Our written work, and more so our face-to-face-discussions at various times, have informed their analyses of their own positions and future prospects. The main concern now is for the history, since the federation has largely morphed into a different set of institutions. The network and rhizome metaphors that emerged from the historical trajectories and the ground of everyday lives of federation members, in resistance, in process of becoming themselves again, also reflect and clarify my own experience of things close to home as well as global trends. These rooted network metaphors also manifest in the workings of cultural, economic, political, police and military power¹ threaded through what we usually call local, national and global domains.

The networks that have linked women and men in Zambrana with each other and all the elements of their living worlds also help to understand the connections of people across fields and fences, over kitchen tables, out in the streets, in cafés and even warzones with each other and their living worlds across the planet. And those connections in turn help us to understand the spatial technologies of powerful state, corporate and military actors operating within and upon those worlds. Networked and rhizomatic connections join hierarchies of investors and financial centres in New York, London, Dubai and Shanghai to the military and intelligence strongholds in Washington, DC, and to the police, armies and air force bases of the planet. They reach into the ecologies and territories of agrarian and coastal communities to grab land and water for elite tourism, for residential development, for rare-earth mines, fracked gas fields, oil fields and coal mines. Rooted network metaphors also go a long way towards explaining the networked strategies of state and paramilitary violence (Rocheleau 2015), as well as the connections of predatory armed forces and criminal gangs across local, national and transnational spaces.

As Doreen Massey, Donna Haraway and others have long contended, the poststructural insights of feminism, cultural studies of science and radical social theory do not only apply to social movements and sustainable alternatives; they also apply to the workings of global financial capital and the way it is entwined in place(s) through networks of power (Harcourt et al. 2013). Examples abound of power-with, in the solidarity of 'the people' and their joint

power-against invasive 'development' or eviction, through resistance, in social movements and spontaneous eruptions throughout the world. Yet these same free-running rhizomatic threads can also serve the exercise of power-over by political and economic elites and militaries. Complex networked entities can also emerge through both planned and accidental encounters of hierarchies and horizontally linked formations of people and other beings, their artefacts, technologies and physical surroundings. The global power elites root in place(s) and run between places just as social movements might, and they take, break and remake territories, mobilizing spatial imaginaries as discursive weapons to reclassify people and places and to render whole groups of people as 'bodies out of place' (Ojeda 2012), as no longer belonging in particular places.

In Zambrana in the 1980s and 1990s, this took the form of selective and repressive enforcement of forest laws against smallholder farmers by forestry units within the army, as well as incursions into their communities and landscapes by citrus and pineapple agribusiness interests. These strategies and processes are gendered in origin, in process and in results, and they carry the baggage of specific feminine, masculine and intersexual tropes. Diana Ojeda's work on the gendered and sexualized framing of nature parks and tourism, and their mobilization by state and military actors in Colombia, illustrates how these entwined discursive and material military and corporate powers work to displace coastal and forest peoples by redefining them out of the landscape. They then remove them by force, whether in microevictions through police enforcement of livelihood and residential regulations or through violent military and paramilitary actions to remove entire communities.

So the objective of my current work is increasingly to read oppression, resistance and repression into the same stories and pictures as the precolonial, hybrid and alternative ways of being, in order to see how they are related and how both are rooted 'laterally' among like elements, and 'vertically' between social, biological and physical elements and the surfaces and subsurfaces of the earth. Increasingly I frame this as being in the living world. I look at power-over (state, gold mine and agribusiness corporations), power-with and power-against (the associations, federation and confederation), and power-between, power-in-spite-of and power-alongside (women in the federation). But in this case I reached back and 'settled for' thinking in the layers of classical ecology combined with networks of living beings on the surface of the earth, with horizontal and vertical (hierarchical) connections between them, and always dependent on vertical roots into the earth's surface, somewhere. The inspiration for the broader concept comes straight from the writings of poststructural feminists (Escobar and Harcourt 2005; Gibson-Graham 2006; Haraway 1991; Harding 2004), indigenous feminists (Laduke 1999) and social movement leaders (Marcos 2002), as well as world anthropology-related fields (Blaser 2010; De la Cadena 2010; Escobar 2008; Ingold 2011).

While the article carries a 2011 date it represents my thinking, in conversation with many others, in 2007, only partially and very imperfectly rendered within the context of a single example. So Nelson's comments about two-dimensional fixity, and the mapping and fixing of relationships between people and between people and land, are very relevant and well taken. The fixity that Nelson mentions is of two types. One is the fixing of polygons of land as property in a Cartesian grid in Euclidean space. What I note in the text but did not fully succeed in illustrating is that there are many types of rooting practice and pattern, and that there is scope for simultaneous circulation and metaphorical rooting in a larger territory, and rhizomatic habits of rooting, as well as fixed roots in plots.² There was a collective rooting and some level of circulation of people, plants (seeds) and animals in a broader landscape and community space that consisted of networked, not contiguous, properties of smallholders and interstitial corridors of forest along roads and streambanks. Robin Roth and I have both encountered difficulties over decades in escaping the recurrent two-dimensional mapping trap (Roth 2009). It took me another two years after this article to work out a better and still very imperfect way to illustrate networked territories and the complex ways of rooting, including rhizomatic strategies. The graphic representation requires careful and painstaking development of illustrations in multiple iterations, to get the structure and pattern of relationships right and make it legible to readers, for a given purpose (Rocheleau 2015).

Responding to Mehta, I assumed intersectionality as a given in this piece because I had addressed it very explicitly in other writings on Zambrana and I needed to respect a limited word count. Her comment reminds me of the dangers and limitations of fixing people and processes within the confines and linearized spaces of short articles. In fact, a woman founder and past president of the federation was one of the key people who convinced me, through her multiple, simultaneous and seemingly contradictory identities, of the validity, and the necessity, for the poststructural and cultural turn in political ecology, social theory and social movements. I have described in other venues the embodiment of intersectionality (labelled 'complex identities') in the distinct gendered and classed landscapes, ecologies and livelihoods that conditioned the terms and patterns of connection of various individuals and households with the Forest Enterprise Project. An extensively illustrated case study (Rocheleau et al. 1996) is available on my website and through Research Gate. The discussion here confirms the need for a monograph on Zambrana written by a collective of academic and federation actors in order to do justice to both the conceptual frameworks and the case study, and to explore strategies of both circulation and rootedness.³

I embrace and cultivate an eclectic approach, from field methods and theories to subjects of study and narrative forms. As Nirmal recognizes, through this

I hope to reach more people and to bring them together in less than predictable ways, to create new nodes of conversation, insights, understanding and action. The FPE volume (Rocheleau et al. 1996) was an endeavour to create a platform for discussion, erected on an overlooked (previously invisible) site of converging interests and distinct understandings, framed with elements of theory and story to conjure conversations and motivate collective feminist thought and action on social and ecological justice. Each article and each chapter since have had similar intentions but the potential points of convergence have been different, and the theories and stories overlap but shift in focus, gather new elements and change direction over time.

I have long since expanded from gender to race and indigeneity as focal elements of concern, and from forestry to land and territory. As Nirmal quotes from her own conversation with an Adivasi leader, it is 'not just *any* land, but *this* land'. It expresses the vision of people in multiple specific places where they and their home places are under attack or at risk of eviction through land-grabbing. She raises the importance in both of our work of ideas of autonomy, and of being differently, as simultaneously representing resistance and alternatives to dominant economic and political systems. Indigenous scholars and activists have long worked from this premise, including indigenous feminists. Part of being differently includes the terms of 'rooting in place' and 'networking across place'. It also involves blurring the boundaries between humans and other beings, and recognizing the existence of conscious beings across categories formerly relegated by modernist logic to the status of things.

My article is meant to further develop the concept of rooted networks, bringing power, territory and feminist natureculture thinking into network theories and methods, and to bring the whole package into political ecology and ecology more generally (building on Rocheleau and Roth 2007). Like much of my work it is feminist-informed, but not exclusively, or even primarily, focused on gender. It is based on peoples' landscapes and life stories, and my own shared experiences with them in Zambrana-Chacuey in the Dominican Republic. The focus on rooted networks reduced the prominence of women in the federation, and the dynamics between various women's organizations and the federation as a whole, to a somewhat sparse account of women's traditional separate domains of power, their foundational roles in the federation and their development of distinct organizations within and outside the federation and their eventual return on new terms. Likewise, the gendered nature of the newly visible and legible regional agroforest was a key point. I should underline that there is a rich history of contested gendered landscapes and livelihoods in Zambrana and it is based in intersectional resistance, not in romance, nor in open conflict. Since the key point of this article was to link the idea of networks with territories, power and material ecologies in place, the gendered struggles within

the federation, and within and between households, were seen as part of these networks rather than foregrounded.

Returning to work in Zambrana always carries a double-edged challenge, to recognize and cite the theoretical insights conveyed by people in the federation and the NGO, without purporting to represent fully their perspectives and without oversimplifying their very complex realities. There is the question of explicit versus implicit presentation of theoretical insights, and conventions of theoretical language versus vernacular narration of theoretical points through stories. Sometimes the theoretical points made or implied can get lost in the narrative flow, especially if we are expecting particular words to signal specific points along the way. I have often traded explicit, bounded and labelled theoretical formulations for the freedom and the reach of running in rhizomatic narrative pathways, telling specific stories across fields, paradigms and communities of researchers and activists, from 'natural' scientists to feminist theorists to indigenous movement activists and writers. In this case the focus on a specific theoretical framework can take away from the complexity and multiplicity of the stories. The same text can elicit critiques of romance, microempiricism and place-bound focus, as well as colonial academic hijacking of social movement experience, perhaps a price of crossing those boundaries at high speed in short stories. I am informed by both kinds of critique and strive to address them in new work. I remain optimistic that we can combine gender-focused and feminist-informed (but not necessarily gender-focused) work in political ecology, STS, ecology and indigenous studies, using roots, rhizomes, networks and meshworks. I aspire to decolonize my own work in FPE by allowing myself to be touched and changed by worlds otherwise, to submit to terms of connection not of my own making, and to be guided by those connections to see and be, differently, and to remake the conditions for justice, peace and life in the worlds I call home.

Notes

1. Both Mehta and Nelson asked me to address the national and international context more, which I have done both in other publications and in this brief commentary.
2. I will revisit this issue and develop it further within a book entitled *The Invisible Ecologies of Machakos: Landscapes and Life Stories 1900–2000*, which will address the multiple and overlapping territories of production, extraction, residence, circulation and identity, from farm plots to landscape, regional and national scale and over multiple temporal scales within the Akamba districts of Kenya. Patterns and terms of connection, rooting and circulation of people, plants, animals, goods and services will articulate with gender, class, age, occupation, religion, group affiliations and political orientation. This will require a whole series of illustrations and will build upon prior illustrations of gendered land and tree tenure in Kenya.
3. It is planned to be a conversation between multiple actors with very different histories and perspectives, including accounts of the conflicts and the compromises as well as the convergences and solidarity, with comments on each other's contributions

including mine and two other academics. But even that always entails the risks of fixing process in place and time, and making it selectively legible to multiple audiences, including those who might use it against the interests of the federation and similar groups elsewhere.

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Section V

Livelihoods, Place, Community

5.0

Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place

J. K. Gibson-Graham

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Introduction

Women and the Politics of Place (WPP) is a project of narrating and theorizing a globally emergent form of localized politics – one that is largely *of* if not necessarily *for* women – with the goal of bringing this politics into a new stage of being. What is truly distinctive about WPP is the vision of a *place-based* yet at the same time *global* movement (Osterweil 2004). Indeed this distinctive vision is what first attracted us to the project, for we were already imagining and fostering an economic politics with the same locally rooted yet globally extensive structure. Rather than ‘waiting for the revolution’ to transform a global economy and governance system at the world scale, we were engaging with others to transform local economies *here* and *now*, in an everyday ethical and political practice of constructing ‘community economies’ in the face of globalization.

WPP can be seen as an offspring of second wave feminism, a movement that arguably gave rise to a distinctive understanding and practice of politics, one that is hinted at though not quite captured in the phrase ‘the personal is political’. Whereas formerly politics was seen to involve large groups of people or small numbers of highly influential individuals organizing to gain power or create change, second wave feminism initiated a politics of local and personal transformation – a ‘politics of becoming’ in Connolly’s terms (1999: 57). Feminism linked feminists emotionally and semiotically rather than primarily through organizational ties. Without rejecting the familiar politics of organizing within groups and across space, individual women and collectivities pursued local paths and strategies that were based on avowedly feminist visions and values but were not otherwise connected. The movement achieved global coverage without having to create global institutions, though some of

these did indeed come into being. Ubiquity rather than unity was the ground of its globalization.

WPP builds on that ground, extending the idea of a politics of ubiquity by emphasizing its ontological substrate: a vast set of disarticulated 'places' – households, social communities, ecosystems, workplaces, organizations, bodies, public arenas, urban spaces, diasporas, regions, occupations – related analogically rather than organically and connected through webs of signification. If *women* are everywhere, *a woman* is always somewhere, and those somewheres are what the project is about: places being created, strengthened, defended, augmented, transformed by women. It is as though the identity category, woman, were to be addressed through contextualization or emplacement, and the feminist question had become 'What might a politics of the emplacement be?' Not a politics of identity *per se*, but a politics of the co-production of subjects and places. A politics of becoming in place.

In the political imaginary of WPP, place takes on a specifically political meaning. Shedding its connotations of anti-cosmopolitan localism (Agustin, 2005), place emerges as the site of political activism and social transformation (Belausteguigoitia, 2005) rather than primarily as a 'home ground'. Women are associated with place not because they are home-based or place-bound but because of their inaugural and continuing role in shaping a new politics. Over the course of more than three decades feminists have inserted issues of the female person and body – the place 'closest in' – into political discourses and struggles in their domestic settings, in their communities, and in the national and international political arenas, thereby enlarging the domain of the 'political' (Underhill-Sem, 2005). And while global women's movements have devoted much energy to 'engendering' global development processes through international conferences and commissions, feminists have not fixated on the global as the ultimate scale of successful activism (Harcourt, 2005). In confronting imperial globalization, they are continuing their orientation to the local, the daily, the bodily, recognizing that transforming the world involves transforming sites, subjects, and practices worldwide. That this place-oriented activism may involve them in global movements (of migrant workers, for example) is not a contradiction, but simply a confirmation that places are constituted at the crossroads of global forces.

One of the inspirations for the WPP project has been the desire to assert a logic of difference and possibility against the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and the teleological generalities of political economy (Harcourt and Escobar 2002; Dirlik 2002). The vision is that women are both threatened and mobilized by the contemporary wave of globalization, and that they are already everywhere engaged in constructing and revitalizing places, in response to the exigencies and possibilities of their everyday lives. What the project hopes to do is foster this tenacious, dispersed and barely visible 'movement', creating

connections (networks or 'meshworks'), sharing information and inspiration through academic and nonacademic channels, developing local experiments into a collective knowledge that will spawn and support more projects and ideas. Representing this movement and connecting its participants, the project will create a recognized (self)identity for something that already exists, thereby empowering and expanding it.

For J. K. Gibson-Graham, the language of place resonates with our own ongoing attempts to bring into view the diversity of economic practices, to make visible the hidden and alternative economic activities that everywhere abound. If we can begin to see these largely noncapitalist activities as prevalent and viable we may be encouraged to actively build upon them to transform our local economies. Place signifies the possibility of understanding local economies as *places* with highly specific economic identities and capacities rather than simply as *nodes* in a global capitalist system. In more broadly philosophical terms, place is that which is not fully yoked into a system of meaning, not entirely subsumed to a (global) order; it is that aspect of every site that exists as potentiality. Place is the 'event in space', operating as a 'dislocation' with respect to familiar structures and narratives. It is the unmapped and unmoored that allows for new moorings and mappings. Place, like the subject, is the site and spur of becoming, the opening for politics.

In our own work we have been pushed to bridge the separations that define and distinguish places. Continuing to think and write together after graduate school, we have had to constantly negotiate the deep and watery distance between the US and Australia, and perhaps more importantly the social distance between two different continents, nations, communities, and life trajectories. To pursue our work of rethinking and re-enacting economy we have tried to span the gap between the academy and activism, engaging in place-based action research involving both university and community-based researchers/activists. Our action research projects have aimed to recognize and value the distinctive economic capabilities of localities, and to build upon these strengths through nourishing communal economic practices and constructing alternative economic institutions. Along the way we have become increasingly communal in our own practices of production and in our sense of ourselves. In 1992 (after 15 years of working together) we adopted a joint persona, J. K. Gibson-Graham, to honor and encourage our small collective authorial enterprise.

In the rest of this chapter we outline the different aspects of our ongoing project of building community economies in place, highlighting the affinities and overlaps that have brought us to identify with WPP. We see our project as having four principal elements. The first involves deconstructing the hegemony of capitalism to open up a discursive space for the prevalence and diversity of non-capitalist economic activity worldwide (see Gibson-Graham 1996). The

second requires producing a language of economic difference to enlarge the economic imaginary, rendering visible and intelligible the diverse and proliferating practices that the preoccupation with capitalism has obscured; we see this language as a necessary contribution to a politics of economic innovation. The third is the difficult process of cultivating subjects (ourselves and others) who can desire and inhabit non-capitalist economic spaces. To frame this cultivation process we step aside from the familiar structural vision of capitalism with its already identified and interested subjects, developing a vision of the 'community economy' as an ethical and political space of becoming. In this communal space individual and collective subjects negotiate questions of livelihood and interdependence and (re)construct themselves in the process. Finally, there is the actual practice of building community economies in place. Here we offer two examples of women's activism, one from Kerala province in India and the other involving Filipina migrants working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with whom we are currently pursuing a collaborative project of action research.

Envisioning a diverse economy

Much of our earlier work has been oriented toward destabilizing the epistemological certainties that justify a particular global narrative and authorize a globally mobilized anti-capitalist politics as the one true path to economic empowerment and transformation (Gibson-Graham 1996, 2002). This has involved repeatedly querying what seem to us grandiose representations of world-scale capitalist penetration and dominion. By undermining the looming capitalist eminence in the foreground of representation, we have attempted to make room for a vision and a self-knowledge of local initiatives – especially non-capitalist economic ones – as powerful and efficacious, not simply a prelude or second best to a global movement or organization.

Arturo Escobar has argued that the project of making the invisible visible, or seeing 'different economies always on the rise', requires a different 'politics of reading on our part as analysts, with the concomitant need to contribute to a different politics of representation' (2001: 158). To read a landscape we have always read as capitalist, to read it as a landscape of difference, populated by various capitalist and non-capitalist institutions and practices, is a difficult task, for we must contend not only with our colonized imaginations, but with our beliefs about politics, understandings of power, conceptions of economy and structures of desire. We are all subjects of a capitalist order – in the sense that our understandings *and* our emotions, our personal ambitions *and* our visions of collective possibility are organized around a visceral belief in the hegemonic presence and power of capitalism.

As one way of creating fissures in the imposing edifice of capitalism, we have been elaborating a vision and language of the 'diverse economy'. A language of economic diversity brings to light what exists in the shadows, disclosing the non-capitalist economic activity that is (everywhere) available to build upon, once we become able to name and see it. This more inclusive economic language harbors heretofore hidden economic identities that can prompt identification and self-recognition, calling into being collective and individual subjects who can imagine and perform alternative economies.

In undertaking this project we are up against something powerful and pervasive – if not capitalism *per se*, then its prevalent representations. In both mainstream and left discourse the economy is understood as essentially *capitalist*, the productive economic subject is restricted to the positions of wage worker or *capitalist* entrepreneur, and places are either incorporated or incorporable into *capitalist* space. To the extent that economic discourse has a place for economic difference, it locates it in a *capitalocentric* field in which capitalism is the norm and non-capitalist economic relations or entities are understood with respect to capitalism, as either the same as, complements to, opposites of or contained within capitalism.

Yet alongside the hegemonic capitalocentric discourse of the economy, there are many counter-discourses of economy that have arisen from alternative strands of economic thinking (for example, classical political economy, economic anthropology, feminist economics, sociology and geography) and from working class, third world, and social and community movements (for example, the feminist, socialist, cooperative and local sustainability movements). These counter-discourses offer abundant resources that we can draw upon in constructing a language of economic diversity.

The most controversial but also most successful counter to dominant economic thinking has been spearheaded by feminist activists and economists, who point to the huge amount of labour (much of it performed by women) expended on unpaid and non-market-oriented activities such as housework, child-rearing, volunteering and care for the elderly and infirm (see, for example, Beneria 2003; Brandt 1995; Delphy 1984; Elson 1995; Folbre 1987, 2001; Henderson 1991; Matthaei 2001; Waring 1988).¹ Empirical work on this topic has established that in both rich and poor countries 30–50 percent of economic activity is accounted for by unpaid household labour (Ironmonger 1996; Luxton 1997). There is now a call for the system of national accounts to be revised so that the total measure of economic performance, gross economic product, includes both gross market product *and* gross household product (Ironmonger 1996: 38–9).

A second challenge to the hegemony of the 'capitalist economy' is presented by the vast literature on the informal economies of both 'less' and 'more' developed nations. The pressure to recognize that livelihoods are sustained by a

plethora of economic activities that do not take the form of wage labour, commodity production for a market, or capitalist enterprise has largely come from the global 'south', though there is increasing evidence of the variety and magnitude of non-capitalist transactions and non-transacted subsistence practices pursued in the developed economies of the 'north'²

A third language of economic difference comes, perhaps surprisingly, from Marx. In *Capital*, Marx foregrounded capitalism against the background of feudal, slave, and independent production as well as the non-exploitative relations he identified with communism. Unfortunately his language of economic difference has been translated into (or mis-interpreted as) an historical stage theory of economic evolution in which capitalism is situated near the pinnacle of development and all other forms of economy represented as pre-capitalist or as (now discredited) post-capitalist alternatives. This means that we are still under the sway of a systemic conception of economy in which only one economic 'system' can exist at a time.

Indeed, despite the proliferative energy that continually gives rise to new economic languages, these tend to remain 'non-credible alternatives to what exists' (Santos 2004: 238), subsisting in the shadows of mainstream economic thinking. Although feminist interventions, for example, have successfully expanded conceptions of the economy to include as legitimate contributions both paid and unpaid labour, and market and non-market transactions, within the hegemonic framing this vast sea of non-monetized economic activity is still situated as merely supporting the 'real' economy, and as ultimately dependent on the determining dynamics of capitalist growth. The idea of independent economic dynamics within household economies, the voluntary sector or neighborhood economies is rendered virtually unthinkable. And the idea of basing a development project on the non-market sector is theoretically and practically speaking 'out of bounds'.

It is clear that there already exists a substantial understanding of the extent and nature of economic difference. What does not exist is a way of convening this knowledge that destabilizes the received wisdom of capitalist dominance and unleashes new creative forces and subjects of economic experimentation. Our intervention is to propose a language of the *diverse economy* as an exploratory practice of thinking economy differently in order to enact different economies. The language of the diverse economy expands our economic vocabulary, widening the identity of the economy to include all of those practices excluded or marginalized by the theory and presumption of capitalist hegemony. Within this language relationships are contingently rather than deterministically configured, economic value is liberally distributed rather than assigned to certain activities and denied to others, and economic dynamics are potentially proliferated rather than reduced to a small number of governing laws and logics.

Our objective is not to produce a finished and coherent template that maps the economy 'as it really is' and presents (to the converted or suggestible) a ready-made 'alternative economy'. Rather our project is to disarm and dislocate the naturalized dominance of the capitalist economy and make the space for new economic becomings – ones that we will need to work to produce. If we can recognize a diverse economy we can begin to imagine and create diverse organizations and practices as powerful constituents of an enlivened non-capitalist politics of place.

We begin constructing our language by convening some of the radical diversity of economic relations and conceptualizing them in terms of three practices:³

- different kinds of *transaction* and ways of negotiating commensurability
- different types of *labour* and ways compensating it
- different forms of *enterprise* and ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus.

Our current representation of what we have called the diverse economy is shown in Table 5.0.1. In this figure what is often seen as the *economy*, that is, formal markets, wage labour and capitalist enterprise, is merely one set of cells in a complex field of diverse economic relations that sustain livelihoods in communities around the world. Below we briefly explore each of the columns, highlighting practices and forms of organization that are usually ignored.

Transactions

In its singular, normal and lawful guise, 'the market' is usually identified with capitalism, and as such is imbued with expansiveness, authority and force. Yet seen in the context of the plethora of transactions that make up our economic world (shown in Table 5.0.1) it seems absurd to think that such a small part of the transactional whole, and one that is so aridly abstract in its theorization, has such power to colonize and obscure.⁴

Formal market exchange accounts for only one set of practices by which the goods and services that sustain livelihoods are transacted. Goods and services are also produced and *shared* in the household, nature provides abundant goods that are *taken* as well as stewarded, individuals and organizations *give away* goods and services, some people rightfully or illegally *steal* goods, goods and services are *allocated* by the state, and traded within and between communities according to traditions of *ritual exchange*.⁵

What is clear is that there is a huge variety and volume of non-market transactions and that they are a significant (and possibly the dominant) form of transaction that sustains us all.

Table 5.0.1 A Diverse Economy¹

Transactions	Labor	Enterprise
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
ALTERNATIVE MARKET	ALTERNATIVE PAID	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST
Sale of public goods	Self-employed	State enterprise
Ethical 'fair-trade' markets	Cooperative	Green capitalist
Local trading systems	Indentured	Socially responsible firm
Alternative currencies	Reciprocal labor	Non-profit
Underground market	In kind	
Co-op exchange	Work for welfare	
Barter		
Informal market		
NON-MARKET	UNPAID	NON-CAPITALIST
Household flows	Housework	Communal
Gift giving	Family care	Independent
Indigenous exchange	Neighborhood work	Feudal
State allocations	Volunteer	Slave
Gleaning	Self-provisioning labor	
Hunting, fishing, gathering	Slave labor	
Theft, poaching	Surplus labor	

¹The table is organized as columns and is not intended to be read across the rows. Note, for instance, that non-capitalist enterprises (bottom row) are engaged in market transactions (top row).

If we examine the formal market itself, we see a variety of socially, naturally and governmentally constructed contexts for commodity exchange. Markets are naturally and artificially protected, monopolized, regulated and niched and in all these cases transactions are governed by context specific contingent social relations rather than abstract and universal logics. Moreover, since markets are often conflated with capitalism, it is important to recognize that not all commodities transacted in formal markets are produced by capitalist firms employing free wage labour – they may be produced by worker collectives, slaves, independent producers, or feudal serfs.

In addition, there are many 'alternative' market transactions in which goods and services are exchanged and commensurability is socially negotiated and agreed upon: transactions that take place in the informal and underground markets in which goods and services are traded according to very local and personalized agreements; the exchange of commodities between and within producer cooperatives where prices are set to enhance sustainability of the cooperative; the ethical or 'fair' trade of products where producers and consumers agree on price levels that will sustain certain livelihood practices; local trading systems and alternative currencies that foster local interdependency and sustainability; the marketing of goods and services produced by the state

and 'sold' under conditions where profit is not the prime arbiter of viability. Barter is another prevalent form of transaction in which goods deemed to be equivalent in value by their producers or traders are exchanged without recourse to money.

Labour

The most prevalent form of labour the world over is the unpaid work that is conducted in the household, the family and the neighborhood or wider community, predominantly by women. Other forms of unpaid labour include the work of self-provisioning or subsistence (for example, gardening, gathering, hunting, fishing, making clothes). To include all of this work in a conception of a diverse economy is to re-present many people who see themselves (or are labeled) as 'unemployed' or 'not economically active' as economic subjects, that is, as contributing to the vast skein of productive and transactional activities that sustain social existence.

The usual image of wage labour is of workers who sell their labour power to a capitalist employer in return for a monetary wage set at a level that allows them and their dependents to buy the commodities necessary for subsistence. There are, however, many other forms of labour that are paid. Worker cooperatives employ a labour force (themselves) that is paid a living wage at a level decided upon by the cooperators. Self-employed workers are in the position of paying themselves a wage, setting (within the constraints of the success of their business) their own wage level and benefit entitlement.

Other people work in return for payments in kind (sometimes mixed with monetary payments). A share farmer works on someone else's land in return for a proportion of the harvest; a live-in migrant domestic servant works in someone's home in return for room and board and a small allowance of spending money that does not amount to a living wage. A pastor performs caring labour in a community and is supported by in kind payments – access to a house, car, gifts of food and a small stipend. Residents of a community offer their collective labour to others at times of high labour demand (harvest, house renovation or moving) in return for a reciprocal claim on labour at another time.

Forms of organization/enterprise

The diverse economy comprises many kinds of enterprise in which ownership and production are differently configured. We are concerned to highlight the ways in which enterprises organize the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus, that is, the diversity of their class relations.⁶ The notion of surplus rests upon an accounting distinction between the labour that is necessary for the producer's subsistence, and the labour that is surplus to the requirements of the direct producers and can be used to support other persons and activities.⁷ This accounting distinction enables a view of a major source of

social wealth (whether in the form of surplus labour, surplus product, or surplus value) and provides an analytical frame for highlighting the different ways this wealth is collected and dispersed.

Many producers have no control over what happens to their surplus – it is appropriated by non-producers who claim right to the wealth produced on a variety of grounds. In capitalist firms workers can be seen to have relinquished right to their surplus as part of the wage contract and it is appropriated by their capitalist employers (or board of directors of the capitalist firm). Similarly in feudal agricultural enterprises access to land for subsistence is granted on the condition that farmers perform surplus labour on their landlord's land or produce surplus product which is appropriated by the landlord. Slaves produce surplus labour that is appropriated by their owners or those who lease them from slaveholders. In all these cases the capitalists, landlords and slaveholders/leasers have first claim on distributing the appropriated surplus, which in the case of the modern capitalist firm goes to cover taxes, interest, dividends, advertising and management costs, investment in expansion (that is, capital accumulation), bribes, personal wealth enhancement, indeed any expenses in addition to those devoted to reproducing the production process (productive capital and labour power).

In addition to the exploitative form of class relations where non-producers appropriate surplus, there are non-exploitative enterprise forms in which workers appropriate their own surplus. Independent, self-employed producers are in charge of producing, appropriating and distributing their own surplus and setting the distinction between their wage (the necessary labour payment) and their surplus. In worker cooperatives, cooperators set their own wage and produce a communal surplus that they collectively appropriate and distribute.

It should be remembered that not all capitalist firms are driven to distribute all of their surplus to expansion or the consumption fund of shareholders and managers. Difference *within* the category of capitalist enterprise is as important to recognize as the difference between organizational forms or class processes.⁸ Increasingly there are 'alternative' capitalist firms who distinguish themselves from their mainstream capitalist counterparts in that part of their production process, their product, or their appropriated surplus is oriented toward environmentally friendly or socially responsible activity. State capitalist enterprises employ wage labour and appropriate surplus but have the potential to produce public goods and distribute surplus funds to public benefit. Non-profit enterprises similarly employ wage labour and appropriate their surplus but by law are not allowed to retain or distribute profits.

By distinguishing all these different ways in which social wealth is generated and deployed, we are able to represent an 'economy' as something more extensive and less concentrated than our usual, commonsense understanding of capitalism. Elaborating a vision of the 'diverse economy' is one

of our strategic moves against the subordination of local subjects to the discourse of (capitalist economic) globalization.⁹ It prompts a recognition that 'things could be otherwise' politically, based on the recognition that they are already 'otherwise' discursively. What is visible, intelligible and measurable has a different imaginative and social status than what is sequestered in the obscure realm of the unthought and unseen. If the elements of a diverse economy can be endowed with credible existence, they can become candidates for political projects of strengthening and building different economies here and now.

The intellectual project of widening the horizon of the economy and locating the diverse practices that occupy the economic landscape is one step towards re-politicizing the economy, exposing its singular capitalist identity as a regulatory fiction (Butler 1990). But what kind of economy might we put in place, if we were truly engaged in building alternatives that were not necessarily or predominantly capitalist? To begin to think about this is to embark upon another kind of language politics, one that involves what we have called the 'community economy'. But rather than the proliferative fullness we see in the diverse economy, the community economy is an emptiness – as it has to be, if the project of building it is to be political, experimental, open and democratic.

Community economies/communal subjects

What might it mean to build a community economy, if we refuse any positive blueprint that tells us what and where to build? Blueprints for economic development have to date been dominated by the naturalized universal of the capitalist economy (as the model of economy, as the only true, viable, self-regulating economy, as something that effaces its particularist origins in the West, in certain forms of market, in certain types of enterprise). Or alternatively they have attempted to prescribe socialism, understood as capitalism's opposite, with central planning and state ownership supplanting the disavowed markets and privately-owned industrial property associated with the capitalist 'other'.

Underpinning the complex set of strategies, policies and beliefs that constitute development discourse (whether it is aimed toward building capitalism or socialism) is a particular ontological framing of the economy that is rooted in the experience of Western European and North American industrialization. The relationships between production and consumption, investment and growth, proletarianization and material well-being, competition, technological change and efficiency that characterized these experiences have been reified as logics of economic functioning and placed outside of discourse onto the terrain of reality. Here they are worshipped as universal principles (sometimes represented as

natural 'laws') of economic evolution. Different attempts to produce economic development ignore these laws at their peril, it seems.

Our stance involves both resisting the attractions of any blueprint or vision of lawful development *and* proposing the *community economy* as a new and different kind of universal that might guide the process of building different economies. Unlike the structurally configured economy with its regularities and lawful relationships, the community economy is an acknowledged space of ethical interaction and self-formation. Anything but a blueprint, it is instead an empty and unknown terrain that calls forth exploratory conversation and ethical and political acts of decision.

For the minimalism and 'emptiness' of the abstract community economy we are indebted to Jean-Luc Nancy (1991a: 74), who theorizes community starting from a pre-subjective recognition of the interdependent coexistence that is entailed in all 'being' – something he calls 'being-in-common' that constitutes 'us all' (Nancy 1991b). Recognition of economic being-in-common is a precondition for a politics aimed at building and extending community economic practices.¹⁰ In approaching the task of signifying the community economy, however, we must keep in mind the ever-present danger that any attempt to fix a fantasy of common being (our sameness), to define the community economy, to specify what it contains (and thus what it does not) closes off the space of decision and the opportunity to cultivate ethical praxis. The space of decision as we have identified it is the emptiness at the center of the community economy; it constitutes the community economy as a *negativity* with potential to become rather than a *positivity* with clear contents and outlines. The practice of the community economy is a fluid process of continual resignification, rejecting any fantasy that there is a perfect community economy that lies outside of negotiation, struggle, uncertainty, ambivalence, disappointment, rejecting the notion that there's a blueprint that tells us what to do and how to 'be communal'. Indeed, it is a recognition that there's no way *not* to be communal, *not* to be materially implicated one with another, that recalls us to the political task of 'building a community economy'.

As with the discourse of economic difference, the practice of the community economy can be seen as already existing and widespread. It is interesting, for example, to note the many alternative economic movements that are explicitly about re-socializing economic relations and infusing them with ethical values and political intent. One has only to think of the fair trade networks that connect third world producers with first world consumers so that in the buying and selling of coffee or bananas or craft products the act of commensuration is *not* disembodied but is ethically negotiated in a quasi face-to-face manner (mirroring the once vital socialist trading blocs). Or the farmers' markets and farm share arrangements and local buying campaigns of community supported agriculture that have sprung up in cities around the industrialized

world to bring fresh produce to consumers at (higher) prices that allow farmers to stay in business. Here we see attempts to eliminate intermediaries and increase the proportion of surplus available to the producer. We can also look to employee buyouts of firms in the face of corporate abandonment in the US, and worker takeovers of factories in the face of economic crisis, as in Argentina today. Here workers are becoming owners, self-managers and appropriators of surplus, learning to make decisions about allocating the value they produce. We can look to the anti-sweatshop movement that raises awareness about rates of exploitation and below subsistence wage rates in industries producing commodities we all depend upon. Or to stockholder movements that use their financial clout to promote ethical investments and police the enforcement of corporate environmental and social responsibility. Or to the living wage movements in North American cities and newly invigorated discussions across Europe and the US of a Universal Basic Income. Even mainstream economic policy has become interested in promoting social entrepreneurship in which non-profit enterprises provide social services at affordable rates and commit to employing community members who are excluded from capitalist labour markets (Amin et al. 2003). In all these movements economic decisions (about prices of goods, wage levels, bonus payments, re-investment strategies, sale of stock, etc.) are made in the light of ethical discussions conducted within various communities of 'us all'. In some cases these communities are geographically confined to the 'local', in others they are international in scope and span the 'global'.

Movements that are re-socializing economic relations provide us with many opportunities to identify sites where ethical economic decisions can be made, where we can begin to perform economy in new ways. These movements involve the coming into being of novel economic subjects who can desire and enact alternative economic relationships. Their example recalls to us the centrality of the ethical economic subject to the politics of constructing a community economy. If our action research practice is concerned to actually build community economies in place, we are necessarily involved in a micro-politics of self-transformation, cultivating ourselves and others as subjects who can identify with and undertake community economic projects. In this connection the economic activities and subjectivities of women come to the fore as salient and exemplary on a number of grounds – not only because women as economic subjects are targeted by the contemporary mainstream development agenda, but because they are actively engaged in the hidden and alternative economic activities of the diverse economy, because their traditional economic pursuits often acknowledge sociality and interdependency, and because women worldwide have become economic activists in place-based movements to defend or enhance livelihoods and environments (see, for example, Horelli 2005).

Women as subjects of economic development and activism

Alongside buoyant beliefs in the efficiency and benefits of globalization a haunting uncertainty has arisen surrounding the question of *who* the local agent of development in the age of globalization might be. Somewhat paradoxically we have recently seen heightened interest in the central role of women in development. While nearly invisible within global and national scale debates about leveling the playing field and joining the global economy, at the local level women in poor urban and rural areas have become the targets of market-led approaches to economic development. Women have been recruited into micro-credit schemes and micro-enterprise development projects upon which the hopes for poverty reduction and economic growth are pinned. And in new debates that trace the success of development agendas to the 'social capital' of certain communities, women's work in nurturing social ties and building and maintaining aspects of civil society is foregrounded as key.

The pioneering achievements of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh were one of the many factors encouraging international development agencies to shift their economic focus to women. Direct improvements to a poor community's livelihoods could be achieved, it seemed, by facilitating women's access to small amounts of credit that they could use to support home and community-based micro-enterprises. With the new micro-credit and micro-enterprise focus, neo-liberal market-led internationalist orthodoxies were married with longstanding local community traditions of revolving credit networks and women's involvement in informal sector production and trading. The ongoing success of these micro-finance schemes relies upon the self-regulating power of the women's borrower group to provide collective and corrective surveillance of individual women's economic habits (Rankin 2001). As more of these schemes have been monitored there is growing concern that some of their impacts may have undermined the trust and supportive networks (the social capital) that enabled them to be established in the first place.¹¹

Clearly it is women's economic identities as existing or potential entrepreneurs that are called forth by these policies. And, as Rankin (2001) argues, it is to women as rational economic subjects, for whom individual gain is paramount, that the appeal for involvement in the schemes is made. Both these aspects of identity are linked to a vision of the economy as essentially capitalist, and the feminine subject as desirous of becoming a capitalist entrepreneur. This is a vision that denies the diversity of women's economic commitments and involvements and ignores the multiplicity of economies and subjects that coexist in economically distinctive places. Importantly, it is a view that disregards the many different opportunities and directions for local economic transformation.

Viewing the recent gender-focused interventions by international development agencies within a 'diverse economy' frame, we can see that these schemes seek to strengthen or establish women as self-employed workers in small

enterprises that are modeled upon capitalist enterprise. The 'development dream' is that, through good fiscal management and innovative product development, some of these micro-enterprises will become fully-fledged capitalist enterprises and the economic benefits will then flow to the wider society.

At the base of the development dream is faith in the incredible productive capacity of capitalist enterprise to generate wealth that can then 'float all boats', supporting higher standards of living and increased levels of well-being. What is rarely a part of this dream, however, is the mechanism by which these benefits will be distributed (let alone redistributed) to all *beyond* those who actively participate in the capital investment or labour markets. The 'us all' that constitutes the majority of society not directly participating in these markets (where some 'return' can be expected) is left out of the picture. The ethical dimensions of surplus generation, its distribution and role in building society are not up for discussion in mainstream development discourse, despite ample evidence that the disparities wrought by capitalist development are not disappearing either within many national economies or on a global scale.

In contrast, the project of building and strengthening community economies assumes that the production and distribution of economic benefit cannot be left to chance. It involves a vision of the economy as an ethical space of negotiated interdependence rather than a self-regulating structure automatically producing (via the invisible hand) increased social well-being through the unbridled pursuit of self-interest. In an environment where the development apparatus is explicitly engaged in producing the entrepreneurial subjects of a capitalist order, it is necessary to pursue an alternative 'politics of the subject', cultivating 'interests' in community economies and capacities to construct them. Not surprisingly it is primarily in the process of building economic alternatives that alternative subjects and capacities emerge.¹²

Women building community economies in place

Below we examine two projects in which women are taking decisions to build new kinds of economy – economies in which social interdependence (economic being-in-common) is acknowledged and fostered and new kinds of community are produced. Each story attests to the power of place as a site of economic diversity and potential, rather than a colonized node in a capitalist world. Each shows women as activists building and strengthening their community economies. And each highlights the constitution of communal subjects through the project of building a community economy in place.

Filipina migrants building the community economy

The international migration of Filipino workers for employment is a central economic strategy for the government of the Philippines, where migrant remittances currently constitute the major source of foreign exchange,

exceeding direct foreign investment. Officially reported remittances amounted to more than US\$7 billion per year for the past 3 years and are projected to reach more than \$8 billion in 2004 (Mellyn 2003; Domingo 2004).¹³ Since this amount exceeds foreign aid for development, the Philippines government, like the governments of other migrant-sending nations, is beginning to consider the development potential of migrant remittances.

Migration is also an important individual and family strategy, with younger workers (the majority of whom are women) leaving home to seek work, primarily in domestic service or merchant seafaring jobs. Conservative estimates place the current number of Filipino overseas migrants at 7.5 million, roughly 10 percent of the population. If the remittances of each of those migrants reach on average 5 people, then well over half of the 76 million Filipinos are directly affected by flows of migration and migrant remittances.

At the turn of the 21st century, there were almost 150,000 Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong alone (Villalba 2001). The bulk of these women's remittances go to their families to expand their consumption and raise their standards of living. But some of them have begun to question the exclusive use of their savings for family consumption, recognizing that such use condemns them (and eventually others) to continued migration for employment. Although supporting their families is important to them, many also want something additional from the migration experience:

... we wanted to be recognized in our home town, to make a difference in our place and to make something of ourselves. Some of us even thought of bringing change in our community.

(Filipina migrant, quoted in Villalba 2001: 81)

An opportunity to 'bring change to the community' is currently being provided by an innovative NGO called the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC). Rather than pursuing the usual NGO strategy of providing services to migrants, the AMC has instead taken up the project of fostering economic activism among them. This has involved a two-pronged initiative: (1) supporting the unionization of domestic workers and mobilizing their political activity around issues in the host country involving wages, benefits, working conditions and immigration policy, and at the same time (2) fostering savings groups to marshal funds for investment to create businesses in the women's home communities. From the perspective of the AMC, migration is a temporary experience that can be instrumental in transforming not only family and individual futures but in creating sustainable economies in women's localities of origin (Gibson et al. 2001).

Savings groups are made up of 5 to 20 women who are usually able to save about 5 percent of their wages (approximately HK\$200 per month) (Gibson

et al. 2001). They work with NGOs based in the Philippines to develop investment and business plans, often involving local community and family members in various capacities. One of the organizations pioneering community enterprise development in collaboration with the AMC is Unlad Kabayan, an NGO that is currently fostering projects in eight provinces of the Philippines. With the assistance of Unlad migrant savings groups are investing in organic chicken farms, rice milling, ube (aromatic yam) processing and confectionery making, a general store, and a coconut coir manufacturing plant, among other businesses. The hope is that such enterprises will reduce and eventually replace the need for continued cyclical out-migration.

We are engaged in a collaborative action research project with Unlad, the local government and members of the community to develop a number of enterprises in the coastal town of Jagna on the island of Bohol. Potential projects involve a group of porters at the local port who are researching the feasibility of a trucking business that could connect upland farmers with urban markets; women who have received sewing training and are investigating the possibility of producing and hiring out ceremonial robes such as togas for school graduations, or wedding and bridesmaids dresses; and various primary producers who are interested in value-added production of locally-identified products such as virgin coconut oil for the local and export markets.¹⁴ The project participants (including migrant investors, the research team and NGO staff, and local collective entrepreneurs) are committed to establishing businesses that accord with values other than profit maximization and to cultivating subjects other than the self-interested individual – investors, workers, and managers who are capable and desirous of constructing a community economy in place. What that involves is continually negotiating the goals and relationships of each enterprise, taking into account their impacts on social well-being and ecological sustainability, and their potential for increasing the surplus available for building the community economy.

To understand the current and potential success of the AMC, Unlad and the women migrants, it is important to recognize the micro-politics of self-formation that accompanies the women's involvement in savings groups for alternative investment. Women migrants who participate in savings groups are making the decision not to consume their wages in Hong Kong and thus are drawing a boundary between their necessary and surplus labour, taking the decision to reduce consumption in order to constitute a surplus available for other things. They are also deciding not to distribute all of their surplus to their families' consumption fund but instead to reserve a portion for community-oriented investment.¹⁵ Through the lens of class analysis we can see that these women are constituting a new class position for themselves as independent appropriators and distributors of their own surplus. While they may

inhabit simultaneously the class position of exploited and indentured labourer (a portion of) whose surplus is appropriated by their employer, their new independent class position is nonetheless empowering. Moreover, the distribution to community enterprise projects adds a communal class identification to their independent and indentured ones (Gibson et al. 2001; Gibson-Graham 2004a). Thus, they are redefining themselves not only as self-appropriating (of their surplus) but as ethical subjects of a community economy.

Women building the community economy in Mararikulam

Mararikulam is one of the poorest areas of the coastal Indian province of Kerala. Yet in this district literacy rates are above 90 percent, infant mortality is low and life expectancy greater than seventy years – indicators that are close to what we would expect in a wealthy country (Franke 2003: 8). Currently Kerala is engaged in what they call the ‘Mararikulam experiment’ – an adventure in generating local income and employment for the poorest of the poor, inspired by the Mondragon experience in the Basque region of Spain. At the heart of Mondragon’s success in generating local employment and increasing standards of living is a strong base of worker-owned industrial cooperatives in which the workers appropriate the surplus they produce (rather than it going to the capitalist, or to the board of directors of a capitalist firm). The cooperatively produced commodities are marketed locally, nationally and internationally. And the industrial coops are supported by ‘second degree’ cooperative organizations that function to redistribute a proportion of the surplus generated toward creating more coops, including not only more industrial coops but also coops providing education (from pre-school through university), housing, health care and social security.

Mondragon provides an inspirational model of a community economy built around the generation, marshalling and distribution of surplus. But any examination of the Mondragon experiment must be struck by the contingent conditions prevailing in the Basque region that presented those cooperators with their particular challenges. This place-based model cannot be transported to any site in the world and expected to work without modification. In each site the particular and contingent conditions will present their own challenges, shaping the decisions made and pathways followed. The insight that surplus is generated and that wealth *can be* shared equitably and democratically is what Mondragon teaches us.

The Mararikulam experiment is not only following and adapting the Mondragon model but building on decades of struggles for social justice in Kerala and most recently the province wide 1996–2001 Kerala People’s Plan Campaign that lifted literacy levels and engaged people in planning processes through innovative grass roots initiatives carried out in each village (Thomas Isaac et al. 1998). In the spirit of self-reliance associated with Mahatma Gandhi

and as part of this experiment, over 1,500 neighborhood savings groups made up of 20 to 40 women are transforming themselves from credit associations to production cooperatives. The exclusive emphasis on women's involvement is a way of addressing issues of gender equity and women's empowerment in Kerala, developing women's productive power to enhance their social and political power. The first step has been to generate capital by organizing women to redefine some of their meager earnings as a surplus to be saved and invested, rather than as a part of the necessary consumption fund. Even very small amounts, when saved by 17,000 women, have yielded enough to capitalize a number of small cooperatives (Franke 2003: 9).

This is where the Mararikulam experiment is both building on and going beyond the development approach of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, which has demonstrated the benefit that savings and small scale loans can have on women's livelihoods. In Mararikulam the lending structure is organized and controlled by elected committees of the women's neighborhood groups, not an outside bank bureaucracy. Members of the savings group are linked not just via the social monitoring of saving and loan repayment, but also as potential worker-owners in a collective income-generating enterprise. The usual projects that target savings and micro-credit involve women working alone in self-employed micro-enterprises and the level of marketing, technological and quality control support is minimal, thus increasing the vulnerability of the exercise and diminishing its chances of growing beyond a certain small size. Rankin (2001) has also pointed out the dangers of programs that rely on collective disciplining of individual repayment behavior resulting in an undermining of other aspects of the community economy such as traditional sharing practices. In the Mararikulam case the emphasis on micro-cooperative enterprises attempts to address the individualization of these initiatives. Moreover, the small coops are supported by a centralized marketing and capital management corporation that provides services to all the micro-enterprises across the larger community.¹⁶ Purchasing these services involves a distribution of surplus generated in the small-scale enterprises, but it is a distribution that ensures the likelihood of success of the micro-cooperative and the sustainable generation of an income for the poor women involved.

The goal of the Mararikulam experiment is to generate up to 20,000 jobs 'paying enough to bring households above the poverty line' (Franke 2003: 8) by creating a big federation of small coops. The initial coops started by producing soap, an ideal product not only because it can be made using coconut oil, an abundant local product, but because Kerala consumes more soap per capita than the rest of India. At a meeting held in 2002, 30,000 women took the Mari soap pledge, to buy Mari soap rather than imported brands in a conscious act of resistance to corporate globalization as well as an affirmation of local self-reliance.

By 2003 the second stage was underway, with coops producing semi-processed foods, umbrellas, school notebooks, school bags and kits. The third more ambitious stage will develop Mararikulam's food producing potential, including fish farming and processing the ocean catch of fish, shrimp and mussels. It will also develop more technologically advanced employment in the manufacture of coir (coconut fiber) products like geo-textiles and packaging. Here they will become exporters, producing food and manufactured products beyond the local capacity for consumption.

The basic idea of the Mararikulam experiment is that local 'wealth' can be collectively marshalled to bring people out of poverty. Local governments and the worker-owners themselves supply more than 40 percent of the investment funds for this experiment with additional funding coming at this stage from provincial and international agencies. Rather than relying on the promise of a trickle down of benefit from the development of capitalist enterprise, the women of Mararikulam are taking matters into their own hands, deciding to use their own savings to leverage funds from community based organizations to build self-reliant worker cooperatives in which they are the first receivers and distributors of their own surplus. Through constructing the capacity to generate surplus in cooperative enterprises that are collectively supported by community wide organizations,¹⁷ the women of Mararikulam are maximizing the chance that benefits will be widely shared and constituting themselves as communal economic subjects in the process.

A concluding thought on the politics of place

What is encouraging and inspiring to us about these stories of women who are building community economies in place is not just the evidence of local success, though this is indeed remarkable and hopeful. Much more broadly, however, we believe that we are witnessing the emergence of a new economic politics – one that is place-based yet globally distributed, in localities and regions on every (populated) continent (Gibson-Graham 2004b, Osterweil 2004). A number of factors have conspired to delay the widespread recognition of this emergent politics, not least of which is the tendency to privilege the global as important and transformative while denigrating the local as contained and coopted – especially where economic politics is concerned. Another factor of course is the global/local binary itself, which makes it difficult to perceive the two poles coexisting in one political form. And yet this is indeed what seems to be happening – a *globally* emergent politics of *local* economic construction, based on widely shared values of autonomy, self-sufficiency, and community. We can recognize this politics in the 'movement of movements' and the World Social Forum, in the popular fascination with the experience of the Zapatistas and the Argentine unemployed workers'

movement, in the explosion of books, articles, videos and websites covering these movements as well local economic projects that are less well-known. Something is happening, it seems, simultaneously on the local and global scales.

At the beginning of the chapter, we spoke of the way that second wave feminism has shaped and motivated our place-based economic politics. Feminism became a global movement not because it was globally organized but because women are everywhere. And of course not only are women everywhere but so are economic practices, resources, relationships, and organizations. What this suggests to us is the globally transformative potential of place-based initiatives, as economies are (re)constructed locally and participants are linked across distance through mutual learning, ties of cooperation, and local identifications with a global 'movement'. It is this new global politics that WPP is helping to bring to (self)recognition, and that offers the possibility of far-reaching change.¹⁸ We are excited to be living in these terrible times.

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Notes

1. Cameron and Gibson-Graham (2003) provide a review of this literature.
2. From a capitalocentric perspective these activities are often seen as remnant social or cultural practices rather than (an arguably growing) part of contemporary economies.
3. Clearly more dimensions of difference could be added, for example, property and resource ownership.
4. Indeed North comments that 'It is a peculiar fact that the literature on economics...contains so little discussion of the central institution that underlies neo-classical economics – the market' (North 1977, quoted in Callon 1998: 1).
5. While the vast extent of the literature on gift giving and ritual exchange has focused on these practices in 'traditional' societies (see, for example, Gudeman [2000] for an overview), recent research in 'the west' has highlighted the huge significance of gift giving, sharing and obligatory allocations between extended kin and other networks (church groups, locality-based communities, etc.) (Community Economies Collective 2001; Godbout 1998). Feminist Genevieve Vaughan (1997) theorizes a parallel economy of generosity existing alongside the 'exchange economy'. She sees giving as an extension of mothering and as a practice that resists calculations of commensurability.
6. Attempts to recoup and develop Marx's economic analysis of surplus production, appropriation and distribution have rekindled an interest in an anti-essentialist

economic language of class (as opposed to a language of social distinction) (Resnick and Wolff 1987; Gibson-Graham, Resnick and Wolff 2000, 2001). This language is non-systemic and offers the possibility of theorizing the complex coexistence of multiple class processes in the constitution of contemporary societies and subjects. It is also nonlinear in that it is released from a teleology of economic development, where feudalism gives way to capitalism, capitalism to socialism (or to the end of history). In other words, it allows a reinstatement of history and contingency in the domain of economy. It de-naturalizes dominance, making capitalist dominance an historical and theoretical question rather than a natural feature of capitalism. We are interested in developing and bringing this class language to a position of more prominence in an alternative (counter-hegemonic) discourse of economic difference.

7. Hindess and Hirst (1975) clarify this point when they state: '[s]urplus labour . . . exists in all modes of production because the conditions of reproduction of the labourer are not equivalent to the conditions of reproduction of the economy' (26).
8. A failure to be attentive to this difference blinds us to the potential for there to be 'good' capitalist firms/employers and encourages myopia when viewing the down side of communality or socialism.
9. For the most part, economic diversity has been framed in the familiar terms of market versus state (this is what gives us the Third Way and the Social Economy as 'the' alternatives), or in the evaluative hierarchies of traditional and modern, backward or developed that permeate and perpetuate the project of capitalist development.
10. Such a politics of course always confronts the dangers of posing a positivity, a normative representation of the community economy, in which certain ethics and practices are valued over others. For instance, the language of the diverse economy recognizes the contemporary prevalence of slavery as a mode of economic organization, indentured labour as a form of remunerated labour, and theft as a mode of transaction. All are sites in which the sociality and interdependency of economic relations is not hidden but is violently and coercively present. It is difficult to imagine the place of these practices in a discourse of community economy that can counter the hegemonic hold of capitalism on the ideas of freedom and democracy. And yet theft is often the only resort of the poor for economic survival, and when it involves reclaiming what has been unlawfully taken, as in common land, resources or intellectual property, it may be construed as a legitimate mode of economic redistribution. Likewise indentured labour performed in one national economy might generate savings that can be used to start community enterprises in another. On what basis might we exclude or include such activities in the practice of building community economies?
11. 'Ethnographic studies have shown that in some microcredit programmes group members vigorously monitor one another's consumption patterns to ensure cash reserves are devoted foremost to loan repayment. In practice, the groups can thus generate an environment of hostility and coercion that polarizes, rather than unites, their members' (Rankin 2001: 32).
12. When unemployed workers in Argentina took over abandoned factories after the economic crisis of 2001, the obstacle they encountered was not the state or capital – which were after all in disarray – but their own subjectivities. They were workers, not managers or sales reps or entrepreneurs, and as one of them said, 'If they had come to us with 50 pesos and told us to show up for work tomorrow, we would have done just that'. Instead, for lack of an option, they found themselves recreating Argentine manufacturing. Just as they had formerly constituted a capitalist economy through their identifications and daily practices as workers, so they are now

constituting an economy and sociality of 'solidarity' as members of the unemployed workers' movement (MTD). That this requires 'a struggle against themselves' is one of their principal tenets and observances (Chatterton 2005: 26, quoting Colectivo Situaciones). For the MTD, combating capitalism means refusing a longstanding sense of self and mode of being in the world, while simultaneously cultivating new forms of sociability, visions of happiness, and economic capacities (Colectivo Situaciones 2004: 13). It is as though they had taken up the challenge of economic subjectivity that Foucault identified many years earlier, and made it the touchstone of their movement:

The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the economy...but to liberate us both from the economy and from the type of individualization that is linked to the economy. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.

(Foucault 1982: 216)

13. Mellyn (2003) estimates that this amount would be doubled if unregulated remittances were taken into account.
14. This is a project Katherine Gibson is involved in with Australian National University colleagues Deirdre McKay, Kathryn Robinson and Andrew McWilliam, and doctoral students Amanda Cahill and Jayne Curnow (Australian Research Council Grant No. LP0347118 'Negotiating alternative economic strategies for regional development in Indonesia and the Philippines').
15. This transformation often involves internal conflict and conflict with the agendas of family members:

Because I am the youngest [in the family] I only supported my father and mother...I told them before I come here in Hong Kong [from working in Singapore], 'I only have to send you 1,500 pesos every month.' Because I said 'I want to save my income'. So I [am] not planning on staying in Hong Kong for long, for many years. So I want to come back home in a few years.

(Gibson et al. 2001)
16. The marketing firm works on establishing brand loyalty (for example, the Mari soap pledge discussed in the following paragraph) but will also 'arrange economies of scale where practicable, will oversee product quality to facilitate out-of-region markets, will assure consistent health and safety standard in all the local units' (Mararikulam Experiment Project website, page 2).
17. Indeed, the construction of local health care clinics is part of the accompanying project of improving public health, health care and nutrition.
18. This does not mean that other types of politics are no longer necessary or appropriate, or that women in place do not have to negotiate the realities of global power. Rather it is an acknowledgment that there is more than one political way forward, and an attempt to discern the outlines of an emerging political imaginary (Graham 2002; Gibson-Graham 2004b; Osterweil 2004). For a longer discussion of the politics of place as it relates to the politics of empire, see Gibson-Graham (2003b).

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5.1

Seeing Diversity, Multiplying Possibility: My Journey from Post-feminism to Post-development with J. K. Gibson-Graham

Kelly Dombroski

Introduction

As a graduate student I first came into contact with the work and persons of J. K. Gibson-Graham. As I was mentored and supervised by Katherine Gibson, the piece 'Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place' became part of my journey into feminism and feminist post-development research. In this chapter I highlight three principles I have carried with me from that time until now: starting where you are, seeing diversity and multiplying possibility. With reference to my own developing research interests, I explore how Gibson-Graham's work is relevant and inspiring in a third-wave feminist context.

Starting where you are

If women are everywhere, a woman is always somewhere, and those somewheres are what the project is about: places being created, strengthened, defended, augmented, transformed by women.

(Gibson-Graham 2005a: 131)

Because the personal is political, I begin here with my own feminist journey, a journey in which the work of Gibson-Graham has played an important role. My feminist journey began rather late, I see now. For most of my youth in the 'somewhere' of 1980s rural New Zealand I assumed what I now know is called a 'post-feminist' stance. That is, I assumed that gender equality had been achieved and all I had to do was get out there and grasp it. Looking back, my attitude seems almost misogynist: I saw equality as something to be achieved by becoming something like a man, and I identified with the male protagonists in all the fiction classics we read throughout school. I eschewed anything overly

feminine, had mostly male friends and began down the male-dominated career path of engineering with a hearty side helping of male-dominated kayaking watersports. Fortunately, a number of experiences arrested this odd trajectory, and gradually I came to understand what the feminist project was all about.

The first experience was getting engaged and married at the rather tender age of 20, to my husband who was then unemployed. All of a sudden, expectations of appropriate wifely behaviour somehow forced themselves into my consciousness, primarily becoming visible due to my unorthodox role as family breadwinner. As I came up against institutional and social expectations that cast me in the role of economic dependant, my identity as protagonist of my own story was challenged for the first time. The second experience was that of conducting ethnographic fieldwork for my development studies master's degree in a national park in Sichuan Province, China. After three days in a Tibetan village, I managed discussions with almost all the men, but had yet to talk to a woman for more than three minutes. My breakfast appeared as if by magic every morning, and then the women trudged down the mountain to catch the bus to their tourism work, returning late in the afternoon only to busy themselves in the kitchen and the courtyard with food preparation and washing. Eventually I began working with them in their jobs outside the village and was able to get more of an insight into their lives. The insight I was left with from this experience was that in the face of hardship and sudden change, women are collectively strong, resourceful and adaptable while not losing their ability to care. Coming from the background I have already outlined, I actually felt guilty for having these 'sexist' thoughts about women's strengths and men's failures. But I saw for the first time that gender equality should not mean women becoming more like men.

The third experience is the key here, however. In March 2006 I arrived as a new PhD student at the Australian National University to study with Katherine Gibson. In addition to the normal stresses of international moves, graduate study and fieldwork planning in China, I was also heavily pregnant and my husband and I were both dependent on my PhD scholarship for our income. Despite our avowals that we would share parenting equally and give equal priorities to both our study programmes, I began to understand how my embodiment as a mother could potentially change this dynamic permanently. Still feeling guilty for my 'sexist' thoughts, I tackled the list of feminist geography articles that Katherine had assigned me, hoping to find some answer to my turmoil. It was at this time that Katherine handed me her volume of *Women and the Politics of Place* (Gibson-Graham in Harcourt and Escobar 2005a) and pointed out her chapter within as a useful 'starting point' for thinking about researching women in China. She probably did not realize that she had also just handed me the key to thinking about my own journey as a woman and a mother.

By the time my daughter was born, it was clear to me that there were some pretty big differences between men and women, and it was not a bad thing necessarily. As I worked with my body to birth and breastfeed my baby, I experienced a deep embodied connection to my child somewhat different from my husband. I knew when to feed her because I could feel it was time as the milk came in; he had to watch the clock, think about her signals and proceed through trial and error. Yet as family breadwinner in a capitalist society, I also felt pressure to dissociate myself from this somehow and get out there and work 'proper' hours. During this time of turmoil, as these new experiences, thoughts and pressures whirled in my mind, often while breastfeeding in the middle of the night, I read:

Women are associated with place not because they are home-based or place bound but because of their inaugural and continuing role in shaping new politics. Over the course of more than three decades feminists have inserted issues of the female person and body – the place 'closest in' – into political discourse and struggles in their domestic settings, in their communities, and in the national and international political arenas, thereby enlarging the domain of the 'political' ... feminists have not fixated on the global as the ultimate scale of successful activism ... they are continuing their orientation to the local, the daily, the bodily, recognising that transforming the world involves transforming sites, subjects, and practices worldwide.

(Gibson-Graham 2005a: 131)

My new orientation to the female, the daily, the bodily and the place closest in was thus affirmed as important politically and intellectually. As I began to prepare my fieldwork proposal and trip to northwest China, I could not help but wonder how the local, the daily, the bodily looked to mothers in Qinghai, and what transformations were happening in their sites, subjectivities and practices. How did they manage an embodied connection to their child, if this indeed was something they experienced at all? How did they contribute to their household financially and economically after children were born? How were their lives being affected by processes of globalization, development and the rapid changes occurring in China? How was the political present in their everyday lives, and how did that compare with mine? Clearly, for me to remain interested in my studies and to work through my own struggles in becoming a strong female protagonist of my own story, these questions needed to become part of my project of research. The next chapter for this female protagonist was the move to the city of Xining, Qinghai's provincial capital, my daughter then just eight months old.

Women are everywhere and therefore always somewhere. As Gibson-Graham notes, it is these somewheres that are being transformed, but I think it is

also that these somewheres may transform a woman. The somewhere for this woman's story became Xining, Qinghai Province, China. I lived on Ba Yi Road, in the lower-income side of the city, lined with small family businesses, open-air markets, hawkers, streetcleaners and more. Other mothers were very obviously present in the economic activities of my street, and in later interviews they expressed a strong conviction that they work to provide for their children and parents. The types of economic activity they were involved in are considered the least important by traditional economists (Waring 1999) and Chinese provincial governments (Hsu 2007), perhaps because they are activities that meet the flexible employment needs of women with children. Whatever the case, the somewhere for these mothers' stories was Ba Yi Road in Xining too, and it was this somewhere where our stories would intertwine momentarily as we all sought to provide for and nurture ourselves and our families.

Seeing diversity

One of the inspirations for the WPP project has been the desire to assert a logic of difference and possibility against the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and the teleological generalities of political economy.

(Gibson-Graham 2005: 132)

Situated in the far west of China, in the province of Qinghai, the 1,000-year-old city of Xining stretches along a river valley between two ranges of dusty and bare mountains. Some one million residents of Han, Tibetan, Hui and other ethnicities live out all or part of their lives here, some migrating seasonally between rural and urban homes. The city is the headquarters for projects, run by both government and development agencies, that seek to 'open up' the west, 'build up' the west, and modernize the city and its people once and for all. No one is the ethnic majority here: Han, Tibetan and Hui Muslim each make up around a scant third of the city, with some other minority cultures thrown into the mix. Yet Han Chinese culture is the majority culture nationally, and is seen as the culture of 'modernity' in this part of the world (as opposed to the 'feudal' minorities). And so it is that modernity and backwardness are measured along a line where Han Chinese norms (cultural, economic, social, political) are seen as the most advanced, and the other ethnic groups are lined up in order of their quality and modernity. Development is often imagined as this: an out-of-the-way, backward, minority-populated place coming to look more like the modern cities of the eastern seaboard, physically and culturally.

Just as the cultural diversity of Xining and Qinghai comes to be imagined by many to line up in a teleological queue, from backward to modern, so too do the practices, lives and 'quality'¹ of mothers there. My research took place in 2007 and 2009, and largely comprised ethnographic observation (for most

of a year in 2007) and qualitative recorded interviews in Mandarin Chinese (for three months in 2009) with Han, migrant Han, Hui and Tibetan mothers. My main criterion for inclusion was that they identified as a mother, of course among other subjectivities they held simultaneously. While grandparents often have primary responsibility to care for children, only one of my interviewed participants was a grandmother as I gradually came to focus on the particularities of younger mothers' lives rather than the care of children.² The majority of my remaining 21 interviewees had children under 6.

Although my focus on mothers was a result of my own life-changing experience of becoming a mother, I tried to approach each of these women with a 'beginner's mind', looking for the diverse ways in which they managed life as mothers and not assuming contiguity with my own experiences or others I had observed and interviewed. Some of the mothers lived away from their children, some lived with their in-laws, some with their parents and some with their nuclear family. Others oscillated between different arrangements depending on the time of life or economic circumstances of the extended family. Some had their children with them at work, or even lived in shops with their children and other family members. My ethnographic work was fairly wide-ranging, but my qualitative interviews with mothers focused on their roles and responsibilities in the household and wider family, and their experiences in a number of key mothering activities that emerged: providing, birthing, breastfeeding, and infant toileting and hygiene.

Whatever their background and current circumstances, I was consistently struck by the way in which women 'lined up' their mothering practices and those of others they knew into two camps: modern and backward. Just as the city of Xining is understood by residents and outsiders to lie at a specific point along a continuum from 'backward' to 'modern', and to be propelled along this path by the process of 'development', so too are mothers understood to line up in some way. Qinghai is one of China's poorest provinces on the most common economic indicators (Goodman 2004). I was interviewing mothers with reference to their everyday lives, and in my 'beginner's mind' their mothering practices were not necessarily related to their poverty or wealth. Yet for mothers in Xining, it seemed that the 'economic' criteria of modernity and backwardness shaped attitudes to everything else mothering.

Table 5.1.1 is constructed from words and ideas found in transcripts and fieldnotes, and it shows a simplistic 'lining up' of women into two categories: backward and modern. Although economics is given as the primary difference between 'backward' and 'modern' cities or provinces, everything the poor women did as mothers was assumed to also be inferior somehow to what the 'modern' women did. The economic, birthing, breastfeeding and hygiene practices of mothers from economically 'backward' areas or ethnic groups were *all* seen as retrograde and inferior irrespective of their education level or income.

Table 5.1.1 The 'lining up' of women in northwest China

poor	wealthy
selfless	'cultured'
undeveloped	developed
'feudal'	'changing for the better'
backward	modern
restrictive	'options'
ignorant	educated
'hasn't changed'	'decision-making'
'uncultured'	rational
dirty	attentive
'bitter'	hygienic
'low status'	'higher status'
'superstitious'	equality

Source: Fieldnotes and interview transcriptions (2007–2009)

Table 5.1.2 The 'lining up' of mothering practices in northwest China

dirty/unhygienic practices	ultrahygienic
prefer boys	selective <i>yuezi</i>
mother-in-law childcare/babies at work	read books about childrearing
spoiling	modern products
unable to educate children	imported products
'jig' babies to sleep	put babies down to sleep
backward	modern
traditional weaning methods	pregnant woman health products
overdress children	lactating woman health products
traditional nappy-free toileting	toys and books
breastfeed too long and too often	best education from kindergarten
poor-quality milk or untreated milk	<i>baomu</i> /nanny childcare
<i>yuezi</i> superstitions	foetal education
daughter-in-law in extended family	nuclear family

Source: Fieldnotes and interview transcriptions (2007–2009)

Table 5.1.2 illustrates this, where the first column describes the words used and attitudes towards rural, migrant, ethnic-minority and poor mothers (i.e., those considered 'less modern'), and the second column describes the words used and attitudes towards mothers who were wealthy Han, Asian or European immigrants from outside the province, and the very wealthy Han within.

It became clear that one effect of the development discourse in northwest China is that the diversity of mothering practices is forced into a kind of historical queue teleology, such as that described by Doreen Massey:

2005a). In the same way, applying such an approach to mothering in Qinghai allowed me to see the diversity of all the different kinds of coexisting practices without organizing them into a historical queue where X practice is slated to replace Y. This does not mean that all practices are ideal, are beneficial to women or are beneficial to children. However, it delinks mothering practices from a capitalist logic where the economic status of a place, group, community or individual determines the quality of mothering or parenting. It does not follow that the poor mothers are necessarily poor mothers, even if they have lower incomes and less education. It does not follow that the mothering practices of the rich or middle class or majority ethnicity are necessarily best, even if it is generally understood to be so in a particular cultural context.

In Table 5.1.3 I give an example of the diversity of economic activities mothers perform on Bayi Road. While not all the mothering practices present in the wordle can be represented here, it highlights how many mothering practices are also part of the (diverse) economy that sustains life for individuals, families and communities. Rather than positioning some kinds of economic (or mothering) activity as further along an imaginary historical queue than others, the diverse economies framework allowed me to represent mothers' economic activities as contemporaneous and equally important, if not equally desirable.

What are the effects of seeing and representing this diversity? Clearly, as Gibson-Graham points out in her use of the diverse economies framework, not all activities may be ethically or personally desirable. A mother may prefer to be paid for her housework labour, or to not to have to perform it all, for example (and indeed some mothers here did not). But the point is not to celebrate diversity *per se* but to open up possibility, for it is in seeing the diversity of women's lives and their important economic contributions that we might imagine a number of different futures outside those prescribed by the teleological story of mothering and modernity. In the next section I pick out two non-capitalist activities from this diverse economy: the non-capitalist transaction of breastfeeding and the non-capitalist labour of infant toileting. I explore the exigencies and possibilities of mothers' everyday lives in Xining through these two activities.

Multiplying possibility

[The language of] place signifies the possibility of understanding local economies as places with highly specific economic identities and capacities rather than simply as nodes in a global capitalist system. In more broadly philosophical terms, place is that which is not fully yoked into a system of meaning, not entirely subsumed to a (global) order; it is that aspect of every site that exists as potentiality.

(Gibson-Graham 2005: 132)

Table 5.1.3 The diverse economy of mothers on Bayi Road

Transactions	Labour	Enterprise
Market	Wage	Capitalist
Consumer of market goods, including babycare services and products	Informal waged workers	Co-owners of teahouse uptown
Paying for birth-related services, such as scans, c-sections, doctor's fees		
Alternative market	Alternative paid	Alternative capitalist
Informal market	Self-employed	Family-owned enterprise
Purchase of fruit, vegetables and meat from 'back-of-the-truck street stalls	Small one-woman stalls	Noodle house owned by two sisters-in-law who employ much of their extended family
Hiring of poor relatives or friends for below-market wages	Back-of-the-bike businesses	
Black market	In kind	
Currency exchange on black market	Housing provided in boss-relative's home or shop	
	Goods given as part-payment	
Non-market	Unpaid	Non-capitalist
Household flows	Housework	Independent
Sharing household labour with other family members	Cooking, cleaning, washing clothes for household	Back-of-the-bike business
Breastfeeding children	Family care	Stallholders in marketplace
Gift-giving	Of children and elderly relatives	Butcher-mothers
Giving gifts to friends, colleagues and family, sometimes to cultivate <i>guanxi</i>	Infant toileting	Feudal/patriarchal: many families operate as an economic unit, with obligatory childcare roles for the husband's mother. Family members may be expected to contribute to family or patriarch-owned businesses for free
State allocations	Self-provisioning labour	
Space for marketplace, toilets provided	Preserving	
State appropriations	Volunteer	
Family land in the country appropriated by state for mining	At church, mosque and temple	
Barter	Care of others' children	
Between stall-holders and suppliers	Giving birth	
	Breastfeeding	

Although Qinghai is a somewhat ‘out-of-the-way’ part of China, it is not isolated from global changes by any means. Two technologies that have the potential to change the everyday lives of mothers are infant formula milk and disposable nappies. But if we reject the teleological understanding of mothering diversity, we cannot assume that they will be taken up merely because they are available and are ‘modern’. In fact, infant formula has been widely taken up but disposable nappies less so, and for a set of contingent reasons entirely different from what one might expect. When we think of local economies as places rather than nodes in the capitalist system, we are more open to considering other possibilities where place is not entirely subsumed into the global order (Gibson-Graham 2005). In the next section I briefly explore the examples of breastfeeding and *baniao* – two mothering practices where change is occurring somewhat contingently.

Unhomogenizing milk

In Qinghai and China more generally, one mothering practice that has changed in the last 20 years is that of breastfeeding (Guo et al. 2013). The use of formula milk has become widespread, and even with recent increases in the category ‘any breastfeeding’, in 2010 around 40% of newborn infants in north-west China received substances other than breastmilk, with some 27.1% of newborn infants being given formula milk. The standard argument for the increased use of formula goes as follows. With the increasing availability of infant formula, the increasing marketing of infant formula as more scientific and producing smarter babies, increasing incomes, and the increasing push for educated women to return to work and produce, infant formula gradually comes to replace breastfeeding in middle-class homes. Then, poor women who may not work, or may even be able to have their babies with them in their work, come to see formula feeding as more ‘modern’, and seek to emulate their wealthier countrywomen by feeding their children modern formula. To summarize, the argument is one of global homogenization.

But what happens if we try to understand places such as Qinghai as having highly specific economic (and cultural) identities, rather than as nodes in a global capitalist system? In my research with Qinghai mothers, I opened up the question of breastfeeding and formula feeding again through a lens of contingency and possibility. What I found was rather surprising. Mothers of all socioeconomic groups wanted to breastfeed rather than bottlefeed, many combining both successfully as required. But for those who did use formula exclusively, it was not in fact the global homogenization argument that came through in these discussions. As I pored over my transcripts for clues, it emerged that formula feeding seemed to begin in conjunction with some highly specific interactions between biomedical traditions of the body and traditional

Chinese medical traditions of the body. In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), breastmilk is understood to be produced through the flow of blood and *qi* in the *Chong* and *Ren* meridians, two important meridians that pass through the uterus and breast. In biomedicine, breastmilk is understood to be produced through the combination of hormones and the act of the baby sucking and stimulating let-down. These different understandings lead to different practices of breastfeeding. Although the two medical systems both support and encourage breastfeeding, when they interact and play out in the very bodies of women and infants, a series of openings occur where formula feeding might enter.

The first of these openings is immediately post-partum. In TCM understandings of breastfeeding, a mother needs to first recover from the act of giving birth, which includes blood flow from her uterus and a draining of her *yang qi*. She cannot effectively make milk while in this state of *yin*. She is required to rest and eat *yang* foods to balance out her *qi* and blood. Feeding her baby while she is in an extreme *yin* state may even lead to imbalances in the baby's *qi* and, potentially, illness. Many of the mothers I interviewed waited 24 hours before beginning breastfeeding, and in rural areas I heard of cases of up to three days. This delay appears to have been in place for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and babies have still managed to begin breastfeeding eventually.

As mothers come to give birth in biomedical environments (hospitals), they begin to embody two different maternal bodies: that of TCM and that of biomedicine. So too are their babies coming to embody two different lived realities. In current biomedical understandings of breastfeeding, babies should be put to the breast as soon as they are born, to help bleeding and the birthing of the placenta. From then on, frequent suckling assists with the production of milk, which first appears as colostrum then comes in fully between three and five days after birth. If babies do not feed early enough, they become dehydrated and hypoglycaemic, and may be treated with sugar water (to give them enough energy to suckle and feed). What happens when these two medical systems interact in one body? On the one hand, women are advised by family members to delay so that they may recover. However, on the other hand, there is now a concern that babies may become dehydrated or hypoglycaemic. In many cases, the solution that keeps both tradition and hospital staff happy is the introduction of formula milk. While some successfully manage to transition the baby from formula to breastfeeding after the appropriate delay, the early introduction can play havoc with breastmilk supply and babies' sucking reflexes, thus increasing formula feeding.

In my research I identified three other specific openings where biomedicine and TCM interacted bizarrely to result in formula feeding, despite both medical systems upholding breastfeeding as the best way to feed a baby (Dombroski 2013). I also identified times where breastfeeding was relatively simple and successful – the one-month confinement seemed to be a time of breastfeeding

ease, compared with studies showing the same time period to be a difficult one for mothers in Western nations (Day 2004). So it is that in Qinghai, formula feeding is not necessarily just a result of economic change and multinational capitalism, but the result of a specific interaction in place and in particular bodies.

Unlike the ‘lining up’ of women into ‘backward’ and ‘modern’, my approach to researching women’s everyday lives has been one assuming economic, social and bodily diversity in and between places. Although the use of formula in Qinghai might look like global homogenization, it actually occurs in a highly contingent and overdetermined interaction in place. This multiplies our possibilities for action in a post-development project for change. We need not rely only on standard breastfeeding education about the ‘truth’ of biomedical understandings of breastfeeding – a strategy which has continually failed in China where TCM is a highly theorized and state-supported medical system with over 5,000 years of history.⁴ Rather, a post-development project of maternal and child health might target the specific moments in the breastfeeding journey where the engagement between biomedicine and TCM seems to produce less than healthy results (according to both medical systems). In fact, I have gone on to work with breastfeeding counsellors to produce dialogues and an educational video for biomedically trained personnel working with Chinese women in Australia – suggesting sensitive ways to avoid a clash, and promote infant health and breastfeeding at each of the specific times identified.⁵

Holding out

While disposable nappies have received millions of yuan of marketing attention in China, the average consumer uses only one a day. There are also millions of non-consumers, meaning that for most of China’s babies, most of the time, alternative hygiene measures are being used. For many visitors to China, the sight of babies’ bottoms poking from split crotch pants is common but somewhat surprising. Some assume that babies clothed in this way must be allowed to urinate or defecate wherever they may be, and assume therefore it is a backward unhygienic practice related to poverty. My qualitative interviews with mothers and grandmothers in Xining, however, seem to point in a different direction. Although it is true that wealthier people are more able to afford disposable nappies, it did not follow that they would use them exclusively. In China, poor and wealthy alike choose to continue using the ancient hygiene practice known colloquially as *ba niao* (which means, literally, ‘holding out to urinate’). Caregivers, including parents, grandparents, nannies and other relatives, become attuned to babies’ signals for their impending need to urinate or defecate, and hold them out as required in appropriate places. Babies may indeed be permitted to urinate on the ground or floor on some occasions,

but unspoken bodily rules and customs ensure hygiene through a system of separation (for a detailed explanation, see Dombroski in press).

Is this system backward then? Will it change inevitably with modernization? Perhaps not. People choose to use it for a variety of reasons. In Qinghai, mothers told me that they continue to hold out (literally and metaphorically) mostly for reasons of health. These reasons are based on traditional understandings of the body and its humours, and are unlikely to be completely superseded by biomedicine. Just as the bodies imagined by TCM and biomedicine continued to coexist in one person for mothers and infants negotiating breastfeeding, babies' health depends on meeting the multiple health needs of these two imagined bodies. My participants understood babies' bottoms to be *tai nen* ('extremely delicate') and hence the dampness associated with wearing disposable (or thick cloth) nappies was considered quite problematic. While they were aware of the need to keep hygiene through avoiding contact with germs and bacteria present in faeces, they were also concerned that the dampness caused by enclosed nappies (even clean ones) could migrate around the infant body causing other damp heat problems, such as cradle cap, colic, eczema and night-waking. It is therefore in the best interests of babies and their families that nappies are avoided as much as possible, while also ensuring that baby faeces is kept separate. They enabled this in part by introducing a very small amount of solid food very early in order to change the consistency of the infant's stools (from runny and frequent breast-fed stools to more solid and less frequent solid-food stools).

Researching infant toilet hygiene from a diversity perspective allows us to therefore multiply the possibilities for a post-development project of hygiene and sanitation. The future of hygiene and sanitation in Qinghai and elsewhere may not look like the norms of the so-called developed nations, such as Australia, where children often wear nappies until preschool (Christie 2010). What role might *baniao* play in post-development projects of hygiene in simple circumstances, or in future resource-constrained scenarios? How can it also multiply possibilities for hygiene in the so-called developed world?

In conjunction with my research into *baniao* in Qinghai, I began researching with Australian and New Zealand mothers using a webgroup to explore *baniao* in their own contexts. This webgroup, called *Oznappyfree*, operated as a sort of hybrid research collective (Latour, Roelvink, etc.) researching and experimenting with variations of nappy-free baby care in a rather different sociocultural environment. For these mothers, researching and enacting different types of infant hygiene were a project of maternal activism – working to protect the environment and their babies' health, resist consumerism, and become more connected to their babies' communications of discomfort and need. It may look like patriarchy or capitalism outsourcing social reproduction to mothers, but for many of them it was a project of 'starting where they were' to multiply

possibilities for the future of their family, community and even planet. One mother has gone on to start a mother's mentoring programme that works to change the world by creating another community that works to celebrate and reinterpret feminine strengths:

Because the world needs more switched on mamas. Seriously sister, we can change the world. One birth, one child and one heart at a time. Let's embrace it all with our hearts wide open!

(www.avalondarnesh.com)

Sometimes as feminists we might feel quite uncomfortable with the open celebration of 'feminine' arts and strengths – it can come across as essentialist and problematically associating women with motherhood/the earth/nurture and so on, perhaps disempowering them in the long run as it contributes to structures of patriarchy and sexism. Such critiques have been levelled at the type of mothering many (but not all) of the *Oznappyfree* mothers practised (see Bobel 2001).⁶ However, an approach built on women and politics of place (WPP) and community economies also rejects essentialism. The difference is that it starts with the lived realities of women's lives, recognizing that these realities are contingently overdetermined – influenced by structural forces such as capitalism, neoliberalism and patriarchy, but also by other discourses, structures and beliefs. The future remains open to possibility, even more so if we do not draw back from exploring and amplifying the resistances, differences, diversity and community ethics that all contribute to (over)determining the future. Likewise in Qinghai, the point is to start with what women are already doing in their everyday lives, and multiply the possible futures beyond the teleology of progress from 'backward' to 'modern', or 'developing' to 'developed'.

From post-feminist to post-development

If our action research practice is concerned to actually build community economies in place, we are necessarily involved in a micro-politics of self-transformation, cultivating ourselves and others as subjects who can identify with and undertake community economic projects. In this connection the economic activities and subjectivities of women come to the fore as salient and exemplary on a number of grounds – not only because women as economic subjects are targeted by the contemporary mainstream development agenda, but because they are actively engaged in the hidden and alternative economic activities of the diverse economy, because their traditional economic pursuits often acknowledge sociality and interdependency, and because women worldwide have become economic activists in

place-based movements to defend or enhance livelihoods and environments (Gibson-Graham, 2008).

Post-development thinkers and writers have critically evaluated the concept of development and found it wanting (McGregor 2009). Most of the time the concept assumes one type of economy developing along similar lines to those of the industrialized nations of the world, a 'great singularity' effectively working to exclude other types of modernity (Escobar 2004) and the multiplicity of necessary life-sustaining activities outside earning higher incomes (Gibson-Graham 2005b). In a diverse economy, activities such as breastfeeding and *banião* are included as non-capitalist transactions and labour. These life-sustaining economic activities have often been seen as the natural work of mothers, and have thus been 'hidden' from development thinkers and workers examining the economy. However, Gibson-Graham has highlighted the importance of women's economic activities, subjectivities, socialities and interdependencies as part of a diverse economy. As we see and map the diversity of the economies around us, we are better positioned to multiply possibilities for building ethical community economies on and around some of these traditionally excluded activities.

Transforming our subjectivities, and cultivating ourselves and others to identify these economic activities as possibilities for futures yet unimagined, is therefore an important task – not only for our research participants but also for ourselves (Morrow and Dombroski 2015). In this chapter I have shown how my own subjectivity as a woman and mother pushed me along the journey from 'post-feminist' to third-wave feminist, where issues of representation, subjectivity and difference are to be explored and even enhanced rather than denied. I have explored how my understanding of GAD was transformed through encounter with the work of J. K. Gibson-Graham and others in Women and the Politics of Place project and the Community Economies Collective, and given a brief taste of how this has played out in seeing diversity and multiplying possibility with my research with mothers in both 'developing' and 'developed' contexts. I continue to draw inspiration from the action research outlined by Gibson-Graham, and look for opportunities to continue the next stage of my journey in more practical and less theoretical arenas.

Notes

1. A translation of the Chinese term *suzhi*. Different people are ranked according to their 'quality', which includes education and background. The term has been studied and critiqued by Jacka (2009).
2. In Chinese studies circles, I am often questioned why I am researching mothers because 'grandmothers always look after the children in China', as if the only

- interesting thing about mothers is childcare, and as if grandmothers are not also mothers.
3. I removed the words 'backward' and 'modern' from the text before creating the wordle.
 4. Guldan's attempts at changing weaning behaviour show a classic clash between TCM and biomedicine, where recommendations from biomedical nutritionists completely ignore TCM food categorizations. She still labels it as a 'transition' to an inevitable future of biomedical dominance, however. See Guldan (2000).
 5. Of course, I am applying my research with mothers in Qinghai to Chinese mothers in Australia, which is not ideal, but an example of 'start where you are!' transformation. As time and funding permit, I hope to repeat a similar project with Chinese mothers in Australia and New Zealand, and to likewise develop similar Mandarin dialogues in partnership with biomedical staff in Qinghai.
 6. Ironically, the women sometimes draw inspiration from the baby-centred care that babies in 'traditional cultures' experience in order to help themselves feel better about the intensiveness of their mothering practices. Yet in Qinghai, neither breastfeeding nor *baniao* are necessarily considered labour intensive due to shared caregiving arrangements – many of my Qinghai interviewees were responsible for breastfeeding their babies but everything else was shared by all family members, including *baniao* and earning an income. Some babies even slept in the same bed as their grandparents.

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5.2

Retrofitting Our Political Imaginations through a Feminist Politics of Economic Difference

Michal Osterweil

Introduction: Beyond GAD

In this chapter I want to make a case for the importance of the essay ‘Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place’ and the work of J. K. Gibson-Graham more broadly, for the myriad people and social movements who are cocreating new forms and stories of (post-capitalist) politics today. This means on the one hand recognizing the importance of this work outside the field of gender and development studies, and inversely acknowledging the centrality of feminism, women and critical theories of development in reframing our understandings of what an effective post-capitalist politics looks like. In fact I believe that this piece – and the epistemic tools it provides us with – can prove indispensable in getting us out of a certain interpretive *impasse* when it comes to making sense of various anti and post-capitalist social movements, including the alterglobalization movement of the 1990s and 2000s, and more recently Occupy Wall Street and the 15-M movement, among others. My goal with this chapter is to arrive at a better understanding of how to employ the kind of theoretical and epistemological tools offered by Gibson-Graham, as well as to better understand the obstacles preventing this perspective from gaining more traction.

In the description for this book project, the editor astutely points out that feminists working at the intersection of GAD have historically been caught in a dilemma between asserting, supporting and pursuing solidarity for all women across the globe, while acknowledging the profound ‘divisions, tensions and systematic inequalities’ that are themselves premised on the divide between ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’. In other words, how does one pursue a global feminist agenda when there are such stark differences and inequalities between women? And at the same time, how does one pursue economic ‘progress’ for women in diverse places, given structurally different locations in global circuits of profit?

Gibson-Graham's work shows that this dilemma has less to do with the seeming tensions between women differently situated in these global economic circuits – that is, differences between women in the global North and women in the global South – and more to do with the fact that the work itself is located on a messy terrain between powerful discourses and assumptions about wellbeing, marginalization and emancipation, as well as powerful discourses and assumptions about what constitutes economics, politics and the subjects or agents of these. So, while no one would want to be on the side of those not working to help improve the material reality of poverty, marginalization and exploitation of women,¹ one must also contend with the vacuity, violence and ethnocentrism of the very concept or discourse of development (Escobar 1995; Esteva et al. 2013; Gudynas 2011) – a discourse that is intimately linked to those of capitalism and modernity. Notably, these discourses are problematic not only for those suffering from poverty – that is, those living on the 'under' side of the developed/underdeveloped binary – but also many people in the supposedly 'developed' world who suffer from the assumptions and practices inherent to the development paradigm. As Martin Kimani notes, aid and development 'places western citizens in a very odd situation. The underlying message they receive is that they live in a sort of heaven and that their money must be used to relieve a hell that is located outside them and external to their life and society.' One need only view the statistics on depression, stress and anxiety in Western countries to understand this dilemma:

Just as importantly, it blinds western citizens to the great extent to which the logic that produces much of the poverty and disenfranchisement in places like Africa are increasingly their lot as well. In this way, the perverse identification of poverty and wretchedness solely with Africa and Africans, which is one of the outcomes of the aid industry's advertising, helps make similar conditions in Europe invisible.

(Zarro 2010: 2)

Gibson-Graham acknowledges and addresses this by challenging the hegemonic and universalized notion of economics underlying the development discourse, and by linking her alternative, community economies, to the figure and historical reality of women. In so doing she posits a unique argument for how and why a feminist politics of economic difference can be indispensable in addressing not only the poverty of women deemed 'underdeveloped', but also, for the wellbeing of people throughout the globe and for any movement or politics that wants to transform the economy and political system globally today. At the essay's core, then, is an argument that the main problems are not poverty or underdevelopment and the gendered ways these are lived and experienced, but rather our limited imaginaries and understandings of

politics, scale and economic possibility, as well as what it would mean to effect transformative change and live well in late capitalist modernity today. While in her essay Gibson-Graham draws on examples almost exclusively from the global South, I believe that, today, nearly ten years after it was originally published – in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, Occupy and myriad other social movements that have pointed to the limits of this global economic order – her argument is increasingly relevant in Europe, North America and other parts of the global North.

I begin by summarizing the original essay, pointing to examples from contemporary social movements, in particular by connecting diverse economic practices with a distinct theoretical ethos. I suggest that one of Gibson-Graham's most important contributions is in her understanding of the political potential of critical intellectual work, or 'epistemic politics' (Osterweil 2013a). I argue that it is her particular understanding of theoretical work, in particular certain versions of post-structuralism, and the ways in which theory and materiality are intimately linked, that is so vital. Key to understanding this link are the figures and historical experiences of women, who were both materially and ideationally pivotal in the making of the story of capitalism. By recognizing and taking seriously the work that theory, critique and analysis do in making other worlds possible, I believe we not only gain a crucial terrain of struggle but also find a way to resolve some of the anxieties activist-scholars have about movements fulfilling their expectation of what a 'truly' transformative or effective politics might look like. I conclude by suggesting that it is precisely our failure to take seriously the power of story and theory to the making of alternatives to, as well as to the maintenance of, capitalism that has prevented us from recognizing the true potential and successes of recent social movements across the globe.

An economic politics of difference: A summary

In contrast with much of the feminist literature on women and globalization, Gibson-Graham's interest is not primarily in discussing how globalization disproportionately affects women, nor how women are using globalization to negotiate new economic or cultural roles, nor in analysing the growth of transnational or global feminist activism – although all of these certainly matter. She is more concerned about the broader transformation of the current global economic and political order dominated by particular conceptions of globality, economics and politics. A crucial component of her contribution is the insight that it is in large part the ways in which capitalism is understood and therefore continuously produced as a hegemonic and totalizing entity, by proponents, critics and anti-capitalist activists alike, that has prevented more transformative and politically progressive political projects from emerging, or

even being seen. As a consequence of this ‘capitalocentrism’ we have failed to recognize that there are already the beginnings of numerous effective politics and economic alternatives being carried out everyday, often by women who participate in myriad non-capitalist activities, refusing – or at times failing – to be valorized by capitalism’s forms and terms. By making these local non-capitalist practices visible and recognizable as credible alternatives, alternative political projects become possible now – rather than in a distant future after the revolution.

Key then is making room for non-capitalist economic activity to become visible, in order to unleash different forms of agency and collective work. As Gibson-Graham puts it, ‘What is visible, intelligible and measurable has a different imaginative and social status than what is sequestered in the obscure realm of the unthought and unseen’ (Chapter 5.0, p. 297). Moreover, mobilizing this language of economic difference creates a great deal of space and power. By identifying the ways in which certain practices are not fully understandable as capitalist, or by naming certain practices as non-capitalist, we begin to chip away at the hegemonic stranglehold the story of capitalism has on our imaginations and begin to allow for the possibility that other configurations of the economy – and reality – are possible.

As we can learn from the proliferation of alternative economic practices in the midst of the austerity crises in Europe – and the summary ways in which these practices were dismissed as reactive, limited and short-sighted (Narotzky 2013; Osterweil 2013b) – the need for these alternative interpretive frameworks is more relevant than ever. Throughout (and since) the Eurocrisis, people created various forms of alternative economies ranging from barter, to time banks, to alternative currencies, to creative experiments in developing new direct producer-to-consumer relationships. Some have suggested that these alternative economic practices are piecemeal, incoherent and unsustainable, the temporary products of having no choice due to a failed economic system – the assumption being that they won’t last, that they are not viable in and of themselves. However, one need only look at evidence from the same social movements since the immediate crisis, as well as in the aftermath of numerous struggles worldwide, to recognize that this is far from the whole story. For example, in Argentina following the economic collapse in 2001, similar practices proliferated and were in fact the inspiration for many of the European experiments. While some have died down, many employee-run firms, employing horizontalist and non-corporate structures, continue to develop long after the peak of the economic crises (Sitrin 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini 2014).

Moreover, even without obvious economic crises, the deliberate enactment of alternative economic practices exist, even in ‘the belly of the beast’. For example, in the US there is a movement of ‘radical homemakers’ in which women and men deliberately seek to revalorize domestic work, not in order to be better

paid for it but in order to live better – without the demands of consumer- and market-based society that requires them to get a job, hire childcare, buy food, and invest in a slue of institutions they don't necessarily believe in and that contribute to environmental and social degradation (Hayes 2010). Challenging both feminist and capitalist assumptions of what contemporary subjects desire, value and live for – that is, equal pay for equal work, the right to get out of the house, wages, consumer goods, economic development – , these radical homemakers are just a small sample of the numerous unimaginable or unexpected practices populating the contemporary political and economic landscape. Making these both seen and intelligible as economically viable, liberatory and politically real becomes a potent political act.

Key to this politics of economic difference is the understanding that part of what keeps capitalocentrism in place is an entire ethic and ethos of thinking and knowing. So it is not simply a matter of economics; economics is one very important and very powerful terrain where Cartesian, rationalist, universalist and economocentric visions of the world are dominant. In this different ethic, exploratory and experimental practices of thinking differently are viewed as the grounds from which significant political action can emerge. The diverse community economies approach honours difference and multiplicity, as well as non-capitalocentric logics. It encourages and recognizes different ways of knowing and theorizing, and consequently different expectations of what can constitute political action. This is itself crucial and offers an important caution to the example of the radical homemakers I described above. For, unless done with the particular theoretical and epistemological ethos offered by Gibson-Graham, we could easily fall back into romantic and politically fraught conclusions about housework being inherently good or freeing. However, the claim is not that all forms of housework are liberatory or progressive, nor that it is part of a feminist politics of economic difference to label them as such. Rather, the point is that we don't dismiss the possibility of these alternative logics and forms of valorization. At stake, as Gibson-Graham argues in her later volume, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, is an entire approach or ethic regarding the role and use of theory.

Women and place

Key to cultivating these different theoretical practices and expectations is recognizing women, feminism and place as key to this economic politics. These figures each stand in contrast with another naturalized figure, discourse or modality. Woman is opposed to a universal subject – generally presumed to be neutral or male. Feminism differs from anti-capitalism – which treats capitalism as the central and real problem, a total system to which there is no outside. And place stands in strong contrast with the global scale – itself presumed to

be locatable but opposed to, or the opposite of, particular or parochial places. Rather than understand this move as an effort to simply romanticize the subjugated side of this opposition, her goal is to trouble these binaries and the ways of thinking and knowing that facilitate them, showing that these discursive 'others' are only negated or made inferior because of the dualist matrix through which they are seen and in which multiplicity, difference and complexity are impossible.

For Gibson-Graham, both woman and place represent potential, they are sites of becoming – not the universal, identity-based positivities generally presumed necessary for politics and action. As such they open up a space for other things to be possible.² Her goal is neither to offer a new blueprint for a universal politics – for example, radical homemakers, barter – nor to simply keep everything abstract and in the air. She does not dismiss positive content in actual places, however, – rather than define them from a global or programmatic vantage point, the politics and practices can only be determined and valorized in their specificities, their emplacements and their relationships.

This is important to keep in mind, otherwise her reference to women, place and feminism may appear to be a result of 'merely' theoretical and analogical associations – of woman as the ultimate other – rather than anything empirically or substantively linked to material women working in concrete places. In fact, as I wrote the sentences above, I could already hear the echoes of activists and feminist scholars grumbling: 'This is all well and good, but this post-structural feminist *theoretical* positioning has little to do with the *actual* lives, projects and economies of women.' This reflects a general weariness of post-structuralism, as well as a failure to understand the material nature and role of theory and story.

In this essay the figures of women and place as sites of becoming and potential are accompanied by actual stories of women working in place. The examples of women in the Philippines and Kerala that are deliberately cultivating themselves as subjects of diverse economies prioritizing community, locality and solidarity, rather than simply 'being' *Homo economici* working solely for profit and individual gain, are important. However, these women are important not only as empirical cases of actual women enacting politics of place; they are potential (and theoretical) as well. They are subjects being made and remade as new stories of economy, politics and possibility are created, narrated and shared, consequently offering new stories utilizable by other women (and men). As such the importance of these figures – women and place, and the political modality of feminism – are not just as theoretical or conceptual counterparts to more commonplace and dominant concepts, figures and political modalities (universal man, globality and molar politics). They are theoretical and actual at once, and they refuse the division between the two. Part of the worldview she is opposing is the supposed and essential difference between theory and

practice, potentiality and actuality, story and reality. In fact, one way to understand what Gibson-Graham is doing in this essay (and in most of her work) is to challenge the theory/reality binary, by demonstrating the ways in which the meanings and narratives are indispensable parts of both the dominant systems and transformative political projects.

Refuting the theory/reality gap

In my own contribution to the volume *Women and the Politics of Place*, where Gibson-Graham's essay originally appeared (Harcourt and Escobar 2005), I grappled with the interesting ways in which the 'new politics' of the alter-globalization movement (also known as the anti-globalization movement and associated with the protests against the WTO, World Bank, G-8 and other enforcers of corporate-driven neoliberal globalization) were being linked with the figure of woman, feminism and/or the feminine. I asserted that there was a clear relationship between the politics of this 'new' movement and feminism – but that there was also a tension between the rhetorical (theoretical) assertion of feminism (including political practices long associated with feminism) and the actual elimination of sexism or the inclusion of women in positions of power within the movement. I have spent years continuing to explore and puzzle through this interesting relationship (see also Osterweil 2010), but it was only when rereading this piece in the context of this volume on GAD that I was moved to reframe my understanding of the crucial role for women in the sphere of anti-capitalism. This in turn required understanding how the subjugation of women was instrumental in the making of capitalism understood not simply as an economic system but as an entire modality of knowing, being and meaning-making.

Women have long been at the frontline of the accumulation strategies necessary for establishing capitalism's ability to be the only story in town – both materially and epistemically. At the same time they have provided many of the invisible forms of unpaid labour that seemingly magically produce profits. As Silvia Federici argues in *Caliban and the Witch*, the success of capitalism was premised on the need to wrest women from their natural spheres of power, including their knowledge of herbal medicine, their ability to feed their families from commons (farmland), and generally their power over their bodies and the sphere of reproduction (2004).³ In her research she argues that the witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries were part of a larger process of primitive accumulation during which thousands of women were killed, and, perhaps more importantly, women's bodies were turned into reproductive machines and sexual difference was transformed into a basis of differential valorization. Against interpretations that posit primitive accumulation as a necessary stage in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, Federici argues that other futures were

being struggled for and possible, and that subjugating women was key to ensuring these non-capitalist possibilities would not be able to flourish. She also notes that these processes of primitive accumulation on the bodies of women accompany every state of capitalist expansion, including recent ones. Importantly, what was accomplished in the process of primitive accumulation was not only the material exclusion of women from the labour market and the forceful disciplining of their bodies into vehicles for reproduction that they were not in charge of. In addition, it involved the invalidation and elimination of alternative ways of thinking about and seeing reality, and the creation of a certain set of epistemological habits.

These habits included, first, the devaluation of previously valued work, such as householding, sustenance and reproduction. This became part of a larger process of what now seems a natural tendency to classify some work, some action, as meaningful and valuable and others as invaluable, which is in turn closely related to the epistemological tendency to think in dualisms and hierarchies, rather than difference. Second, the exclusion, even criminalization, of herbal medicine, magic and other ways of knowing helped make science, law and secular reason the only forms of valid knowing. And, of course, the privatization of what had once been common and sacred, naturalized ideas of people as individual labourers, land as property and nature as resource (Polanyi 2001). Moreover, these were all associated with a narrative of progress and movement towards a more advanced way of life (Rist 2008).

In other words, while certainly these were material and historical processes imposed by force, key to their effects (and effectiveness) are the ways they simultaneously helped to naturalize *ideas* about women being worth less, *ideas* about (economic) productivity being linked only with waged labour, and *ideas* that devalorized difference, including of other ways of knowing, being and doing in the domains of medicine, magic, meaning and others (Federici 2004). In other words, it shows that the domination of capitalism is itself intimately linked to the hegemony of rationalism, Cartesian dualisms and science – key components of modernity and of capitalocentrism.

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that given that the knowledges, experiences and powers of women were so marginal and invisible, women were (and are) predisposed to participate in projects that go by alternative economic logics or values, refusing to accept capitalism's monopoly on what counts as economics, success and living well. As John McMurtry, quoted by Sylvia Federici states, 'The emerging liberative agent in the Third World is the unwaged force of women who are not yet disconnected from the life economy by their work. *They serve life not commodity production*' (quoted in Federici 2012: 91, emphasis added). Far from an essentialist account of women as a romanticized and privileged site for generating alternatives to capitalism, such accounts demonstrate the dual possibilities in being invisible and disvalued. On the one hand, certainly

there is exploitation, for this unwaged labour goes unpaid while it makes profits possible. However, at the same time, this exclusion allows for other values and valorizations.⁴ The ability to see these other values linked to the life economy goes hand in hand with an entire way of seeing and being in the world that is not only not capitalocentric but not economocentric, and perhaps not modernist.

Again, I can see how this argument can be accused of idealizing housework or other unpaid work and disregarding the 'real' power of capital. In fact, many critiques of this sort have been levelled against Gibson-Graham. However, this is again why it is so crucial to recognize that the theoretical modality we are working in here is different. This is not a universal prescription but a tentative, local and particular ascription that can be effective if situated within the framework of feminist economies of difference. At the same time, it also points to how deeply embedded both capitalo- and economocentrism are in our habits of thought that the exploitative reading is presumed.

Understanding how the subjugation of women, their activities and their knowledges played a crucial role in producing capitalism, as well as the epistemic and ontological edifice that maintain its hegemony, helps to clarify the importance of theoretical and meaning-making practices to our politics. It also enables us to make sense of many practices of contemporary movements that are often critiqued for refusing to practice more realistic anti-capitalist politics; and it goes against the tendency to dismiss critical or post-structuralist theoretical perspectives as being anti-political.

Theoretical practice and epistemic politics: Towards a new political imagination

One of the most common critiques of the work of Gibson-Graham has been of her use of post-structuralist theory, and her supposed disregard of the material realities of capital and capitalism. However, for her, and for myself, the disavowal of post-structuralism reflects a failure to take seriously epistemic politics of deconstruction and imagination, or to limit these to theoretical and academic pursuits, rather than acknowledge that they are material political practices that subjects of all kinds are engaged in. One of Gibson-Graham's most important contributions is in her understanding of the political and material importance of discursive, textual and imaginative work that can make the invisible visible, meaningful and therefore powerful. Recognizing and taking seriously the work that theory, critique and analysis do in not only making other worlds possible but actually cultivating them points to the epistemic as a crucial and material terrain of struggle. Against critiques both within movements and within the academy that see theory and analysis as separate from, at times even opposed to, 'real politics' or 'action', Gibson-Graham

demonstrates the fact that given the hegemony of certain stories of economy, globality and politics – all of which share certain epistemological and ontological assumptions – we have no choice but to work to disrupt the stories, and then challenge the categories and ontological grounds that make them seem inevitable and immutable. Gibson-Graham's theoretical practice challenges culturally ingrained and embodied practices that enact the separation between theory, practice, language and reality.

This is a crucial point for understanding how the politics of economic difference and its discursive strategy differ from more traditional critiques of and oppositions to capitalism, and leads us to the crux of why this work is so pivotal. For it is not so much about fighting against, or waiting for the system to become completely undone, or about giving a new definitive and universal proposal for political strategies to displace others, but about enabling meanings and stories to move and work such that people recognize themselves simultaneously as subjects and agents of a diverse economy, and also as part of a postcapitalist political project and process.

It is clear that there already exists a substantial understanding of the extent and nature of economic difference. What does not exist is a way of convening this knowledge that destabilizes the received wisdom of capitalist dominance and unleashes new creative forces and subjects of economic experimentation. Our intervention is to propose a language of the diverse economy as an exploratory practice of thinking economy differently in order to enact different economies.

Current economic discourses colonize our language, our political imaginations and our practices, and obstruct our visions of truly transformative alternatives, for women and men, in both the south and the north. They also include gendered assumptions of the reality and desirability of development, growth, labour and success. Dominant treatments of our global economy – including quite importantly treatments by anti-capitalist scholars and activists – are themselves dependent on naturalized ideas of economics and capitalism that, to a certain extent, correspond to naturalized ideas of valid forms and scales of resistance and change. They also go hand in hand with our understandings of and beliefs about power, and our experiences of our own internal desires (and even our sense of self). As a result, even those critical of the current economic system are often not able to see the ways in which we have come to treat as natural or inevitable many of the assumptions and cultural logics valorized by capitalism. These include conceptions of the individual, work, wages, basic needs and even 'the good life'. As Gustavo Esteva and co-authors put it in a recent volume, undermining the modern assumption that there are universal basic 'needs':

The readers of these words do not *need* air: you are all breathing. But if you were suddenly thrown into the ocean, you would soon be in desperate need

of air. A catastrophic destitution, dispossessing people of their way of life, is the precondition for every modern 'need' (and thus the root cause of modernized poverty).

(2013: 17, emphasis added)

In other words, even those things that seem universal and objective – that is, basic needs, our experience of ourselves as individuals with material needs – are historically produced through material and discursive practices.

Importantly, this process and project need not be complete or total. This I believe is particularly important because it interrupts the tendency for activists to dismiss as not radical or sufficient more partial, experimental and local practices that they fear may not be intentionally or thoroughly anti-capitalist. It also speaks back to activists and others who decry post-structuralist approaches that grant meaning and stories material power.

In other words, one of the key criticisms of Gibson-Graham, and feminist post-structuralism more generally, is that her deconstructive, anti-foundationalist approach actually distracts or takes away from 'real' political work, and therefore contributes to the problem (Dempsey and Rowe 2004; Epstein 1995; Maeckelbergh 2009). Movements themselves experience versions of this debate, decrying complex, post-structuralist theory as itself a problem, even at times as the enemy (Epstein 1995), and often calling for a polarization between material and cultural strategies. What Gibson-Graham offers then is a way to get past this material/cultural, practice/theory divide to recognize theoretical and epistemic work as a material and ethicopolitical practice that can be approached with different modalities, different ontological expectations.

This is a shift we desperately need, not only in order to defend the successes of many movements to those who deny them but also to help activists and others recognize themselves within a new story of politics, economy and life. Capitalism is a story that works through the meanings it produces and eliminates and is as much about the material bodies it disciplines and disposes of, and these meanings are themselves tied to entire forms of knowing, being and doing. Similarly, anti-capitalism, postcapitalism and all the theoretical frameworks that underpin social movements and visions of resistance are also stories – some more or less coherent, and perhaps most importantly for this essay, with different degrees of self-reflexivity and awareness about their status as stories and the theoretical frameworks undergirding them. The failure to see the relationships between these stories, realities and our visions of how to make change has been instrumental in preventing movements from recognizing their successes or deriving possible strategies for them. It has also led to anxieties among activist scholars analysing contemporary movements, when the movements don't seem radical or anti-capitalist enough – or when the topography and temporality of the transformation is slower and more microscopic. In fact, at the

heart of our current political and economic predicament is a failure to recognize the ways in which our own stories and habits of thought surrounding both economics and politics collude with, or end up co-constituting, a capitalocentric political imaginary and ontology.

In my own work with anti-capitalist, autonomist and other radical activist networks, as well as with scholar-activists, the failure to recognize the epistemological and ontological shift required of us has had many consequences. One big one is the repeated experience of declaring movement failure, when successes abound, albeit at more micropolitical or molecular registers. Over ten years ago, having recently begun my own doctoral research with anti-capitalist networks and activists affiliated with the alterglobalization movement – the ‘movement of movements’ best known for the large countersummit protests against the WTO, IMF and World Bank of the 1990s and early 2000s – Gibson-Graham’s thinking proved pivotal. As I sought to make sense of a set of emergent political practices and logics that seemed to evade traditional definitions of both politics and globality, her work, and the WPP framework more broadly, helped make both visible and legible a series of what I termed ‘place-based political practices’. These reshape what politics and political effectiveness look like, constituting what Gibson-Graham called a new political imaginary and ‘a remapping of the political terrain’ (Gibson-Graham 2006). Key to these place-based political practices were a series of practices aimed at theorizing change and movement differently, and they instantiated a marked epistemological shift to a more open-ended politics, which I have termed ‘theoretical-practice’ (Osterweil 2013a).

Today – in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Occupy Wall Street, the revolutions of 2011 and increasing concern over climate change – this concept of a new political terrain may be even more relevant and urgent than it was then. Not only because many of the same alternative political logics are present, but because today disillusionment with politics as usual, the economic system as well as the notion that more growth necessarily equals better, are matched by the emergence of new economic practices that are themselves more visible in a more mainstream way.

With slogans like ‘We are the 99%’, the inequality endemic to the system is harder to deny, and with the anti-austerity movements in places such as Greece and Spain, alternative economies and economic practices such as barter and time banks, were not only emerging but were actually being reported on (see, e.g., Baker 2012; Cha 2012). If ever there were a time in which an argument for the reality and necessity of thinking the economy differently could be taken seriously, it would be now.

However, and similar to the heyday of the alterglobalization movement, many on the Right and Left alike were quick to condemn these movements as having failed to achieve any real or substantive political (read electoral, read

macropolitical) change.⁵ Even some activists were convinced of these criticisms. The question I was left with was: Why? Why do these politics continue to be dismissed or relegated to the realm of superficial, minor or frivolous, especially given that numerous people, including Gibson-Graham, have been doing the work of developing and articulating this new language, lens and logic of politics?

Returning to the cynicism surrounding poststructuralism and deconstruction I pointed to above, I believe the problem is less about the political potency of tools such as deconstruction and critique, and more to do with the fact that we still don't fully take on the consequences of employing such epistemological and methodological tools more consistently and thoroughly. We continue to presume a division between the textual and the real, political action and intellectual work, failing to take seriously the other worlds, ways of knowing and alternative realities deconstructing dominant entities, such as the state, economy and the individual both entail and require. This does not mean expecting to find that the alterglobalization or Occupy Wall Street movement have already created *an* alternative to the state, the economy or the individual as new full-fledged entities. Rather, we need to get better at making visible and legible the emergent entities or assemblages, relationships, impacts and ways of being that have been produced by and through these movements. These unfold along different temporalities, different scales and, perhaps most importantly, the changes often take place at more internal and intensive levels, including the level of subjectivities – including how they know, desire and act. We also need to recognize that key to this work is changing the expectations of the explanatory versus world-making role of analytical, textual and theoretical work.

For example, we should consider some of the key political practices of Occupy Wall Street, but also of the Indignados in Spain, as well as the other movements of 2011 – practices such as occupying public spaces, setting up tent villages, creating theatrical interventions and holding general assemblies attempting to institute forms of direct democracy. These practices work at registers not usually associated with either politics or movements. They have to do with generating affect and collectivity, and producing new forms of desire, new values and new senses of power. With the pause they produce in a day in the life of a city, they not only subtract from capital's productivity but also produce new things that change reality: these include new relationships, new ideas, analyses, and concrete projects and institutions.⁶ These might not have an immediate impact on the traditional political terrain – that is, the electoral terrain – but they certainly do change things both materially and virtually.

A great deal has been written about the new forms and experiences of democracy being practised and experimented with during peak events, such as world social fora and counter-summit protests, as well as in a much

more territorialized way throughout Latin America – for example, by the Zapatistas, the Unemployed Workers Movements and other indigenous movements (Maeckelbergh 2009; Sitrin 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini 2014; Zibechi 2010). However, perhaps what we have been less good at articulating is that while the word ‘democracy’ is being used, what it is being used to describe involves transformations that take place at a level we would struggle to fit into traditional notions of democracy, or even politics more broadly. These experiments in democracy, in addition to being about organizing and managing social systems, also involve cultivating ways of being that involve more humility, reflexivity, forgiveness and even love (Boggs and Kurashige 2011; Sitrin 2012). Moreover, they involve helping to produce people who see action as complex and necessarily fraught, and hence requiring ways of knowing that are less dependent on certainty, rationalism, linear causality and uniformity. This is why phrases such as ‘walking while questioning’ became so important for many in the global justice movement. Acknowledging the uncertainty and questions that characterize reality, the Zapatistas asserted an ethic that embodied the open-ended and ongoing nature of truly progressive political work. The cultivation of this thinking ethos can be considered one of the key ‘outcomes’ or effects of contemporary activists – whether Italian autonomists, neo-zapatistas or a part of a new network of activists in the US seeking to bring non-Western, non-secular visions of spirituality, healing and transformation to social change work. Rather than determine their impact according to how the dominant system or culture defines success, they are working to design and bring about new vocabularies, practices and ways of being. As Rebecca Solnit so eloquently puts it, ‘for what changes in revolution is largely spirit, emotion, belief – intangible things, as delicate as butterfly wings, but our world is made of such things. They matter’ (Solnit 2011).

If we are to learn from Gibson-Graham, and from the political strategies she offers in her article, we need to acknowledge that the obstacles to take these seriously have everything to do with the divisions we continue to uphold between our theories, ideas and visions, and the rubrics we use to evaluate, measure and then record our successes.

Notes

1. Usually the assumption in such discourses is that we are speaking about women in the global South, despite the high rates of woman and child poverty in the US and elsewhere.
2. As she puts it in an earlier essay,

To the extent that the figure of woman signals unfixed or incomplete identity, she is the subject to be constructed through politics. She is the subject of becoming, whose failed identity stands for the possibility of politics itself.

(Gibson-Graham 2004: 32)

And similarly,

place is that which is not fully yoked into a system of meaning, not entirely subsumed to a (global) order; it is that aspect of every site that exists as potentiality. Place is the 'event in space,' operating as a 'dislocation' with respect to familiar structures and narratives. It is the unmapped and unmoored that allows for new moorings and mappings. Place, like the subject, is the site and spur of becoming, the opening for politics (Chapter 5.0).

3. Part of the basic medicinal knowledge many women held was how to use abortifacient plants to control their reproduction.
4. In fact it can mean moving from a politics of refusal (i.e., refusal to do work that is unpaid), to a politics of valorization, in which non-capitalist logics are cultivated and valorized, and women regain the love and pride for the work as the basis of a different form of economy. See Federici (2012).
5. See my response to Narotzky (2013) and Osterweil (2013b).
6. For example, look at the Beautiful Solutions website (<https://solutions.thischangeseverything.org/>), a database of alternative practices, many of which are small but ultimately displacing the dominant institutions' monopoly on how we do economy, democracy and so forth.

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5.3

Cuban ‘Co-ops’ and Wanigela ‘Wantoks’: Engaging with Diverse Economic Practices, in Place

Yvonne Underhill-Sem

Introduction

‘Co-ops’ and ‘wantoks’ represent alternative economic practices of collectivities in out-of-the-way places. In this chapter I interrogate them using a diverse economy analytic to show how a community economies perspective provides critical leverage into thinking economies differently. Such an analysis is urgent in light of the continued and uncritical uptake of neoliberal development models in many different parts of the world. I argue that economic emancipatory practices of a community economies perspective can contribute to the reconfiguration of new economic arrangements on all geographic scales. The social relations that emerge in the practice of community economies have the potential to deal with gender justice imperatives such as ending violence against women. They also offer ways to account for the influence of non-human agents which shape alternative economies of practice. In addition, the recent theorizing of community economies offers productive news ways of taking forward political engagement.

Cuban socialism is rapidly changing after 40 years of specific practices of appropriation and redistribution. During a visit to Cuba in 2014, I learnt much about this transition, though my particular focus was on the implications for gender equality and, in particular, violence against women. Cuba’s strong commitments to women’s emancipation were a critical part of their socialist transformation (Molyneux 1994). However, the extent to which this translates into gender equality has been long debated (Molyneux 2005). Cuba was the first country to sign and the second, behind Sweden, to ratify CEDAW.¹ From an economic angle, a community economies perspective aligns neatly with Cuban socialism. In terms of supporting alternative economic practices, it also has the potential to shift imaginaries and locate them in practices that deal with the intransigence of violence against women. The new social relations that emerge

in the practice of community economies could also extend to a politics of place where there is no violence against women.

The reference to Wanigela 'wantoks' goes in a slightly different direction. It draws attention to the taken-for-granted understandings of a 'politics of place' in the most linguistically diverse country in the world. 'Wantoks' (= 'one talks') refer to groups of people in Papua New Guinea, in the region known as Melanesia, who speak the same local language that allows them to share the economic burden of cultural obligations. This collective identity provides them with an imperative to engage in particular economic practices, especially in relation to reciprocal obligations at key life events (Nanau 2011). Within development policy, the concept is also closely associated with less favourable notions of nepotism referring mostly to urban Papua New Guinea (Cockanye 2004; Monsell-Davis 1993). However, in 'rural' Wanigela, it is not used in the same way because groups of people are not mobilized with reference to a particular language. Residents in Wanigela, Oro Province, Papua New Guinea, numbering about 10,000, speak three lingua franca as well as two pidgin languages and English. Nevertheless, the concept of 'wantok' networks has a longer genealogy of greater relevance in Wanigela. It is considered to be a part of a 'Melanesian Way ideology' (Narokobi 1980), and more recently as a resilient system for maintaining security and stability in Melanesia (Nanau 2011). This refers to livelihood security but also to security from supernatural non-human agents who are part of the 'era of ancestors' (Nanau 2011: 37). As new capitalocentric economic practices arise in places such as Wanigela, this concept has the potential to provide security for women against the violent acts of men. The alignment of diverse economic practices with 'wantok' communities seeking to meet non-capitalist goals, especially in relation to key life events, is also based on a reconfiguration of social relations that can contribute to addressing the violence against women. When this is made more explicit in community economies perspectives, there are greater possibilities for doing economies differently in Wanigela.

A diverse economies perspective has enabled my understanding of how different economic practices are performed and how new subjectivities are created both materially and discursively. The challenge is to incorporate the influence of ideologies which underpin gender inequality in Cuba's socialist economic transition and in Wanigela, where the non-human agency of ancestors plays a critical role in economic practices.

These timely moments of reflection coincided with my being asked to comment on Gibson-Graham's article, 'Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place'. Together, 'co-ops' and 'wantoks' seem to me to be examples of how to use the notion of diverse economic practices and their materialities and discursivities to, first, confuse the certainty of place and, then, to make more evident other features that shape economic and political

practices in diverse and transformative ways. In Cuba, this includes paying closer attention to violence against women, and in Wanigela it requires taking account of non-human forces. In doing this in out-of-the-way places, it became clearer that working with diverse economic practices allowed me to sharpen my understanding of localized politics of places.

Thanks to diverse economies

Gibson-Graham's articulations of the practices of diverse economies have been pivotal to my work in the Pacific. I used them in 2003 at the Symposium on the Gender, Social and Economic Dimensions of Global Trade and Multilateral Agreements in Fiji (Underhill-Sem 2003). At that time it invited discussion on the pros and cons of co-operatives after an experienced female agricultural officer spoke about the impossibility of co-operative enterprises in the Pacific given their historical demise. In 2014 I used it again to shape my discussion about marketplaces at a conference at the National University of Samoa and once again it initiated a discussion about co-operatives. This time it was a young woman who was involved in a farmer's association expressing her hope that she could convince her group to work as a co-operative enterprise.

As a conceptual framework, it has been unfairly criticized for not being able to contribute to debates around the transformation of major economic, political and social structural changes, such as are occurring in Cuba (Peck and Brenner 2010). I wondered if the same could be said for how it deals with violence against women? And how might it work in places where languages also incorporate the force of non-human agents in the unfolding of new and gendered economic practices of land appropriation in resource-rich out-of-the-way places? Miller's (2013) extension of community economies theory as three moments, ontological conversation, ethical debate and political intervention, provides a fertile way to think through these issues. It recognizes that political engagement swivels on different and sometime momentary points of expression but it requires acknowledgement of the different ways in which such imaginaries travel – excavating and exposing but also engaging and consolidating. This is where community economies can explicitly engage with geopolitical structural impulses that lead to the transformation of Cuban socialism in ways that also expose domestic violence. It also allows for an engagement of debates around the cultural continuities and modernist notions of resource ownership while dealing with a logic inspired by non-human agents from other worldly imaginations.

Situating myself in this analysis

How is it possible to bring Cuba and Papua New Guinea together in a chapter about GAD written by a woman from a University in New Zealand/Aotearoa?

Our embodied and situated selves are never self-evident, yet they carry critical insights from the intersecting positions from which we write. Let me provide something of an orientation to the standpoint from which I write here. I am a Cook Island New Zealander with close family ties to Papua New Guinea. This started at the turn of the 20th century with my grandfather, who was born in Gulf Province of the then New Guinea, to my Cook Island and Niuean greatgrandparents, who were London Missionary Society missionaries. My grandfather survived his early years in Papua New Guinea, unlike at least one of his siblings. Just over 80 years later I married into another part of independent Papua New Guinea, Wanigela, in Oro Province, a place I have visited many times, which my children call home. I taught geography at the University of Papua New Guinea, conducted my doctoral fieldwork in Wanigela entitled 'Maternities in Out of the Way Places', and since 2003 have been living and teaching development studies in Auckland, New Zealand. My intellectual development as a scholar of gender and social justice in the global South has emerged from the intimate connections I have with Wanigela and to which I regularly return, even when my family and I have lived in other places from as far as Germany and as neighbourly as Samoa. On returning to New Zealand, I sought a place to advance my commitment to social justice in the Pacific. Being invited to serve on the board of Oxfam New Zealand provided a welcome avenue for this. In my capacity as the chair of the Programme Committee, I deputized for our terminally ill chair of the board, Nicky Wrighton, and *en route* to an Oxfam international meeting in the US, I funded myself to join a group of ten other Oxfam staff and board members to learn about the work of Oxfam Canada in Cuba. These contingent circumstances speak to the fertility of mobility to which we in the Pacific are forever grateful (Underhill-Sem 2004).

Community economies

Gibson-Graham's diverse economic framework has greatly contributed to my analytical understanding of economic practices in places I am deeply attached to as well as to places I am passing through. Crucially, it has provided an instructive intellectual practice that invites me to look for the

different kinds *transactions* and ways of negotiating commensurability, different types of *labor* and ways of compensating it [and] different forms of *enterprise* and ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus.

(Gibson-Graham et al. 2005)

I have found this practice of training my observations and analytical lens extremely effective whether it was my first visit – for example, to Cuba – or whether I had known a place for almost 30 years, such as Wanigela. The

vignettes that follow point to a well-known limitation in the framing of community economies, that is, how to engage with the ever-present impulses of mainstream global imperatives.² The other vignette points to a less well-explored dimension in the community economies framework, which is how to work with non-human agents such as those in the spirit world. In the remainder of this chapter I expand on both these points and in doing so discuss issues around ensuring gendered social relations retain a central place in 'communal economic practices and constructing alternative economic institutions', so that feminist imperatives to address gender inequalities are taken seriously.

In her 2005 paper, Gibson-Graham seeks to connect her project of 'building community economies in place' with the explicitly feminist project of WPP. In doing so she highlights four principle elements of her project: opening up discursive space; enlarging the economic imaginary; cultivating new subjects; and building community economies in place. Based on the following vignettes, I suggest that while the discursive space has been opened up and the economic imaginary has been enlarged and, moreover, populated by alternative economic thinking, such as agroecology, food sovereignty and *buen vivir*, the hegemony of capitalist thinking remains. Yet in places, such as where Cuban agricultural co-operatives and possibly the new non-agricultural co-operatives (Wielgus et al. 2014) are located, individuals and communities are already animated by a sense of ethical practice that shares much with a community economies framework. How can they be supported in the challenges they face as Cuba in 2014 undergoes another economic and social transformation (Diaz 2014)? Closer attention is clearly needed to support these community economies, coming as they do from a unique and complex space of possibility.

However, we need to recognize that opening up the economic imaginaries for some can lead to new market economics, which are actually mainstream elsewhere. In those places where alternative economic practices are the mainstream, such as in Cuba but also in Wanigela, neoliberal capitalist practices still have the questionable but nonetheless huge ideological weight. The struggle to retain land in Wanigela introduces sad stories of huge land grabs organized by the urban elite (Filer 2012) that effectively stifle the building of community economies. Is there enough time for the 'non-credible alternatives to what exists' to become more than just 'subsisting in the shadows of mainstream economic thinking'? It is not just that a hegemonic understanding of the economy is all-pervasive and compelling, but also that such approaches have the benefit of time to develop the weight of taken-for-grantedness.

Gibson-Graham et al. (2005) argues that there are particular ways in which women in these places become 'economic activists in place-based movements to defend or enhance livelihoods and environments'. However, the women in the following vignettes bear little resemblance to the women as subjects of economic development and activism depicted by Gibson-Graham – the Filipina

migrants at the Asian Migrant Centre or the Mararikulam experiment in Kerala. Rather than needing to build a community economy, women in Cuba and Wanigela are already part of a community economy and engaging in diverse economic practices. They do this within an economic reality that, in the case of Cuba, includes a sustained state-led project of socialism that also silences domestic violence. In the case of Wanigela, place-based movements are mediated with reference to intangible non-human subjects which are often tragically connected to women's bodies. In both cases the imperative is also to ensure that the new economic trajectories being laid out are inclusive of community economies. This will require a step beyond ontological conversations and ethical debates and into political interventions.

Virtues and shortcomings: Cuba

Vignette 1: Cuban 'co-ops'

In March 2014 I arrived at a seaside hotel in Havana, followed the bellboy over ill-fitting water-stretched carpets, through back corridors to the only functioning staff elevator, quickly refreshed after my 36 hours journey before meeting my hosts, three members of Oxfam Canada. Within two hours of arriving in Cuba I was listening to a senior economist from the Ministry of Agriculture explain how the 'market economy' works. He was talking to about 30 co-operative leaders, comprising about equal numbers of men and women and ranging in age from about 30 to 60, from around the country. Although it was 6.00 pm and the workshop had started in the morning, everyone in the room was attentive and engaged. There were many questions of clarification: 'So, does that mean we can sell our produce directly to the hotels and make our own price?' 'How do we decide on the price?' 'What happens if another co-operative wants to sell their produce to the same hotel?' There were questions about whether they could still buy seed from the government stores, where could they get other 'inputs' from, what happens if their crop is not good enough, how do they get their produce to the hotel and so forth. I also had many questions. Underlining many of them was how might a diverse economies framework, as distinct from a mainstream neoliberal economic framework, have been introduced into this critical and unique process of imagining economies anew and planning with and for community economies in the last bastion of socialism in the 21st century? After visiting five more co-operatives over the following two days, it was clear that the suite of economic models drawn on to inform this transition did not include any heterodox models, including that of diverse economies.

In this vignette, the potential for a community economies perspective at that moment was huge but missing. Cuba is in the throes of a significant social and economic transition (Diaz 2014), and there is a healthy willingness to

work differently to enhance the livelihoods of the many and various communities in the country. At this moment, however, the alternative economic option being promoted is the 'free market'. In our visit to five different economic enterprises in and around Holguin, in the southeastern part of Cuba, and among much talk of innovative agricultural practices, was a constant reference to community service and community good. The values of community economies were evident yet the alternative economic system being formally introduced was a 'simple' market economy. This would radically change the community economic practices already evident in the swapping of houses and other microeconomic practices (Anderson 2014). But the imperative to improve the stock of residential housing requires significant investments of capital that appeared to be beyond the imaginaries of the co-ops that we visited.

This workshop would have been an ideal place for a community economies perspective to be presented. There are obvious commonalities in principles between Cuban socialism and community economies, yet the reach of mainstream economics is huge. However, once community economies are fully translated into Spanish, its value in deconstructing the economy might travel beyond Anglophone shores. Until then, it seems that other alternative forms of economic practice are in the ascendancy in Cuba.

There was a similar sense of the concept of diverse economies being sidelined on an Alternatives to Economic Justice panel at the International Forum on Women's Rights and Development in 2012 in Istanbul (the AWID Forum). Held every three to four years, the forum brings together women's rights groups, donor agencies, development practitioners, grassroots leaders and activists from around the world. It is a place where participants network, build alliances, celebrate and learn in dynamic inclusive spaces. According to its website,

the Forum responds to the urgency to promote stronger and more coordinated engagement and action by women's rights advocates, organizations and movements. We also believe that the Forum has the potential to set agendas for women's rights movements and organizations on key issues, identifying concrete initiatives they can engage with.

(<http://www.awid.org>)

I was invited to join a panel to discuss the possibilities of alternative economic frameworks agreeable to feminist sensibilities. The four frameworks were diverse economies, food sovereignty, agroecology and *buen vivir*. Each framework was signalled as having the potential to address economic justice from a progressive feminist perspective. The audience of over 100 was intrigued by the different approaches and what each could offer. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, all the presentations except mine were made in Spanish, thanks perhaps to the larger collective feminist impulse emerging from progressive political

movements in Latin America in contrast to, say, the Indian subcontinent or Africa, and certainly the Pacific. We had a healthy discussion and debate about the relative merits of each framework. The main concern about a diverse economies approach revolved around how its politics were not evident – ‘Yes, but where is the politics?’ Indeed, it was even suggested that it might be an approach amenable to conservative economic enterprises. It seemed to me that the earlier focus of community economies was on the micropolitics of change, which were recognized as operating at different levels. But they were harder to discern in contrast with the large-scale structural changes addressed in the other frameworks. The question that kept coming up was how to ensure a diverse economy analysis which both convinces at larger scales of analysis and advances a progressive politics of social justice. Since then, Miller’s (2013: 518) articulation of the possibility of radical democratic economic organizing emanating from community economies theory provides a key step towards further engagement with the ‘complex ethical and political work of building no capitalist livelihoods’.

The question still remains about how a community economy framework might be drawn upon to address the economic relationship between Cuba and Venezuela, with its oil-for-doctors arrangements (Werlau 2013). As Cuba begins its next engagement with the capitalist compulsions of global trade, its community values are likely to be moderated by the less than community-focused imperatives of Brazilian agroindustrial interests or the entrepreneurship of the Miami Cuban diaspora. Agroecological and food sovereignty perspectives have an explicit position on the types and nature of tangible agricultural products that can be produced. And this is closely matched by successful organic Cuban farmers’ experiments (Leitgeb et al. 2011). Further, this kind of examination can be scaled so that one can begin the analysis at the household level and scale up to the nation state and onto the global level where, for instance, the demand for Cuban cigars can be understood. So while the practice of asking about different kinds of transaction, different types of labour and different forms of enterprise provides a powerful yet simple analytical, the next set of questions needs to interrogate the identifiable transactions, forms of labour and types of enterprise labour which currently have a wider political value, albeit sparked by less than progressive ideological leanings. The economist from the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture provided a very confident presentation about the need to transition to the market economy, ending with a comfortable air of *fait accompli*. Yet the troubling unanswered and longstanding economic question about how ‘value’ was calculated and then equitably appropriated and distributed required a careful discussion around social relations within communities.

There was a buzz of excitement as participants in Havana continued discussing the possibilities. I was left thinking about the tourist enclaves and state programmes to ‘re-educate’ prostitutes. And what of the under-reported but

prevalence of violence against women that is denied by the state? These concerns are noted in the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) committees comments on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cuba. It seems that cooperative enterprises were not actively addressing this issue. Is it possible that a community economies perspective might offer a better way to do this? By explicitly addressing violence against women, the virtues of a fine analytical approach that expanded economic imaginaries would also be able to deal with the imperatives of gender justice. Inequalities can only be addressed when they are named and bought into view. The challenge for ontological conversations begun by community economies theories, and the ethical debates that followed, is to initiate political interventions that take seriously violent and gendered materialities.

Virtues and shortcomings: Wanigela

Vignette 2: Wanigela 'wantoks'

We knew it was a call from Wanigela because although domestic mobile calls were now possible, cheap international calls were costly, so they never left a message. We returned the international call to the most recent cell number we had. The conversation with a younger sister-in-law was more worrying than previous ones that requested a 'little bit of help'. It concerned how to deal with the request of another sister, who had been married into a different clan for over 30 years, but who now wanted to build a permanent house for her growing family on the land of her father's clan. There were many reasons for this move but a key one was to be closer to negotiations over new resource developments in the area. Other clan members were hoping for our intervention because although we did not live in Wanigela, we were the family of the oldest son. The 'we' included my husband as well as me as the sister-in-law of over 25 years. Unsaid, but understood by all in the discussions in the village, were the high stakes. If this was not done correctly, there was a real threat to the well-being of many. As a clan we had recently completed a critical cycle of marriage exchange after five careful years of planning. We humbly felt we had done it well. But as a family we had also shared the death, tragically, of a young woman and, foreseeably, of the oldest woman. Meanwhile, the village, including members of our family and clan, was also in the throes of variously engaging with a foreign logging company. The company bought cash employment and much hope of wider development, but it was still necessary to maintain subsistence gardens as well as attend to church, clan and family obligations, all of which required time and resourcing. In Wanigela, there is little sense of 'wantokism' based on language. However, clan affiliations are the major markers of how people meet their obligations. Importantly, the social relationships that arise in these processes are intimately tied to land, and the historic and mythical non-human

agency of ancestors and others. Key social relationships in Wanigela are regularly marked by the dynamic relations between clans as individuals moved between personal and partible beings (Strathern 1988). These relationships are continually reinforced by diverse economic and non-economic practices, as well as by ever-present and still strongly imagined non-human agents.

This vignette enables an interrogation of the value and limitations of a diverse economies perspective. Amid the troubling politics of agroindustrial land-grabbing in many poor developing countries such as Papua New Guinea (Filer 2012), small-scale resource allocation issues can often get lost. When land is in short supply, there are ongoing discussions over how the remainder is distributed for houses, for subsistence gardening, for public good practices, for religious activities and for new community activities. While the challenges of resource-rich developing countries have been increasingly well documented at the national level, less well understood are the non-economic 'forces' that play a critical role in moderating the diverse economic activities, especially as they pertain to multilingual communities, such as those in Papua New Guinea. These forces infuse informal institutions with an integrity that rests on powerful understandings of intangible spiritual and cultural practices and influences. Despite growing levels of education and the spread of Christian religious beliefs, simultaneous recourse to spiritual forces still has discursive and material effects. This is especially so when unexplained events lead to the search for behaviour that transgresses 'normal' economic, social and cultural practices. And very often this leads back to decisions about land. The Wanigela vignette invites a more careful analysis of these diverse economic practices, and here I want to consider the leverage that a community economies analytic provides in taking account of social relations with non-human beings.

To fully understand the question of 'where someone can build', it is important to situate the debates of resource-development projects in Papua New Guinea. In the case of Wanigela in the 2010s, development projects have invited a raft of possibilities from gold mining to butterfly farming to making bark cloth. Dominating all these initiatives has been the ongoing search to take advantage of the resources in unlogged primary forest. Since the mid-1980s, the logging industry in Papua New Guinea has been under close scrutiny because of the relative ease with which corrupt practices by national politicians and bureaucrats have been able to siphon huge financial benefits away from the people who 'owned' the resources (Barnett 1989). A number of legislative and procedural attempts have been made by various national governments to establish a sustainable non-corrupt forest industry. However, in the multiethnic and politically diverse country of Papua New Guinea, this is not an easy task and continues to be subject to political wavering among resource owners, elected politicians, forestry officials and foreign companies. Since the 1990s this has been well documented. Filer (2012) gives many detailed examples of how

these tensions play out at the local and national level throughout the country. However, tensions are also evident in the culture of politics embedded in the everyday lived experiences of women.

In 2014, people in Wanigela still express frustration with the slow pace of development as the main school buildings continue to deteriorate and the health subcentre lacks basic health supplies for the approximately 10,000 people it serves. The grass airstrip has been closed for several years due to the unwillingness of subsistence farmers to regularly slash the grass – ideally with a tractor but, when there is no fuel, by bush knife. New initiatives have come and gone – balsa wood production, cashew nut plantation – but none has advanced in the same way as logging operations. Sometimes these have been small-scale, time-limited activities because it has been so difficult to alienate enough virgin forestland to make the extractive investment worthwhile (Underhill-Sem 2003/2014). However, in the 2010s, new national policies on land alienation and agroindustrial development plans have cohered around dubious practices of land alienation that have implicated national and provincial land offices as well as many village-based leaders – often whose only real ‘wrong-doing’ was to imagine a new development project that would benefit the whole community in ways that national and provincial governments were unable to do.

Such was the case in Wanigela where the process of land incorporation advanced and which involved many middle-aged men – such as the husband of my sister-in-law. Being involved in these negotiations required many meetings and it was easier to stay close to the action rather than walk the extra two hours to their current home. Over the years, however, ‘unexplained’ illnesses, affecting his eyes and his legs, kept coming up. And then, in 2013, his second-born 20-year-old daughter died from ‘lack of blood’. Tragically, there was no way to really know the reason for this death but much has been inferred about his work with new logging interests. This was similar to the incident in 1994 when my mother-in-law suffered a severe leg injury as a result of a heavy branch unexpectedly falling from a large tree while she was in the garden. Why did the branch fall, and why did it fall on this particular woman? Many suggestions were posed; perhaps someone was in the garden area, but we did not see any traces of them. Perhaps she was being punished for transgressing some boundaries. Perhaps others in her family were pushing boundaries. Perhaps it was a kind of warning. Perhaps a more powerful sorcery would have successfully caused a death and a greater disability. Perhaps there were other people involved (Underhill-Sem 2003/2014).

Whatever the answers to these and other questions, these incidents are never put down to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. They are shaped by resource conflicts in Wanigela, just as similar disputes in Wanigela are now constituted by earlier incidents. The answers to the questions raised about the deaths are part of a wider localized understanding of how the world works. They

are part of the materially and discursively constructed culture of Wanigela that needs to be taken into consideration in place-based politics, such as the process of allocating land from one clan to another clan based on filial or sibling bonds. The stakes are high, so the micropolitics of negotiation are cautiously extended in time and space. This is the logic of difference and possibility, and also of consideration given to otherworldly forces.

Using a community economies perspective allows for a careful mapping out of emerging economic practices, being cognizant of the ontological substrate upon which these rest. In this case, it is the practice of attending meetings to discuss new developments in relation to the appropriation of new configurations of resource appropriation, such as incorporated land group holdings. The ethical debates that followed were held in many and various places and among many and various people, including me while living in New Zealand. Women were part of these discussions and played an important role in extending them beyond the recognized meetings, which almost always only involved men. Further, as in the vignette above, wider understandings of security also surfaced. It was not just a simple concern over livelihood security and developing a sustainable, locally owned development project, but reference was also made to security in relation to non-human actors, whose evidence was made apparent in past events, such as the sickness and even death of close family members. Taking Miller's (2013) argument further, Wanigela is currently in a 'moment of politics'. This will occur within the 'networks of relations, struggles and possibilities' from which this particular 'process of articulation emerges' (Miller 2013: 526). My challenge is exactly that of Miller who, following Gibson-Graham, argues we should 'focus our creative energies on constructing *weak theory* – theory that "refuses to know too much" about what is or isn't possible – so that our organizing, and our commitment to face-to-face negotiation and transformation, can be *strong*' (2013: 526).

Conclusion

The vignettes I analyse here illustrate how a community economies framework can be employed to explore the transformation of major economic, political and social structural changes in relation to gender justice. In addition I raise the question of whether a community economies framework can be used to speak to non-human agents in new economic practice. Miller's articulation of the intertwined nature of theorizing community economies has helped me to engage intellectually and politically in the spaces I inhabit. It takes me another step towards articulating the discomfort that often comes when working with the 'possibilities of partial connection' (Miller 2013: 531).

My engagement with the diverse economies framework in Cuba and Wanigela rests on a similar interrogation of the notion of intersectionality.

It is here where I see the beginning of a productive impulse. An intersectional imaginary to community economies allows for a better understanding of the hegemonic structural impulses that are leading to the transformation of Cuban socialism, without addressing domestic violence. It might also allow for us to engage in debates around cultural continuities and modernist notions of resource ownership while also dealing with a logic inspired by non-human agents from otherworldly imaginations. In my chapter the notion of intersectional diverse economic practices is in its weak theory stage. It is clear that at some moments we need to recognize the politics of working where the dominant intersections swivel around gender, but at another it may be race or class or identity or non-human agency. Our intellectual agility will be tested but our insights will be deeper.

Notes

1. See its reports to CEDAW, available online. For example, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&skip=0&query=&coi=CUB> (accessed 5 January 2015).
2. See Peck and Brenner (2010) for a longstanding dismissal of diverse economies and Springer (2012) for a more mediated example.

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5.4

'Optimism', Place and the Possibility of Transformative Politics

J. K. Gibson-Graham

Some ten years on from the publication of the essay 'Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place', I am struck by both the continued relevance of what Gibson-Graham laid out in this chapter and by the many changes that have occurred both on the world stage and in my place 'closest in' over the last decade. Globally we have seen a widespread and growing interest in experimenting with 'more than capitalist' economies, publically signalled, as Michal Osterweil and Yvonne Underhill-Sem point out, by Occupy, 15-M and the *buen vivir*, food sovereignty and solidarity economy movements, to name just the most well-known meshworks that are leading the charge to make other worlds possible. Closest in there has been the sad loss in 2010 of one half of the J. K. Gibson-Graham writing duo, when Julie Graham's wonderful, but too short, life was extinguished by cancer and its aftermath.

Such a sad irony it is that halfway through the decade in which our work became widely used in contexts as disparate as Xining in Western China, rural Colombia, Kurdish regions of Turkey, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA, and the suburbs of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, my feisty feminist friend Julie should bow out not of course without a fight but on a high, having just co-delivered the Janice Monk Distinguished Professor Lecture in the School of Geography and Development at the University of Arizona. Julie died confident in the knowledge that our work as Gibson-Graham had been appreciated, sometimes even life-changing, as Dombroski, Osterweil and Underhill-Sem (chapters 5.1–5.3) illustrate, and that it would go on. Indeed, Gibson-Graham has continued to publish and her work has evolved in collaboration with other members of the Community Economies Collective, both developing threads that had started to form prior to 2010 and taking on new thinking and practising projects (see, e.g., Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy 2013). In all this work the arguments laid out in the reprinted chapter remain pertinent. In this response essay I would like to address two issues that bear some restatement in light of persistent criticisms of Gibson-Graham's work. One is the issue of

analytical 'optimism' and the other is the perceived scalar limitations of the place-based politics Gibson-Graham outlines.

At a recent Symposium on the Shrinking Commons organized by Ash Amin at Cambridge University, Gibson-Graham had the audacity to challenge the founding premise of the gathering. The argument was that we cannot just assume that commons are shrinking, despite the high-profile cases of enclosure or lack of management of open-access resources that critical scholars are so eager to conclude are orchestrated by neoliberal globalization. Gibson-Graham argued (drawing on Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy 2013) that commons are the product of commoning practices – that is, of organizing access to something (whether physical, social or intangible) that supports the life of a community, of caring and taking responsibility for it, of benefiting from it but not necessarily owning it. There is work to be done to ascertain whether commons (and community that practises commoning) are being newly created, expanded or reshaped, or indeed being degraded and destroyed. Gibson-Graham's paper pointed to the formation of some new communities that were starting to care for and thus common our open-access atmosphere. At one point during the symposium in discussion with a prominent British physical geographer, they turned to me and offered the following pronouncement as a way of closing off more exploration of our different perspectives: 'Well you're just an optimist and I'm a pessimist.'

The accusation of optimism is a familiar rebuttal of Gibson-Graham's attempts to engender a politics of possibility by imagining and enacting community economies. One could try to dismiss it lightly, as Gibson-Graham did for many years, with a polite correction to the effect that it is hopefulness not optimism that backs up the work. But I have come to see this criticism as a more serious refusal to think. To me the label 'optimist' denotes someone who is willing to engage in the work of theorizing contingency, of taking situations that are 'not fully yoked into a system of meaning' and finding the dislocation, the wiggle room, the moment of rupture, the empirical richness of excess and working with it to fashion a politics. It's not just about looking on the bright side of things, of only accentuating the glass half full; it's about refusing to line things up, to make strong connections that discourage thinking and close off options for transformative action.

In her appreciative chapter, Osterweil also ponders this refusal to do the work involved in thinking possibility. She attributes this to the anxieties of activist-scholars that drive them to doubt or even condemn experimental, local practices as 'not radical or sufficient', not truly 'transformative' or 'anti-capitalist'. One of the most common anxieties that Gibson-Graham encounters is the fear of co-option of any initiative by 'neoliberal capitalist globalization'. The word co-option just needs one mention and immediately heads are nodding and world-weary expressions of 'I told you so-ism' take up residence

on the faces of 'critical thinkers'. Clearly this is not just about intellectual laziness or correct line-ism and the allure of adopting a strong theory that organizes the world, eliminates surprise and appears radical to boot. As one of Gibson-Graham's critics once shrilled, 'There are people starving out there!' Yes, indeed. The world is full of power inequalities, injustice, violence, starvation and illness, and many experimental initiatives confront forces that seek to undermine or even actively destroy them. This cannot be denied. But to roll all such forces into a single dynamic – that of neoliberal capitalist globalization – is to perform closure and evacuate politics of any strategy other than bare resistance. The alternative is to take up the finely tuned tools of weak theory and start to seek pathways, connections and surprising alignments, treating place/situation/event as unmapped and unmoored to anchoring structures.

This is where Dombroski's chapter is so intriguing in that it shows how a scholar can refuse the tidy narratives of strong theory and launch out into unknown territory to find a different politics – one that is of place and of the bodies of women and their networks of support. The kind of politics that emerges is not, however, anything like what we have come to expect. It is a mixed up, hybrid concoction of practices that, more than the women that enact them, 'speak' to each other across the globe. As infant carers in the minority 'developed' world seek new ways of living with the environment in less resource-hungry ways, the nappy/diaper-free mode of infant-rearing practised in China is a beacon of hope for how the sociality and materiality of modern life might change. Dombroski's close reading of economic diversity and everyday life in Xining produces glimmers of a different hygiene regime, one that is less water and resource intensive, that calls for greater appreciation of modes of non-verbal communication between infants and their carers, and that enrolls intergenerational networks in child-rearing.

Place-based research that is conducted with a 'beginner's mind' allows for a wealth of unyoked realities, such as those Dombroski documents to take on meaning. It is with these raw materials that new performative assemblages might be fashioned. And this is where a scalar outlook that sees place-based theorizing in terms of the limits of the local is not at all helpful. Again there is work to be done to trace how such thinking from the grassroots can speak back up and out to have global effects that challenge universalizing theories and the damages they inflict. An example drawn from recent action research in Melanesia might illustrate this point and, in doing so, touch on some of the concerns raised by Underhill-Sem.

Pacific Island nations are experiencing rapid economic change as semisubsistence livelihoods are eroded, rural migrants flood to squatter settlements around major towns, and land- and ocean-based resources are sought by global supply chains. There is much concern for the kinds of issue Underhill-Sem discusses in connection with Papua New Guinea, including resource exploitation,

increased food insecurity, and the rise of inequality and violence. The lives of women and men are being dramatically transformed with more change on the way as developed world trading partners instigate 'closer economic relations' via free trade agreements such as PACER Plus.¹ While dominant economic policy promotes international free trade, social policy discourse, under the successful influence of second-wave feminism, promotes gender equality, though the connection between these two policy thrusts is questionable. As many feminist scholars working on GAD have pointed out, women often bear the brunt of economic changes that are supposed to 'float all boats', and there are huge disparities that are generated by rapid economic change. There is, of course, much questioning of the universal economic growth paradigm and many examples of place-based responses, such as that of Vanuatu, where sustaining the custom/kastom economy is promoted as key to increased well-being. Thus far there has been less questioning of the universal discourse of gender equality, though scholars such as Sally Engel-Merry have raised concerns about top-down impositions of Western rights-based thinking (2014). It was in this context of concerns that Gibson-Graham's project to explore community-based understandings of gender equality in Melanesia was situated.

The research was informed by the wish to ask how women and men in various contexts in Melanesia understand gender and gender roles, and what they aspired to in terms of a future for relations between women and men. The aim was to supplement and perhaps even question the relevance of universal indicators of gender equality, such as numbers of women in parliament, educational achievements or women's access to cash, and generate alternative indicators that could be used to track changes in the lives and well-being of women and men along with economic change. What emerged from the research conversations were grounded views on what kinds of economic empowerment (women's kam up in Melanesian pidgin) was desired, the value of achieving women's and men's togetherness, the important role of women's collective action and organization, and what was aspired to in terms of women having a voice in public life. Importantly, it was not only cash incomes that were seen as contributing to empowerment, but also income in kind from the non-cash economy and the multiple benefits of maintaining a role in the kastom economy. Another important consideration to emerge was the need for positive male role models for younger men to emulate.

From a considered engagement with people in place, Gibson-Graham devised a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators that communities and governments could collect in order to track changes for the better or worse in how the lives of women and men are lived in a challenging period of both economic and environmental change. These indicators are a form of metrics or sociotechnical objects that can promote global discussions about what constitutes development. They embody a place-based criticism of the economic

growth paradigm and they open up new understandings of gender equality as defined in place.

Human/non-human assemblages provide the opportunity for place-based theorizing to spread as they connect grounded sociocultural experience, techniques of measurement, indicators, universal discourses, modes of performative community learning and probably other actants we have yet to identify. Such assemblages have the potential to stretch across the globe to inspire other sites of place-based indicator thinking and in doing so to produce a transformative politics based on ubiquity rather than unity.

Those attuned to social theory might pick up on the engagement with ANT and assemblage thinking that is helping to push further development of a transformative politics of place. Certainly in the last decade, Gibson-Graham has welcomed the challenge to think beyond the human subject as the privileged agent of change. Accordingly, strategies for building community economies have proliferated as we begin to include the actancy of the non-human, including other living species as well as technologies both material and immaterial. There are still huge challenges to face in this world full of human sadness and ecological destruction, but it still seems to me that we have no option but to take the work of being a theoretical 'optimist' if we are in any way going to contribute to building other possible worlds.

Note

1. See <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/pacer/pages/pacific-agreement-on-closer-economic-relations-pacer-plus.aspx> (accessed 18 October 2015).

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Section VI

Gender, Race, Intersectionality

6.0

Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging

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Power and belonging

Politics involve exercise of power and different hegemonic political projects of belonging represent different symbolic power orders.¹ In recent years, the sociological understanding of power has been enriched by the theoretical contributions of Michel Foucault (1979; 1991a) and Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1990). Traditionally, power was understood and measured by the effects those with power had on others. Feminists and other grass roots activists, following Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), promoted a notion of 'empowerment' in which people would gain 'power of' rather than 'power on'. While this approach has been used too often to cover intracommunal power relations and the feminist 'tyranny of structurelessness' with which Jo Freeman (1970) described the dynamics of feminist politics, the notion of empowerment does fit alternative theoretical approaches to power which focus on symbolic power.

Max Weber's classical theory of power (1968), which differentiated between physical and charismatic powers, those dependent on individual resources and those emanating out of legitimate authority, has been supplemented, if not supplanted by other theoretical frameworks which sought to explain what is happening in the contemporary world where social, political and economic powers have become more diffused, decentered and de-subjectified. The most popular of these new approaches have been those by Foucault (1979, 1986, 1991a) and Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990). Foucault constructed a notion of a 'disciplinary society' in which power increasingly operates through impersonal mechanisms of bodily discipline and a governmentality that escapes

the consciousness and will of individual and collective social agents. Under such conditions, power as was formerly known, starts to operate only when resistance occurs. However, as Ciaran Cronin (1996: 56) points out, while Foucault's genealogical perspective of power is of crucial importance in understanding contemporary politics, it is too radical and monolithic, and therefore 'it is impossible to identify any social location of the exercise of power or of resistance to power'. This is where Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, while sharing some of Foucault's insights, such as the role of body practices as mediating relations of domination, can serve us better.

The subject for Bourdieu is both embodied and socially constituted. His theory of practice (in which there is constant interaction between the individual symbolically structured and socially inculcated dispositions of individual agents which he calls 'habitus' and the 'social field' which is structured by symbolically mediated relations of domination) offers a more empirically sensitive analytical framework for decoding impersonal relations of power. Symbolic powers are of crucial importance when we deal with political projects of belonging, although more often than not, they are the focus of contestations and resistance. Adrian Favell (1999) defined the politics of belonging as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance'. The boundaries the politics of belonging are concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries that, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and 'them'.

The question of the boundaries of belonging, the boundaries of the Anderson (1991[1983]) 'imagined communities', is central in all political projects of belonging. The politics of belonging involve not only the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers (within and outside the community) but also their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents. It is important to recognize, that such political agents would struggle both for the promotion of their specific position on the construction of collectivities and their boundaries as well as using these ideologies and positions in order to promote their own power positions within and outside the collectivities.

The politics of belonging also include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of such a community. As such, it is dialogical (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999) and encompasses contestations both in relation to the participatory dimension of citizenship as well as in relation to issues related to the status and entitlements such membership entails.

It is for this reason that we need to differentiate between belonging and the politics of belonging. Before discussing this in a little more detail, it is important to discuss why intersectionality and the epistemology of the situated gaze is so central to it.

Intersectionality

Epistemologically, intersectionality can be described as a development of feminist standpoint theory which claims, in somewhat different ways, that it is vital to account for the social positioning of the social agent and challenged 'the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere' (Haraway 1991: 189) as a cover and a legitimization of a hegemonic masculinist 'positivistic' positioning. Situated gaze, situated knowledge and situated imagination (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002), construct differently the ways we see the world. Intersectionality theory was interested even more in how the differential situatedness of different social agents constructs the ways they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects.

I do not have space to get into the history of various inter- and intradisciplinary debates on how to approach intersectionality. Instead, I shall just mention three main points that characterize my approach to intersectional analysis. Unlike many feminists, especially black feminists, who focus on intersectional analysis as specific to black and ethnic minorities women or, at least, to marginalized people, I see intersectionality as the most valid approach to analyse social stratification as a whole (Yuval Davis 2011). Intersectional analysis does not prioritize one facet or category of social difference. Unlike those who view the intersection of categories of social difference in an additive way, I see them as mutually constitutive. As to the question of how many facets of social difference and axes of power need to be analysed – this is different in different historical locations and moments, and the decision on which ones to focus involve both empirical reality as well as political and especially ontological struggles. What is clear is that when we carry out intersectional analysis, we cannot homogenize the ways any political project or claimings affect people who are differentially located within the same boundaries of belonging.

Belonging and the politics of belonging

It is important to differentiate between belonging and the politics of belonging. Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home'. As Ghassan Hage (1997:103) points out, 'home is an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future'. (See also Taylor 2009.) Part of this feeling of hope relates to home as a 'safe' space (Ignatieff, 2001). In the daily reality of early 21st century, in so many places on the globe, the emphasis on safety gets a new poignancy. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that feeling 'at home' does not necessarily only generate positive and warm feelings. It also allows the safety as well as the emotional engagement to be, at times, angry, resentful, ashamed, indignant (Hessel, 2010).

Belonging tends to be naturalized and be part of everyday practices (Fenster, 2004). It becomes articulated, formally structured and politicized only when it is threatened in some way. The politics of belonging comprise of specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries (i.e., whether or not, according to specific political projects of belonging Jews could be considered to be German, for example, or abortion advocates can be considered Catholic).

As Ulf Hannerz (2002) claims, home is essentially a contrastive concept, linked to some notion of what it means to be away from home. It can involve a sense of rootedness in a socio-geographic site or be constructed as an intensely imagined affiliation with a distant local where self realization can occur.

Belonging

People can 'belong' in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments. These can vary from a particular person to the whole humanity, in a concrete or abstract way, by self or other identification, in a stable, contested or transient way. Even in its most stable 'primordial' forms, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity – the latter is only a naturalized construction of particular hegemonic form of power relations. Belonging is usually multi-layered and – to use geographical jargon – multi-scale (Antonsich, 2010) or multiterritorial (Hannerz, 2002).

In order to clarify our understanding of the notion of social and political belonging, it would be useful to differentiate between three major analytical facets in which belonging is constructed. The first facet concerns social locations; the second relates to people's identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings; and the third relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging/s. These different facets are interrelated, but cannot be reduced to each other.

Of course not all belonging/s are as important to people in the same way and to the same extent and emotions, as perceptions, shift in different times and situations and are more or less reflective.² As a rule, the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they become. In most extreme cases people would be willing to sacrifice their lives – and the lives of others – in order for the narrative of their identities and the objects of their identifications and attachments to continue to exist. After a terrorist attack, or after a declaration of war, people often seek to return to a place of less 'objective' safety, as long as it means they can be near their nearest and dearest, and share their fate.

Ethical and political values

Belonging, therefore, is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are assessed and valued by self and others and this can be done in many different ways by people with similar social locations and who might identify themselves as belonging to the same community or grouping. They can vary not only in how important these locations and collectivities seem to be in one's life and that of others, but also in whether they consider this to be a good or a bad thing.

Closely related to this are specific attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity and categorical boundaries are being/should be drawn, in more or less permeable ways, as different ideological perspectives and discourses construct them as more or less inclusive. It is in the arena of the contestations around these issues where we move from the realm of belonging into that of the politics of belonging.

The politics of belonging

In my 2012 book I discuss what I consider to be the major political projects of belonging in the contemporary world. The first one is citizenship. I argue that citizenship should not be seen as limited to only state citizenship but should be understood as the participatory dimension of membership in all political communities. Moreover, I argue that it is impossible to understand state citizenship without analysing the multi-layered structures of people's citizenships that include, in intersectional ways, citizenships of sub, cross and supra-state political communities.

I also argue that in spite of this and in spite of the reconfigurations of states as a result of neo-liberal globalization, different state citizenships (or their absence) and the rights and entitlements associated with them, can (still?) be seen as the most important contemporary political projects of belonging, mobilizing people in popular resistance campaigns as well as determining to a great extent a global system of stratification.

Central to my argument in the book is the claim that the political project of states and that of nations overlaps only partially and is hegemonic only within specific locations and in specific historical moments. It is for this reason that nationalism and related ideologies are constructed in the book as an autonomous political project of belonging from that of citizenship of states. Nationalist ideologies usually construct people, states and homelands as inherently and immutably connected. The fluidity and mobility of globalized economy, people's migrations and political/religious/social movements that transcend national and ethnic borders and boundaries (in spite of various

attempts by states to control or contain them). They have also deeply affected nationalist political projects of belonging as well as the ethnocization of many states. It contributed to the rise of political movements that embrace the conviviality and richness of multicultural national lives. It has also with a growing intensity, contributed to the rise of and the emotional power of autochthonic movements that claim possession of territories and states because 'we were here first'.

This is the other side of the growing legitimacy of the notion of indigeneity, which conversely has proved to be a potent tool for claiming rights of racialized minorities who survived colonization and settlement of Europeans in various parts of the world. Their struggles, although different from those of other racialized minorities of people who immigrated to those and other western countries, can be analysed, on the one hand, as some forms of nationalist political projects of belonging. On the other hand, they can also be seen as part of the global rise of cosmopolitan political projects of belonging that rely on human rights discourse to claim their entitlement for individual and collective rights.

Another rising cluster of political projects of belonging are linked to religion. These can be linked to particular nationalist and ethnic movements or constitute parts of cosmopolitan global movements. Some of the most important political projects of belonging of our times are religious fundamentalist (or absolutist) movements which have arisen in all major religions and are part – especially some Muslim and Christian fundamentalist movements – of the global 'clash of civilizations' discourse which has come to replace the cold war as a dichotomizing discourse of the globe.

Although there have been feminist political projects focusing on all major political projects of belonging – citizenship, nationalism, religion, cosmopolitanism (Yuval-Davis, 2011) I consider 'ethics of care' to be more specifically a feminist political project of belonging. It relates more to the ways people should relate and belong to each other rather than to what should be the boundaries of belonging. Nevertheless, in the last instance, the question of boundaries cannot really be avoided once we start questioning who cares for whom and what are the emotional and the power relations which are involved in this interaction. Virginia Held (2005) claims that the care social and political model developed out the mother-child relationships model guarantees mutual equality and respect among people. In reality, although children can wield a lot of emotional power on their parents and others who love them, they do not have the same power as the carer adults and can easily be deprived and abused in many ways. Pointing out, as the feminists who developed the political project of 'the ethics of care' all do, that everyone at certain times of their lives becomes dependent on care, can be the normative basis for the development of 'ethics of care' as a necessary element of social and political solidarity, but cannot

guarantee it. It is for this reason that Martha Nussbaum (2001) argues for an approach to compassion in public life that operates at 'both the level of individual psychology and the level of institutional design' (p. 403). Although she recognizes that some emotions are at least potential allies of, and indeed constituents in, rational deliberation (p. 454), she extends her analysis to include the recognition that public institutions play a role in shaping possible emotions (Perri 6 et al. 2007), as well as the role individuals play in creating institutions according to their own values and imagination. Those, in their turn, influence the development of values such as compassion in others.

Nevertheless, in order to be able to influence, let alone construct, public institutions, emotions such as care and compassion are not sufficient, unless there is power to make them affective. It needs to be recognized, for instance, that while caring for others is the opposite of neo-liberal ethics which does not recognize notions such as 'public good' or 'public interest' and feminists have developed 'ethics of care' as an ideological and moral alternative to this, it can be argued that the adoption of 'ethics of care' by women, especially those who work in the care sector, facilitates and oils, rather than obstructs and resists, the smooth working of globalized neo liberalism which depends on local and global chains of care. As Martin Luther King Jr, stated,

What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love. (Excerpts from 'Where Do We Go from Here?' Martin Luther King Jr., 1967 in Gregory 2008: 1995.)

Care and political projects of belonging

Without power as a resource to, at least, resist if not affect positive change, the normative values of care and love of feminist 'ethics of care' can have very little social and political influence and can, at best, be perceived as utopian. As Joan Tronto (2005) has shown, using excerpt of Thomas More's Utopia on denizens, situated gazes can delineate boundaries of recognition and care even within Utopias. What is most important to recognize, is that not every combination of power and care/love would be compatible with feminist 'ethics of care' political projects of belonging or with that of Martin Luther King, Jr.

While feminists focused on care and love associated with traditional gendered western femininity as it is constructed in women's roles in family and society, we need to be aware that the heteronormative constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as complementary opposites, as is constructed in hegemonic discourses on these roles, have detrimental effects on women's powers and autonomy, let alone completely excludes the experiences and values of sexual minorities.

At the same time it is clear that even in such hegemonic discourses care is not exclusive the property of womanhood. There can be no clearer sign in such hegemonic discourses that men care about their community and society than their traditional readiness to perform the ultimate citizenship duty – to sacrifice their lives and to kill others for the sake of the nation. As Cynthia Enloe (1990) pointed out, fighting for the nation has been often constructed as fighting for the sake of ‘womenandchildren’. More concretely, it has been shown that men care not only for the notions of home and homeland but for the other men in their unit with whom they are fighting (Kaplan, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 1997). One of the main worries of military commanders about including women in combat military unit has been that their presence will disturb the male bonding which is at the heart of military performance.

On their side, women as carers are not only constructed as the biological and cultural reproducers of the nation, but are also the men’s ‘helpmates’ – their roles in the formal and informal labour market has been usually defined according to the range of duties demanded from the men, fulfilling, in addition to their traditional reproductive duties, all the tasks the men left when called to fulfil national duties in times of war and other crises (Yuval-Davis, 1985). Caring, in its different gendered forms, therefore, has been at the heart of the performativity, as well as narratives of resistance, of national belonging. Nowadays, in many states, serving in the military is not any more a male citizenship duty. Just when women started to be allowed to join the military formally in more equitable manner, the military was transformed from a national duty into a form of a professional career, like other agents of national external and internal security. This is also a time in which usually in these states, women bear less children and the national population as a whole starts to age.

This is also the time in which women come to participate in higher and higher percentages in the national labour market, just when, due to neo-liberal globalized economy demands, the nature of service work itself changes and becomes more demanding. This is the time when the ‘care gap’ appears, not only in the domestic sphere, but in the national sphere as well and when the growing dependence on migrant and immigrant workers in various sectors of the economy but especially the care one, raises issues of racialized boundaries of the nation and the various inclusionary and exclusionary political projects of belonging – secular and religious – and the emotions associated with them.

Maybe even more importantly, this is the time in which in many countries, especially in the West, the percentage of citizens who care enough to vote in the elections falls beyond any previous known rate of the population, especially among younger generations who have grown up under the transformed state institutions as a result of globalized neo-liberalism. Neoliberal morality of the ‘selfish gene’ seems to be celebrating, as people cannot see any relationships

between engaging in the state and their own interests and concerns. A cynical illustration of this reality has been the demand – from all major political parties in the UK, for instance – to agree for savage cuts in state benefits and services and/or freezing workers' salaries, when the profitability of banks and most of the incomes of the highest earners are largely not been affected or significantly interfered with. Of course, the distance – if not contradiction – between the care demanded from citizens, driven by feelings of entitlements (Squire, 2007) of states and the interest of those who rule states can take also very different forms, such as when in ethnocracies, citizens who belong to non hegemonic minorities are still demanded to show loyalty and care to the state which frames of reference is constructed in terms excluding their collectivities.

The probably obvious, and yet groundbreaking at its time, element in Benedict Anderson's theory of nationalism in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) has been a recognition that nationalism, although modern and correlative of the age of enlightenment, is not based on rationality. Like other 'modernist' theorists of nationalism (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Althusser 1971), Anderson linked the rise of nationalism to a particular stage of the rise of industrialization and capitalism (print capitalism in his case), and saw it as replacing religion. In this respect, he was wrong, as we can see that most contemporary nationalist ideologies incorporate, rather than fully replace, religious belonging. He was right to emphasize the passion which is at the base of the nationalist sentiment in which, like religious or familial attachment, there is no actual rational reason and self interest involved.

As Anderson argues, this care is not based on any notion of self interest, and this is where it gets its strength from, as it is a substitute construction of 'the sacred'. 'The sacred', constituting the heart of the religious sphere, then, inspires probably the strongest notions of loyalty and sacrifice. The notion of martyrdom is widely spread in various religions, especially the monotheistic ones. The notion of absolute sacrifice is not limited to sacrifice of self but also of those the self cares most about, as is illustrated in the stories when a father is prepared to sacrifice his son (Abraham and Isaac) as well as a mother her children – at least in the Jewish tradition in the story of Hanna and her seven children³ where she preferred them to be killed rather than to betray the Jewish faith.

One of the factors contributing to the growing strength of religious movements all over the world is that religious movements and organizations are often the only ones who put time, energy and funds in caring for the poor, the homeless, the slum neighbourhood, especially after the growing privatization of the welfare state and the collapse of socialist and communist movements. At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are growing secular global social movements concerned with war, poverty and global warming which transcend borders and boundaries, sharing common human values

rather than ethnic, national and religious belonging in cosmopolitan practices and discourses of global and human care.

In discussions of familial, national and religious sentiments, it is sometimes taken for granted that people would not be prepared to sacrifice their lives for any more abstract – or cosmopolitan – cause. And yet we know that strangers and outsiders volunteered to fight for various socialist revolutions – Che Guevara probably embodies this sentiment more than anyone else – and in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, for example, the international brigade had an important role to play, ideologically and militarily (Richardson 1982).

In recent years the international solidarity movement in support of the Palestinians⁴ for instance, has also been politically important as other similar organizations in other militarized conflict zones, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Although some of the volunteers have religious motivation, for others it was the visceral cosmopolitan sentiment of caring and identification with oppressed strangers and the need to fight for their human rights to be recognized.

Feminist ‘ethics of care’ morality does not ground its ontological base in membership in specific national, ethnic or religious communities but on transcending familial relationships into a universal principle of interpersonal relationships. We need to explore, what, if at all, is the relationship between the discourse of ‘ethics of care’ and collectivity boundaries. Such exploration should not be carried out only in relations to feminist ethics of care but also in relation to other similar moral philosophies that put ‘love’ at the basis of the good society.

As illustrated by Donovan and Adams’ work on animal welfare (2007) there is one basic similarity which is assumed in all ethics of care theories which is, to use Alison Assiter’s words that ‘all human beings are needy and all suffer’ (2009:101). Following Kierkegaard’s call to love all human beings and Levinas’ insistence that care and love should not be mutual or conditional, she also argues that ‘sometimes, loving another will involve respecting their differences from oneself to the extent that one is able’ (Assiter 2009: 102). The position expressed in the above quote raises two issues which are of fundamental importance to feminist and other emancipatory politics of belonging. First, what criteria should be used to decide when such difference should or should not be respected, and secondly, how does one determine their ability to respect such differences. I would like to examine these two issues via examining transversal feminist politics (Yuval-Davis, 1994, 1997, 2011, 2012; Cockburn and Hunter, 1999).

Care, belonging and feminist transversal politics

Transversal feminist political movements are one form of cosmopolitan dialogical politics. The participants, while being engaged with ‘others’

belonging to different collectivities across borders and boundaries, act not as representatives of identity categories or groupings but rather as advocates, how they are reflectively engaged in 'rooting' and 'shifting' and how their strength lies in the construction of common epistemological understandings of particular political situations rather than of common political action. It was also mentioned that transversal politics, unlike 'rainbow coalitions', depend on shared values rather than on specific political actions, as differential positioning might dictate prioritizing different political actions and strategies. Most relevant to our discussion here, it was described how transversal politics encompass difference by equality and while continuously crossing collectivity boundaries, the transversal solidarity is bounded by sharing common values.

Shared values as the basis of solidarity and cooperation is generally rejected by ethics of care feminists. The bond of mothers to their children and of carers to their dependents is not that of shared values but that of love and need. The ethics of care feminists and others might share the value of helping the needy, but there is no such a demand for the needy to necessarily hold such values. This is an asymmetrical politics of solidarity based on the Levinas principle.

Transversal politics, on the other hand, are based on the symmetrical politics of the Buberian 'I-You' approach. But the symmetry and reciprocity is not that of commercial interest, as Levinas claimed in his critique of Buber, but of the reciprocity of trust. While one might be engaged in defending the rights and/or helping to fulfil the needs of any individual and collective human beings whatever their values, common political belonging depends on shared values, although these shared values encompass intersectional individual and collective differential positionings. This trust, based on common values, also differentiates transversal politics from the Habermasian (Habermas et al., 2006) deliberative democracy approach.⁵

This is of crucial importance because in this way the transversal perspective helps us to judge which differences matter when and where, and to differentiate between care and compassion towards the oppressed, whoever and wherever they are, and that of accepting them all as long term potential political allies in any case of political mobilization.⁶ Southall Black Sisters in London, for instance, are very active in the defence of women of all ethnic and religious communities from domestic violence and abuse, rejecting any cultural and religious justification of such acts. At the same time, they are not the political allies and oppose those who have sought to solve domestic violence caused by migrant men by deporting them from Britain – after all, men of all classes and ethnic communities commit the crime of domestic violence but are not punished by deportation. Racist solutions should not be the answer to sexist problems and SBS would not establish a transversal political alliance with those who do not share their anti-racist values. Although Southall Black Sisters have been an effective campaigning organization in many ways, and even

managed to overthrow attempts by politically hostile local authority to stop their funding, they do not have the power to stop such deportations.

Examining feminist ethic of care and feminist transversal dialogical politics brings us back to the question of power and its relations to ethics and to the words of wisdom of Martin Luther King quoted earlier,

I would argue that a feminist political project of belonging, therefore, should be based on transversal 'rooting', 'shifting', mutual respect and mutual trust. It should be caring, but should differentiate clearly between caring towards transversal allies and caring towards the needy. Above all it should not neglect to reflect upon the relations of power not only among the participants in the political dialogue but also between these participants and the glocal carriers of power who do not share their values who need to be confronted, influenced, and when this is not possible – resisted.

Concluding remarks

Politics of belonging is about the intersection of the sociology of power with the sociology of emotions, but it is the normative values lens which filters the meaning of both to individuals and collectivities, differentially situated along intersectional glocal social locations. It is not, or not just, ideological and emotional 'consciousness raising' which homogenizes discourse, but specific relations of power. But power, in order to be effective in the long term, has to be internalized and naturalized. The problem of feminist, as well as other emancipatory political movements of belonging, is how to gain power enough to change society, without internalizing, on the way, at least some of the assumptions about 'what works' which, at the end, would have them co-opted. The case of 'gender mainstreaming' is but one example, but there are also many others.

I would like to conclude by quoting St. Lukes, who predicted that 'The Wretched will inherit the Earth', which some, like Anat Pick (2010) would claim is the religious formulation of the mission of the Left. She also claims that this is an impossible mission, as granting power to the powerless without just transfer rather than a transcendence of relations of power is a contradiction in terms except in extraordinary and very short moments of grace (for example, the 18 days of resistance by Egyptians in February 2011).

While I find this warning sobering but valid in many ways, this view also involved a homogenous construction of power which I take exception to, ignoring the complexities of different systems of power which have different systems of checks and balances which might be mobilized, to a lesser or greater extent in the containment, contestation and redistribution of power and other social resources. On a more basic level this view of power of the powerless ignores

the insights of Bourdieu which views power as constituted by constant interaction between the symbolically structured and socially inculcated dispositions of individual agents and the social field structured by symbolically mediated relations of domination.

So – is our mission impossible? Probably. But we must carry on in the Gramscian way – with the pessimism of the mind and the optimism of the will. As the Zimbabwean women’s slogan says – ‘If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.’

Notes

1. This chapter is based on the paper ‘Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging’ presented by Professor Nira Yuval-Davis as a keynote speech at the National Gender Conference for the Danish Association for Gender Research 2011. It draws from her book *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (2012). The text has been edited for the Handbook.
2. As will become clearer further on in the chapter, these facets can be reconstructed and reconfigured in many different ways by different political projects of belonging.
3. <http://www.jewish-history.com/occident/volume7/jun1849/hannah.html>.
4. <http://palsolidarity.org/>.
5. In the importance of trust in public political life and the ineffectivity of accountability as its replacement in public culture, please see Onora O’Neil’s 2002 BBC Reith lectures <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2002/>.
6. Recently there have been major debates and political crises in two major human rights organizations, Amnesty International in London and the Centre for Constitutional Rights in the USA when major feminist activists working in both organizations accused them of crossing the boundary of defending human rights victims and championing them as if they are not only victims but also human rights defenders and thus giving their views political legitimacy. See <http://www.human-rights-for-all.org/> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/nov/15/international-criminal-justice-yemen>.

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6.1

Towards an Ethics of Care: Response to 'Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging'

Aili Mari Tripp

Introduction

Nira Yuval-Davis, in her thought-provoking essay 'Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging', advocates for a view of intersectionality that is mutually constitutive and is focused on a politics of belonging, which has to do with contestation between different people sharing the same location. She stresses that one cannot homogenize a political project of people who are positioned differently. She argues that in spite of globalization, state citizenship still remains the most important political project of our time, along with nationalist and religious projects. In this context she wants to develop a feminist political project of belonging based on an 'ethics of care', rather than one built on citizenship, nationalism, religion or cosmopolitanism. It is an ethics of care that is based on power and shared values rather than an economy of care that simply makes it easier for women to be exploited. She asks on what basis should that 'ethics of care' be built and is uncomfortable with the notion that it be built on the bond of mothers to their children, which is a relationship of love, need and dependence rather than a more symmetrical relationship. What criteria, then, should be used to decide how differences should be respected and how does one determine the ability to respect, she asks?

Yuval-Davis is also interested in incorporating a notion of intersectionality that is concerned with power. Unlike standpoint theory, which is agnostic about power relations, intersectionality is explicitly concerned with power (Lutz, Herrera Vivar and Supik 2011). These relations are dynamic and changing. Scholars of intersectionality examine systems of power and oppression based on multiple forms of difference that are interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation from one another. In other words, one cannot pull apart one identity from another and try to understand it on its own. People have multiple identities that intersect and coproduce one another, depending on social experiences. Individuals or groups who are privileged in one power

relationship may find themselves marginalized in another. As with standpoint theory, individuals have different perceptions and worldviews, but as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) has argued, these perceptions can be based on simultaneous experiences of privilege and disadvantage.

While I entirely embrace the idea that there needs to be a feminist-inspired political project other than one built on citizenship, nationalism, religion or cosmopolitanism, I am not sure that an ethics of care can entirely avoid the notion of dependence even if it is premised on equality. My other concern is that an ethics of care needs to take existing realities, ideologies and practices as a starting point. It can and should be normative and visionary, and it should transcend existing ideologies, but it also needs to take lived experience as a starting point. I elaborate on both these caveats below.

Can an ethics of care avoid dependence?

First, regarding the idea of symmetry that Yuval-Davis wishes to preserve, care implies that someone is in need of care, so it is not entirely clear to me that 'an ethics of care' can be perfectly symmetrical at any given moment. One should always assume equality between people, but we are not all the same and we should not require sameness in an ethics of care. Moreover, I don't think that one can entirely escape the notion of dependence. Children, the ill, the disabled, the elderly – all are dependent at different times. Even caregivers and parents are dependent on others in various instances. What equalizes us as humans is that everyone at some point in their life is dependent on others. There may be greater symmetry when the child who was parented becomes the caregiver of the elderly parent. Someone who was cared for when they were ill can care for their caregiver who might become ill. Relations between parents and children need not be based on hierarchy because parents learn as much from their children as children learn from them. All of these relations can and should be based on equality and mutual respect. Dependence does not mean inequality.

Being a caregiver also does not necessarily imply exploitation, although in practice it often can be such a relationship. Women, more often than not, end up in underpaid, undervalued, caregiving roles, creating an imbalance. Caregiving can be reimagined so that it is shared by more household members, by men and women in the home, and in ways that do not result in exploitation within the family, of poorer women and men workers in caregiving jobs both locally and globally. However, shifting to the notion of 'an ethics of care' that is detached from mothering does not necessarily mean that one escapes these realities.

Because the foundation of an ethics of care often rests on the metaphor of mothering, one needs to come to terms with mothering. It seems that the

metaphor of caring, or of motherly caring, should not be taken too literally. It should be thought of symbolically for the values it represents. Not everyone is a mother: men and young children cannot be mothers; women with adult children generally do not mother in the same active way as when their children were younger; some women are yet to be mothers; and not all women can or wish to be mothers. Moreover, not all mothers are caring, loving, selfless or self-sacrificing. So when we speak of motherly caring, most societies think of it as a metaphor and see it for what it represents as an archetype rather than an actual relationship. The metaphor implies selfless caring for the other without thought of oneself. It implies putting someone else's needs above one's own. It implies complete devotion and love of the other and recognition of the value of everyone who has been born because they are human. This is, of course, an ideal and it is one that falls far short of reality. It is an ideal that could be adopted by any gender and anyone. An ethics of care that arises from this archetype sees value in everyone and, because of their humanity, they are deserving of care. The mother is a society and state that values the welfare of each of its members and sees their survival and flourishing as integral to the survival of society itself.

However, an ethics of care is first concerned with whether one's needs are being met. In that sense it is similar to a human rights ideology that claims that everyone has a right to be free from abuse regardless of their party affiliation, race, religion, gender, history of their group identity and so on. As Yuval-Davis points out, quoting Alison Assiter, 'all human beings are needy and all suffer... sometimes, loving another will involve respecting their differences from oneself to the extent that one is able' (2009: 101, 102 cited in Yuval-Davis 2011). Yuval-Davis, however, goes on to ask in a somewhat contradictory fashion: 'what criteria should be used to decide when such difference should or should not be respected, and secondly, how does one determine their ability to respect such differences'. An ethics of care cannot ask this because everyone is meritorious. However, she is right to focus on power inequalities. An ethics of care should examine the power relations that give rise to certain forms of need, and one can address those imbalances. One way to address them to minimize asymmetries is to provide people with the means, with the capacity, as Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (1993), Martha Nussbaum (2000) put it, to be able to advance themselves through education, access to credit, healthcare and other such means. It also may require tackling inequalities that give rise to difference through state policy and, for example, provide benefits to all, not through a means-tested system but through a universal system that removes the stigma of being a welfare recipient. Another way, which is suggested in this essay, is to see the ethics of care as a means by which women and people more generally become empowered.

Building on a lived ethics of care

My second interest in this essay is to show that an ethics of care should build on existing practices and ideologies. While the ethics of care is a normative ideal that transcends citizenship, nationalism, racism and cosmopolitanism, we find aspects of this ideal realized in women's mobilization the world over in contexts of conflict. One of the most interesting manifestations of this ethics of care has been women's capacity for recognition and working together across difference during conflict and civil war. It is here where we have witnessed the most remarkable capacities to bridge difference and manifest caring of the other, of the so-called enemy, and of those with whom one experiences the greatest difference. It is in these instances where we find women doing what other members of society were often unable to do: bringing the so-called 'enemy' into their ambit of care. Not only do they care for the other but they work together with them to provide care. Clearly, this is not a statement about all women, and some work at odds with this ethic, but it does describe the many who are active in peacebuilding.

Often in articulating this ethics of care, women rationalize their activities by drawing on fairly essentialized notions of motherhood and caring. But again, they are referring to an archetype, not a literal understanding of motherhood. They are pointing to an ethics of care constructed through their peacebuilding activities amid conflict.

A few examples may illustrate this ethics of care in action and how women have embodied this ethics of care and led the way. When violence broke out in Kenya after the 2007 elections in Nakuru, Grace Kibuku,¹ a businesswoman who was also head of the water commission, went to the authorities to beg them to take action to stop the violence. Nakuru was the most affected part of Kenya when land-related violence between the Kikuyu and Kalenjins broke out after elections in 1992, 1997 and especially 2007.

Kibuku had arranged for a hotel to be transformed into a place of refuge for displaced women, children, the elderly and disabled, to protect them from the cold at night. They accepted all into the hotel, including Kalenjin and Kikuyu. But the militia came with jerrycans and as police stood by watching, they torched the hotel while people were inside. Women leaders in the community went to the police and others in authority to beg them to stop the violence, but to no avail. They said to the men: 'give us the trousers [authority] and we will take care of this'. Then and there, Kibuku decided she wanted to run for political office, which she did in the next election. 'This was not about me, it was about us. I wanted to be in power make a difference.' Women did everything they could. They prayed, they took care of the needy, they pleaded with the authorities, they held a press conference and they marched to the provisional commissioner's (PC's) office. When they reached it, he said he was in a

security meeting and refused to meet with them. They were infuriated because nothing had been done to stop the violence and the police were simply standing by as the violence flared. The receptionist, recognizing the urgency of their request, told them that she would do them a favour and pretend that she was going to the toilet. She said: 'You storm in and don't spare that man. They have been sitting since morning doing nothing.' The women stormed in and Kibuku shouted: 'How can you sit here as PC while they are burning down Nakuru!' He started shaking and broke down crying. She said to him: 'Crying is not enough. I say to you men this is not a crying matter. Do something.' That night the PC imposed a curfew and the violence, which had taken at least 80 lives and displaced 8,000 people, began to subside.

Kibuku explained that women took action and helped out those who had been displaced because

by nature women are compassionate. When this happened, the men ran. The attachment of a woman to care for her child means that we are not made to do those corrupt things, we are not able to burn buildings, we are not naturally violent. People want to use violence to deal with fear.

Another Kenyan activist, Rosemary Okello-Odede, said that the 'ethnic card has worked for men in elections, but women politicians use the women's card, which unites them regardless of whether they are Kikuyu or Luo. We are mothers of all children, we understand all our children. Women are national, while men are ethnic' in orientation. 'We have a broader narrative.'² This is not to say that in reality women did not also draw on ethnicity, or that men did not challenge its politicization, but the comment speaks to the existence of an ethics of care associated with women and the values of motherhood that transcends tribalism.

In Western Africa another example of this narrative unfolded. When about 276 mostly Christian female students were kidnapped in April 2014 by the Al Qaeda-linked Boko Haram in Nigeria's town of Chibok in Borno State, it was not until Muslim and Christian women rallied together to protest the action that the mass abduction received national and international attention. Boko Haram had been attacking schools in northern Nigeria since 2010, killing hundreds of students and closing down schools.

Although there had been clashes between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria, Muslim and Christian women formed coalitions across religion and ethnicity, and between secular and religious women to protest the Chibok kidnappings in the northern Borno, Kaduna, Jos, Kwara, Nasarawa and Plateau states. In Nasarawa the protests were organized by the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) together with the Women Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). In Jos, the protests were organized by

FOMWAN and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). Similar protests were held in Abuja. I asked the secretary general of the Abuja chapter of FOMWAN, Rafatu Abdulhamid, why women of all religions had been at the forefront of the protests. She said there were some men but mainly it had to do with the fact that 'mothers feel the loss of other mothers so intensely, they feel it as though it were their own loss. We had no choice but to let our feelings be known.' She also made it clear that the Muslim community in Nigeria regarded Boko Haram's action as contradicting Islam and made it harder for girls to go to school in northern Nigeria.³

Jordan Rengshwat, a lecturer at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, which is based in Jos, found that the Chibok incident had brought people together, especially women, across religious divisions in a country that has often been divided and seen violence based on religious and ethnic differences.⁴ Similarly, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos explained that women led the way in calling for the return of the girls and influenced others to do the same:

They are just innocent girls, and every human being feels bad about this. Life is sacred. I think, because they are innocent young girls and also because it touches directly the suffering of women, the mothers of these children. And women can identify themselves more with the pain of others. The women started holding demonstrations – both Christian and Muslim women. Nigerians are standing up together for freedom and dignity; a common voice is growing up, a voice that says: 'Violence is never the way'.

(National Catholic Register 2014)

Far from the site of the abductions, the Market Women Association closed down markets in Lagos to protest against the abductions in solidarity with the mothers of the Chibok girls. Adiat Alao, the leader of Apongbon Market, explained:

We are mothers and we know what the mothers of the girls are going through. We also feel the pain as mothers, so we decided to close down the markets this morning to share in the pain being experienced by the parents of the girls. We feel for the abducted girls.

(*The Guardian* 2014)

Women's mobilization during conflict is often characterized by a transcendence of ethnicity and religion, the very divisions that have been politicized and led to violence. According to Yvonne Ryakiye, in 1996 most inhabitants of the Tutsi Musaga village and the Hutu Busoro village in Burundi did not feel safe travelling to each other's villages. Ryakiye went to sell her wares in Musaga anyway. As she explained,

people here would say of me, 'She is a traitor, she has gone there to tell our secrets!' When Tutsi women came to Busoro, the same would be said of them there. So together with Ancilla and the other women from Musaga and Busoro we founded an association. We called it *Twishakira Amahoro* [We Need Peace]. If we do not make an association, we thought, we as women will not achieve anything. We developed good relationships. We told the women: 'A woman does not belong to any ethnic group. All these problems just hurt us. Let's work together to bring back peace!' We rebuilt the houses destroyed during the crisis in Gatumba for both the Hutu and the Tutsi. When the Women Peace Centre learned about us, they invited us to talk to women in Ngozi. We told them that among women, there are neither Hutu nor Tutsi, 'We all are Barundi.' We did the same in Ntega and Marangara.

On numerous occasions, Ryakiye and others were able to save the lives of Tutsi.⁵

As a result of such mobilization, amid the worst fighting in 1999, women organized an exchange of humanitarian aid as a gesture of solidarity between two groups in Musaga and Busoro. Women from Musaga collected what food and clothing they could find for the women in Busoro, who had previously been attacked. As they heard gunshots in the surrounding hills, they gathered at an administrator's office and gave speeches pledging support to one another. They chanted, sang and danced for hours, 'We are the women of Busoro, we are the women of Musaga, give us peace, give us peace now!', until the gunshots subsided.⁶

Similarly in Somalia's civil war, women's role in sustaining families and communities uniquely positioned them to mobilize people at the grassroots and across clan lines, and to devise alternative networks for food, clothing, shelter and health services. Household divisions of labour dictated that women were the main ones responsible for restoring destroyed schools, creating clean water sources and assisting displaced persons.

One finds example after example of such unsung heroines and heroism. Women came together across acrimonious differences in peace talks in Burundi, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, and sat in the peace talks together from the outset, while men sat with their own parties and ethnic/clan groups. Women often saw unity as a starting point of the negotiations rather than the end point, and they saw their unity around common demands relating to the war, national reconstruction and women's rights as the focus of the process, rather than how to divide up positions and power. Women activists in such contexts often found it easier to build alliances across conflicted differences because they shared common gender concerns and shared opposition to patriarchy.

Women built ties across the Christian-Muslim divide and across ethnic divisions in Liberia in the two civil wars between 1989 and 2005. Their protests in

Liberia and collective action at the Accra peace talks in 2003 speeded up the resolution of the conflict. In the Liberian and many other peace movements, women saw peace as a process rather than a goal.

Women have also linked the ethics of care to political power and the necessity for power in order to be able to actualize their vision of care. Interestingly, they often embody Yuval-Davis' notion that caring needs to be combined with a political vision. Hence one often finds in African contexts a notion of 'political motherhood' that combines motherly caring with the need for women's political empowerment. One often discovers that movements for peace frequently include as one of their central demands the need for women's political representation. This corresponds nicely with Martin Luther King's eloquent admonition:

What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love. And this is what we must see as we move on.

(King 1967)

Thus, when Catherine Samba-Panza, who is a women's rights activist and human rights lawyer, took over as interim president of the Central African Republic in 2014, the news reports reflected these perceptions of female political power and what it symbolizes. The Central African Republic has been fraught with sectarian conflict, displacement and ethnic cleansing of Muslims in a country where 15% of the population is Muslim and 50% Christian. 'Everything we have been through has been the fault of men [fighters],' said Marie-Louise Yakemba, who heads a civil-society organization that brings together people of different faiths, and who cheered loudly when Ms Samba-Panza's victory was announced. 'We think that with a woman, there is at least a ray of hope,' she said. 'As a woman, she can understand the sufferings of the people, and as a mother, she will not tolerate all of this bloodletting,' said Annette Ouango, a member of a Central African Republic women's group. 'The men have done nothing but fight,' said Judicaelle Mabongo, an 18-year-old student in downtown Bangui. 'The men, they are fighting. But they are only destroying the country. This woman, she might be able to change things' (*New York Times* 2014).

The rhetoric is not unproblematic. While drawing on the motherly imagery, there is a heavy essentialist tone to the discourse, which reflects a gender duality in society. This vision may be harmful to the inclusion of men in solutions. But if taken at a more archetypal level it speaks to an ethics of care and the need for power to enforce that ethics of care. It speaks to the passion behind the

need for a different set of values than those that have produced ethnically and religiously based conflict in these societies.

Ideologies of care

While Yuval-Davis advocates for intersectionality as an approach, women's movements that draw on an ethics of care adopt numerous different ideological approaches to their understanding of difference. Intersectionality is a particular perspective rooted in US and British historical realities. It is a heuristic tool that can be used in understanding how differences are structured along various power differentials. It is less useful as a guide to action. Here it is instructive to look at experiences in different parts of the world to bring in a wider array of approaches.

In India during the 2002 Gujarat communal riots between Muslims and Hindus, many women's organizations called for the building of ties across difference. The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was one such organization. It is an independent trade union with a membership of over a million women. The organization is particularly known for mobilizing women across caste and across the Hindu-Muslim divide in India, drawing on the Gandhian idea that all people have equal worth, regardless of religion or caste. Their guiding principles emphasize *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *sarvadharma* (integrating all faiths) for social change. The organization is based in Gujarat, which has experienced communal Hindu-Muslim violence since India's independence in 1947. The majority of SEWA members are of lower castes and religious minorities. SEWA, along with other women's organizations, played an important role in education, awareness-building and dialogue between Muslim and Hindu women, and between women of different castes. SEWA leaders called on all the authorities to act to stop the violence, which mostly affected the poor, but they claimed they were helpless. At this time the Gujarat government was controlled by an extremist and violent wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Led by the chief minister at the time (the current prime minister of India), Narendra Modi, the BJP was regarded as polarizing and this contributed to the violence. Almost 40,000 SEWA members in Ahmedabad were directly affected by the violence in urban areas and 52,400 in rural areas. Their livelihoods were severely affected as raw materials were no longer available and no one was coming to collect their finished goods. They lost family members and homes, and some lost all their worldly possessions. Interestingly, SEWA and other women's NGOs worked in the communal harmony frame, which according to Mangala Subramaniam focused more on healing the community than on women's rights and concerns specifically, even though they were acknowledged. This approach seeks to 'interrogate, resist, and reconstruct the notion of communalism by challenging the gendered basis upon which it is perpetrated

and embedded in the broader notions of nationalism' (Subramanian 2014: 76). Thus SEWA did not focus its activities around sexual violence even though it acknowledged it because it felt the communal relations were too fragile to withstand blame.

There are other ideologies that drive women's mobilization around an ethic of care. Many societies conceive of a form of complementarity between the genders that allows for women to mobilize across difference. The potential limitation of such a view is that it locks women and men into prescribed roles and reifies a notion of gender that is fixed rather than fluid. Nevertheless, in Bolivia, for example, one of the reasons that women were able to build a broad coalition and gain legislative quotas, whereas the men of various indigenous groups failed to do so, has, in part, to do with the philosophical understandings within Andean cultures of complementarity between the sexes, which is referred to as *chachawarmi* in Aymara and *qhariwarmi* in Quechua. This dualism influences all spheres of life, including public decision-making, and it allowed women to put aside their political, class and ethnic differences to demand political rights and quotas for all women. In contrast, the movement for indigenous reservations in the legislature was unsuccessful because of the many divisions within the indigenous peoples movement: some won power while others were marginalized (Htun and Ossa 2013). Societies the world over have variations on such dual understandings of male and female spheres, and increasingly they are being used as a basis for demanding political power for women.

In Liberia, understandings of gender are based on a strict duality of female and male spheres, which are found in many parts of Africa. Rather than being a source of women's disempowerment, women claim their political authority from their engagement in this sphere. This moral authority served women peacemakers well in trying to negotiate with the militia to lay down their arms. They also appealed to their authority as mothers. Elizabeth Mulbah and Marian Subah of the Christian Health Association of Liberia called the faction leaders to a peace meeting. Two other important meetings were to be held on the same day, one organized by the Inter-Faith Mediation Council and another by the political parties, but the militia leaders went to the one called by the women because, as one faction leader put it, 'When your mother calls, you must show up' (AWPSG 2004: 28),

Another peace activist, named Peace, explained to me why women were able to build coalitions across difference:

God gave us women knowledge. We are peacemakers. We have mind to do development, not a mind to destroy. We give birth. We know how to struggle. If someone kills someone, we feel the pain. When children joined the rebels, they smoked, moved about and killed. It was men that herded the children to fight. Now fathers depend on mothers to help them take their

children out of trauma, to talk to them to leave fighting, smoking, and to stop moving around stealing.

It is important to note that women often drew on these gendered constructions for political expediency, in order to gain political support, to appeal to donors and to elicit public sympathy at home and abroad. However problematic from a feminist standpoint, women have depicted themselves as mothers who are natural peacemakers and leaders in order to be granted a seat at the peace negotiating table or claim leadership. Ruth Perry explained why she succeeded in conflict management and became head of the Council of State in Liberia in 1996: 'I projected myself as a true mother and stabilizer, using faith, discipline, courage, patience and tolerance. Prior to becoming head of state, I was deeply involved in encouraging and motivating women and all patriotic Liberians to take an active part in the peace process' (AWPSG 2004: 31).

Similarly, Nobel laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was the first female elected president in Africa, drew on the motherhood trope quite actively. She is known in Liberia as 'Ma Ellen'. A Johnson-Sirleaf campaign T-shirt read: 'All the men have failed Liberia – Let's try a woman.' As she explained in an interview,

I believe that there are certain attributes in a woman that give her some advantages over a man. Women are usually more honest, more sensitive to issues and bring a stronger sense of commitment and dedication to what they do. Maybe because they were mothers, and being a mother you have that special attention for the family, for the young, for children... All in all I am glad I am a woman and I think in Liberia today, it is time for women to show what they can do.

(Dukulé 2005)

Towards an ethics of care: Lessons from civil wars

What can we learn from the ethics of care embodied in these movements? First, the ethics of care is found in the quotidian. Peace is the starting point, and seeking peace, often through very quotidian pursuits of seeking water, fuel and shelter, is the way forward. It does not make headlines, it does not (usually) win Nobel Peace Prizes or gain the attention of politicians. It does not garner the spotlight because it is found in the everyday ordinary activities of life. It is remarkable for the lack of attention it draws to itself. Its importance lies in its mundane yet life-changing nature.

Second, an ethics of care points us to unities that help draw people together across difference. More than any other difference, gender difference cuts across the widest array of identities, creating a key building block to allow for such unities to be built. We need to aspire beyond difference and move to a post-identity world in which people can enjoy their cultural differences, but in which those

differences are not tied to economic and political power, which is what can make these differences so powerful and potentially destructive. One of the reasons women's rights activists have been especially adept at building ties across difference is because mobilization around women's rights and participation has the potential to unite the broadest swathe of any society around an issue because it is the broadest identity and it does not map onto wealth and power in the same way that other identities do. Women are generally in poor, middle-class or wealthy classes in equal numbers to men, but other groups can be included or excluded by wealth based on how they are situated within a society. These divisions can potentially lead to tensions and conflict. From the Liberian to the Burundian civil wars, women have mobilized around gender demands. They were able to tap into one of the broadest sets of cross-cutting interests in their societies and thus form new building blocks to build ties across difference. In all cases, women worked across class lines, thus reinforcing the cross-cutting nature of the gender alliance over ascriptive difference.

Third, an understanding of power is integral to an ethics of care. The most successful movements have sought to build alliances with the needs of the weakest and most dispossessed women at the forefront and with these women in leadership. This provides these movements with an ethical compass from which to proceed. When societies have aligned themselves with dominant powerful forces, this has often led to alliances based on racism, tribalism, wealth and other divisions. These are often backed up by ideologies of nationalism, apartheid and sectarianism of various kinds.

Fourth, while theoretically one can develop a notion of a care economy, in practice women activists already have existing frames that articulate versions of an ethics of care in their economic and household activities, but also in building the aforementioned bridges across differences in contexts of conflict and in building their movements. Sometimes these understandings are quite essentialized, based on notions of complementarity or duality of gender roles. However, these societies also find these gendered divisions a basis for building ties across difference. The lived ethics of care is an incomplete project because it appeals primarily to the caregiving tendencies of women rather than incorporating all genders. Thus while the lived experience of creating an ethics of care may provide a foundation on which to develop the project, it needs to be more explicitly detached from its focus on women to embrace all humans and from its essentialized assumptions about gender. Nevertheless, we need to look at such experiences in further developing the concept.

Notes

1. Interview with author, 21 May 2014, Nairobi, Kenya.
2. Interview with author, 22 May 2014, Nairobi, Kenya.
3. Interview with author, 30 May 2014, Maropeng, South Africa.

4. Interview with author, 30 May 2014, Maropeng, South Africa.
5. Interview by Maziar Bahari, translated by Tatien Nkeshimana, edited by David Shem-Tov, *Burundi Voices Project 2006*, <http://www.burundivoices.org/eng/yvonne4.asp>.
6. http://www.fasngo.org/en/activities/bestpract/linx/glakes/busoro_and_musaga.htm.

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6.2

Towards a Broader Scope and More Critical Frame for Intersectional Analysis

Susan Paulson

Introduction

Some 25 years ago in the Bolivian Andes, I asked farmer Faustina Fernández a clumsy question phrased something like ‘What are you?’ Her thoughtful answer revealed limitations of the static ways in which I sought to label people by gender and ethnoracial identity: ‘When a woman is hoeing potatoes in her field she is a *campesina*, but when she goes to the city to sell her potatoes she is a *chola*.’

As described in Paulson (2002), these words guided my observations on the morning when I helped Faustina to prepare breakfast for her children, *compadre*, nieces, nephews and others who would gather to join the harvest. Throughout the long day of digging and sorting potatoes, as well as feeding the workers, Faustina managed and performed a series of activities that were explicitly organized by kin relations, while neither sexuality nor ethnoracial identity seemed particularly salient. In the late afternoon, however, different identifications came into play. Leaving her sister in charge of the final sorting and bagging, Faustina hurried to her patio where she changed into her best market clothes, a velvet *pollera* skirt and tight lace blouse glittering with plastic pearls. As she rebraided her hair, she explained: ‘The truck-driver is due at six o’clock to load the potatoes, and if he thinks I am some dirty Indian he’ll cheat me in the portion of potatoes he takes in exchange for transporting my cargo.’ After cutting the deal and getting her produce loaded, Faustina spent the night in the back of the truck, bouncing amid the cargo on the long road to Cochabamba. Arriving at the market before dawn, she arranged her produce in a stall rented by a cousin who lived in the city. She was careful not to intrude on the space of the neighbouring urban vendors, who scorned her as a country bumpkin. Nevertheless, in her interactions with customers, Faustina played up her identity as a native of a rural region known for high-quality potatoes. She joked merrily in Spanish with men customers, in a context

where ways of expressing urban *mestizo* manliness include flirtatious exchanges with indigenous women. With urban housewives, however, she ingratiated herself by responding to their condescending address of 'waway' ('my child') with humble poses and phrases sprinkled with Quechua; by emphasizing her indigeneity she could better please those clients whose own sense of whiteness, educatedness and feminine purity depends on their performance of superiority to her.

During the decades following this observation, emerging theories of intersectionality have introduced new vocabularies for thinking and talking about the various dynamics of difference that Faustina engaged in during her daily life. In Nira Yuval-Davis' words (2006: 200), 'By incorporating these different kinds of differences into our analysis we can avoid... attributing fixed identity groupings to the dynamic processes of positionality and location on the one hand and the contested and shifting political construction of categorical boundaries on the other.' In addition to better understanding how Faustina's identifications and relations shifted as she moved through space and time, long-term research in Bolivia has allowed me to observe remarkable shifts in the structures and institutions that set the scene for her actions and experiences. To the surprise of many, positions of indigeneity that had long been marginalized and stigmatized became resignified during this time with new kinds of power and legitimacy (Canessa 2005).

In her articles 'Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging' (2011) and 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics' (2006), Yuval-Davis provokes us to think critically about ways in which power and identity play out in fields configured by multiple differences. In this chapter I engage her provocation by pursuing opportunities that I think are promising for addressing current challenges in GAD.

To begin with I ask what kinds of intersectional thinking can help us to recognize and respond to a wider range of relevant people and groups. Yuval-Davis (2011: 3–4) explains that intersectional theory explores 'how the differential situatedness of different social agents constructs the ways they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects', an application that seems relevant to every actor and group involved in development processes. However, all the discussions and quotes that she presents from scholars, organizations and international meetings limit the focus of intersectionality quite narrowly: while they show how intersectionality sheds light on social agents ranging from the black working-class women in Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) groundbreaking work to rural indigenous women such as Faustina, conceived as potential beneficiaries of GAD efforts, none of them extends the intersectional gaze beyond the realm of variously marginalized or disadvantaged women.

What happens if we widen the scope of intersectional analyses to encompass social, cultural and political positions omitted from most GAD frameworks?

The most obviously relevant positions are those of diversely positioned men, and it is also valuable to turn the analytic lens on those agents who make and implement GAD policies and programmes. Among the latter group, Yuval-Davis' (2011) discussions of politics of belonging help to illuminate the kinds of positioning that are grounded in shared ethical and political value systems. Even those committed to sustaining a focus on marginalized women will benefit from a more comprehensive analytic framework to understand and address the sociocultural systems and historical processes that produce and reproduce the positions of these women, together with the multiple forms of oppression they face.

In tandem with advocating intersectional analysis of a wider range of actors and groups, I call for building a more critical analytic framework. A basic step here is to examine the logic that underlies dominant thought, language and practice in GAD. How does its categorization scheme work? How and why has it kept the gaze directed towards certain individuals and groups while obscuring others? Intersectional analysis, in synergy with queer theory and with anti-racist and postcolonial feminism, has worked to question and destabilize aspects of this logic, including the constructions of 'woman' and 'man' as universally coherent categories.

Conceptualizing intersectionality

A conceptual framework that developed together with modern Western culture, and that structures and is conveyed by contemporary language and social science, allows us to distinguish among phenomena identified as class, race, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexuality, ability and other. These conceptual categories have been institutionalized and operationalized so that they serve in various ways to justify – and in other ways to critique – the assignment of individuals to social groups which enjoy differential access to power and resources. They also set the scene for the experience and the exercise of identity and belonging.

Various ways of interpreting and applying these categories work towards different ends; they also set the scene for quite dissimilar ways of thinking about how multiple types of difference intersect. Each way of conceptualizing intersectionality is useful for some approaches to GAD and advances some of its goals, while posing limits or problems for others. Yuval-Davis addresses debates about the relative benefits of locating intersectionality on one analytic level or another, the conflation or separation of those levels, as well as ways of conceiving the relationship among social divisions or categories. I agree with her that intersectional analysis need not prioritize one facet of social difference; particular types of difference are more or less relevant to each context and purpose. However, because my linguistic and conceptual vocabularies make it difficult

to talk about many dimensions at once, I will introduce some ideas about intersectionality in relation to ways of thinking about one type of difference: that which is racialized.

Evidence of racialization and racism is most commonly recognized in the oppression of and discrimination against individuals and groups identified as non-white. The concept of intersectionality introduced by American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) built on that perspective, adapting it in order to make visible the unique conditions of those who suffer discrimination or oppression along both racial and gender lines. Similar conceptualizations of intersectionality have been used to address and support individuals marginalized in varying ways around the world. Characteristic interpretations of Crenshaw's metaphor of the crossroad are well captured in this quote that Yuval-Davis (2006: 196) selected from a 2001 World Conference Against Racism report: 'Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group . . . tries to navigate the main crossing in the city . . . The main highway is "racism road". One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street . . .'

This approach has raised important critical questions about the extent to which mainstream feminism has represented interests and perspectives of white, middle-class women. Together with work focusing on positions and conditions of immigrant women, disabled women, rural women, lesbians, Muslim women in Christian communities, women in the developing world and others, this approach to intersectionality serves to alert GAD initiatives to the extent to which women in different positions and identities are impacted by (and experience) the same phenomena and policies in quite different ways. In María Lugones' (2007: 192–193) words,

Intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other. The move to intersect the categories has been motivated by the difficulties in making visible those who are dominated and victimized in terms of both categories . . . It is only when we perceive gender and race as intermeshed or fused that we actually see women of color.

In conveying the most widely applied approach to intersectionality – that whose methods and purposes are focused on women of colour – Lugones fails to mention that perceiving gender and race as intermeshed phenomena is also necessary and useful in order to 'actually see' white men (and everyone else).

In a quite different approach, some scholars of race and racism have begun to identify the establishment of whiteness/Europeaness as the common core of dominant racial systems, recognizing its incumbent privileges as fundamental expressions of racism (Rothenberg 2004; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). This latter conceptualization of race and racism raises the possibility for

quite different applications of intersectionality, which Yuval-Davis (2006: 201) distinguishes from the first:

One of the differences among the different approaches to intersectionality ... is that while some (especially Essed, Crenshaw and Harding) focus on the particular positions of women of colour, others (such as Brah, Maynard, Anthias and Yuval Davis) have been constructed in more general terms, applicable to any grouping of people, advantaged as well as disadvantaged.

In her later paper, Yuval-Davis (2011: 4) makes clear her own commitment to analysing whole social systems: 'Unlike many feminists, especially black feminists, who focus on intersectional analysis as specific to black and ethnic minorities women or, at least, to marginalized people, I see intersectionality as the most valid approach to analyze social stratification as a whole.'

This more comprehensive approach to intersectionality has tremendous potential to transform GAD thought and practice. It can help make sense of positions that may be marginal in some ways and dominant in others – for example, via awareness of the white privilege enjoyed by certain women, or the benefits of masculinity enjoyed by certain indigenous people. Its application can generate more specific understanding of what happens at the intersection of white, Christian, heteronormative and masculine identification. And, crucially, it allows a more subtle approach to the extremely varied positions and subjectivities of people categorized as 'men'. The use of intersectional analysis to reveal and recognize how spatial, sexual, ethnoracial, socio-economic and other differences create very different conditions of masculinity can help overcome the gross categorization of all 'men' as dominant oppressors who monopolize power. This distinction can be vital in efforts to motivate more effective consideration of all gendered actors and conditions relevant to development processes.

The distinction between a focus on women of colour and a recognition of whiteness, masculinity and other dimensions connects with another key distinction among approaches to intersectionality: the conceptualization of the interplay of differences as additive versus constituent. The above quote depicting a minority woman as the target of distinct forces of oppression that meet at a crossroads quite graphically conveys the first option, that each pre-existing force 'adds' to the power dynamics that influence the woman's subject position and her life journey.

It is more difficult to visualize phenomena such as racism, classism, patriarchy and colonialism in terms of the second option – that of mutually constituent systems. This requires us to consider that, although we name, perceive and talk about these as distinct forces, they may never operate separately in practice, nor exist independently in the world, but instead operate, from the

beginning, to produce and reproduce each other along with the people and practices they shape.

The challenge to think in more constitutive ways about intersectionality is supported by approaches to race that do not focus on discrimination against people identified as non-white, nor on the establishment and exercise of white privilege, but instead strive to understand racial systems as historically contingent sociocultural institutions that produce privileges as well as disadvantages along with the asymmetric relations between them (Wade 2010). Critical studies of processes through which race and racism emerged interdependently with the emergence of colonialism, capitalism, nationalism and modernity set the scene for thinking about ways in which gender and sexuality were mixed up in these historical developments. So, when Anibel Quijano (2000) argued that racial ideas and institutions that developing in conjunction with coloniality came to shape and permeate all social existence, María Lugones (2007) responded by asking how gender also intersected the processes that shaped those emerging social orders and identifications.

Deeper understandings of specific and intertwining histories of race, gender and other social systems is fundamental to the goal of forging the kind of development efforts that are capable of transforming current asymmetrical systems. Lugones (2007: 193) puts her finger on what I see as a vital step in that process: 'So, once intersectionality shows us what is missing, we have ahead of us the task of reconceptualizing the logic of the intersection so as to avoid separability.' For those of us engaged in GAD, this challenge requires us to think about how we think.

Positioned knowledge and power

By drawing attention to the social positioning of different actors, and by rendering explicit their differently situated gaze, knowledge and imagination, feminist standpoint theorists have challenged assumptions of one objective reality and drawn attention to varied epistemological stances. Epistemological stances have been connected in varying ways to single identity categories, via labels such as 'a women's perspective' and 'the ecological Indian', while intersectional positioning is recognized in discourses such as those about 'indigenous women's oneness with Nature'. While some ecofeminists (e.g., Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva 2014) have worked to honour such specifically positioned perspectives, others find problematic implications in their stereotypical deployment (Anna Kaijser 2014). However, both groups emphasize that different ways of seeing, knowing and experiencing the world are associated with different kinds, degrees and relations of power.

A particularly powerful kind of power is established when knowledge connected with a certain stance comes to be presented not as one positioned view

or local knowledge but as the objective and universal truth. Robin Lakoff (2000) points out how language works to establish the neutrality of perspectives established as the *status quo*, and Donna Haraway (1991: 189) describes the claim to knowledge that purportedly transcends social and cultural position as 'the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere'.

Yuval-Davis (2006: 199) follows Sandra Harding's distinction between two types of difference connected to different types of knowledge: ranking in hierarchical social systems versus location in different cultures:

However, there is a need to differentiate carefully between different kinds of difference. In her discussion of epistemology, Sandra Harding (1997: 385) commented that in addition to differences relating to differential power positionings, there are also 'mere differences' – the cultural differences that would shape different knowledge projects even where there were no oppressive social relations between different cultures.

While I agree that it is useful to distinguish social systems from cultural locations, I fear that Yuval-Davis' association of power with the first and 'mere differences' with the second could be misleading. I believe that both social and cultural differences develop through historical dynamics that always involve both 'mere differences', which are fundamental to the richness and resiliency of human groups, and asymmetries of power, which produce inequalities within and between groups. Although power relations between cultural knowledges are not always explicitly politicized, I find it hard to imagine the type of situation described by Yuval-Davis (2006: 199) 'where there were no oppressive social relations between different cultures'.

What I find particularly valuable here, however, is Yuval-Davis' (2006: 199) move to add a third dimension to Harding's distinction – that of epistemological and ideological difference: 'Alison Assiter's (1996) notion of "epistemic communities", in which political values, rather than location across power grids or cultural perspectives, become the unifying factors.' Epistemic communities can be thought of as networks that link together ideas, resources, actors and actions dedicated to addressing given issues. Yuval-Davis' discussion of the politics of belonging in networks or communities based in shared values and political positions opens up the pathway for needed examination of a specific cluster of epistemic communities: those anchored in the knowledge projects of feminism, of critical feminism, and of GAD. How do these communities intersect with or distinguish themselves from each other? How are positions within each established? How does identification with feminism, or with GAD, intersect with other axes of identity? What ideas and values circulate through the networks that link together meetings, research programmes and projects related

to GAD? And, most concretely, how do these politics of belonging influence the practice and impact of GAD?

The opportunity to look critically at the practices and politics of belonging that shape engagement with GAD is made possible by key developments in intellectual history – developments for which, once more, critical feminism has been a vital driver.

Feminist critiques of knowledge projects

In the late 20th century, investigations of power in previously unexamined places – specifically in the production of knowledge – provoked a tumultuous turn in intellectual history. Evolving feminisms worked together with critical explorations of colonialism, international development, environmental history, area studies, race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender to interrogate some key foundations of Western academia:

- the dichotomy between nature and culture;
- the universality of reason;
- the innate selfishness of *Homo economicus*;
- the naturalness of heterosexual monogamy;
- the adequacy of conventional disciplines;
- the neutrality of Western scientific categories and findings.

Interacting with other theories of power, critical feminism has helped to reveal how dominant scientific and social discourses have worked to express and disseminate the positioned knowledge and perspective of one socio-cultural group: wealthy European Christian men. This local knowledge and worldview emerged in and with a historical moment known as ‘modernity’, developing together with social relations of capitalism and with coloniality, what Walter Mignolo (2007) has called ‘the dark side of modernity’. Critical scholarship about the development and dissemination of this particular knowledge and worldview, with its incumbent ways of seeing and thinking about gender, has deepened and complicated discussions about gender and historical change. Yet, somewhat surprisingly, the fundamental assumptions of Western academia listed above as debunked by critical feminism continue to play powerful roles in most theories, policies and initiatives related to GAD.

Before exploring the potential of intersectionality to destabilize or transcend some of those assumptions, let us take a brief look at historical processes leading to the establishment of gender systems observed around the world today, together with dominant ways of thinking and talking about gender.

Throughout what is known of history and prehistory, a variety of gender practices and meanings coexisted, influenced each other and evolved in different parts of the world. During the past 500 years, gender ideas and traditions developing in Europe and later in North America have increasingly met those developing in other parts of the world in fields of unequal power that set the scene for assimilation, resistance and hybridization.

Raewyn Connell (2000: 45) summarizes impacts observed in many parts of the world:

The colonial world saw the installation, on a very large scale, of institutions on the North Atlantic model: armies, states, bureaucracies, corporations, capital markets, labour markets, schools, law courts, transport systems. These are gendered institutions, and their functioning has directly reconstituted masculinities in the periphery.

And Maria Lugones (2007: 189) notes the depth of impacts in Latin America:

I think that articulating this colonial/modern gender system, both in large strokes, and in all its detailed and lived concreteness will enable us to see what was imposed on us. It will also enable us to see its fundamental destructiveness in both a long and wide sense. The intent of this writing is to make visible the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting us – both women and men of color – in all domains of existence.

Long after most colonies obtained independent statehood, neocolonial and globalizing processes have continued to drive the dissemination of gender ideologies and institutions dominant in Europe and the US. National and international development programmes, including those explicitly addressing gender, have been – and continue to be – key vehicles of this dissemination.

While specific histories of gendered action and practice leave formidable material impacts, their influence on how we see and think about the world goes even deeper. In the introduction of the book *Género y Descolonialidad*, Walter Mignolo (2008: 9) characterizes the dominant gender system in Latin America as a colonial form of patriarchy that ‘regulates social relations of gender and sexual preference and does so in relation to authority and the economy, but also in relation to knowledge: what can and should be known, who can and should know’. Indeed, much of what is known, and what is thought, about GAD today is circumscribed, to varying degrees, by what scholars refer to as colonial/modern logic.

Most obviously relevant to our discussion is the way this logic construes gender as distinct and separate from generation, class, citizenship, ethno-racial and other differences, thereby setting the scene for the metaphor of

intersectionality. Closely related is the assignment of the entire world's population to a few essentializing categories. These are not generic categories but ones that work in specific ways, according to a dichotomous and hierarchical logic that divides content into two realms, placing one of them at a higher level: humans over nature, men over women, whites over non-whites, heteronormative masculinities over 'deviant' masculinities and so on. The common acceptance of the higher-status category as the norm representing each realm has frequently obscured internal differences: thus 'man' stands for humans, heteronormative masculinity stands for masculinities. Lugones (2007: 192–193) describes how intersectional theorists criticize the characterization of all members of a given group by the identity of those who are most dominant in terms of intersecting categories:

Kimberlé Crenshaw and other women of color feminists have argued that the categories have been understood as homogenous and as picking out the dominant in the group as the norm; thus *women* picks out white bourgeois women, *men* picks out white bourgeois men, *black* picks out black heterosexual men, and so on.

Ironically, academic and applied work striving to address the invisibilization of certain members within heterogeneous categories has often done so by 'picking out' the non-dominant term. With the establishment of men as the norm, the vast majority of gender attention has focused on women. Assuming white/European as the norm, racial and ethnic considerations have focused almost entirely on people identified as non-white and/or indigenous. And in heteronormative societies, the study of sexuality and sexual identities has largely focused on individuals and groups identified as LGBTI. Unfortunately, these efforts have often functioned more to flip the tortilla than to transcend its logic. The inverted application of dichotomous hierarchical logic (together with its concrete manifestations, such as those called 'reverse racism') has made it difficult for all types of people, including scholars, to see and think about straight white men in terms of gender, race or sexuality. By illuminating marked identity groups while leaving dominant ones in the shadow, this partial eclipse limits our potential to recognize the systemic character of these intersecting social systems.

Conceptual blinders that have kept the critical gaze away from dominant identities are being defied in a surge of work including critical race studies that expands the analytical lens to include 'whiteness' (Jensen 2005; Rothenberg 2004), descriptions of the historically specific 'invention of heterosexuality' in late 19th- and 20th-century European and US society (Katz 2007), and critiques of processes through which development policies and practices have assumed and imposed heteronormativity in wildly varying contexts (Jolly 2000; Lind

2010; Lind and Share 2003). In parallel efforts, a range of studies have begun to apply gender analysis to men, examining cultural variation in expressions of masculinity, as well as hierarchical relationships that value and empower different forms of masculinity within and between societies (e.g., Hearn and Morgan 2014; Kimmel et al. 2004).

Each movement that brings visibility and support to non-dominant identities and perspectives, like each critical look at dominant identities and knowledge projects, makes a unique contribution. Considered together, they can provoke more powerful systemic understandings and promote deeper changes. In order to build on advances achieved by these different approaches, and also to push beyond them, we return now to promising options to extend the scope of intersectional analysis.

Intersectional masculinities, GAD

One of the biggest barriers to sustainable achievement of GAD goals, both conceptually and politically, is the tendency to categorize ‘men’ as a homogeneous group, and to exclude them from gender-related analysis and support. Attention to the intersection of masculinity with generation, socioeconomic class, and with racial, ethnic, sexual, spatial or other positions facilitates the consideration of specific men and groups of men in GAD.

At the turn of the century, two visionary papers raised the possibility of incorporating men into GAD, and testified to heated debates about whether or not this was desirable and how it could or should be done: ‘Men, Masculinities and Development’ by Andrea Cornwall and Sarah White (2000) and ‘Mainstreaming Men into Gender and Development: Debates, Reflections, and Experiences’ by Sylvia Chant and Matthew Gutmann (2000). A couple of years later, Chant and Gutmann (2002: 269) interrogated the prevalent ‘male-blindedness’, observing that

Gender and Development (GAD) policies encompass a broad range of approaches and interventions, but to date have largely been associated with programmes established by women for women. This is despite the fact that, in theoretical terms, GAD is concerned with gender relations, and therefore with men as well as women.

During the decade following these calls, some policies and programmes have addressed specific groups of men, and some have resisted change. However, surprisingly few publications have presented research that considers men and masculinities together with women and women’s concerns in the analysis of GAD issues. A few collections have made important strides by thinking intersectionally about men. Ian Bannon and Maria Correia (2006), for example,

brought together a wide-ranging collection of essays about differently positioned men in their aptly titled volume *The Other Half of Gender: Men's Issues in Development*. The later collection, *Men and Development: Politicising Masculinities* (Cornwall et al. 2011), draws attention to multiple axes of difference and context in ways that open up possibilities to move beyond static binaries of sex role theory.

Other barriers to the success of GAD arise from attempts to apply Eurocentric ideas and discourses in a variety of cultural contexts. From the start, GAD ideas and initiatives have provoked resistance from a range of actors. These are often dismissed as reactions driven by men trying to hold onto their power (which no doubt is one thing going on). However, an intersectional look reveals that it is not only men resisting and women supporting given ideas and initiatives; rather, responses are informed by other types of difference, including generational, rural versus urban, and cultural and class perspectives.

In Latin America, heated dispute about the cross-cultural applicability of gender concepts and programmes was launched early on by Eduardo Grillo Fernández's (1994: 2) accusation: 'gender has been directly imposed by international development agencies, with their characteristic arrogance and efficiency, without considering the slightest possibility that its imposition would damage life in our cultural environment'. In *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí (1997) argued that 'gender was not an organizing principle in Yoruba society prior to colonization by the West' (1997: 31).

These conflicts are partly rooted in a common elision between what is the concept of gender and what is one historically particular model of gender: specifically, a binary patriarchal system from which oppressed women need to be liberated. With time, those engaged with GAD have come to think and talk more clearly about gender as an analytic category useful to see and to analyse a diversity of arrangements, each specific to a given place and time. By facilitating greater sensitivity to diverse contexts, this shift encourages attention to the intersection of gender with other sociocultural systems in each context.

Recent analyses capture more subtle understandings of resistance to GAD. In a high-profile debate that ostensibly pits two incompatible visions against each other – Andean complementarity versus gender equality – Anders Burman (2011) identifies tensions along several axes. The concept of 'chachawarmi' has come to represent an Andean notion of gender complementarity in which the heterosexual couple is the fundamental social subject, encompassing feminine and masculine forces that oppose and complement each other to form the cosmos. While the concept is endorsed by some indigenous-identified activists in efforts to 'decolonize' and 'depatriarchalize' Bolivia from Euro/US domination,

Burman (2011: 67) observes that the class, education and geographic location of different Bolivians also play roles: 'Not everyone, however, looks with approval on this reclaiming of "tradition." The emancipatory potential of chachawarmi for indigenous women is questioned by middle-class liberal advocates for gender equality and radical feminist activists alike.' Indeed, anarchofeminists in the collective *Las Mujeres Creando* critique romanticized visions of Andean complementarity just as ruthlessly as they attack the individualistic model of gender equality advocated by bourgeois feminism.

Fertile tensions between dominant ideas about GAD and differently positioned perspectives are leading to remarkable results. In South Asia where much (but not all) GAD work has ignored non-dominant gender identities, including those of hijras, monks and nuns that are grounded in millennial traditions, Western ideas about gender identity and rights have been taken up in new ways, leading to legislation in Bangladesh in 2013 and in India in 2014 to officially recognize 'third gender' categories.

Epistemic community

Theorists and practitioners of GAD have thought a lot about women like Faustina, and like Crenshaw's woman at the crossroads of oppression, conceived as potential beneficiaries. We have considered ways in which their positions, conditions and perspectives are shaped simultaneously by gender and racial identity, cultural and religious views, geographic location, socioeconomic position, and others. Here I advocate bringing this tradition of thought together with critical feminist ideas about knowledge and belonging to also think intersectionally about the positions and perspectives of those people who plan and implement (and theorize) GAD. Yuval-Davis' (2011: 3) discussion raises questions about what kind of politics of belonging have been employed to unify diverse people in an epistemic community built around engagement with GAD.

Adrian Favell (1999) defined the politics of belonging as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance'. The boundaries the politics of belonging are concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries which, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and 'them'.

In what contexts and ways has the categorization of all females in the world into one identity and interest group worked to facilitate affinity between those people doing GAD and those people conceived as beneficiaries? In what ways has the construction of this female 'us' depended on the exclusion of males as

'them'? Has the dirty work of boundary maintenance in GAD required members to adopt certain ways of seeing and talking about gender? In what ways does defining 'us' through these shared ideas and values depend on opposing other cultural and religious positions related to gender?

Courage to address these tough questions can be found in Yuval-Davis' (2011: 14) proposal for building belonging that is not based in uniformity and that is attentive to relations of difference and power within, as well as between, groups:

I would argue that a feminist political project of belonging, therefore, should be based on transversal 'rooting', 'shifting', mutual respect and mutual trust. It should be caring, but should differentiate clearly between caring towards transversal allies and caring towards the needy. Above all it should not neglect [sic] reflect upon the relations of power not only among the participants in the political dialogue but also between these participants and the glocal carriers of power who do not share their values who need to be confronted, influenced, and when this is not possible – resisted.

Conclusion: Towards more transformative approaches to GAD

Without attempting to characterize all approaches at play, I have compared and contrasted three different ways of looking at the intersection of differences, asking how each does or can help to address the current challenges of GAD. A first approach, already widely applied in GAD, is the application of intersectionality to make visible and to address conditions and opportunities of individuals and groups of women disadvantaged in terms of multiple kinds of difference.

I advocate a second approach that would broaden the scope of GAD by extending intersectional attention to a wider range of positions, particularly those often left unmarked. This may involve acknowledging ways in which certain women enjoy dominant class, cultural, ethnoracial or religious positionality, together with recognizing how different masculine positions are coconstituted by racial, occupational, ability or other identities that carry disadvantages. It may also involve attention to multiple dimensions of people who are positioned as GAD theorists and practitioners.

The third way of thinking intersectionally could transform the logic and analytic framework that structure GAD as a field of discourse and action; it involves looking at how sociocultural systems of difference mutually constitute each other as they work to produce and reproduce all actors and identities, together with the environments in which they act. This approach requires consideration of the evolution of gender systems – together with evolving ideas and discourses about gender – through time and across space in order to think

about how current practices and conversations may reproduce or transform future manifestations of those systems and ideas.

I do not see these approaches as mutually exclusive but as cumulative and complementary; both the prevalent focus on variously marginalized women and my proposed attention to a wider range of actors and positions are indispensable for building a third, more systemic, understating of intersectional dynamics in the historical processes that constitute all these positions and conditions, and the relations between them.

The glimpse of Faustina Fernández that launched this essay demonstrates the centrality of context to my understanding of ways in which subject positions and relations are produced and negotiated in particular environments, each with unique configurations of power. The third, more systemic, approach to intersectionality benefits from the work of political ecologists such as Juanita Sundberg (2008) and Andrea Nightingale (2006), who have studied ways in which ethnoracial, gender and other social systems interact with the environment. These scholars purposefully move beyond a focus on the identities of marginalized people to study how identity systems work through time and space to actually produce people and places as they engineer and justify inequitable access to and exchange of resources. Awareness of the power that each of us exercises to create and recreate identities and environments is promoted by Dianne Rocheleau's (2011: 209) insistence on seeing all of us as both denizens and artisans of the contexts in which we act:

We all live in emergent ecologies – complex assemblages of plants, animals, people, physical landscape features, and technologies – created through the habit-forming practices of connection in everyday life. We both inhabit and co-create these ecologies of home, often without being able to 'see' them clearly.

Thinking about gender and other differences not only in the formation of individual subjects (marginal or otherwise) but also in the continual constitution of societies and environments opens up new opportunities for development studies and practice. I pursue these opportunities (Paulson 2013) by analysing select historical and geographic processes to reveal how gender interacts with other systems to sustain or transform sociocultural, institutional and biophysical landscapes in Latin America. This book launches a new way of thinking about gender as a sociocultural system that infuses with meaning and power the practices and relationships that play out among humans, and between humans and their environment, all with symbolic reference to sex and sexuality. In this conceptualization, gender interacts with other systems in various contexts and scales where they influence institutional development together with the

distribution and use of different assets in ways that impact infrastructure and environment.

This and other efforts to link intersectional and critical feminist perspectives enrich understandings of GAD. They also complicate the work considerably, giving rise to tensions between two vital challenges: on the one hand, the need to dialogue with and build on valuable research and initiatives developed in a framework of hierarchical dichotomy and dominant categories, and, on the other hand, the need to challenge and transcend limitations of knowledge and action couched in this framework. To understand relations between gender and change, we must draw on information generated by research that is based – to varying degrees – in currently dominant ways of seeing and thinking about gender. Most obviously, a great deal of what is observed in this heterogeneous world is organized and represented according to prevailing binary categories: men versus women. Sometimes this gender scheme is crossed with other binaries to produce more specific and multifaceted categories: white women versus non-white women, economically active men versus inactive men, male-headed household versus female-headed household. My reluctance to reproduce these ethnocentric conceptualizations, and to risk reinforcing the belief that they reflect some kind of universally true structure or pattern, weighs against the compelling benefits of using these familiar categories to present and interconnect findings and projects.

Methodologically, the use of widely applied research categories allows us to document historical change via time series data, and to make quantitative comparisons across different territories, countries and world regions. Analytically, focusing on these categories helps us to see how dominant logics and institutions have unfolded historically and geographically. For purposes of communication, the use of common terms and categories facilitates understanding and dialogue with a range of interlocutors. Politically, I respectfully acknowledge the efficacy of various strategic essentialisms to motivate and unite diversely positioned women around ideas and projects of GAD.

However, the discussion developed here suggests that the binary categories and logic that currently gird much scholarly and applied work are also part of the problem – perhaps a crucial part. They come up short in efforts to represent complex empirical realities, and they do not resonate very well with people living in diverse and non-dominant identities and cultural systems. So, while drawing from and engaging in established conversations about GAD, I call on readers to use intersectionality to examine critically the thoughts and words circulated in them – quite simply, to follow Yuval-Davis' (2011: 4) urging: 'when we carry out intersectional analysis, we cannot homogenize the ways any political project or claimings affect people who are differentially located within the same boundaries of belonging.'

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6.3

Murals and Mirrors: Imprisoned Women and the Politics of Belonging

Marisa Belausteguigoitia-Rius

This is the story of an uprising of women inside a Mexican prison to take over the prison walls. It is a story of the uprising of a gaze and the rising of a voice. It is a story of how women in prison came together and transformed a territory of punishment and reduction into one of belonging and access to justice. It narrates a rebellion against imprisonment, abysmal failures in education and juridical blindness. It offers a perspective on the collective fight for a specific right: the right to see and to be seen as a foundational operation in the construction of a politics of belonging.

Visuality, according to Nicholas Mirzoeff (2011), is provided through an epistemological frame concerned with the ability to assemble vision with the authority to manifest what is, or is not there to be seen. What is in prison to be seen? What in a woman's prison? Visuality intervenes in the borders and boundaries of vision. It constitutes the visual frame that manufactures consent. The register of normality and of the quotidian is conformed through authorized images and visual codes (2011: 3). What kind of knowledge – visual knowledge – is produced through the questioning of the frames of vision that normalize prison and women in prison?

Prison is the space for the forgotten and the invisible. If citizenship can be understood as a matrix of belonging, a frame of visibility of ways of seeing and perceiving an 'us', which perspective of this right to see and be seen is possible for 'them', the ones in prison? Is it possible to allude to a countervisuality, a perspective which not only illuminates those abandoned and erased but allows them to 'look back'? Can we articulate a politics of belonging with a politics of seeing – seeing back as 'talking back' – and being seen as a right, as a form of citizenship? Is it possible to think of a politics of belonging emanating from a politics of visibility? Can we think of belonging and its politics as the unravelling of a basic right: the right to look and be looked at?

The visual sequences that allow the subject to see and be seen are strategically interrupted in prison. Prison's architecture and structure intervenes directly



Figure 6.3.1 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

into the ‘right to look’ through a structural intromission inside two foundational dimensions of reality: time and space. The constriction of space and the marking of time produce the impossibility of human and physical horizons and interrupt the possibility of looking and imagining within and beyond prison walls. The story of this unprecedented uprising is related to the act of looking, looking collectively – and obliquely – towards that which constrains: walls.

Walls are artefacts that bound the space of prison. Yuval-Davis (2011) speaks of new assemblages she calls ‘politics of belonging’, a particular accumulation of power which involves ‘the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers, but also their contestation, challenge and resistance’ (Yuval Davis: 6). Prison territories and prison normatives operate around boundaries. They sever belonging and paradoxically reinforce forms of resistance that tend to seek alternative forms of collaboration and collective construction. She says that ‘Belonging is about emotional attachment, about “feeling” at home’, and continues: ‘home is an ongoing project entailing a sense of hope for the futures’ (Yuval-Davis: 4). Prison breaks visual and affective horizons and strongly severs feelings of home and belonging. Women prisoners are abandoned soon after they are imprisoned. That makes this first wall appropriation – the spiral staircase, which connects with the outside, with the visit – more significant.



Figure 6.3.2 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

This chapter focuses on the collective construction of images, visual narratives and forms of countervisuality of imprisoned women as the way to ‘look back’ and advance a politics of belonging. It strives to offer frames of visibility of both women in prison (they disappear as soon as they are imprisoned) and their own strategies for countervisibility as the possibility of seeing and being seen in unexpected ways (Mirzoeff 2011: 5). It searches for the appearance of frames of visual autonomy of women as opposed to the submission to visual authority. It addresses the kinds of intervention which transform prison from a territory of punishment into one of belonging, where women collectively may develop a critical and conscious way of looking at each other and at themselves. The right to look, says Mirzoeff (2011: 3), ‘is not about seeing, is not about perceiving reality, it begins at a personal level with the look into someone else’s eyes to express friendship, solidarity or love. Most of all it is about the right to be seen.’

I analyse a project, *Mural and Mirrors: Visuality, Justice and Gender Perspective*,¹ delivered by a public university, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with women prisoners at Santa Martha Acatitla.² The project involves the enhancement of an extraordinary dimension of participation through the construction of a collective visual narration. *Murals and Mirrors* began in 2008 with a visual call that demanded colour on the grey prison walls.



Figure 6.3.3 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

Murals and Mirrors is an interdisciplinary project, which combines the fields of art, justice and new pedagogies from a gender perspective, to seek a structural transformation of the ways in which women are ‘processed’ and visualized in the juridical, cultural and pedagogical scene. It began with a request from a group of female prisoners at Santa Martha Acatitla female prison in Mexico City: ‘We want colour.’ What is asked through the demand of ‘colour’? What when this request is made inside a monochromatic space such as a prison? How may colour transform reduced and isolated individuals into collectives of trust and consciousness? In which ways does colour enhance citizenship?

This request alluded to a strong Mexican cultural tradition: muralism. Muralism in Mexico can be seen more generally as a monumental narration of hegemonic stories, which strive to create a nation and a community through the construction of emotional visual belonging.³ How may this pedagogical practice favour female vision and countervisuality?

Women prisoners wanted to paint the huge spiral staircase that connected the outside with the centre’s main patio, where the visit is expected. They demanded the prison authorities to surrender the walls.⁴ A small collective of women and a group of students and academics – mostly feminists, academics, visual artists and educators – argued with the prison authorities about the convenience of ‘decorating’ their walls. They agreed to let the women paint the prison due to the recognition of an artistic practice in Mexico. The visual urgency of the collective echoed an admired and well-known national art of muralism. Their need for colour and visibility ended – within five years – in the creation of a collective of women, which appropriated the prison’s walls.



Figure 6.3.4 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

We started out with ‘The Cry’, the first mural painted in the staircase of the patio where women wait, a space loaded with longing: for the visit, for the sentence, for freedom.⁵ The initial gesture was the outcome of desperation and the inability to find words to represent it. We ended with a fourth mural, ‘Collective Actions for Justice’, which demonstrated the ability to name desolation. Women from different ages, ethnicities, nationalities, social extractions and sexualities upraised and assaulted the walls, which confined them. Four murals were the outcome of the female uprising and undertaking of the prison’s limits. We were called upon to paint murals and we ended up building an alternative history of justice in Mexico, emanating from one of the most neglected places in our country.⁶

Social stratification is specially marked in prison. It is worth noting that women from different backgrounds created a collective – in the midst of diversity and mistrust – to expand the prison limits. This rebellion around colour, space and time (against grey, reclusion and dead time) constituted a symbolic act of crucial importance. Doing time in jail signifies breaking the links of trust, solidarity and friendship; prison not only severs women from the outside but damages strongly the drive for connection inside. Redoing time in jail by appropriating its walls means working towards union within separation and dismemberment; it means creating a new dimension of participation, which includes severed time, disjointed space and fragmented bodies.

According to Rancière (1996), this conformation of a community, this new dimension of participation, ‘the part of those who have not part’, allows for

visibility of both what is common and what is exclusive. This occurs through the intervention of a different experience of the aesthetic of the sensitive. He states:

The *partage du sensible* constitutes a particular system of sensitive evidence, characterized by the proper tension emanating from the encounter between the shared commonality and its differentiated parts: it is that which allows us to see, at the same time, the existence of the common and the marks (cuts) which define the place of the exclusive.

(1996: 25)

A politics of belonging to a new dimension of participation, Rancière continues, could be understood as this common terrain, the one effected – paradoxically – inside an intervened space and an interrupted time. Through distortion and disfiguration of the idea of communality and so that there is a sense of the common, the divided and the disjointed – in such places as prison – we can see a difference between police and political. The organizing that the police do is through the machinery of consensus. Instead the political – the real aesthetic revolution – is only possible in the emergence of a visuality which contains both the sense of a commons that are shared and disfigured. This paradox sees a different distribution of the sensitive (*partage tu sensible*), in a common place, divided and shared, polemic and controversial, with the interruption of the organization of order provoked by the institution of those who have no part.

Rancière locates an accent on distortion in the breaking of order done by the parts that have no part. In the case of prison, the population is constantly interrupted by the call to appear in their cells, for food, and by the multiple forms of surveillance and vigilance. The hard work done in the activity of painting had to be interrupted again and again, but the women prisoners organized around interruption, the penitentiary call, was a motive for the enhancement of creativity. The call to stop and appear in front of the officers provoked creativity and solidarity instead of confusion and disappointment. Tasks that were abandoned were taken by others. We could say interruption and surveillance favoured – in aesthetic revolution such as the *institution of those who have no part* – continuity and communality. We may talk about a politics of belonging, which exercises a controversial type of power, the one affected through interruption.

Thus the aesthetic derived inside a paralysed space, by those who have no part, mobilized women. Four murals, four uprisings of voice and gaze, four rebellions against separation and around interruption gave way to visual narrations which depicted a collective project around boundaries and borders: ‘The Cry’, ‘Time, Hope and Strength’, ‘Paths and Ways of Freedom’ and ‘Collective

Actions for Justice'. We began with an expression of indignation, dispossession and abandonment and ended with a clear call for justice.

The beginning: The right to look

The project began with a veiled resistance to domesticity and 'size'. Almost 100% of the recreational and educational activities, to reinsert or rehabilitate women, are manual: cutting, kneading, modelling. They are done on small surfaces, looking down, and they represent marketable and domestic figures such as Cinderella, princesses (exact copies of Walt Disney ones) or religious figures (mainly virgins, the Guadalupe Virgin being the most reproduced one).⁷ The enormous size of prison murals, their monumentality, constituted an extension of the right to be seen. Opaque walls could function as mirrors when overtaken by colour and visual narration. This revenge on domesticity, size and constrained space came after a workshop on photography in 2007, the epitome of looking at each other and looking at themselves.⁸

In the workshop on photography and through the camera lens they could look into portions and sequences of each other. Full mirrors are prohibited in prison, so no one can look at their complete figure; only fragmented bodies or faces can be seen in small mirrors. The right to look – in this case represented by the camera and its mobility – represents autonomy and works against restriction of the visibility of the body and its integrity. Mirzoeff goes as far as stating that 'Claiming the right to look has come to mean moving... towards



Figure 6.3.5 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla



Figure 6.3.6 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

an autonomy based on its first principle: the right to existence' (Mirzoeff 2011: 4).

John Berger in his famous book *Ways of Seeing* (1972) underlines the importance of 'seeing' and its relation with 'knowing'. The way we see and read the world is, according to him, directly related to knowledge. We never see one thing; we see connections in between things. The spectator's knowledge of the connection in between situations, their capacity to interrelate parts or fragments of their vision to other 'unities of signification' signals their independence and their possibilities to rearrange given totalities into something else.

We find here some foundations for the exercise on countervisuality. The gesture of countervision may alter the logic of parts (being in parts and apart) and displace this fragmentation towards a new notion of being as being capable of looking, based on the interrogation of given visual accounts – what is or is not there to be seen – or set units of signification. By this exercise of rearrangement of given totalities, women in prison – passive subjects of reduction and fragmentation – develop into active agents of new forms to see and be seen. The camera and the workshop on photography represented the opportunity to produce manifestations of countervision as the fragmentation of unitary vision, of the surveillance of what is and is not to be seen since the lens inaugurated different modalities of visuality. In that particular frame of visual rights, the demand for colour and narration could not be more pertinent.



Figure 6.3.7 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

First mural: 'The Cry'

This first appropriated wall, an oblique one – a spiral staircase where the scarce visit descends – is placed at the limit of the prison; it represents the relation of women with their families, since it separates and connects the inside from the outside.

Women prisoners named the first mural 'The Cry' and the last 'Collective Action towards Justice'. As we can perceive in this naming, the visual narration began with a cry and ended with action – collective action towards justice. The urgency of 'The Cry' preceded the serenity of the organized discourse. Nelson Maldonado (2008) speaks of this special sequence:

The serenity of organized discourse is not preceded by a period of contemplation or neutral observation of reality, but by a time of urgency in which the subject cannot take his recognition as a human being for granted and has to attract attention simply to the fact that he is there.

(Maldonado 2008: 133)

I want to comment further on the economy of representation of 'The Cry' and what it means inside prison. The organization of this countervisual



Figure 6.3.8 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

narration – from a cry to an organized discourse – developed based on what Rancière and Deleuze (2009) sustained around painting: ‘Painting may be a sensitive work around sensation only if the pictorial diagram is equivalent to a metaphor, that is if the word or a sort of speech construct this equivalence.’ This equation around pictorial diagram and the word as metaphor (the distorted word and the precise image) accomplishes disfiguration as a gesture of counter-visibility. Rancière’s definition of painting is an effect of disfiguring: ‘Painting is the work around speech, around the unfolding of the pictorial diagram as a metaphor, the work of disfiguration.’

‘The Cry’ had enormous consequences in both the ways in which the visit sees women and the ways women represent themselves. According to Nelson Maldonado (2014: 30), a cry is precisely a sound uttered as a call for attention, as a demand for immediate action of remedy, or as an expression of pain that points to an injustice committed, or to something that is severely lacking. Rage, pain, humiliation, hope, justice and solidarity gave way to representation.

‘The cry is the revelation of someone who has been forgotten or wronged’, as Maldonado states; it becomes a call for recognition of the singularity of the subject as such (p. 133). Beyond singularity, this mural appealed for collectivity in very different ways. Women began to paint by something we called the pedagogy of contagion. Each one of them designed her own image. Women in

prison are advised to stay away from each other, the fear of being contaminated by crime and failure in prison runs high. Contact is avoided owing to a fear of becoming the other: this unwanted women that has been punished, because of a wrong-doing.⁹

Women do time defeated – dislocated – by guilt and pain. More than 70% are between 18 and 40 years, and 86% of them are mothers (Giacomello 2103: 113). Each has left behind three or four children. In a large proportion they are the breadwinner in their home. The creation of a community, of emotions of solidarity, respect and collaboration, are strongly interrupted in prison. Emotions such as respect and solidarity could contribute to the construction of actions, as political gestures of belonging.

The ability developed by women to assemble a visual understanding of the immense injustices they suffer speaks of the ways in which women transform the terrain of prison from one of severance and punishment into one of belonging, by the intervention on their frames of visibility: a whole juridical, aesthetic and cultural revolution. What I found salient was the demarcation of irregularities in their juridical processes parallel to the ways in which they rise, resist and transform the territory of prison into a space of liberation and instances of justice. The politics of belonging articulated by female muralists visualizes the boundaries, limits and borders of the failed promise of reinsertion.



Figure 6.3.9 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

Second mural: 'Hope, Strength and Time'

The second mural – a smaller spiral staircase, where women waiting to be sentenced descend, was offered as a present from sentenced women to the ones waiting. With such a gesture they intervened again in the pedagogies of fear and distrust propagated by the prison politics. The gift for the women waiting for the visit, for the sentence for liberation, for suffering to end was extraordinary – precisely that which was taken away: time.

Sentenced women gathered and offered time, lifetime, unmarked time – significant time – to the newly imprisoned. It was time filled with scenes and images that intended to apace and awake them. They figured out that this second staircase could resemble a huge sand clock.

They designed this figure to be loaded with little sand clocks, which would fall upon the staircase as rain. To mobilize time they designed little sand watches containing different scenes: the panopticon tower crumbling down, enclosed women and constrained femininities. Significant time scenes were painted inside the monumental and hegemonic time in prison. This autobiographical spatialization of hegemonic time offered words to explain and expand the ways in which women were imprisoned. Words gave way to an image of solidarity represented by arms holding themselves. Seeing and saying entered in a communal space, opening for the unexpected: the unseen and the unsaid.



Figure 6.3.10 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla



Figure 6.3.11 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

This second mural developed a three-fold perception of time: the time of the sentence, the time to wait for the visit and for the family, and time to fill and to feel. As a result, women saw what they were trying to say, and said what they were trying to see. They created a communal space of seeing and saying (Ranci ere 2011: 15), which transformed the meaning of the sentences, decided by blind judge into the sentence as group of words that contains a subject of agency and action.

Women could narrate (see and say beyond) their time inside and outside prison with another vocabulary and most importantly with a different accent around their ‘failures’ as women. Narration of their previous life and their marked time was consistently interrupted through the process of painting. According to Jerome Brunner (1991), narration gives account of something crucial described in a compass of time. Time – significant time – is made through narration, not the other way around. Narration is not allocated in a stable and linear time, narration – according to Goldman (in Brunner: 18) – represents then the reaccommodation and transformation of hegemonic time.

Time in prison is processed to dehumanize, to intermittently interrupt collective and individual sequences of interaction and intersubjectivity, which construct friendship, love and solidarity and impose distrust and fear. This results in a severe interruption of the capacity of narrating inside a collective frame, which means living within a significant and shared time. The second mural allowed time to be produced by countervisual narration – as an effect of being visible – in a human time and a women time, rather than an abstract clock time.



Figure 6.3.12 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

Third mural: 'Forms and Ways of Freedom'

The third mural, 'Forms and Ways of Freedom', was painted in a dirty corner where garbage accumulated, just next to the place where women were punished, and incarcerated inside the prison.

It was during the painting of this third mural that we materialized the collective desire of looking towards justice as a right to claim, not only to draw. The action of shouting, this explosion of designed rage, in the first mural, and the intervention of time, in the second, developed a way to look at that which confines: justice, but also sexuality and violence. It was during the design of the

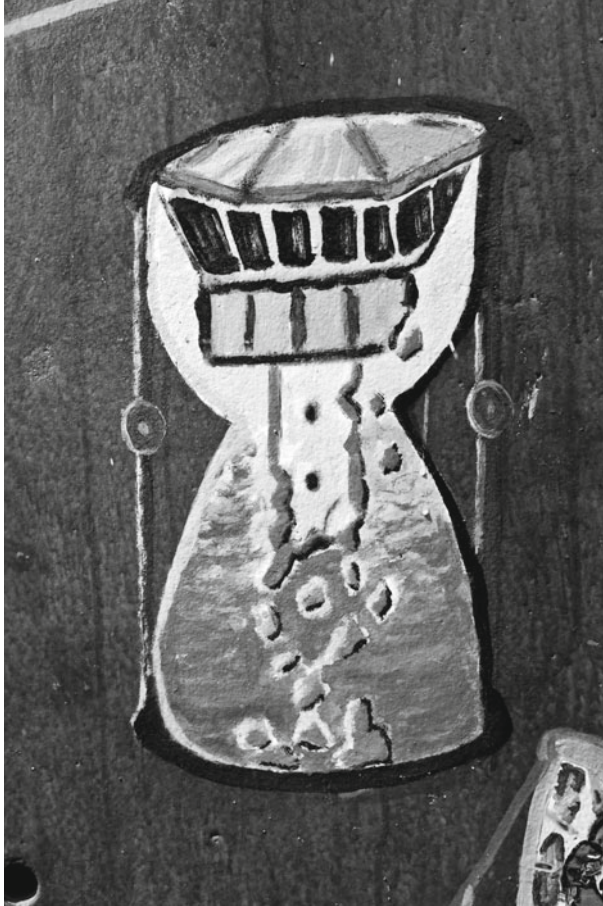


Figure 6.3.13 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

third mural that they developed what we called sexual authority in narration. Women painted themselves in two different scenes. The first was just below the punishment area, where they painted themselves painting: a mirror on the wall. The second one depicted them looking towards a horizon, delimited by seeing, their gaze flying free and their bodies inscribed with the most beloved intimate spaces and persons.

These opaque surfaces began to work as luminous points of articulation, which returned an image of transition and movement, of perspective and horizon in the place of stagnation, opacity and passivity.



Figure 6.3.14 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla



Figure 6.3.15 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

Fourth mural: ‘Collective Actions towards Justice’

No serenity preceded this transparent enunciation: ‘Collective Actions towards Justice’. After five years of visual grammar, they offered their final tones: a design of the universe of the law, an incommensurable galaxy, a labyrinth with ambulant spectres carrying files and papers, lost in the midst of a process without gravity, without logic, without rights, without possibilities of being seen.

At the centre of the lost galaxy they painted a huge double door representing the law: the constitution on the right and the criminal Code on the left with



Figure 6.3.16 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla



Figure 6.3.17 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

the door only slightly open. They consented that the law must serve them, but they knew about their closed doors.

During the design of the fourth mural, after a strong and constant reflection around female history and the history of justice, we ended by opening a



Figure 6.3.18 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

juridical clinic of public interest with a gender perspective, whose mission was to detect structural fault lines and blind spots in the processing of women.¹⁰ Our goal would be to favour vision, to make the juridical system ‘see’ the ways in which they fail women, fail justice and fail the construction of a state of law, citizenship and democracy in Mexico.

As the women took over the walls, they also claimed their right to see and speak in favour of their juridical and intersubjective processes. We went from the first mural, which signifies a cry of impotence, to the fourth, which speaks to the strength that these women have acquired intellectually, visually, sexually and in terms of their legal status. They constituted themselves as both women in process and women processing blindness and womanhood through the construction of four extended and monumental visual narratives – a set of magnified compasses of visual sequences, which transformed space and time inside prison.

The visual intervention made by imprisoned women in favour of their inner and outer liberation speaks of the relevance of facing prison with open eyes, through collective action, which transform the politics of reduction and separation into the politics of belonging: of becoming a citizen inside a collectivity overflowed by interruption and restriction.

Women stand before the doors of the law resembling – this time – a Mrs K in Kafka’s *Trial*, but on their feet, within the time of narration, in a space filled with colour. A standing juridical subject – a woman – waits before the law, a scene created through the expansion and reinforcement of the right to look. Is it her door?¹¹ Will it finally open for her as a citizen, for them as women and



Figure 6.3.19 Murals and Mirrors/Santa Martha Acatitla

juridical subjects contradicting the death of the peasant before the door of the law? To exit through the insignificant angle of that door painted as the final narrative, the women need to look right into justice's eyes. And justice has to return that look, not with closed eyes but with open ones, looking right into the women's eyes.

Notes

1. We (a group of students, academics, artists and activists) began the construction of this project in 2008. Currently we continue to encourage public interest to visibilize the structural failures of justice in relation to women prisoners through a research seminar, and we continue with the artistic and pedagogical work inside prison at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City.
2. Santa Martha Acatitla is one of the two penitentiaries in Mexico City. It is located in the southeast of the city. It was built in 2002 above a garbage disposal facility of one of the most intensely populated sections of the city. Some 1,750 women are incarcerated there. More than 30% are there because of minor crimes related to drugs and 60% because of crimes against property. Almost all the crimes committed (if at all) were non-violent and minor. The imprisoned women face a faulty justice process and intense corruption.
3. Muralism depicts heroism and patriotic love for the new Mexican post-revolutionary country. Made popular at the beginning of the 20th century by Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, among others, muralism multiplied after the Mexican Revolution (1910–1921). For more on muralism and nationalism, see Ricardo Pérez Montfort (1999) 'Muralismo y Nacionalismo Popular 1920–1930' in *Memoria Internacional del Muralismo*.

4. One morning during the summer of 1910, a group of independent young artists, headed by Dr Atl, demanded Justo Sierra, chair of the Ministry of Education, to deliver the walls of the recently constructed building of the National Theatre. The group initiated the movement of modern muralism. See Adrián Villagomez Levre (1999) 'Historiografía del muralismo' in *Memoria Internacional del Muralismo*.
5. In November 2008, as the chair of the Gender Studies Program of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, I received an invitation to Santa Martha Prison to contribute to an uprising: the taking over of their walls. We offered workshops on feminist visual culture, muralism and emancipatory pedagogies. The task of taking over the walls of the prison encouraged me to construct a project which expanded with the appropriation of the prison walls: *Mural and Mirrors: Visuality, Justice and Gender Perspective*.
6. The Supreme Court in Mexico City, right by the Zócalo, hosts the famous murals painted by Rafael Cauduro in 2010. Cauduro is one of the greatest muralists of all times. Inside one of the four spiral stairways, precisely the one used by the Supreme Court's judges to ascend and descend, one can find Cauduro's famous mural, which represents the interpretation of the history of Justice in Mexico, called 'The Seven Mayor Crimes'. Simultaneously but separately, Cauduro at the Supreme Court, and the women at Santa Martha's Prison, painted their own versions of justice in Mexico. Cauduro shows the flaws, corruption and violence in the country. He culminates his murals with the depiction of prison and of incarcerated women as a major crime. Women in Santa Martha's Prison recreated the history of justice from their own perspective, achieved through the right to look collectively. In 2013 we invited Cauduro to Santa Martha Acatitla's prison. The women's murals touched him to the core.
7. Reinsertion activities offered by the prison system are not educational; they reinforce visibility as the authority that reduces their existence and their rights to be, and be seen. According to Mirzoeff, 'Education, as an emancipatory action, will favor the act of an intelligence obeying only itself...' (Mirzoeff 2011: 5). This move towards autonomy and emancipation cannot be done alone; the right to look and exist is a collective manoeuvre.
8. Film, writing, theatre and photography workshops are not frequent but are possible inside women's prisons; they are given independently of the penitentiary educational activities by universities, NGOs or religious groups under others.
9. In reality the 'wrong done', as this first mural underlines, points to the effect of being constructed as a woman. 'The Cry' points to the fact that most of the female prisoners are in prison because of minor, non-violent crimes, such as law drug commercialization and minor robbery (90%). Poverty, fragile labour situations and the coercion of womanhood are the main reasons for such petty crimes. The extreme corruption of the Mexican prisons contributes to the absurdity of the punishment of these women. There are not many studies that focus on women but researchers such as Azaola (2006) and Corina Giacomello (2013) show sustained practices of corruption that incarcerate innocent women and men. The incarceration of women in Mexican prisons is unbelievably high and the use of prison is abusive. During 2011 some 96.4% of guilty sentences led to imprisonment. Only 3.6% established alternative sanctions, such as the use of bracelets for mothers, fines or reparation. See *La Cárcel* (2013) *en México: ¿Para qué?*
10. With the support of the School of Law and the CDHDF (Mexico City Human Rights Commission), we created the Maricela Escobedo Clinic of Public Interest for

Justice and Gender (*Clínica de Justicia y de Género Maricela Escobedo*) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, which is one of a kind.

11. I am referring to the last section of Kafka's *The Trial*.

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6.4

A Dialogical Conversation: A Response to the Responses

Nira Yuval-Davis

I have found all three responses to my article fascinating and thought-provoking. Of course, these three chapters are much more than mere responses – each in their own way, to a lesser or greater degree, has taken my paper as a point of departure to reflect upon the related ideas of the politics of belonging, intersectionality and transversal politics, as well as to tell the stories of the fascinating women and women’s groups they have been working with. I find that even when seemingly the writers do not agree with what I have written (or sometimes the way they interpret what I’ve written), there is a basic agreement and a shared perspective with them all.

Rather than continue to speak in generalities, I am going to relate to some central points in each of the three chapters in order to promote our dialogical conversation on these issues.

Paulson (Chapter 6.2) starts by quoting the farmer Faustina Fernández’s answer to her question ‘What are you?’ She told her: ‘When a woman is hoeing potatoes in her field she is a *campesina*, but when she goes to the city to sell her potatoes she is a *chola*.’ This answer shows a high sensitivity to the spatial and temporal dimensions in which intersectional analysis should take place, taking account of the differential situated gazes in which dialogical constructions of ‘approximating the truth’ (Hill-Collins 1990) are taking place. It is for this reason that methodologically I recommend a combination of what McCall (2005) calls the intracategorical and intercategory approaches to the study of intersectionality. The first one explores the specific meanings in the specific situated gazes in which particular social positionings are understood in specific times and places, while the second provides a comparative perspective which lessens the chance of an ethnocentric interpretation of particular categories of inequality. In the study of GAD, this methodological combination would be of particular importance.

Like Paulson, I see intersectionality as an analytical framework that can highlight specific oppressions but that can – and should – be used as a

generic tool to examine systems of social inequality. This is the reason why in my writings I have recommended (Yuval-Davis 2011b) that sociology adopts intersectionality as the most valid approach to studying social stratification, as differential social positionings cannot be reduced only to those of class, as traditional sociological stratifications theories do (McCall 2005). In this sense, Paulson is right when she claims that power relations between cultural knowledges are not always explicitly politicized. It is hard to imagine the type of situation described by me, following Sandra Harding (1991) and Nancy Fraser (Fraser and Honneth 1998), in which signifiers of cultural difference are not loaded with differential power and legitimation. However, this differentiation is important if we want, like Paulson and I do, to acknowledge epistemic communities that share values but not social positionings or identifications. Such an approach, rather than ignoring cultural and other differences (as the old 'Left' or supposedly colour-blind universalists have done), acknowledges them as part of the transversal 'shifting' and 'rooting' processes of transversal dialogue but on the basis of mutual respect which does not ignore their social differential power positionings but rather encompasses them within the boundaries of the egalitarian dialogue. In other words, in such transversal dialogical contexts, for example, the fact that the participants come from different social classes, genders, ethnic, national or racial origins, with their own differential power bases is acknowledged but is not used to automatically claim superiority or higher validity. Rather, it is used to gain a more comprehensive epistemological approach to 'the truth', in the way Hill-Collins (1990) has recommended.

Politics of belonging based on 'epistemological communities' is described in Marisa Belausteguigoitia-Rius' contribution (Chapter 6.3). The Mexican prison artistic 'uprising' could not have been accomplished without the participation of students, activists and artists from outside the prison in this project. Belausteguigoitia-Rius shows how the engagement encourages, rather than diminishes, the situated gaze of the prisoners as a wonderful example of a transversal political action in which social, cultural and other differences are acknowledged rather than ignored. A mutual respect is kept throughout the 'rooting' and 'shifting' processes involved in accomplishing the murals.

Although Aili Tripp (Chapter 6.1) focuses mostly on theoretical issues emanating from the idea of ethics of care as the feminist political project of belonging, her description of the actual practices involved in such politics are another illustration of transversal dialogical politics. She describes the ethics of care as a normative ideal that transcends citizenship, nationalism, racism and cosmopolitanism. She recognizes such politics in women's mobilizations all over the world where they have worked across borders and boundaries in contexts of conflict and war.

The mutual trust which has been built up among these women due to their shared feminist and emancipatory values is exactly what I mean when

I talk about the need for symmetry in feminist ethnics of care, when I side with Buber rather than Levinas¹ regarding the need for mutuality in such politics – mutuality of trust, not of interest or of equality of social positionings.

My emphasis on such mutuality emanates not from a denial of the need for asymmetrical dependency that each of us sometimes experiences. Rather, it is just the opposite. My call for mutuality based on trust is a protest against the identity politics call for ‘solidarity right or wrong’. In my writings, I sharply differentiate between the universal need to support all those oppressed and persecuted and generally unable – temporarily or permanently – to be independent, and those with whom I share long-term political alliance. I reserve the right to criticize political ideologies and daily practices of all people, whatever their social, economic and political positionings. While many of the people on the British Left, for example, would claim that it is racist and Islamophobic to criticize Islamists (or Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist fundamentalists), I (and my friends in *Women Against Fundamentalism* (2014)) would argue that it is racist to homogenize and reify. It would be racist to not differentiate among members of the same ethnic, national, racial or religious group and automatically assume that criticizing ideologies or practices of some is to be against all.

This does not mean that I would support counterterrorism, arbitrary arrests, torture or a more basic denial of economic and other aid or, as Tripp rightly claims, following Sen and Nussbaum, supporting and empowering people to help themselves when I do not share the same values.

In the feminist literature on the ethics of care, there are two basic models: the maternal model (Held 2005; Ruddick 1989), which assumes an asymmetrical power relation between mother and child, carer and cared, and the citizenship model (Tronto 1993), which claims that everyone in their lifecycle undergoes periods of dependence. Caring and being cared for are part of the duties and rights of citizenship in communities and states. Moreover, these duties and rights are not conditioned by each other – the right to be cared for does not depend on the ability and practice of caring for others. Indeed, this relationship is not symmetrical.

The political project of belonging to a caring epistemic community depends on political trust – that others share the value system and that they undertake daily practices that sustain the project. Such a political project of belonging needs to cross borders and boundaries of class, gender, lifecycle stages, ethnicity, nationality, religion and ability.

Note

1. See the discussion in my chapter entitled ‘The Caring Question’ in Yuval-Davis (2011a).

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Section VII

Violence, Militarism, Conflict

7.0

Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and “War Economies”

V. Spike Peterson

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Essentially, the fragmentation and informalization of war is paralleled by the informalization of the economy.

(Kaldor 1999/2001, 104)

The phenomenon of the informal economy is both deceptively simple and extraordinarily complex, trivial in its everyday manifestations and capable of subverting the economic and political order of nations.

(Portes and Haller 2005, 403)

David Roberts (2008) observes that defining human security is more contentious than defining human *insecurity* (also Burke 2007). Like many others, Roberts draws on diverse literatures referencing institutional, indirect, or structural violence to generate a definition of *insecurity* as “avoidable civilian deaths, occurring globally, caused by social, political and economic institutions and structures, built and operated by humans and which could feasibly be changed” (2008, 28). Indirect or structural violence refers to the presumably unintended but recurring patterns of suffering or harm that result from the way social institutions or structures “order” expectations, norms, and practices.¹ “War” is arguably a display of structural violence at its extremity. Feminists have produced incisive accounts of how in/security, violence, conflicts, and wars are pervasively gendered.² But existing analyses tend to focus on masculinist identities and ideologies in the context of embodied and “political” forms of violence, leaving aside how these are inextricably linked to economic phenomena.

This tendency to conceptualize politics and economics as “separable” has a long history, and is exacerbated by disciplinary divisions institutionalized in

higher education. Nonetheless, it serves us poorly, and is especially problematic for making sense of contemporary global conditions.³ In the late twentieth century, structural changes in the capacity of state governments to “manage” national economies compelled International Relations (IR) scholars to rethink the relationship between states and markets, politics, and economics. One effect was the consolidation in the 1970s of a subfield characterized as International Political Economy (IPE).⁴

While IPE scholars go some way toward integrating the study of political and economic dimensions of global dynamics, their inquiries remain limited. On the one hand, a divide between IR focused on “security” and IPE focused on “global economics” continues to forestall holistic, systemic analyses. On the other hand, feminist contributions continue to be marginalized in both fields of inquiry. IR and IPE scholars occasionally include sex as a variable, in effect, “adding women” (treating gender as an *empirical* category) to existing frameworks. But they rarely acknowledge gender as an *analytical* category, in effect, ignoring the *theoretical* implications of gender as a governing code. Indeed, addressing this feminist insight would challenge the foundational assumptions and existing frameworks of IR and IPE.⁵

The importance of such conceptual reframing is forcefully articulated by feminist IR scholars Marianne Marchand and Anne Sisson Runyan in their Introduction to the second edition of *Gender and Global Restructuring* (2011b). They note that since the events of September 11, 2001, feminists increasingly draw connections between the economics of neoliberal globalization and the heightened militarism and imperialism of President Bush’s “war on terror” (2011b, 2). Reflecting on terminological choices, Marchand and Runyan sideline the more familiar “globalization” in favor of “global restructuring,” which better addresses the “fraternal twins” of neoliberal economic globalization and neoimperial political/military domination (2011b, 6). In their words, “the concept of global restructuring takes us beyond a narrow economic view of (neoliberal) globalization and instead emphasizes a multidimensional, interconnected and profound set of transformations” that include “new security dimensions” (2011b, 2). In addition to urging a merger of economic and political analyses, Marchand and Runyan observe the “deep recognition in transnational feminist thinking of the close and complex relations between ‘the intimate’ and ‘the global’ ” (2011b, 6).

With these points as background, I attempt in this chapter to pursue the following questions: How are economic practices – especially, informal activities – and forms of political violence *interconnected*? How are both neoliberal globalization and militarized conflicts *gendered*, and hence, how might feminist analyses of Global Political Economy (GPE) advance feminist (IR) analyses of war and global *insecurities*? In particular, I am interested in exploring how global restructuring in recent decades – characterized here as the ideology and practices of neoliberalism imposed worldwide – shapes conditions of direct

and indirect (structural) violence, manifested in relatively “new” patterns of militarized conflict and war (Kaldor 1999/2001, 2006).

The most visible insecurities in this context are widening economic gaps between the rich minority global North and the poor majority global South.⁶ Some of these inequalities play a role in initiating and/or exacerbating violent “political” conflicts. At the same time, neoliberal globalization erodes the autonomy of states. It thus alters their ability to regulate internal activities, advance public welfare, and/or ensure public order through conventional modes of centralized, legitimate, governmental authority. In these senses, deteriorating economic conditions and the inequalities they generate are inextricably linked to political practices and the insecurities they entail.

Hence, what I attempt in this chapter is to illuminate connections among the following: the structural violence constituted by neoliberal economic restructuring; the scale and significance of *economic* informalization, especially in relation to inequalities and attendant insecurities; the implications of *political* informalization, especially in relation to violent conflicts constituting “new wars”; and gender-sensitive research on economic *and* political informalization as processes that together shape the resolution or continuation of conflict conditions. This feminist lens permits additional angles of vision: it illuminates not only economic conditions within and outside of households, but also how power relations operate from “the intimate” to “the global” level by shaping who does what work and how all work is gendered and differentially valorized. Given the vast terrain of these topics, my attempt can only be preliminary and partial. I explore an arguably novel blend of particular literatures with the hope of generating insights of potentially wider significance.

I first discuss informalization, the expansion of informal – unregulated, unofficial – economic activities, and why this development is significant economically (due to expanding inequalities), politically (due to expanding insecurities) and analytically (due to posing gendered quandaries). My focus then turns to the literature on “new wars” and ways in which these reconfigure security issues, especially in relation to informal and especially underground or black market activities. The next section provides a brief review of the implications of such illicit activities in conflicts and “war economies.” I then distinguish among “coping, combat, and criminal” types of informal activities variously operating in conflict zones. This framework affords me a way to systematically compare the agents, motivations, and activities of each, their gendering, and their potential positive or negative implications for resolving militarized conflicts.

Informalization and insecurities in today’s global economy

Growth in the number of informal-sector and women workers is the centerpiece of global restructuring.

(Ward 1990, 2)

Contemporary neoliberalism gives particular meanings to human activity through the choices it provides, the regulatory ideals it imposes and the identities it prescribes as most suitable.

(Griffin 2009, 8)

Understanding the current expansion of informal activities requires familiarity with neoliberal ideology and practices that have shaped global restructuring since the 1970s.⁷ In brief, neoliberalism combines the tenets of neoclassical economics, which champion individual market rationality and the efficiency of private enterprise, with those of classical political liberalism, which champion the separation of politics from economics and the minimum of public/governmental power. Late twentieth-century neoliberalism takes this to the global level, promoting “unfettered global markets and a consumer-based individualistic ethic which transcends national communities” (Tooze 1997, 227).

The market reforms promoted by neoliberalism were initially characterized as supply-side economics or “the Washington consensus.” Some favor the label “market fundamentalism,” which draws attention to what critics deem inappropriate reliance on “free market” principles to address not only economic but also social and political issues. While recurring and escalating financial crises spur extensive critiques, neoliberal principles continue to dominate economic thinking and practice. As Penny Griffin observes, the recent post-Washington consensus “Second Generation Reform” is hardly less market-centered than its predecessor, “the difference being that it is simply more concerned to acknowledge and remedy ‘market imperfections’” (2009, 10). Despite devastating crises and global economic turbulence, neoliberal policies are at best being mildly reformed, but are not being fundamentally challenged or transformed today.

The concept of “liberalization” that pervades neoliberal discourse is understood as minimizing government interventions in business activities and hence enabling the “free” circulation of ideas, capital, and goods worldwide. Policy reforms are variously aimed at relaxing or eliminating state-based restrictions: deregulation (to remove existing regulatory constraints); privatization (to replace public ownership and control); and greater free trade (to ensure more open borders). Complementing these supply-side reforms are fiscal and monetary “stabilization policies” claimed to reduce government spending and deficits. Finally, national specialization in economic activities is promoted, assuming that countries as units enjoy comparative advantages, and export-oriented policies are favored for economic development and growth.

Historical, sociocultural, and geopolitical differences shape the implementation and implications of neoliberal policies. While the effects are therefore not uniform, some patterns are widely acknowledged. In a snapshot: deregulation, liberalization, and privatization have reduced most states’ capacity for and/or commitment to social welfare provisioning. At the same time,

these policies have fueled “flexibilized” production processes, undercut the power of organized labor, exacerbated un- and underemployment (especially of men), and deepened economic inequalities within and between nations.⁸ With flexibilization, we observe a global “*feminization of work*”: simultaneously an embodied transformation of work practices (more women working), a deterioration of labor conditions (more insecure, precarious jobs, as had been always true of women’s work), and a reconfiguration of worker identities (more female breadwinners).⁹

Flexibilization and feminization also relate to informalization, since downsizing, outsourcing, and subcontracting processes shift production toward less formal (secure, regulated) work conditions. This increases the insecurity of the global majority, who face limited options in their pursuit of income generation and survival resources. As economic restructuring and financial crises reduce the availability of “decent jobs” – formal, secure, safe work – more and more people are working wherever and however they can; hence, the global expansion of informal activities. The “feminization” of these activities is registered by their devalued status and the structural vulnerability of those who do this poorly paid work: women, migrants, the urban “underclass,” youth, and the poorest populations worldwide.

Informality refers to work that occurs outside of formal (official, recorded) market operations and hence eludes government regulation and taxation.¹⁰ Until recently, accounting for this work was of little interest to economists, who tend to focus on official, recorded market transactions. They also expected informality to wane with state development and modern industrialization. Today, however, most observers agree that informality is a central dynamic of the world economy: it shapes the resource-pooling and survival strategies of households worldwide, constitutes the primary source of income generation and new job growth in the global South, and has expanded dramatically in the global North.¹¹

Mainstream analyses of informality are constrained by reliance on the dominant positivist, and masculinist conceptual premises of neoclassical economics.¹² In particular, orthodox accounts assume that formal and informal activities are non-overlapping categories; treat clandestine or criminal types of informal activities as a separate area of inquiry; and exclude the unpaid domestic labor of social reproduction. These assumptions are too restrictive to adequately analyze the global politics of informalization. To acknowledge a wider range of activities and take women’s work seriously, I consider informal activities as existing along a *continuum* of distinctions (unpaid reproductive labor; nonstandard, “irregular” work; illicit revenue generation) without presuming discrete categories. This captures how deteriorating conditions of work and changing regulatory frameworks increasingly expose the pretense of clear boundaries.¹³ It also builds on feminist arguments regarding

the *economic* significance of the unpaid but socially necessary labor of social reproduction.

Social reproduction refers to activities in support of ensuring the daily and generational continuity of individuals and collectivities. Access to market, community, and public resources shapes the conditions of social reproduction, but most of the *work* involved is unpaid, assigned to women, and situated in or near households. Feminists argue that economic theory is impoverished by its failure to account for this labor and its structural importance. This “domestic” work sustains reproductive processes (upon which society depends), produces intangible social assets (upon which market activities depend), and significantly shapes the quality and quantity of labor, goods, services, and financial assets available (e.g., through production, consumption, savings, intergenerational transmission of assets). In effect, (unpaid) household labor underpins and articulates with (paid) work – both formal and informal – so that counting the former is necessary for generating adequate accounts of the latter.

I refer to “households” (rather than families) as basic economic units to emphasize the *pooling* of material and nonmaterial resources from multiple activities to ensure well-being and reproduction of social groups (which may or may not be kinship based) over time.¹⁴ As an effect of neoliberal restructuring, public resources devoted to welfare provisioning decline just when the need for such support grows. Loss of cash income increases pressure on nonmonetized (unpaid) work to ensure household survival. These entwined developments reveal tensions between state capacities, patterns of capital accumulation, and the viability of households as basic socioeconomic units.

Feminists identify a *crisis of social reproduction* as pressure increases to ensure the survival of households in deteriorating economic conditions.¹⁵ It is primarily women who are expected to make up the difference between human needs – emotional, physical, economic – and decreasing resources from monetized income, public welfare, or community transfers. But as the limits to human capacity are reached, social reproduction is threatened. The current downturn compounds these dynamics.

If we assume an extensive, inclusive continuum of informal work, the majority will involve domestic, subsistence activities in support of household reproduction and “irregular,” small-scale entrepreneurial activities, such as scavenging, street vending, home-based production, and petty trade. These forms of work are rarely considered illegal, though in practice the distinction between licit and illicit is increasingly difficult to establish. By definition, income generated through underground, illegal, or black market activities avoids being recorded, taxed, or regulated, and so falls within the continuum of informality. Illicit economic activities have a long history and today constitute big business on a global scale; they are an underrecognized aspect of militarized conflicts.

A key insight is that economic informalization and *political* informalization (weak or eroded state capacity) are often interconnected. Political informalization appears most frequently in the IR literature on “fragile” or “failed states,” where it is typically assumed that these pose a variety of risks: as potential sites of political violence, criminal organizations, or even terrorist activities (Di John 2010, 10–11). Any state weakened by economic restructuring, unstable regimes, or militarized conflict is less able to control informal and even criminal activities. These activities may become war-profiteering opportunities and sources of combat funding that fuel conflicts and complicate their resolution. Moreover, recent scholarship suggests that states have an ambivalent attitude toward informal activities, and do not always wish to eliminate even those that are clearly criminal. There are various reasons why states may be selective in how they enforce prohibitions, manipulate crime statistics or report “terrorist” activities (Friman 2009; Andreas and Greenhill 2010).

In sum, informalization is *economically* important because of its global scale, its implications for working conditions, wages, profits, and tax revenues, and its effects on resource distribution within and among nation-states. Informal and formal work together produce patterns of monetized income, household strategies of resource-pooling, and people’s capacity for social reproduction. Informalization typically places downward pressure on formal wages, increasing the *insecurity* of jobs, income, and household survival.

Informalization is *politically* important because it complicates public policy-making and alters power relations. In all states, effective policies depend on accurate estimates of various economic activities, and informalization thwarts reliable recording and measurement. Unregulated work practices pose safety, health, and environmental risks; criminal activities thwart public interests in law and order; and diminished state ability to sustain legitimate forms of order threatens the security of all, though not homogeneously. The insecurities that informalization increases in turn shape whether and how political and even militarized conflicts occur.

Informalization is *analytically* important because it exposes prevailing accounts as inadequate and challenges foundational gendered dichotomies about work and value. It defies theorists’ expectations that informal activities would fade as industrial capitalism matured. Informalization remains key to analyzing the intersectionality of structural inequalities. In effect, it constitutes devalued (feminized) work and hierarchies of gender, ethnicity/race, class, and nation which then shape which devalued (feminized) workers are most likely to be doing it: the poor, ethnic minorities, women, youth, migrants, the urban underclass, the global South. Informalization thus offers a productive lens for “seeing” how power operates to reproduce structural inequalities. These are all gendered processes, frequently entail insecurities, and variously shape conflicts. In the next section I consider those particular insecurities fueled by the

diminishing ability of states to regulate economic and political activities more generally, and the conduct of war more specifically.

Rethinking “war” and human in/securities

Political violence at the beginning of the twenty-first century is more omnipresent, more directed at civilians, involves a blurring of the distinctions between war and crime, and is based on and serves to foment divisive identity politics – these are the characteristics of “new wars”.

(Kaldor 2006, ix)

Criminality is a major characteristic of new wars.

(Mittelman 2009, 170)

How to understand and potentially transform “war” is the central question of IR inquiry, and it points to how war changes over time. A proliferation of violent “civil conflicts” in the late twentieth century prompted many to reconsider what “war” is. Mary Kaldor (1999/2001, 2006) coined the term “new wars,” arguing that the dominant modality of warfare has changed and demands fundamental rethinking.¹⁶

For Kaldor, a key difference is that “new wars involve a blurring of distinctions between war . . . , organized crime . . . and large-scale violations of human rights” (p.2). Kaldor distinguishes earlier from new wars in terms of goals, methods, and financing (p.6–12). First, the goals of warfare now feature “identity politics” – claims to power based on an identity that is relatively delinked from statecentric interests and tends to be exclusivist and nostalgic, rather than cosmopolitan and aspirational. Such identity politics displaces earlier territorially based geopolitical objectives. Significantly, the “new wave of identity politics is both local and global, national as well as transnational.” It is facilitated by new technologies, which enhance the speed and spatial dispersion of political mobilizations (p.7).

Second, the methods of warfare have shifted from earlier vertically organized, centralized state-based units that were appropriate for gaining and securing physical territories to ones that are horizontally organized, involve strategies of guerrilla warfare, and feature decentralized actors who attempt to control populations by sowing fear and hatred, as well as by the literal expulsion of “Others.” A prominent effect is dramatic increases in human rights violations and civilian casualties.

Third, the war economy has shifted from statecentric to decentralized and external resources. This relates to the structural changes due to neoliberal globalization discussed above: increasing unemployment, expanding the informal economy, decreasing tax revenues, and facilitating transnational flows of licit

and illicit resources. These processes erode the autonomy of the state and its ability to control violence. Neoliberal policies “provided an environment for growing criminalization and the creation of networks of corruption” (Kaldor 1999/2001, 83). The effects are devastating for democratic processes and the pursuit of a global cosmopolitan project.¹⁷

Militarized conflicts today *vary* in how, and to what extent, they exhibit these dynamics. War conditions keep changing, and in her 2006 Preface Kaldor acknowledges a decline in wars and war-related deaths since 1999.¹⁸ She contends, however, that insecurity has increased since 9/11 and that key claims regarding “new wars” are even more pertinent in the twenty-first century. In her words:

What the international community has succeeded in doing is freezing conflicts, in stabilizing the level of war-related violence. However, in most conflict-affected regions, there are still high levels of human rights violations and crime; a variety of armed actors remain at large; there is high unemployment and a large informal or illegal economy; and very little has been done to confront identity politics.

(Kaldor 2006, x)

However much actual wars vary, all conflicts today *do* take place in a global context profoundly shaped by neoliberal policies that exacerbate inequalities, insecurities, and the decline of centralized state governance and control. Here I turn to consider the gendered linkages between licit and illicit informal activities and how these relate to the conduct and conclusion of militarized conflicts.

Illicit informality and conditions of war

As crime and security come to govern ever-wider policy domains, including migration, finance, and health, there has arguably never been a more pressing time to consider the international political economy (IPE) of crime.

(De Goede 2009, 104)

We know that patterns of resource distribution are key to both “causes” of conflict (e.g., fueling resentments and militarizing demands for redistribution) and capacities for sustaining conflict (e.g., supplying and financing militarized activities). The new wars literature argues that in intra- rather than international wars, funding is not simply a matter of formal military budgets. In civil conflicts, self-financing is an issue for combatants and is secured through formal as well as informal work (licit and illicit), and through partnerships with armed groups, arms suppliers, organized crime, and corrupt governments.

Increasingly, security analysts need to track *licit and illicit* economic activities and resource flows to better understand the causes, conduct, and consequences of conflicts, and to identify effective crime- and conflict-reducing policies.

Informal activities, by definition, pose tremendous challenges for reliable assessment and yet militarized globalization has, ironically, generated interest in better accounting of what violence costs. One reason is increasing awareness of illicit practices as routine features of low-intensity conflicts, civil wars, and terrorist activities.¹⁹ Indeed, since 9/11 illicit activities have assumed a key role in the study of “war economies.” These studies suggest new questions about informalization and its effects on human security (e.g., linking illicit trade in drugs or arms with military strategies and outcomes). In addition, they provide crucial empirical data on the key players in, motivations for, and profits generated by informal activities in times of conflict. Finally, they may begin to explain how national and transnational policies enable or constrain informalization and illicit activities. This growing literature explores the interaction of what Zartman (2005) calls “need, creed, and greed” in contemporary conflicts.²⁰ The shared starting point of these studies is that modalities of warfare are profoundly altered by globalization processes, especially in their economic dimensions.

This literature foregrounds what Andreas (2004, 641) calls the “illicit international political economy” (IPE; also Friman and Andreas 1999; Naim 2005). In addition to clandestine provision of war-making *materials* (equipment), illicit activities such as trafficking in drugs, sex workers, migrants, dirty money, and black market goods provide the *financing* necessary for war. These markets defy territorial boundaries and state-based legal regimes; they are increasingly regional and even global. Deregulation amplifies opportunities for criminal networking activities and money laundering. This burgeoning research suggests patterns of gendered insecurity change as informal, “shadow,” or underground economies are expanding, and provide supplies and financing for conflict activities (Le Billon et al. 2002; Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Jung 2003). Boundaries distinguishing licit from illicit activities blur as criminal, corporate, and corrupt governmental interests converge (Ruggiero 2000; Duffield 2001; Naylor 2002). International regulatory regimes raise legal issues as national security interests connect war-fighting and crime-fighting (Andreas 2003; Andreas and Price 2001). Regional, systemic conditions gain prominence as key determinants of local conflicts and longer-term prospects for social stability (Le Billon et al. 2002; Pugh and Cooper 2004).

On the whole, this research supports Kaldor’s claim that neoliberal policies guiding *economic* globalization are having deleterious, indeed disastrous, *political* effects by exacerbating corruption, criminality, and militarized conflict. Informalization and illicit activities increase as the centralized power, regulatory capacity, and public accountability of states is eroded in favor of

unaccountable decentralized markets, private interest networks, and international agencies. Where conflict emerges, there are powerful incentives for seeking, and many opportunities for securing, resources and profits through both licit and illicit informal activities. Centralized governments weakened by economic restructuring and/or protracted conflict are less able, and sometimes also insufficiently motivated, to prioritize law and order. In militarized conflicts where effective public control and authority are limited, postconflict reconstruction may be continually undermined by established networks of private, often illicit, resource provision. In short, a disturbing trend is emerging in which new forms of violence are becoming endemic when the processes of economic and political informalization converge.²¹

Coping, combat, and criminal informal economies

From this literature I draw more specific insights regarding the gender dynamics of war economies and the insecurities they generate. Relying on Pugh and Cooper (2004), I posit three subgroupings of informalization found in conflict zones. These “coping, combat, and criminal economies” are overlapping and interdependent; they interact with each other and are structurally linked to “regular,” formal economies.²² Each has distinctive tendencies in what motivates the agents, who these agents are, and what the primary activities of each economy are. I provide only an abbreviated sketch of the three economies here, where my objective is to suggest how they are gendered and what this might mean for feminist analyses of human security and insecurities.²³

Informal coping economy. Processes of social reproduction and strategies of family/household survival are central here. Agents are primarily motivated by the need to secure basic (life-sustaining) resources as conflict conditions undermine social stability, erode the formal economy, and disrupt traditional livelihoods. Agents may include individuals, families, households, kin networks, neighborhood communities, or social solidarity groups. As conflicts worsen and/or economic conditions deteriorate, coping strategies may increasingly involve informal and even illicit activities. Possibilities include dealing in black market goods; engaging in sex work and debt bondage; selling organs for transplant; and participating in potentially lucrative but high-risk criminal activities. Agents in this economy have more stakes in ending conflicts than perpetuating them, because they are structurally the most vulnerable and rarely command sufficient resources to prosper much from societal disruption. To what extent these agents are committed to ending conflicts will depend, however, on how they imagine postconflict conditions: What forms of security will be put into place? Will they be sustainable? How will their social reproduction and economic provisioning be affected? What if anything will the formal economy offer them?

This coping economy is obviously feminized, as social reproduction and caring labor are quintessentially women's work. As in nonconflict conditions, more women than men are responsible for sustaining families, households, kinship networks, and even neighborhoods. A global increase in female-headed households exacerbates the pressures on women to generate coping strategies that enable social reproduction, and these pressures increase when war destroys basic infrastructure and traditional labor patterns, still further worsening unemployment and the decline in public welfare and state services. Due to daily risks of conflict conditions as well as masculinized state priorities, women may experience decreasing access to or agency in public spaces. Militarized conditions tend to privilege male desires, entertainment, consumption, education, and employment at women's cost. The heightened masculinization of war zones may also deepen heteropatriarchal attitudes, with effects that vary by culture and context.

For these and other reasons, women may have a particular stake in seeing conflicts concluded. Yet only exceptionally are they recognized as key players or included in political negotiations. Postconflict plans also pay minimal attention to meeting the economic losses and heightened emotional problems of families and households in the aftermath of war and its violence.

Informal combat economy. Activities that involve directly engaging in combat, as well as supplying, supporting, and funding fighters, are central to this economy. Agents are primarily motivated by desire for achieving military objectives. These include armed groups and their political supporters, as well as conflict entrepreneurs who facilitate acquisition of war resources. Activities typically blur licit-illicit boundaries, as combatants turn to a variety of sources. Because of the erosion of central authority and weaker regulatory mechanisms, transborder movement of supplies and financial arrangements are common. Some involve informal, far-flung diasporic connections, while others may even involve transnational organized crime networks. Depending on context, financing a conflict may include looting, theft, smuggling, piracy, kidnapping, trafficking, and other black market activities, aid manipulation, and expropriation of natural resources. In support of military objectives, particular areas or natural resources controlled by opponents may be targeted to undercut their economic power. On the one hand, such agents may resist peace if they anticipate a loss of status or power through negotiations, by losing land or access to other valued resources, or by being shamed, punished, or held accountable for crimes. On the other hand, agents may seek peace if they anticipate postconflict benefits, such as life being less traumatizing, less violent, and more sustainable and jobs and livelihoods being more available and secure. This combat economy is the most obviously masculinized, since defending and fighting "for" families and political identity groups are quintessentially manly pursuits.

This generalization, however, erases the history of female participation in conflicts and obscures the complexity of wartime conditions. The disruptions of war often challenge conventional gendered identities and divisions of labor. Still, in most conflicts the majority of combatants are men, especially young men, for whom battle may mark a transition to fully adult status.²⁴ The combat economy combines such direct combat activities with funding, supplying, and otherwise facilitating military objectives, where women and older men may be more prominent.

Moreover, feminist studies of nationalism emphasize that idealized constructions of womanhood symbolize the cultural values of a group. In this sense, as identity politics assume greater importance, pressure increases on women to conform to masculinist group expectations with respect to their appearance, demeanor, and social behavior. Not doing so can place women at considerable risk, for example, subjecting them to violent forms of discipline by their identity group. Conforming to their socialization – and especially in militarized contexts – men are more likely to participate in, rather than protest, harsh treatment of these women.

Devaluation of the feminine translates here into silencing, objectifying, violating, assaulting, and even killing women and (feminized, Othered) civilians; discriminating against and often punishing “insufficiently masculine” men; using women as sexual decoys (Eisenstein 2007); abducting women and girls for ransom; trafficking in women and children; and prioritizing masculinized identities, practices, and objectives in the name of military needs. Whether or not combatants have a stake in ending conflict depends critically on their estimated probability of victory, or at least their share of postconflict resources and power. In new wars, the interaction of identity politics and militarized masculinities appears to deepen combatants’ resistance to negotiations that promise less than complete victory. Insofar as this is the case, it obviously exacerbates the already significant difficulty of achieving a sustainable peace.

Informal criminal economy. Activities that directly and indirectly supply, finance, and profit from conflict are central to this economy. Agents are primarily motivated by desire for profits. Conflict zones present unique opportunities for this insofar as regulatory mechanisms break down or are suspended, and centralized authority is weakened by war, fractured by political divisions, or disabled by corruption. Agents include petty criminals, conflict entrepreneurs, traffickers, war profiteers, money launderers, and those who produce and/or transport trafficked goods. In most cases, the agents of the criminal and the combat economy interact and even overlap. This is especially likely as conflict continues, when profit making can displace military objectives. Criminal agents may also interact and overlap with the coping economy as individuals and households pursue, or feel forced to engage in, illicit activities as a survival strategy.

Activities in this economy fall outside of state regulation and documentation. They include smuggling, trafficking, predatory lending, aid manipulation, natural resource expropriation, fraud, tax evasion, and money laundering. While understood as a criminal economy, some of these activities straddle the licit-illicit distinction, for example, predatory lending. This economy also tends to be transnational and to involve larger regional activities such as smuggling, trafficking, and supplying arms. Financial arrangements for these purposes may involve money laundering and banking activities outside the country. Agents in this economy resist peace if they expect to lose income, have fewer profit-seeking opportunities, be apprehended, and held accountable. They may seek peace when they anticipate prosperous postconflict conditions, including long-term investment opportunities, or turning to more profitable legitimate businesses. In the absence of strong central authority and reliable law enforcement, however, Goodhand notes that “there are few incentives for entrepreneurs to make the shift toward longer-term productive activities” (2004, 65).

The criminal economy is more obviously extensive and complex, especially in terms of its financing. Its agents may be variously gendered, depending on cultural context, the activities involved, and where individuals are positioned in criminal networks. The profit-making motive driving this economy reveals how inseparable all three economies are, since coping economies require access to cash or credit as part of survival strategies and combat economies must secure various resources in formal and informal markets powerfully shaped by flows of capital and finance within and beyond the conflict zone. These globally restructured cash flows and markets are not directly under the control of the agents of the three informal economies. These points reinforce Kaldor’s key claim that new wars must be understood in the context of globalization: “the intensification of global interconnectedness – political, economic, military and cultural” (Kaldor 1999/2001, 3).

Moreover, the depersonalized, competitive, objectifying, and commodifying dynamics of profit making are arguably no less masculinist than are formal relations of production, political activities, military institutions, and organized crime. At the same time, this informalization disrupts any rigid boundaries between production and reproduction, public and private, licit and illicit, which might exist. In light of this complexity, specifying the gender of any informal economy is complicated and the gendered effects never wholly predictable. To use gender analysis productively, the specifics of context are crucial. Similarly, how and to what extent agents in the criminal economy are invested in prolonging, rather than concluding, new wars will depend on multiple factors and can only be determined through empirical investigation of particular cases.

Conclusion

Feminists have produced telling accounts of gender in relation to security and war. This chapter explored how *economic* phenomena are relevant for analyzing conflicts that are typically addressed solely as *political* phenomena. Across the world, decades of neoliberal ideology and practice have had uneven and contradictory effects. While a small elite benefits in the short run, the long-term pattern is one of increasing inequalities within and between nations. These inequalities constitute *insecurities* at all levels from the intimate and local to the national and global. This chapter offered a schematic mapping of informalization as a prominent feature of neoliberal globalization, suggested how global expansion of informality articulates with changing modalities of warfare, and drew linkages between economic and political informalization in conflict zones. Deploying the analytical framework of identifying coping, combat, and criminal informal economies, and specifying how these are gendered, highlights how pervasively and significantly gender shapes the conduct and consequences of war. It also suggests the challenges feminists must confront to analyze and respond effectively to *insecurities* shaped by these entwined processes of economic exploitation and political militarization.

Notes

1. Johan Galtung (1969, 1971) early on articulated “structural violence” as a security issue; recently, the insecurities of human life under contemporary conditions include Agamben’s “bare life” (1998) and Butler’s “precarity” (2009).
2. The research is now extensive, and well represented in this edited volume. See also Jacobs et al. 2000; Goldstein 2001; Giles and Hyndman 2004; Mazurana, Raven-Roberts, and Pappart 2005; Parpart 2005; Hunt and Rygiel 2006; Sjoberg 2006; Enloe 2007; Eisenstein 2007; Anderlini 2007; Shepherd 2008; Kaufman and Williams 2010; Sjoberg and Via 2010; and special issues of *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 2001; *Security Dialogue* 2004; *Security Studies* 2009; *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 2010.
3. Michael Mann, a prominent scholar of states, war, and capitalism, argues that the lamentable failure of “social scientists . . . to address some of the most fundamental problems of modern society” is in part due to “divid[ing] up reality between different academic disciplines” that have “encouraged each other’s worst vices” (1988, vii).
4. To foreground transnational dynamics, I favor referring to the Global Political Economy (GPE). For recent accounts of the field and its varying approaches, see Abbot and Worth 2002; Peterson 2003; O’Brien and Williams 2007; Miller 2008; Oatley 2010.
5. For feminist critiques of masculinist IR and IPE, see, for example, Tickner 2005; Peterson 2005; Waylen 2006; Griffin 2009.
6. “Global South” and “global North” reference social (not narrowly geographical) locations of vulnerability and privilege respectively. On increasing inequalities within and between nations, see, for example, Cornia 2004; Wade 2004; APSA 2008.

7. The literature here is vast, but accessible overviews and insightful analyses include Stiglitz 2002; Ong 2006; Klein 2007; Peck 2010.
8. From a critical perspective: deregulation has permitted the hypermobility of capital, spurred phenomenal growth in crisis-prone financial markets, and expanded the power of private and corporate capital interests (at the expense of public, collective interests); liberalization is selectively implemented (powerful states choose when to engage in protectionism, while less powerful states lose control over protecting domestic industries, goods produced, and the jobs provided); and privatization has meant a loss of nationalized industries and their potential public benefits, as well as a decrease in public sector employment and welfare service provision. See, for example, Scholte 2005; van Staveren et al. 2007; Peterson and Runyan 2010; Marchand and Runyan 2011a.
9. The “feminization” of economic restructuring has been widely noted and researched, e.g., Standing 1999; Beneria 2003; Peterson 2003; Hoskyns and Rai 2007; Berik et al. 2009. I deploy “feminization” in my work to emphasize the *devaluation* – ideationally *and* materially – of ideas, identities, bodies, practices, skills, etc. – when associated with “the feminine”/femininity. For theoretical elaboration of this claim and its wider application, see Peterson 2007, 2009b.
10. To avoid clumsy phrasing, I use informal activities, informality, and informalization interchangeably in this essay. Controversies regarding how to define, hence measure, and/or interpret the relationship between formal-informal activities pervade the literature. For recent overviews, see Portes and Haller 2005; Fernandez-Kelly and Shefner 2006; Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur, and Ostrom 2006a. I cannot address definitional debates here, but attempt to do so in Peterson 2010, and through a critical lens on GPE I situate informality in the context of interdependent reproductive, productive, and virtual economies in Peterson 2003; see both for detailed references.
11. On increases in the scale of informal work, see Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur, and Ostrom 2006b; Chant and Pedwell 2008; ILO 2008; Barta 2009. Gender-sensitive discussions of the financial crisis include Young and Schuberth 2010; *Gender & Development* 2010; Runyan and Marchand 2011.
12. For feminist critiques of orthodox economics, see Hewitson 1999; Barker and Kuiper 2003; Ferber and Nelson 2003; Barker and Feiner 2004; Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela 2004; Kaul 2008; Griffin 2009. See Peterson 2010 for a detailed discussion and literature review of three prevailing approaches to theorizing informality: mainstream, structuralist, and feminist.
13. Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur, and Ostrom also propose a “continuum,” acknowledging how formal-informal are contested but “cannot be suppressed – they are now too well ingrained in the academic and policy discourse” (2006b, 7); see also Fernandez-Kelly and Shefner 2006.
14. My account combines points in Smith and Wallerstein 1992; Dunaway 2001; Douglass 2006. Douglass (2006, 423) deploys the term “*householding*” to underscore how “creating and sustaining a household is a continuous process of social reproduction that covers all life-cycle stages and extends beyond the family.” *Global* *householding* references the many ways in which these processes increasingly occur across national boundaries, for example, through transborder marriages, overseas education, labor migration, and war displacements. On global *householding*, see the Critical Section of *Politics & Gender* (2010); Safri and Graham 2010.
15. Bakker and Gill 2003; Hoskyns and Rai 2007; Bakker and Silvey 2008.

16. Security scholars use a variety of terms to capture changing conditions of war: “low intensity conflict,” civil war, unconventional warfare, and postmodern war. In this essay I do not engage with debates about defining war, nor do I contend that “new wars” displace all other forms; indeed, they exhibit many parallels with earlier colonial and imperialist wars. My objective is rather to explore ways in which conditions of war – that are typically analyzed as political, militarized phenomena – are altered by the economic phenomena of neoliberal globalization, including its erosion of centralized state power and autonomy. In effect, the “new wars” literature affords a stark illustration of informalization as economically and politically significant. Kaldor’s *New and Old Wars* was initially published in 1999; cited pages here refer to the 2001 version that includes a new Afterword. In the Preface to the 2nd edition (2006), Kaldor acknowledges a decline in the number of wars and of people killed in wars since the first edition; I return to this below.
17. “Cosmopolitanism” for Kaldor refers “both to a positive political vision, embracing tolerance, multiculturalism, civility and democracy, and to a more legalistic respect for certain overriding universal principles which should guide political communities at various levels, including the global level” (2001, 115–116). In the second edition, Kaldor places greater emphasis on “the construction of legitimate political authority” (2006, x).
18. The decline is especially marked in the African context, and accompanied by important gender gains; see especially Tripp 2010. Critics of oversimplified claims associated with “new wars” research include Cramer 2006; Duffield 2007; Keen 2007.
19. See, for example, Biersteker and Eckert 2008; Andreas and Greenhill 2010; and the burgeoning IPE research on “risk.”
20. Paraphrasing Arnson’s description (2005: 11): “need” refers to grievances ranging from political repression to economic deprivation; “creed” to generalized belief and identity feelings; “greed” to personal or factional ambitions of private gain. Which of these factors warrants priority in explaining wars is continually debated.
21. This point is made from a variety of perspectives. See, for example, Kaldor 2001; Pugh and Cooper 2004; Naim 2005; Jung 2003.
22. The Pugh and Cooper volume refers to “combat, shadow and coping economies” (2004, 8), and I have modified these terms somewhat. I prefer “criminal” rather than “shadow” to more explicitly distinguish the illicit character of that economy, and I include aspects of social reproduction when referencing the “coping” economy. The mainstream IPE literature is virtually silent on both the significance of social reproduction and the gendered dimensions of war and reconstruction. For feminist treatments, see references in note 2 above.
23. Material presented here overlaps with Peterson 2008, 15–17; see Peterson 2009a for a preliminary case study of how these informal economies “appear” and operate in the context of the war in Iraq; on gender in the latter, see also Sjoberg 2006; and on gender and war in Middle East wars, see Al-Ali and Pratt 2009.
24. Recruiting – or using various means of compelling – especially male but also female *children* to participate in combat activities is relatively recent.

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7.1

Gendered and Racialized Logics of Insecurity, Development and Intervention

Maryam Khalid

Introduction

In her article ‘Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and “War Economies”’, V. Spike Peterson identifies the too-often overlooked links between ‘the political’ and ‘the economic’, and outlines the connections between political violence and economic practices. Focusing on the uneven and contradictory logics and practices of neoliberalism, she illustrates how the local and global inequalities produced by neoliberal global restructuring create insecurities that lead to militarized conflict and war. Peterson’s discussion of gender, development, economic restructuring and security illustrates that expanding economic inequalities are inextricably linked to expanding political insecurities. In this chapter I explore these ideas with a specific focus on the ways in which racialized and gendered discourses of security and development enable the militarized conflicts that have contributed to the development of informal economies in post-war contexts. In doing so I provide an overview of how dominant discourses of development, democratization and security are interconnected along gendered and racialized lines, in order to show how development discourses fit into broader (historical and contemporary) gendered and racialized discourses of global politics (especially in terms of security and global order); how these discourses are militarized, thus enabling and perpetuating violence; and their gendered and racialized effects. I thereby draw on discourses of development, security and intervention related to what has been called, in these discourses, the ‘third’ or ‘developing world’, with a specific focus on the contemporary Middle East.

I concentrate on the Middle East because the region has been a key focal point of dominant development discourses since the 1980s, and because of the centrality of the region to contemporary mainstream security concerns. The Middle East example illustrates well the convergence of gendered and racialized understandings of the world and the people in it, in terms of how

the world is best politically and economically organized. Given the region's history of intervention, it also presents a useful case study through which to explore how security and development are linked, how they function to enable intervention, and how they are ultimately militarized. My understanding of 'militarism' here is as a concept that captures more than just the institutions of the state, the military and 'elite' politics. Rather, I am influenced by feminist research that challenges the boundaries of dominant understandings of militarism. Thus I see militarism as 'an ideology that encompasses the myriad political/economic/social relationships, processes, and practices that are organized around, draw upon, and support "military values" ' (Khalid 2014). Militarism functions on the assumption that 'military values and policies [are] conducive to a secure and orderly society', and is characterized by a reliance on (often state-led) violence to resolve conflicts and implement policies (Reardon 1996: 14). This understanding of militarism is important to my discussion in this chapter because it allows us to 'locate' the logics of militarism beyond the obvious, in discourses of economic and political development and restructuring as they intersect with dominant discourses of security in global politics. In particular, the logics of militarism, I argue, are discernible in dominant discourses of 'appropriate' global governance, order and development; and these are refracted through gendered and racialized understandings of the world, whereby 'Western' and 'masculine' values of economic rationality are privileged over the feminized 'backwardness' of the 'underdeveloped other'.

Representations of (under)development (relating to the Middle East and beyond) have been gendered and racialized, and discursively enabled the violence of (often military) intervention. Contemporary 'global' development policies target the 'underdeveloped' and seek to enact neoliberal economic and political reforms; the ways in which this has taken place in the Middle East, and especially the effects this has had in terms of contributing to insecurity and enabling military intervention, illustrates an important aspect of the ways in which discourses around 'the economic' and 'the political' are not only interconnected but also gendered and racialized, and how they enable and perpetuate militarism and intervention. Mainstream discourses about security, and the activities carried out within this discursive framework, are closely linked to discourses of development. The economic insecurity this restructuring has created in many parts of the world, and in particular the Middle East, is inextricable from the imperialist development discourses that have rendered the Middle East in need of economic and military intervention. I start by backgrounding discourses of development and (imperial) intervention. In particular, I highlight the importance of racialized (often orientalist) knowledge(s) in discourses of development and democracy as they have related to the Middle East. Of particular importance is 'democratization' as it intersects with development, in terms of both dominant global politics and US policy towards the

Middle East specifically. It is also central to contemporary orientalist discourse, in which the Middle East is constructed as 'stagnant' and 'backward' by reference to its political and economic features and organization. This provides context for understanding how development, security and militarism intersect in terms of the 'War on Terror'. I use this to discuss how gendered and racialized discourses of (neoliberal) development, security and militarism have enabled intervention in the 'War on Terror', which in turn has impacted on the informal economies Peterson discusses.

Gender, race and the imperialism of 'development'

The currency and function of the gendered orientalism of neoliberal restructuring, and the interventions enabled by this discourse, are deeply related to dominant discourses of 'development', which itself is racialized, gendered and tied to imperialism. The historical antecedents of contemporary development lie in European colonial discourses, which deployed racialized and gendered understandings of notion of 'progress' as defined against 'backward' non-Western societies that were, at best, 'passive' or 'stagnant' and, at worst, in 'decline'. Aiding the political and economic development of these societies along liberal and capitalist lines became central to the highly gendered and racialized discourse of the 'white man's burden' that justified colonialism. While binaries of racialized difference and gendered responsibilities (the paternalism of 'the white man's burden') are not explicitly deployed in contemporary development discourse, the basic binaries underscoring colonial discourse have been mapped onto the post-1945 discourse of development/underdevelopment. Structured around a series of differences between 'them' and 'us' (urban/rural, modern/traditional, productive/unproductive), peoples of the global South remain the 'objects' of development discourse dominated by Western 'experts' (Wilson 2011: 316). Thus gendered and racialized understandings of what constitutes 'appropriate' global political order and governance inform dominant understandings of contemporary development. Development discourse cannot be fully understood without some understanding of the international system in which it operates. Gender and race are central to the historical construction of identity categories such as developed/undeveloped, sovereign/dependent, democratic/repressive and strong/weak states. I am concerned with illustrating how these categories are deployed in ways that enable the violence that results from economic and military interventions. In doing so, I explore how these identity categories have developed, and how they are connected to each other and to logics of militarized security.

The link I wish to establish between imperialism, development and militarism is best illustrated through an overview of the emergence, dominance and institutionalization of liberal internationalism. In the 20th century, liberal

democratic states became some of the most prosperous and powerful in the world, 'propelling the West and the liberal capitalist system of economics and politics to world preeminence' (Ikenberry 2009: 71). A liberal internationalist global political order emerged out of the ideas presented by some of these states (led by US President Woodrow Wilson) in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars. Advocates of liberalism as an organizing principle of the international system put forward liberal internationalism (as institutionalized in, for example, the UN, IMF and World Bank) as a way of global ordering that is essentially 'positive'. Purported to be egalitarian, to help all peoples achieve political and economic 'progress', its proponents argue that 'At its most basic, liberal internationalism offers a vision of an open, rule-based system in which states trade and cooperate to achieve mutual gains' (2009: 72). However, this understanding of liberal internationalism is dependent on, and obscures, gendered and racialized knowledge about the world that enables imperialism to be naturalized through the 'universalizing' of particular political and economic systems that privilege some over others.

That is, the organizations that were established through the Atlantic Charter and Bretton Woods system post-Second World War (the GATT, IMF, World Bank and UN) institutionalized 'liberalism's implicit subjectivity of "I lead, you follow"' (Ling 2004: 134). Although liberalism is marked by a commitment to freedom, peace and democracy, it is not fundamentally opposed to imperialism (Long 2006: 201). Constructed as based on 'universal' principles and interests, these institutions were designed to 'civilize' global politics and to 'develop' the 'underdeveloped' (Grovoqui 2004: 51). For example, post-Second World War US foreign aid programmes were 'designed to support friendly regimes, to prevent others from defecting' to the Soviets during the Cold War 'and to serve as a global mechanism to maintain international order while promoting economic growth in developing and the newly-emerging countries' (Tschirgi 2006: 47). The Cold War-era Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, for example, were 'precursors' of contemporary 'development assistance' as they incorporated aid into a security strategy against a threatening 'other' (Duffield 2002: 1065–1066).

(Neo)liberal discourse, as created in and by hegemonic international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and GATT, is predicated upon a division of the world into oppositional identities that draw on constructions of a capitalist 'Western self' as progressive and developed, and the 'other' as the 'backward', 'underdeveloped', 'Third World' or 'global South'. In this configuration the 'self' is a white/male/capitalist 'West' that is marked out by its adherence to (and propagation of) a specifically neoliberal configuration of the world. Simultaneously, gendered logics function to mark out this 'self' through 'masculine' traits of rationality, wealth and power, whereas the 'other' is marked out by race and is feminized, embodying 'brownness, blackness or yellowness shackled

by superstitions or fundamentalisms... and exhibits irrationality, poverty, and powerlessness' (Ling 2008: 1, 3). Indeed, dominant development discourses reinscribe colonial narratives of the 'lazy native' in gendered ways, and by drawing directly on the ideals of neoliberalism. In GAD programmes and literature, for example, women are often praised for making 'efficient' choices that accord with the rational' logics of neoliberalism, while men's choices and 'inefficient' spending (e.g., on recreational activities) become contemporary markers of inferior 'other' masculinity marked by irresponsibility and a preoccupation with pleasure over (economic) efficiency (Wilson 2011: 317–318).

In privileging liberalism and capitalism, and seeking to incorporate the Third World into the economic structures of the West, international institutions have an imperial function. For example, the conditionality of IMF and World Bank loans, and the process of structural adjustment, have been instrumental in diffusing neoliberal principles and practices, requiring 'developing' states to conform to a specific understanding of 'successful' political and economic organization (and related cultural practices) (Hobson 2012: 199, 220). These institutions and their effects are not merely 'economic' or divorced from the political (or the cultural): their impact extends to the ability, through economic relationships, to 'culturally convert' the 'underdeveloped' to 'Western liberal-civilizational principles' which are purported to 'help or uplift them' (Hobson 2012: 119, 219–221), and also naturalizes the assumptions and logics that enable (indeed demand) intervention into those states/regions that fail to conform to the logic of neoliberal restructuring. In this sense, Mark Duffield explains, liberal internationalism means 'new ways' of intervening in the global South (Duffield 2007a: 32). Although 'new' in the rejection of overtly racist or gendered language, the conceptualization of the world here is still underpinned by racialized and gendered logics (of feminized backward 'others') that have enabled imperialist intervention (in the form of colonialism but also beyond it).

Interventionism is also enabled by the securitization of development, which is concomitant with its militarization. Duffield explains that development has been 'securitized' in terms of being aimed at those states, regions or populations that are perceived to threaten 'our' 'security' (2001: 15). This, he argues, can be understood as a 'liberal strategization of international power' that is predicated on and (re)produces categories of 'civilized' (democratic, egalitarian, developed) and 'barbaric' (backward, despotic, underdeveloped) (Duffield 2007b: 2727–2728). For example, in the 'War on Terror' era, 'failed' and 'fragile' states (and the use of feminizing language reflects the gendered nature of development discourse) are identified as central to ensuring 'security'. Colonial are reinterpreted in the construction of the world as comprising developed/underdeveloped and effective/failed states. These function to 'promote neo-trusteeship or benign imperialism' and 'legitimize these prescriptions as

non-racist, technical fixes to failures of governance' (Shilliam 2008: 778–779). However, this depends on the ability to assign 'freedom and representation to "us" ' which itself has been predicated on a 'culturally coded racism' in which binaries such as 'civilized/barbarian, advanced/backward, active/passive, industrious/sensuous' are applied to peoples who do not 'measure up' to 'our' standards of civilization.

The conceptualization and practice of 'development' then functions as a 'liberal relation of governance' in that speaking of 'development' allows for power to be exercised in the act of 'speaking on behalf of people and their rights, freedoms, and well-being' (Duffield 2007b: 230). In this way development has a relationship to security discourse, whereby helping those 'less fortunate than us' is not simply altruistic: by 'fostering "their" development, we improve "our" and potentially global security' (2007b: 225–226). As Duffield explains, 'the nineteenth-century liberal urge to protect and better has been supplemented by a contemporary developmental need to secure unfamiliar and incomplete life' (2007b: 234). Thus the provision of development aid for the developing world by wealthy capitalist economies has been 'framed in universalist terms of bringing progress and development to the Third World' but reflected a 'specific concern with the *security* of the developed world' for 'our' security as much as 'theirs' (McCormack 2011: 246).

The ways in which racialized and gendered identities of 'us' and 'them' are constructed and function in global politics (especially around intervention) are central to making 'intelligible' the binary identity categories upon which logics of militarism and narratives of intervention (in and beyond development and security discourses) are predicated. In terms of the Middle East, this has been particularly important in US security prescriptions (since at least the 1980s) as understandings of 'appropriate' economic and political development became securitized in ways that discursively necessitate intervention in the region. Democratization and economic liberalization policies, for example, that encourage 'others' to take on political and economic models that make 'the world safe for capitalism' are inextricably linked to the assertion of 'Western' identity in the racialized and gendered hierarchy of global politics (Nayak 2006: 56). As feminists have pointed out, the construction of identity and threat in global politics has largely been underpinned by logics of hypermasculine competition and the superiority of 'Western liberal values'. Although the end of European colonialism resulted in formal recognition of the 'sovereignty' of states, imperial power relations continue to operate in the postcolonial liberal international system as a particular modality of 'informal imperialism' functions to restructure 'the world' in the image of the imperialist (Ayers 2009: 3). Democratization movements, in seeking to privilege particular political institutions and economic arrangements, are an example of this contemporary 'imperial governance' (Ayers 2009: 3–4).

Securitizing (under)development in the Middle East: Race, gender and the 'new' orientalism

Democratization has been particularly central to US foreign policy towards the Middle East, resulting in a series of attempts to spread 'Western' liberal-democratic values and associated economic systems to the region (Bacevich 2002). The logics shaping this policy are not only racialized (in the ways explained above) but also fundamentally gendered, reflecting a masculinist fixation on power and weakness. Global politics is configured by gendered logics in which performing masculinity is vital: gender shapes responses to (and constructions of) 'national security threats' as the world comes to be seen in terms of performances of masculinity and femininity. Insecurity about acceptable performances of masculinity finds expression not only in the discourses of, and the language, concepts and metaphors used to express, US foreign policy, but also in its policies and actions (Sjolander and Trevenen 2010: 162–163). The very need to 'assist' the 'underdeveloped' is predicated on a fear of insecurity, of becoming vulnerable (feminized) if such (often militarist) policies are eschewed (Bialasiewicz et al. 2007: 412). For example, the foreign policy prescriptions of US neoconservatives have conceptualized (militarist) programmes of democratization (and broader economic development) as necessary to avoid leaving the US ' "weak", "helpless", and "dependent" ' on its European allies in the face of security threats emerging from the Middle East (Takacs 2005: 298). Intervention (particularly military intervention) then becomes a way to not only shape the world according to particular political and economic configurations but also to reaffirm a masculine self-image. The intersection between political and economic discourses is key here: championing a 'free-market' system that 'values making profit over meeting human needs' and centring the domestic economy on militarism (e.g., spending more on the military than social welfare programmes) means war is constantly being legitimized and prepared for (1992: ix).

Indeed, dominant understandings of political and economic 'development' have discursively enabled (if not 'required') military intervention in the Middle East. Understanding how this occurs requires some discussion of the broader gendered orientalist discourses through which development and (in)security are themselves refracted in the context of the Middle East. Orientalism is the discourse by which 'the West' comes to 'know', understand and dominate 'the East' (Said [1978] 2003). Orientalist logics create dichotomies between the 'civilized West' and the 'backward East', and consistently define a series of hierarchical categories. These categories order peoples by reference to gender and race, marking out 'Arab/Muslim'¹ and 'Western' through racialized and gendered characteristics. This allows for the pre/proscription of thoughts, ideas, behaviours and so on that are 'appropriate' and 'natural' to peoples

identified as belonging to these categories (Khalid 2011). How civilization and backwardness are signified has varied over time; in the context of contemporary discourses of development and neoliberalism, orientalist logics draw on these discourses' assumptions and logics around 'appropriate' economic strategy and 'development' to construct 'backwardness' and 'progress' in ways that require those who are 'developed' to intervene into the lives of those who are deemed 'backward'. Indeed, contemporary orientalist representations of the Middle East have a clear link between economic and political development and (in)security.

That is, dominant (Western) representations of development/progress discussed earlier are inextricable from understandings of 'the West' as 'the birthplace of democracy and hence the carrier of economic and political progress'. The East, by contrast, is economically stagnant, and therefore 'the home of despotism' (Hobson 2004: 224). As Bryan Turner explains, the trope of 'oriental despotism' is made intelligible through 'the failure of capitalist economic development...and political democracy' in 'the Orient' (Turner 1994: 23). The privileging of Western experiences, ideologies and ideals in global politics in this discourse is constituted by its encounters with colonialism (Chacko 2004). In both the practice and study of global politics, a particular definition of 'progress' is privileged (Saurin 2006: 27), which Branwen Jones explains is expressed in the assertion that ' "the rest of the world" has benefited and continues to benefit from the spread of the West's civilizing values and institutions' (Jones 2006: 55).

These ideas, developed historically but 'updated' and deployed in various ways since, are made intelligible through specific (and naturalized) understandings of gender and race, and are the core of what Yahya Sadowski calls the 'new' orientalism. This orientalism retains the core basic binary logics of what Said described in relation to East–West interactions during the colonial era and earlier, that result in hierarchical categories of 'us'/'them', 'civilized'/'barbaric' and are understood and constructed by reference to a lack of 'appropriate' political and economic structures. In the contemporary context, limited state capitalism and the lack of corporate identities of social organizations in the Middle East have, in neo-orientalist discourses, been explained as the outcome of cultural peculiarities that are often linked to the influence of Islam in the Middle East (Sadowski 1993: 15–19). In predicating 'Arab culture' and/or 'Islam' (or the Islamic world) as backward, orientalist discourses simultaneously construct 'the West' as rational and progressive by contrast. Sardar argues that the Arab/Muslim 'other' is projected as 'a problem', as 'an immovable obstacle between "Western" civilization as its destiny: globalization' (Sardar 1999: 55). By reference to these ideas, and since the 1990s in particular, the discourse of 'Islam' (constructed through mainstream media, academic and elite

political representations) has constructed a (male) 'enemy other' located in the Middle East. This 'other' is 'male' (while othered 'women' are victims) and 'his' backwardness illustrated by a lack of 'progress' and rejection of the (Western-but-universalized) values that can ensure 'progress' (Khalid 2011; Said 1997; Samiei 2010; Sardar 1999). That is, orientalist discourse constructs 'the East' as a site of insecurity precisely because of its failure to adopt 'appropriate' modes and paths of political and economic development.

Development and militarism: The 'War on Terror'

The (male) other's lack of (economic) rationality, particularly in the post-9/11 context, has been clearly linked to global security threats. A key example here is the 'War on Terror', which was instigated by the US in response to Al Qaeda's attacks on the US in September 2001. Mainstream Western discourses drew on gendered and orientalised representations of the 'Eastern other' to facilitate military interventions in the US-led 'War on Terror'. This 'War on Terror' discourse constructed a benevolent, civilized and moral masculinity embodied in the 'West' against the backward, barbaric, oppressive, deviant masculinity of the (Middle Eastern) 'other' (Khalid 2011; Nayak 2006). Feminists have argued that a capitalist, neoliberal concept of economic progress, which has been central to development discourses, shaped the dominant narrative of the 'War on Terror' (Agathangelou and Ling 2004: 519–520; Shepherd 2006: 33). This was particularly so in 'official' US 'War on Terror' discourse, as the link between (under)development and (in)security was explicitly made in President George W. Bush's comments on the necessity of the military interventions of the 'War on Terror':

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe – because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo.

(Bush 2002)

This reflects the belief that neoliberalism is 'the lone bearer of reason' and that the free market can be used as a 'civilizing' tool to control irrational and backward 'others' (Springer 2011: 91). This is evident in the 2002 US National Security Strategy (NSS), which was drafted in the 'War on Terror' context. The NSS publicized after 9/11 'mentions free trade, private property and the

virtues of capitalism as frequently as it mentions terrorism, evil and rogue states' (Nayak 2006: 55). It explicitly linked the US's economic ideology with its political one, and to global security:

The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity.

(White House 2002)

This glosses over historically, politically and economically specific explanations for unrest and discontent in the Middle East, especially the failure of neoliberal restructuring imposed by international institutions and Western states on the Middle East in the 1980s and 1990s (Hellmich 2008; Samiei 2010: 1149). Updating the colonial narrative of 'oriental despotism', such representations legitimize the need to control or police the Middle East. Here the gendered and racialized logics of orientalism construct the 'other' as both too weak to progress politically and economically (illustrated by the lack of democracy and neoliberal economic reform in the region) and yet strong enough to pose a threat to the 'civilized world' (Tuastad 2004: 591–592).

This construction of 'us' and 'them' is made intelligible because of the prior racialization and gendering of various peoples and regions in discourses of global politics, particularly development discourses. The prescription of intervention as a legitimate action in this security strategy, and in the 'War on Terror' more broadly, is only made possible by positioning the 'East' as being in need of guidance from a 'superior' Western 'self' marked out by its exemplary embodiment of liberalism and capitalism. Democracy promotion and neoliberal restructuring is central to securing peace in this strategy, and reflects the belief that not only US but global interests are best advanced through the promotion of ('Western') liberal and capitalist values and institutions in 'strategic' areas (Monten 2005). The potential for security through development and progress is militarized: the US must use its 'unparalleled military strength' to 'defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants', and to 'encourag[e] free and open societies on every continent' against the plans of 'shadowy networks of individuals' who seek to 'penetrate open societies' (White House 2002). This security strategy is thus predicated on the presupposition that 'freedom' entails the 'hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade' to the exclusion of any other economic and political configuration.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that development, democratization and security are inextricably linked, and are constructed and acted upon in ways that are fundamentally gendered and racialized. Gender and race shape 'development' and '(in)security', and are central to understanding the ways in which militarism and military conflicts have been enabled and played out. In the context of the Middle East, these discourses are also orientalist, and (re)produce long-standing narratives of the region's backwardness and barbarism. The 'War on Terror' is an outcome of the logics of militarism predicated on the gendered and orientalist discourses that have long shaped dominant understandings of 'development', 'progress' and 'security'.

One of the outcomes of this militarization is seen in the development of war economies, as Peterson explains in the core text. Official narratives around the 'War on Terror' posited military intervention as the key to ensuring global security. However, this has not eventuated. Indeed, as Peterson has explained in earlier research, the insecurity exacerbated by wars has led to the expansion of informal economies in the aftermath of the Iraq War, for example. Informalization was emerging before the 2003 Iraq War, as a result of sanctions and unrest. In the aftermath of the war, even basic needs have been difficult to meet. The gendered division of labour and gendered violence has increased, alongside increasing violence and religious conservatism (Peterson 2009). Thus the militarism and the drive to ensure security through 'our' political and economic values has gendered and racialized effects. Not only this, but these contribute to the gendered and orientalist narratives of 'oriental barbarism'/'backwardness'/'underdevelopment' that are deployed in the service of militarism, and which enable the interventions that lead to further upheaval and insecurity.

Note

1. I use 'Arab/Muslim' purposefully here to signify that 'Arabs' and 'Muslims' are conflated in orientalist discourses, despite the differences between these groups as well as the differences among them.

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7.2

Economies of Conflict: Reflecting on the (Re)Production of 'War Economies'

Heather Turcotte

Introduction

War is an economy of violence that can take on, and transform into, many forms to meet the demands of the global political economy (GPE). Central to war and GPE are long institutionalized colonial narratives about where violence happens in the world. It is not coincidence that the 'new' known sites of global violence coincide with conventional economic understandings about which parts of the world have been colonized and exploited for their labour resources, are considered to be underdeveloped, and are in need of a variety of international interventions in order to be brought (back) into the global marketplace. The histories of GAD are central to understanding present conditions of conflict, human insecurity and proliferating 'war economies'. In particular, this reflection is concerned with the gendered and racialized colonial histories of violence that frame how we understand the new sites of political and economic conflict and insecurity.

In 'Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and "War Economies"' (2011), V. Spike Peterson examines how despite a recent history of thinking politics and economy explicitly together, there is little discussion about the intimate links between political economy, forms of war and gender. The changing conditions of war – its development and effects – positions women as the 'shock absorbers' and ones to 'make up the difference' in an increasingly global landscape of violence, yet the analysis in international relations (IR) often fails to take into consideration how the violence is able to perpetuate through these gendered dynamics. Peterson argues that examining the links of gender and 'war economies' can not only open up the theoretical and political terrain of violence in ways that provide more complex understandings but also shift women's lived experience away from bearing the burden of economic and political violence. Such a shift has the potential to reframe the limiting conditions of war economies by creating new frameworks of justice and resolution that can account for women's disproportionate labour.

The turn to new kinds of war that Peterson discusses through Kaldor (1999, 2006), such as terrorism and conflict zones, is an attempt to account for a broader understanding of global conflict that is intensifying under neoliberal political and economic reforms. The 'new' is the recognition of informal mechanisms of violence that make war, GPE and the state system possible. In the turn to attending to the informalization of war and the economy, the focus is on criminal and illegitimate activity as well as the ways in which people cope and work to alleviate such violence that are outside official state regulatory frameworks. However, in this turn to new kinds of war, the 'new' often elides how the informalization of war and the economy is a historical process embedded within the frameworks of the colonial state. Similarly, the increased attention to gender insecurities is also a product of the colonial state.

In what follows, I examine how 'new' forms of conflict and gender insecurity are older structures of violence. I argue that the narratives of 'new' violence (conflict zones, terrorism, human insecurity) mystify the formalization of violence by the interstate system and the privileged actors of this system. This reflection is an attempt to account for how the analysis of the 'new' and informal forms of violence generate violence as endemic to particular regions and produced by particular groups of people, which targets historically underprivileged international communities as the problem. Following the historical context of colonialism and feminist postcolonial and transnational analysis, I refocus my discussion of 'new' wars as a structural problem of the state system and capitalism that has historically created a privileged class of benefactors in the global North that maximize their profits from the continued violence against and among underprivileged communities in the global South.

I consider new forms of war, economy and gender as continuing colonial state logics that deeply racialize and sexualize GPE, geopolitics and justice possibilities. To more fully understand the neoliberalization of war that Peterson questions, we must consider how ideas of gender, political economy and conflict are colonial constructions that work together to hide the linkages of structural violence that generate 'new' economies of violence. Too often mainstream and critical sites of IR, including feminist IR, fail to contend with older forms of colonial violence that rely on the production, marketing and consumption of violent and victimized global bodies. Failure to contend with the interstate system's conditions of economic and political violence continues to centre capitalist expansion and state intervention as the mechanisms to ease global violence – a process that structures of privilege and exploitation keep in tact.

The focus of 'new' forms of conflict is fixed on identifying new bodies to be discovered and brought into the fold of violent systems – bodies that need eradication through other forms of legitimate war (i.e., peacekeeping,

conflict resolution, war) or saving through economic progress in the forms of development, human rights and humanitarianism. As Peterson, among others, has detailed, the attention to war economies by feminists and feminist IR has expanded narrow definitions of conflict and war. Historical feminist analysis of war economies includes how economic and political intervention itself – forms such as peacekeeping, development, empowerment and human rights – also contribute to the perpetuation of political conflict and economic violence that disproportionately affect women (Agathangelou and Ling 2003; Eisenstein 2007; Enloe 1990). As international justice is increasingly regulated through the terms of development and security, it is imperative that feminist IR account for the historical formulation of colonial state violence that solidified gender violence through the ‘entwined process of economic exploitation and political militarization’ (Peterson 2011). This chapter centralizes how new forms of war are, in fact, old structural conditions of political and economic gender violence by addressing how and why political economy is gendered war that produces intergenerational violence.

Informalizing zones of conflict

Frederick Cooper argues that ‘history is not a dead past, but a basis for making claims that are very much of the present’ (2002: 15). Informalization is a historical construct tied to the development of the neoliberal state. As Peterson argues, informalization is central to the development of the state, GPE and the proliferation of conflict; the ever-present informal political economies ‘exacerbate corruption, criminality, and militarized conflict’. Indeed, she warns there is a disturbing trend of ‘new forms of violence that are becoming “common” as processes of economic and political informalization converge’. However, the increased focus on informalization as the reasoning for which conflict is intensifying and taking on new gendered forms must also consider how it has systematically undergirded the interstate system and the growth of capitalism by exploiting gendered labour and global communities of colour (Agathangelou 2004; Davis 1978 (1998); Rodney 1972 (1981); Tadiar 2004). We must consider the ways in which informalization works to silence the racialized, classed and gendered violence of the interstate system.

Peterson importantly sketches out the gender dynamics of informal conflict for us through the categories of coping, combat and criminal, and argues that we must pay closer attention to women’s unrecognized forms of labour in order to respond adequately to the growing insecurities of global politics. I would like to further suggest that in order to do so we must question the very foundations of knowledge in which we understand gender and violence as informal and formal processes. As more knowledge constructs, policy frameworks and gender justice advocates work to parcel out and name gender, and forms of gender

violence, as different and unique from conventional discourses of political economy and war, it is critical to consider how these convergences can reveal dangers in naming gender as a category of violence. Who and what must be criminalized, what histories are erased and who most benefits from this naming?

To address these questions, I draw attention to how political and economic informalization shifts our view away from the analysis of colonial state violence and towards the formulation of informal war as ‘conflict zones’ and particularly ‘women in conflict zones’, which generates the need for new forms of intervention and state regulation into once colonized sites. IR’s interest in new forms of war generally, and Peterson’s attention to the neoliberalization of war specifically, is intimately linked to the historical making of conflict zones. IR and feminist IR have not fully contended with how this shift contributes to, and relies upon, the criminalization of gender put into motion during colonialism. The current formulation of conflict zones and war economies remains in a colonial framework that sutures economics and politics together through violence, and particularly through the restructuring of gender.

A conflict zone comes into being through the historical criminalization of people and land. As new configurations of conflict appear on the international map, there is an urgency to understand how such new sites are tied to older colonial maps made through militarization and capitalist expansion that fed on the bodies and labour of less privileged communities (Escobar 1995; Turcotte 2014). Postcolonial and feminist scholars argue that state-making and capitalist expansion are achieved through numerous acts of racial, gender and sexual violence (Alexander 2005; McClintock 1995).

Conflict zones often conjure up images and understandings of violence that are endemic, illegitimate, continuous and more difficult to control (Agathangelou and Turcotte 2010a; Turcotte 2011). Conflict zones are generated within a dichotomous logic of legitimate/illegitimate and internal/external that signifies instability and failure and generates an imagined geography of ‘failed’ or ‘weak’ states outside the West (Korf et al. 2010; Lipschutz and Conca 1993; Ó Tuathail 1996; Peluso and Watts 2001). Yet rarely do presentations of conflict zones portray the state system itself as a producer of conflict. The academic disciplines of political science and IR have played a key role in defining the parameters of conflict and the locations of these geographical zones. Historically, global conflict is presented as ‘outside’ the West – parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The conflict is often theorized as the violence of nationalism set in relationship to, but separated from, the state apparatus. ‘Third world’ states are consistently presented as plagued by conflict within their territories because of ethnic and religious tensions, underdevelopment, resource scarcity and extractive economies, rebel factions, dictatorships, war, low-intensity war, general instability and,

increasingly, violations of women's rights and development (Enloe 1973; Giles and Hyndman 2004; Kaldor 1999).

The geography of conflict zones is a legacy of colonialism and colonial state violence. Colonial violence respatializes people, land and knowledge; it seeks to create a confined figure of threat by drawing boundaries around territories that could (and do) transgress the state. As Mamdani (1996) argues, 'institutional segregation' and 'territorial separation' are colonial state strategies of reworking geography into distinct racial, gender and sexual orders for capital accumulation. The logic of segregation and separation are written into state structures through legal, popular and military means in order to subvert and subdue resistance to the state project; it is both formal and informal modes of power.

Additionally, Max Weber argues that 'the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one' (1946: 78) that goes beyond overt discipline and punishment. State violence is represented not only in the 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force' (Weber 1946: 78) but also in those illegible and informal forms of violence in daily practices of state institutions. The colonial reworking of social order and control through the making, segregating and unmaking of people and land produces a body of knowledge that wields tremendous power because it creates bifurcated structure that formalizes the violences of informalization and exclusion. As Ronnie Lipschutz (2000) and Peterson (1992) argue, the state is constructed and legitimated through a logic and practice of exclusion.

Exclusion, as the framework of the modern state, normalizes 'West' and 'Western' knowledge frameworks through the configuration of a racialized, gendered other (Hall 1997; Said 1978; Seth 2010). The state project of exclusion codifies bodies and institutionalizes the West as the yardstick of political and social comparison. Imperial state expansion and colonial occupation exploit scientific and social science discourse to name and construct evidence for racial and gender difference within and between states (Alexander 2005; Imam et al. 1997; Seth 2010; Stoler 1995). The knowledge produced and consumed about difference provides legitimacy to colonial claims to geographical space and the conditions of normalized violence (Mbembe 2001; Oyewùmí 1997; Spivak 2003; wa Thion'go 1986).

Thus, contemporary geopolitical maps are derivative of violent colonial histories and knowledge formations that seek to eradicate, domesticate and incorporate geographic populations into a narrative of an interstate system that would be dominated by Western-colonial states. However, to justify direct and indirect forms of colonization, bodies in these geographic sites are not only configured through difference; they are also much understood as counterhegemonic, threatening and inferior (Gramsci 1973). The agents of the colonial state

reinforced their invented boundaries of statehood through blurred perceptions of legitimate and illegitimate bodies of land, people and knowledge.

Because the nation state is both an imagined community and a regulatory structure (Anderson 1983; Coronil 1997), it is always forming itself and demarcating its borders against another, illegitimate body. A considerable amount of work by different agents of the state (i.e., government, academics, citizens) is necessary to naturalize a geographical border and a cultural divide that separates people while claiming to bind them together (Anzaldúa 1987). Be it the brute force of conquest or the eager investment in citizenship privileges, the state 'reinscribes the violence of a history made at the expense of the labour and natural resources of peoples relegated to the margins' (Coronil 1997: 6). States are made through various and intense formal and informal struggles, which reveal more about the anxieties and investments in state-making than about the conditions of violence the state claims to be alleviating.

In thinking about the historical making of conflict zones, I briefly turn to the Berlin Conference (1884–1885) as an important marker in understanding the mapping of colonial state anxieties as a necessary part of war economies. Some 14 states convened in Berlin, Germany, in November 1884 to negotiate Western powers' control over the continent of Africa (i.e., Betts 1966; Boahen 1985; Pakenham 1991). This negotiation of power, however, was less about Africa than it was the Western powers' concern about securing their own economic, political and social interests and stability within a shifting GPE. The fear of a state (or states) becoming too dominant within the international system foregrounded the demarcations of territory, and the conference focused on ways to lessen intragroup threats among Western nations and to establish rules for engagement in Africa as a way to prevent a struggle between these Western states. Africa was (and remains) a terrain in which to work out, through a variety of wars, the political and economic anxieties of the privileged in world politics.

The stability of the interstate system relied upon the creation of new states that would contribute resources and labour more efficiently to the development of the interstate system. The conference produced a discursive terrain of shifting structural domination. It was a meeting to ensure exclusion of territories – even in the direct occupation of land and military force – as a means to regenerate the interstate system. The conference created geographical zones in Africa that could be mobilized to support and secure state centres in the West. The Berlin Conference also established state markers of global inequality and contributed to the building of a neoliberal world order through the direct occupation and extraction of lands and people (Rodney 1972), as well as the further creation of and investment in non-Western geographical sites as places abundant in resources, but always potentially a threat to these

resources including themselves (Klare 2001, 2009). As an explicit tactic of domination and legitimation by the West, the Berlin Conference was about making claims to land, labour and resources, and demarcating sites of anti-colonial and terrorist activity within a shifting GPE.

The making of a colony, Achille Mbembe (2003) explains, 'represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law (*ab legibus solutus*) and where "peace" is more likely to take on the face of a "war without end" ' (p. 23). Mbembe is referring to the ways in which the colonialism territorializes spatial and social relations as colonial sovereignty that normalizes war (security) in the name of civilization and economic growth. The Berlin Conference was simultaneously an act of war and an economic conference. It drafted a map of protection and terror within the international system, which served to justify Western interventions into Africa and to further naturalize exploitation and the informalization of violence.

While the Berlin Conference was framed as Western states' colonial and imperial acquirement of resources, it was also about the manifestation of Western anxieties that create conflict and war to ensure their own survival. How we understand new forms of war, or privatization or neoliberalization, develops out of a deeper history of violence that defines security and threat through the perspective of interstate survival. The Berlin Conference facilitated direct colonization, intervention and occupation, and insured a structural linkage of Western states needing to create new sites of conflict and development as an integrated process of their own survival.

Considering conflict zones within this colonial landscape raises questions about the role of the state in producing violence. 'New' or emergent phenomena rearticulate the older power structures that have found new ways of expanding their political tentacles throughout the state system. Neoliberal policies, free market democracy and expansive human rights are just a few of such nuanced sites of power and exchange. These contemporary forms of empire rely upon older structures of geopolitical privilege and domination that demarcate conflict elsewhere. In other words, global conflict is presented as endemic to previously colonized third world states that are now understood as needing the development, rights and security offered by colonial first world states (Escobar 1995; Williams 2010). The presentation of violence as problems for postcolonial states first mystifies the violence that makes the international state structure possible and second silences how First World states are accountable for global conflict. The separation and hierarchy between states mystifies their histories of connection and the cohesion of violence within nation-state projects (Agathangelou and Turcotte 2010a, 2010b). A conflict zone comes into being through economic and political interests. Not only do new wars or the neoliberalization of war exacerbate and create new forms of violence as Peterson suggests, but the 'new' or 'neo' forms of violence work to further justify and

institutionalize state violence. The production and distribution of a conflict zone works to hide state violence altogether.

Colonial regulations of gender and the making of gender violence

The criminalization of gender and gender violence takes explicit form in the making of colonial states. The colonial state imports and naturalizes patriarchal culture and institutions that aim to subordinate people through dichotomous gender hierarchies. Colonial importation of gender ideologies sought to reconfigure men as the official workers of the colonial state, with women as the productive and reproductive labour of the family (Oyewùmí 1997, 2003). As Amina Mama (1997) argues, the proletarianization of men required the domestication of women through the informalization of women's labour. The colonial state delimits the boundaries of sexuality through legal, economic and military practices that work to naturalize white heterosexuality and ownership of colonized bodies (McClintock 1995; Mohanram 2007; Smith 2005). Colonial sexual exploitations of colonized peoples conflate conquest with desire and represent such populations as rapeable and expendable within nation-building projects. Sexual violence, filtered through the logics and practices of slavery, is legitimized within the colonial state as a tool of state security. The colonial state is a structure of militarization that works to institutionalize sexual violence as a legitimate state practice to ensure dominance and order over society (Alexander 2005; Fanon 1963; Stoler 2002; Waller and Rycenga 2000).

The logic of security within the colonial state perversely masculinizes 'resistant' colonized men as threats and feminizes 'docile' colonized men as state labour, while configuring women as objects of colonial sexual violence. According to Mama (1997), the

changes in African gender relations [during colonialism] have been so profound that they may well have been one of the most dramatic sites of struggle and change...[and therefore]...gender analysis of the cultural changes that occurred takes us beyond the most immediate and visible levels of might and conquest.

(Mama 1997: 69)

As 'women are marginalized and men are absorbed' (Mama 1997: 70) into the colonial state, gender becomes the focus of international security regulations. The displacement of violence by imperial bodies onto a racialized, gendered other produces violence as internally endemic to the African continent and perpetuates Western state intervention through periods of decolonization and the postcolonial moment.

The postcolonial state polices gender and sexuality as a way to delimit productive and non-productive bodies within GPE (Alexander 1994: 14–20). The binary representations of women as both the non-productive sex and the embodiment of unruly sex, or as the ‘mothers of our nation’ but caretakers of the family, enact and erase women’s labour and sexuality, including their sexual labour. This is a fundamental management discourse in the understanding of gender, development and conflict.

During the period of decolonization, the international focus on population control was an important historical management discourse; it defined which bodies could be waged war upon in the name of international development and economic growth that hid the explicit violence of state security logics. Arturo Escobar (1995) argues that development is a neoimperial Western creation that maintains control over the profitable resources of newly independent nations by reinforcing unequal state positions of ‘core and periphery’ within the international system (Wallerstein 2004). The core states – Western states – argue that developing states are unable to control and properly manage their resources because of internal instability that directly links to their poor economic growth. The logic of development ensures the continued segregation and inequality between colonizer and colonized. It also ensures that Western states are in a position to dictate the terms and ideas of development and security.

Population control is a regulatory logic and one that is central to the informalization of development. It garnered large amounts of funding from international and non-governmental institutions to educate and provide services for population reduction as the way to promote economic growth (Smith 2006). Malthusian claims of population explosion in ‘less developed’ geographies target low-income populations, specifically black and brown bodies around the globe, as the source of global poverty and insecurity. Malthusians further argue that underdeveloped nations have larger numbers, which tax already depleting resources and have negative effects on the sustainability of the entire globe (Ross 1998). Population control is thus framed as a struggle over resources and an important ‘new’ form of conflict. Discourses of population control are discourses of resource control and conflict in which there is struggle over resources such as people’s reproductive and productive labour as well as the ‘natural’ resources found within the geographical creations of ‘underdeveloped’ in the global South. Because population is both a resource and a threat to other kinds of resource, the mainstream international response has resulted in numerous interventions by ‘more developed’ nations in order to protect the ‘global good’ and security of the ‘world’s’ resources. These interventions come in the form of regulatory laws, troop deployment, development programmes, humanitarian aid and unequal production of knowledge.

Critical development and postcolonial scholars point out that a focus on the populations of ‘underdeveloped nations’ in terms of depleting resources and

creating new forms of resource conflict draws attention away from the unequal systemic frames of global capital that regulate gender, race and sexuality. In particular, it targets women's bodies in 'third world' locales for material violence in forms such as forced sterilization. Population control situates women's bodies as reproductive and productive resources under the control of the state. Such histories have significant consequences for the ways in which contemporary discourses of gender violence and violence against women, women's rights and state protective services are formulated, perceived and implemented within international politics. In other words, population control mobilizes new disciplinary and security mechanisms that ensure 'first world' economic and political hegemony within the shifting tides of geopolitical frameworks and war economies (Escobar 1995; Hartmann 1995).

Although the term 'third world nation' was first uttered in the 1950s by colonial and recently decolonized states as a political marker of non-alignment with the imperial powers of the international system (Prashad 2007), international security discourses have appropriated the term to mark such geographies as inferior and in need of development and conflict resolution. Knowledge production is central to shifting forms of war. There are deep political stakes and historical effects of naming conflict and development in different parts of the world. Recasting knowledge about conflict and development as a linked colonial geography can work to displace endemic constructions of violence and reorient our attention to the structural connectivity of violence and enable an explicit engagement with structural violence rather than target new kinds of people for new forms of violence (see also Grewal 2004; Hesford 2011; Nnmaeka 2005).

Seeing the effects, shifting the view of economies of gender conflict

The discipline of IR develops through similar temporal and structural frames that lead to the production of conflict zones and the informalization of war. Much of the knowledge within IR is concerned with international security and conflict resolution, which sustains the image of the West as a model of progress and places it in a privileged position to alleviate the developing world's problems. The concept of 'women in conflict zones' comes out of scholarly work in political science focused on gendered power dynamics.¹ Women in conflict zones signify that gender is both a main and an under-recognized form of violence within these sites of conflict (Giles 2008; Jacobs et al. 2000; Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998). Understandings of gender violence in conflict zones are often presented as sexual violence, violations to women's, children's and 'non-combatants' bodies and psychologies, and violations of rights based on one's gender and sexuality (Carpenter 2000; Heineman 2008). Some of the

studies focus on female experience and participation in conflict, as well as transitions out of conflict (MacKenzie 2012; Meintjes 2001; Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Khsheiboun 2009). Other feminist analysis in political science troubles the structural historical production of racialized and gendered bodies (land, people and knowledge) and asks why it is that 'women' in 'conflict zones' become the site where violence can be seen by the West (Agathangelou 2004; Eisenstein 2007; Shepherd 2008; Turcotte 2011).² And, as mentioned above, Peterson's discussion focuses on the gendered violence that informs her framework of coping, combat and criminal informal economies.

In short, all the works draw attention to the fact that there is still a need for protective services and interventions for people who experience, or are about to experience, violence on local and global scales. However, within mainstream feminist analysis, few are critical of state and feminist frameworks that individualize violence, portray it as endemic to particular global communities and target women for further regulation through justice seeking mechanisms of the state. Importantly, postcolonial feminist and transnational feminist approaches argue that when women's bodies become the site to see global violence, our political gaze cannot rest upon their bodies. Instead, we must ask questions about the structural and state conditions that lead us to these sites of violence and analysis (Agathangelou and Ling 2009; Agathangelou and Turcotte 2010a, 2010b; Chowdhry and Nair 2004; Eisenstein 2004).

The marking of where violence happens, what kind of violence it is and who needs protection from it repositions state regulation and silences the structural complicities involved in the perpetuation of violence – particularly gender, racial and sexual violence. Furthermore, the concepts and practices of justice become narrowly construed inasmuch as the state's objective is not to eradicate violence but to contain, criminalize and manage it. Within discourses of gender violence, gender becomes criminalized in a variety of ways. First, it is criminalized through geography and the racialized, sexualized and gendered ways regions are named as conflict zones (Johnston and Longhurst 2010; Kobayashi 1994; Kuokkanen 2008; Shigematsu and Camacho 2010).

Take, for instance, the construction of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the oil-producing region, as a conflict zone. The violence that surrounds petroleum extraction in Nigeria is often presented as resource and ethnic conflict (Klare 2001; Yates 2012). Conventional and critical studies of the petroleum industry have long argued that the oil industry generates many different forms of violence, such as environmental degradation, economic corruption and inequality, political instability, and numerous negative health effects (Okoji 2000; Okonta and Douglass 2001; Turner and Brownhill 2004). Peluso and Watts' (2001) foundational work on 'petrovioence' argues that this violence is not endemic to petroleum communities; rather, it is part of a larger geopolitical system of imperial and capitalist violence. His work encourages us to think critically of the

historical and cultural local context of oil violence alongside larger structures of violence of the state system, and how petrovioence elevates questions of citizenship, justice and the perpetuation of structural violence.

However, despite the important insight of critical scholars into the structural relationships of petroleum violence in Nigeria, US mainstream representations of Nigeria view it as a naturalized place of violence – a conflict zone (Cioffi 2010; Turcotte 2011). Increasingly, US presentations of petrovioence in the Niger Delta are attributed to terrorist and gang activity (Polgreen 2007; Ukeje 2001; Von Kemedi 2006). Gender is criminalized by focusing on black male youth as gang members using illegitimate militarized force for economic gain (Bhattacharyya 2008; Hagedorn 2008). This narration reconfigures understandings of social justice strategies as violent efforts against state, multinational oil corporations and their own communities. While I discuss this more at length elsewhere (Turcotte 2011, 2014), it is important to consider how criminalizing male youth avoids the discussion of systemic and systematic violence present in the discourses of informalization, war economies and gender justice.

The second way that gender is criminalized within the construction of conflict zones, and particularly the focus on ‘women in conflict zones’, is the separation of women from men in such a way that women are presented as having no connection to the structural conditions of violence, but rather become the site where the violence happens. Often in the discussion of conflict zones and petroleum politics, women are presented as separate from the oil industry and as the main victims of the violence generated within their communities. There exists a long history of literature, legal and activist work on and by Nigerian women addressing gender-economic violence and colonial-state violence within petroleum conflict (i.e., DonPedro 2006; Ekine 2001; Mba 1982; Turner and Oshare 1994). Despite this vast literature, the knowledge produced about women in conflict zones continues to present images of men, rebel violence and acts of war as being the culprits of their violence rather than the structural conditions of the interstate system that support the political economy of oil.

Finally, a third way that gender is criminalized is through the production of a third-world woman subject (Kapur 2005; Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1988) whose body is violated because of her position within a conflict zone. The production of women in conflict zones is deeply intertwined with the histories of Western representations on violence against women in the global South and the configuration of domestic violence victim, both of which situate gender violence on a woman’s body and construct it as endemic to the community. These representations of violated women in geographically bound elsewhere are consistently marketed for and consumed by Western audiences without the political attention to how such audiences, and particularly feminist audiences,

are participating in imperial forms of violence that deny systemic culpability (Alexander 2005; Goldberg 2007; Hesford and Kozol 2007).

The discourses about conflict zones flatten the complexities of how the category of women has been historically produced to serve US imperial agendas rather than to eradicate the violence that affects all members of the community within conflict zones (Fernandes 2013; Turcotte 2011, 2014; Volpp 2006). In the case of the Niger Delta, these discourses also fail to fully engage with the literatures that theorize the realities of struggle against decades of environmental degradation, exploitation by multinational corporations (MNCs), repression by the state, and violence performed by domestic and international security forces deployed to protect oil interests. The targeting of male youths, the state and MNCs as producers of violence alongside the claims to save and free women from such violence creates the conditions in which we can only see legitimate forms of violence on a woman's body, which then subjects that body to further forms of criminalization and violence. Whether women are presented as passive victims or as spectacular protestors, these different ends of the same spectrum maintain the imperial conditions of conflict zones that require dichotomous racialized gender relationships and feminized bodies to bear the brunt of violence at the expense of masculinized bodies.

All of the examples I have provided (conflict zones, the Berlin Conference, population control, petropolitics) garner immense interventions in the forms of funding, training and the building of new careers. IR concentrates on low-income locales within brown or black geographies, which have historically been mapped as endemic sites of conflict and threats to (inter)national security. The perpetual blurring of ethnic, gender and resource conflict ensures continued targeting of once colonized geographies for new forms of violence, and thus new sites of research – be it development, new wars, informalization or gender – maintain privileged positions for Western society and members of the global North; it ensures we remain external and unaccountable to the conflict.

It is important that feminist IR continues to make legible the ways in which gender and sexual politics are sites of economic conflict that IR helps to create and distribute to a larger global market (e.g., Agathangelou and Ling 2003; Dozema 2010; Shepherd 2008). Contemporary narratives on gender violence have emerged from longer histories of the production of bodies through state regulation and discipline, and of women's bodies as the spectacle of violence (see Foucault 1977; Hartman 1997; Scarry 1985). Such histories are rarely, if ever, incorporated into discussions of state policies addressing gender violence within political economy, except for the search for violence against women in conflict zones. This focus on the 'new' conceals the historical and systematic gender violence practices embedded within a colonial state system (Alexander

2005; Razack 1998; Rowley 2003). The state's and media's focus on violence against women meets what Elizabeth Goldberg (2007) describes as the 'new market economies of violence' readily consumed by US social imaginaries (see also Razack 2008). Such a focus on spectacular forms of violence rarely invokes radical change in the daily and systemic relationships that give rise to violence; rather, 'markets of/for violence' maintain the divisions of violence (see also Reddy 2011).

In its spectacular form, gender violence is framed as rape and mutilation in 'public' battles and 'private' homes. Separation into sites of public and private silences the ways in which the framework of the state is premised upon gender and sexual violence, during times of explicit war and imperial and colonial expansion (Mama 1997; Smith 2005), as well as times of 'non-war' (aka 'low intensity conflict'), a constant state of war that blurs the boundaries between public and private violence (Agathangelou et al. 2008; Mbembe 2001, 2003). Such segregations offer only limited ways in which to see and understand sexual and gender violence.

Rather than recriminalize, feminist inquiry is a place to disrupt the politics of traditional, and some critical, formulations of resource-ethnic conflict and violence against women that relies upon the homogenous, dehistorical and spectacular production of a violated female body who is a victim of her own community and culture. Transnational feminist work has long argued against US imperial projects that define a violated female figure to be saved by US and international definitions of women's rights because it often involves the criminalization and eradication of the targeted communities (Eisenstein 2004; Turcotte 2014; Volpp 2006). As I have briefly discussed here, the regulation of gender relies on its criminalization through colonial process that delimits which bodies are legitimate and which are threats to the colonial project.

While some critical feminists have critiqued imperial discourses of saving violated women from illegitimate violence within their communities as a means to war and peacekeeping, there has been less focus on the ways in which feminism and IR hide their role in criminalizing gender and producing violence by narrating women in conflict zones as a new site to expand human rights. Following Peterson's insight to examine war and the economy, academic sites such as IR and GAD will benefit from further examination into the interconnected logics of global violence, resource conflict and gender violence. There exists a rich legacy of academic-activists who demand attention to multiple economies of global violence and justice. However, as nation-state projects continue to make and remake themselves through new narratives of conflict and territorial sites, we need renewed engagement with this historical work and an expansive framework for thinking, feeling and reimagining the development of transnational gender justice frameworks.

Notes

1. In political science generally, and IR more specifically, complex tensions exist between theories and theorists who engage in feminist studies and gender studies. Much of this tension circulates around the question of knowledge formation, which positions the political project of feminism and a feminist politics as about more than being attentive to the differences of gender production and manipulation within global politics (see, e.g., Carver 2003; Shepherd 2008; Sjoberg 2006).
2. I would like to point out that the literature on conflict, war and security in IR is vast and conflicting even within the knowledge produced in feminist IR. The chosen citations above are just a very small sample of a larger contested terrain.

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7.3

Effects and Affects: Women in the Post-conflict Moment in Timor-Leste: An Application of V. Spike Peterson's 'Gendering Insecurities, Informalization and War Economies'

Sara Niner

Introduction

Spike Peterson asks: 'How are economic practices – especially, informal activities – and forms of political violence interconnected? How are both neoliberal globalization and militarized conflicts gendered...?' (2011: 3). In the new nation of Timor-Leste, these are important questions to answer, and strong links between gendered inequality and the informal nature of the post-conflict Timorese economy and state institutions will be shown here. However, due to its convoluted history, Timor-Leste remains little affected by global neoliberal forces although its particular marginality and underdevelopment are in part due to its location in historical global networks which left it vulnerable to exploitation and conflict from both colonial and neocolonial forces. Colonial elites and their networks have survived the long conflict with Indonesia and prosper in Timor-Leste's post-conflict economy. It will be argued that contemporary social and economic structures are extremely gendered, leaving women doubly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The post-conflict template assumes that a society was better before the conflict in terms of the formal structures of economics, law, order and government legitimacy, but in Timor-Leste, due to the predominance of informal structures, this assumption does not hold. The territory is a peripheral state in modern global networks and retains the impoverished, largely undeveloped and informal economy it has always had. It is of strategic interest only due to its position in the maritime world of Southeast Asia (Reid-Smith 2006), and for the extensive petroleum deposits that are coveted by larger regional powers, such as

Australia and China. The profits, now spent freely, also attract the business community of Indonesia and other neighbouring states.

This new, uneven and contested national economic development engages with the indigenous customary social structures that dominate life in Timor-Leste. This presents an interesting case study for the application of Peterson's framework. A feminist analysis of Timor-Leste's largely informal systems will be described, outlining the contemporary correlation between economics (local and global), contemporary culture and women's status, including the contested issue of gender-based violence.

Timor-Leste is a post-conflict country where the population has faced widespread and long-term violence resulting from 24 years of armed conflict and occupation by neighbouring Indonesia (1975–1999). Indonesian forces destroyed most infrastructure and all state institutions on withdrawal. In 2006 the deputy minister of education and culture described how people became accustomed to living with violence during the occupation, resulting in a 'culture of violence' (UNICEF 2006). While the conflict concluded 15 years ago, several outbreaks of national-level violence among a militarized male elite has plagued development, with high social costs for all, but the vulnerable most of all.

This tiny half-island state of around a million people reached international attention because of the brutality of the Indonesian occupation and the massive UN intervention that ended it in 1999. After centuries of both passive and active armed resistance to Portuguese colonialism (15th century to 1975) and the neocolonialism of Suharto's Indonesia, the Timorese elite (along with international support) established the new state that exists today. The programmes of economic and social development established with international support can only superficially be described as formal. Underneath this presentation of formality, most activity continues informally through previously existing networks and indigenous alliances, with some seepage into illicitness. Timor-Leste is largely ruled by a postcolonial oligarchy, and perhaps only now are claims to political domination based on this elite membership or resistance service being superseded by claims based on more modern qualities, such as wealth, education and cosmopolitanism.

Approximately two-thirds of Timorese live in rural intergenerational poverty in a life devoted to subsistence farming in a largely cashless informal economy. Although Timor-Leste is one of the least economically developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region, it has one of the fastest-growing economies due to the exploitation of petroleum deposits in the Timor Sea. How the government is saving and spending this new income is a matter of great public debate (Barma 2014) and, while spending has had some effect on poverty levels, an estimated 37.4% of the population still live on less than US\$1.25 a day (in purchasing power parity) (World Bank 2012). A rentier state is emerging that distributes

wealth through patronage and client networks via various social welfare and investment schemes. The control and distribution of wealth and resources in this emerging system is extremely gendered due to the lack of recognition afforded to women for their service to the independence struggle and to longstanding economic disparity.

While Timorese women were marginalized in the power hierarchy of the nationalist struggle, they have succeeded in being included in today's national parliament and government in significant numbers. Yet this quantitative victory has not yet translated into a more qualitative one, and the struggle for recognition of women's rights to be equal partners in national decision-making continues to be led for the most part by elite women (Niner 2011). Women's decision-making power in local communities and the private sphere is even more contested (Cummins 2011; Niner 2011; Niner et al. 2013). Women may hold important and powerful roles within families and communities but they are often limited to the private sphere or the domestic realm, reducing their economic, educational and political engagement (Niner 2012). In local rural communities, and to varying degrees among many urban and semiurban dwellers, customary practices determine gendered roles and relationships. The Timorese economy is highly gendered and this along with social structures makes women vulnerable to both public and private violence, referred to as *violencia iha uma laran* ('violence in the home'). Family or domestic violence, the crudest expression of women's inequality, is a significant issue, and this will be described in detail below.

How did it come to this? Timor-Leste's militarized post-conflict state

Militarized conditions tend to privilege male desires, entertainment, consumption, education and employment. The heightened masculinization of war zones may also deepen hetero-patriarchal attitudes, with effects that vary by culture and context...

(Peterson 2011)

History and the effects of conflict

The acquiescence of Western interests, predominantly the US and Australia, to the 1975 invasion of the territory by the neocolonial state of Indonesia and the subsequent 24-year occupation has been well documented (summarized by Niner (2009)). The strategic interests of the US are directly implicated in this military invasion, as are Australian ambitions for control of the oil fields in the Timor Sea at the height of the 1970s oil crisis. In 1998, when the US and the World Bank finally withdrew political and economic support for the

corrupt and authoritarian regime of President Suharto, it collapsed, along with its control of Timor-Leste.

These maybe dramatically crude and nascent manifestations of Peterson's political-economy framework from an earlier era of globalization, yet these historical events and motivations remain relevant in contemporary Timor-Leste. The hegemony of the US and agencies such as the World Bank propped up the Indonesian regime while it carried out the brutal 24-year conflict in Timor-Leste and masked the economic exploitation of the territory by both Australian and Indonesian interests. US hegemony and associated Australian complicity, which tacitly supported Indonesia's regime of human rights abuses in Timor-Leste, including extensive sexual violence against women (VAW), should not be forgotten.¹

Exploitative relations with Indonesia and Australia remain a feature of Timor-Leste's foreign policy and economy today. The crimes against humanity perpetrated by members of the Indonesian military during the occupation remain unprosecuted, while a significant political and economic relationship with Indonesia is privileged by the male political elite of Timor-Leste, many of whom are themselves survivors of these abuses. Aspects of the sexual violence carried out by occupation forces had 'an almost ritualistic aspect', designed to humiliate elite resistance families (Carey 2001: 258) such as the current prime minister, Xanana Gusmao. Timorese men were powerless to protect their families from this abuse and, because violence was targeted at those closest to them because of their own activities, unresolved feelings of responsibility and blame must cloud the resolution of these atrocities.² Regardless, women survivors remain shamed and silenced, with many families prohibiting victims from speaking out about their abuse for fear of disgrace (Carey 2001: 262; Pereira 2004). Recent research demonstrates ongoing anguish and anger among women for such past injustices (Silove et al. 2015). Timorese human rights and women's groups continue to campaign for international justice for these crimes but find little traction nationally or internationally.

The dominance of men in contemporary Timorese society can be traced historically and culturally but is today renewed and strengthened by a persistent militarization enduring after the war (for a historical review of gender relations, see Niner 2011). Persistent militarization serves to 're-entrench the privileging of masculinity – in both private and public life' (Enloe 2004: 217–218). We can trace the militarization of Timorese society during the Indonesian occupation until now, and this shaped the Timorese armed and clandestine resistance organizations which are so significant in post-war society. Nor did militarization stop at the end of the Indonesian occupation but continued with the arrival of a UN peacekeeping force of around 10,000. Vijaya

Joshi (2005) describes this effect and also the 'masculine nature of the UN administration'.

The exclusively male leadership of the nationalist struggle were engaged in a brutal and bloody war for most of their adult life and suffered a variety of ill-effects, including displacement, imprisonment, torture and loss of family, friends and colleagues, and they made dreadful sacrifices for national independence. Just as disturbingly, and as already mentioned, their wives, sisters and daughters were often the victims of sexual abuse at the hands of the Indonesian military or its militias. It is male elites from this resistance struggle who now head up the government, military and police, and the post-war society they have shaped is heavily influenced by thinking and behaviours derived from these experiences. Like most places in the world, demobilization and security arrangements have failed to deal with the deep imprinting of violent masculinities in former combatants and the effects of militarism embedded in society overall (Cahn and Ni Aolain 2010: 116).

In Timor-Leste, as elsewhere in the Pacific and the rest of the world, a strictly hierarchical society is apparent where stronger, more senior or more powerful people control or abuse those in lesser positions.³ Therefore there is a socioeconomic or class element to the violence. As most such societies are patriarchal, anyone less than elite males are disadvantaged, including women, the young and men with little access to political and socioeconomic power. There are also further categories of disadvantage according to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. So people can be disadvantaged in multiple ways or intersectionally. Poor female-headed households are a key example of this.

These types of social relations were a significant contributing factor to the conflict within this leadership which led to the 2006 national political crisis and shattered the process of national reconstruction. Further, episodes of violence have continued with the 2008 shooting of President Horta and the unsolved slaying of 'petitioner' Alfredo Reinado. The recent homecoming of exiled guerrilla leader Mauk Moruk and his displays of militarized power accompanying demands for political power continued this trend. This behaviour can cynically be explained as 'rent-seeking', and the government's tactic of paying off these troublesome veterans does nothing to halt the trend as the precedent it sets is one of rewarding those who cause conflict with violent expressions of masculinity.

These patterns continue to privilege a militarized masculinity that requires a 'feminine complement' that excludes 'women from full and assertive participation in post-war public life' (Enloe 2004: 217–218). The absence of women not only in creating conflict but also in solving it emphasizes that women still lack an influential role in political and security affairs. Although it is largely

the male political elite causing conflict, it is rarely analysed in terms of gender. In Timor-Leste, gender rarely features in any political or economic analysis by either academics or international agencies. Nor are these broader dynamics addressed in contemporary gender programmes (Cahn and Ni Aolain 2010: 120–121).

Militarized states and informalization

Timor-Leste has been described as a ‘fragile state’ and one in danger of failing due to ongoing conflict, but the analysis that this is a result of the privileging of a militarized masculinity in the post-war society is not made (except here). These gendered characteristics have been transformed into aggressive competitiveness between elite male politicians that dominates national Timorese politics – an environment inhospitable to women. The exception is the elite women who serve their male leadership in gender-appropriate ministries – predominately finance, social welfare and justice. In Timor-Leste’s staunchly clan-based society, women are aides to their male political patrons just as they were during war. Yet this situation may be reaching tipping point with a critical mass of women in parliament becoming ever more experienced and self-assured. In 2010, these women, along with the wider women’s movement, were able to ensure the introduction of the *Lei Contra Violencia Domestica* (Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV)).

The new state institutions have been criticized as weak, and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, pre-eminent leader of the armed resistance, is notorious for bypassing state institutions and unilaterally making decisions about state policy and budgets (Niner 2009; Barma 2014; Scambray 2015). Such political informalization is associated by Peterson with economic informalization, as will be outlined below.

It’s not personal; it’s just business: Women and the post-conflict economy

Peterson explains that ‘states weakened by . . . militarized conflict are less able to control informal and even criminal activities . . . [which may] fuel conflicts and complicate their resolution’ and that these ‘states have an ambivalent attitude toward informal activities, and do not always resist or wish to eliminate even those that are illicit (criminal)’. She describes a masculinized ‘combat economy’ which valorizes ‘fighting for’ families and political identities and associates this with ‘criminal informal economies’, which include ‘smuggling, trafficking, predatory lending, aid manipulation, natural resource expropriation’, much of which has been described in Timor-Leste (see Scambray 2015). These activities are analogous with the masculinization of politics, military institutions and organized crime such as we see in Timor-Leste today.

The political economy of state budgets

The rebuilding of the Timorese state was begun by the UN administration established in 1999 with the World Bank as a partner managing Timor-Leste's donor funds. Tim Anderson describes the influence of World Bank policies in Timor-Leste and the economic policy mix of liberal and human-centred development strategies of the first Timorese Government led by FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor):

An outside reader of the [National Development Plan 2002] might say that, in terms of economic development strategy, economic liberal influences are strong to dominant, but moderated by some developmental state influences in the areas of planning and natural resource management and by some human development emphases in terms of participation and a more equitable approach to education, women and rural development.

(Anderson 2012: 224)

Anderson goes on to describe early tussles over economic policy between the FRETILIN government and its' World Bank and AusAid advisors, and describes the austerity measures of this first government. However, by 2010, with money pouring in from petroleum exploitation, a different Timorese Government, the AMP (Alliance with Parliamentary Majority) coalition led by Xanana Gusmao, took a market-economy approach to development and established a US\$70 million economic stimulus strategy called the 'Referendum Package' while also working on improving conditions for foreign investors. Local companies were subcontracted by government to construct public facilities in the hope of building up local markets. This process circumvented normal government procurement procedures.⁴ Many complaints of patronage, waste and corruption have been made (Anderson 2012: 230). This 'big money' approach is consistent with a policy of economic liberalism and, indeed, World Bank official Jeffrey Sachs advised the AMP government to spend even more of the oil fund in this way (Anderson 2012: 234). Local watchdog organization La'o Hamutuk estimates that the fund will be depleted by 2028 at current spending rates (Scheiner 2012). Many contracts were awarded to resistance veterans and others in the patronage networks of AMP, which itself may have worked against the aims of the strategy.

Given that they had putatively (the veteran status of many recipients is hotly disputed) spent their best years in the jungle fighting the Indonesians, few of these veterans had any experience in project management or any relevant vocational skills for that matter, so they simply sold-on the contract to third parties for a percentage, meaning that this whole exercise

in providing employment to veterans largely resulted in a gratuitous cash giveaway.

(Scambary 2015)

This style of resource distribution by the Timorese government is creating an increasing disparity between a small elite and the ‘much larger and structurally vulnerable majority’.

Barma (2014) describes Timor-Leste as a ‘rentier state’, with an increase in these practices reported since the 2012 elections which returned Gusmao’s government. He continues:

as one might expect in clientelist systems, where political support tends to rely on distribution of patronage – the bulk of expenditures has been on consumption goods (i.e., direct transfers, subsidies and public sector employment), with less investment in public infrastructure and other avenues of longer-term collective welfare. Now, furthermore, public investment execution seems to be enriching elites to a greater degree than before, which is also in line with the expectation of particularist rent distribution associated with clientelist, rentier states.

(Barma 2014: 10)

Establishment of a gendered social welfare system

In today’s post-conflict environment with increasing national budgets from oil and gas, there has been an increase in ‘welfare provisioning’ rather than Peterson’s description of a decreasing trend in neoliberal regimes. This provisioning makes up a very large share – 13 per cent of the 2012 budget: US\$234 million, compared with US\$153 million spent on health and education (Government of Timor-Leste 2013).

Between 2008–2012, veterans received USD119 million in pension funds and scholarships. The 2013 state budget allocates USD92.5 million for veterans, and projects this to increase by exactly four per cent each year in the future. In addition to this handout, veterans also received USD78 million in contracts, awarded without a tender process, for projects related to the national electrification scheme.

(Scambary 2015)

These social welfare resources have been awarded according to the patriarchal values of the Timorese state. Veteran recognition has been targeted at men, based on their actions during the war and a continued privileging of militarized masculinity as the most valorized or valued citizens in society (as has happened in post-war societies all over the world). Pensions and social services

for combatants (only men were recognized in this category) and the widows of combatants have been one of the government's largest expenses. This veteran recognition was disputed by female combatants and they received some awards (Niner 2013). This has ensured the primacy of militarized masculine privilege in Timor-Leste's post-war society. Even the widows of veterans awarded pensions in their name must relinquish them once they remarry and become the 'property' of another male 'protector'.

However, the World Bank officers conclude that while veterans' pensions are extremely generous, they are 'unlikely to have a sizeable impact on poverty on a national scale because the beneficiary group is small relative to total population' (Dale et al. 2014: 6). The one programme identified as being capable of tackling intergenerational poverty is the *Bolsa da Mae* (mother's purse) targeted at poor families with young children, which is 'significantly less generous' (Dale et al. 2014: 7). They assess the impact of this approach:

We find that though Timor-Leste's level of social protection expenditure is high by international standards, the overall poverty impact is incommensurate with spending levels. This is explained by the proportion of expenditure devoted to transfers to veterans, the large proportion of the poor population which is not reached by the current targeting mechanisms, and the small coverage and benefit level of the only program that explicitly targets poor households.

(Dale et al. 2014: 1)

Implications of informalization for women

Peterson reminds us that informalization provides a 'productive lens for "seeing" how power operates to reproduce... and sometimes complicate structural inequalities'. Once that lens also takes on a feminist hue, it highlights economic and power relations that shape people's lives: 'who does what work and how all work is gendered and differentially valorized' from the intimate to the global. Timorese women's greater share of unpaid work in the home, their many hours of unpaid work in agriculture to feed their families and their hours in feminized, devalored low-paid work have created a huge inequity for women in Timor-Leste which has significant implications for their health, well-being and future opportunities. This is the result of Timor-Leste's largely informal economic and political systems combined with contemporary culture and women's status. This is highlighted by the fact that while 23% of the population are undernourished, women have higher rates of malnutrition and lower levels of literacy and numeracy than men (UN 2010).

The Timor-Leste 2010 National Demographic Survey reported that while 44% of married women were employed over the previous 12 months, mostly in agriculture, either for themselves or the family, the vast majority (80%) did

not receive any payment (GovTL NSD 2010: 203). Overall, women were less likely to participate in the salaried workforce, representing around 36% of non-agricultural-sector employees, and then occupied lower-level positions. The 2007 Timor-Leste Living Standard Survey reported that women were much less active in the labour force, participating at a rate of 48.5% compared with men's 77.4% (GovTL NSD 2008).

In 2005, women represented around 25% of the civil service but held only 2% of the highest positions (Ospina 2006). Out of 70,000 paid employees earning a total of US\$12 million per month, women received as little as US\$3 million (UNDP 2011). In 2010, Timor-Leste received a rating of 55 in the Gender Equity Index (GEI) published by Social Watch. This reflected an improved rating in education for women but, overall, Timor-Leste's rating was pulled down by low indicators for the economy and for women's empowerment due to the small percentage of women in technical, management and government positions. Overall, women earn lower salaries, receive fewer benefits and opportunities to advance in their professional careers and are less likely to be promoted (Costa, Sharp and Elson 2009).

Women's contribution to the unpaid economy, in care and household work, is much greater than for men. Typically men devote 36% of their time to housework compared with 50% for women (UNDP 2011). More unpaid work combined with lower earnings makes women and their dependent children more vulnerable to poverty. Although feminist scholars have devoted enormous amounts of research to this unpaid and uncounted (and therefore unrecognized and devalued) contribution of women to national economies, these figures are rarely referred to in official documents.

Much of the work available to women in Timor-Leste is categorized as 'informal'. Remuneration is paid cash in hand, without negotiation regarding fair wages or conditions. In addition, women in informal work are unable to access existing or proposed Timorese social security schemes, and with an absence of occupational health and safety standards, some are experiencing violence, harassment and other forms of coercion. The new Working Women's Centre Timor-Leste has been established to support women to access and stay in work, and it aims to reduce women's vulnerability and violence in the workplace (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House 2012: 7–9). Discrimination against female workers and mistreatment and violence in the workplace have also recently been addressed by Labour Law 4/2013, introduced in 2013, which aims to eliminate discrimination and VAW workers in the private sector.⁵

Women also face other problems in attaining any kind of productive work in that they have an average of six children. Children and growing families are very welcome in a country that has been through such a brutal conflict and lost many family members, and many more traditionally minded rural parents believe children are their greatest asset. Nevertheless, high infant and maternal

mortality figures speak of the negative impacts of this birth rate on mothers and their children, and of a low investment in women's 'human capital'. Equally, considerable childrearing and domestic duties limit women's educational and economic opportunities and political participation. Anecdotally, many women express a desire for fewer children, yet they are commonly given few opportunities to make decisions about their fertility and sexual health, as those choices are often dictated by their husband, extended family and the Catholic Church (Soares 2006; Richards 2009).

'Devaluation of the feminine' and gender violence

Peterson emphasizes the concept of 'devaluation of the feminine', which in times of war means 'silencing, objectifying, violating, assaulting and even killing women'. In Timor-Leste's post-conflict society, other patterns pointed out by Peterson can also be observed: devaluing women's work and skills; 'disregarding the burdens on women'; and underplaying insecurity, both privately and publicly. In Timor-Leste we can add cruder forms, such as VAW as a result of women's social and economic disadvantage as already described.

VAW in Timor-Leste

Peterson argues that 'centralized governments weakened by protracted conflict are less able – or insufficiently motivated' – to prioritize or impose 'law and order' and this may be a factor in this situation. VAW, encompassing public or workplace violence, harassment and bullying, domestic or private violence and sometimes referred to by the catch-all term gender-based violence, is the crudest form of gender inequality in the world. In 2009, National Police statistics demonstrated that domestic violence remained the most reported crime – an enormous 77% of all crime (UNDP 2011) – yet formal justice systems have dismally failed women attempting to pursue justice for such crimes (JSMP 2004). A concerted national campaign against domestic violence driven by strong pressure from the Timorese women's movement resulted in the introduction of the LADV in 2010, as noted.

Timorese perspectives on what constitutes domestic violence are extremely divergent, and local understandings of the 2010 law are superficial (Niner et al. 2013). Most cases continue to be dealt with by local customary law processes in which women are not usually permitted to participate, and compensation for offences is usually made to the family of the victim through male representatives. However, this is part of a larger issue of how domestic violence is conceptualized in customary justice systems:

as a problem between two extended families rather than the individuals directly involved, prioritizing the protection of the collective relationships

in tight-knit communities, or 'peace', over 'justice'... As a result, customary justice systems do not always respect the victim's interests or rights, frequently blame female victims for violence committed against them, and impose social pressure to accept a solution which provides no redress for the violence.

(Kovar and Harrington 2012)

Moreover, the customary practices of mutual exchange between the bride and groom's families on marriage, often referred to as *barlake*, binds the families together such that wives might be compelled by their family to tolerate domestic violence because such commitments cannot be reversed or broken (Silva 2012). This and women's economic dependence on men is often explained to be why it is not in the interests of women to refer domestic violence to the police and risk imprisonment of the perpetrator or breaking up the family (Kovar and Harrington 2012: xx).

In recent research the Harmonia Iha Famalia project reported that Timorese women attributed much domestic violence to profound economic stress in the household (Alola Foundation 2011). This research concluded that a combination of traditional values and poverty was placing women at risk of domestic violence (Alola Foundation 2011). Poverty was widely reported as exacerbating relationship and household stress. It was found that in Timor-Leste's patriarchal societies, women were often blamed if the household was not managed according to the expectations of the husband and the extended family. The expectations placed on women included providing meals, sending children to school and meeting the needs of their husbands. Women were often blamed when they could not provide these domestic services, and this put them at risk of conflict and violence.

Violence as a symptom of women's economic and social disadvantage

Women as a gender are generally more vulnerable to violence because of their weak socioeconomic position, which is due, as noted, to their unpaid reproductive work and lower wages for productive work. This is combined with their lower social status apparent in lower indicators for health, education and literacy. In patriarchal societies, women generally have less decision-making power in formal political structures but also within communities and domestically. The culture generally sets out what are acceptable roles and relations between men and women, and men as household heads often have the power to decide what women can and cannot do. Men's controlling behaviours in relation to women is directly linked to gender-based violence (Pulerwitz and Baker 2007). Women's weak socioeconomic situation also means they have less options and opportunities to leave a situation of violence, especially if there are many children to support (Asia Foundation 2012).

Much research in this field of VAW focuses on legal systems' and state institutions' failure to protect women from violence or on how particular cultural contexts are conducive to VAW. This is apparent in developing country contexts where violations against women are often presented as evidence of cultural 'backwardness' or state failure of some kind (Montoya 2013). This analysis presents the issue of VAW differently: not as a failure of laws, governments or cultures but as an ongoing part of the political economy related to structures of inequality, poverty and exploitation, and in this way connecting gender violence with economic inequality (True 2012). The *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor Report* (ODE 2008) concludes something similar about Timor-Leste when it advises that VAW must be understood as a symptom of women's economic and social disadvantage. Distressing preoccupations with injustice, both past and present, were 'compounded by women's dissatisfaction with their contemporary lives, in particular, not being able to access education or employment, and being encumbered by the burden of daily survival' (Rees et al. 2013).

Nationalism and identity

Feminist studies of nationalism document how idealized constructions of 'womanhood' symbolize the cultural values of particularist identities. In this sense, as identity politics assume greater importance, pressure increases on women to conform to rigid (masculinist) expectations with respect to their appearance, demeanour and social behaviour. Failing – or being perceived as unwilling – to do so can place women at considerable risk, and may subject them to violent forms of 'discipline' by males (and females) of their identity group.

(Peterson 2011)

The experiences of male resistance fighters are prominent historically, with women being startlingly absent from the displays in the Timorese Resistance Archive and Museum or at various memorial sites, which focus instead on the senior male leadership of the resistance, particularly those currently in power. Women important to the early struggle seem like ghosts: they appear occasionally in photos and documents, but mostly they are invisible in the telling of Timorese history, except as victims and martyrs. There seems little capacity to imagine women in the roles of soldiers or leaders; stereotypically, these heroic roles are assigned or imagined as only male, and this failure of imagination has not only limited women's political participation but also the economic privileges awarded to male veterans.

It is still socially unacceptable for women to privately or publicly contest men's power. Invisible social control is exerted using customary practices, and by powerful people or institutions who define socially restricted roles for

women. It also works to limit participation psychologically through an internalized feeling of subordination, social exclusion and inequality, and devalues the concerns of the excluded group, in this case Timorese women. Women have to be more muted and skilful in getting around these cultural norms,

This post-conflict moment is significant for the future of women in Timor-Leste. Yet women face cultural and political pressure to conform to male expectations and desires. While the work of the women's movement, women in parliamentarian, NGOs and government has created the space for changes in practices, a deeper shift is needed. Deep-seated cultural change and transformation of gender roles and hierarchies must also be part of this; in particular, a reversal of the more destructive gender dynamics being played out in both national- and domestic-level violence.

Conclusion

While cultures of violence are common to post-conflict societies, this is perpetuated by the persistent militarization such as exists in Timor-Leste, as described. The militarized masculinity that was created during conditions of war has survived and become embedded in an aggressive competitive national politics dominated by the veterans who fought in the long and brutal conflict. The rentier state that has emerged from these politics uses patronage or clientist networks to distribute resource dividends, which has become a strategy for maintaining power. This is building the foundations of a society based on structural inequality and institutional violence. The exploitation and discrimination against women are part of this inequality. Women's productive work in Timor-Leste is more likely to be in the informal economy, which makes them, along with the men who work alongside them, more vulnerable and exploitable, unprotected and unscrutinized as they are by formal structures or analysis.

This analysis argues that women's socioeconomic disadvantage in Timor-Leste creates the conditions in which domestic violence occurs. Research on connections between economic inequality and domestic violence in Timor-Leste is only just beginning and includes the socioeconomic factors that enable women to make active choices about staying in or leaving violent domestic relationships, and opportunities for their livelihoods that reduce women's vulnerability to domestic violence.

The dedication of women to the cause of national independence contributed to the liberation of Timor-Leste, yet the enjoyment of the fruit of nationalist struggle has not been shared equitably. Victory is overshadowed by the continuation of feminine subordination and discrimination in the domestic sphere, in the veterans' recognition process and in Timor-Leste's post-conflict economy. In the contested world of modern Timorese history, the crucial and unique

role of women in the resistance has not yet been fully acknowledged, and a devaluation of the feminine affects women's active and equitable participation in the post-conflict society.

It is understood by women in Timor-Leste that the struggle for women's rights was not possible during the difficult times of the war and was subsumed by the nationalist struggle (Niner 2013). However, even today during peace, women's struggle for equitable conditions is fraught as it would necessitate a cleaving and the voicing of opposition to the men – the fathers, uncles, brothers and husbands – alongside whom women fought the war, and with whom they formed families and communities during those hard times. Such a shift in thinking, for both men and women, may well be impossible for the generation who suffered together during such a long and troubled war.

Notes

1. These crimes are most fully and accurately described in the CAVR (Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation) Final Report 2005.
2. There might also be a similar imperative at work within the situation of the lack of recognition of these survivors of sexual violence used as a weapon of war as legitimate victims of the conflict deserving of acknowledgement and compensation alongside veterans (Niner 2011: 424).
3. Research found that 67% of children in schools had experienced the teacher beating them with a stick, while more than half of all children had also experienced being beaten with a stick and shouted at by their parents (UNICEF 2006). In the community, mild forms of domestic violence are viewed as normal and are used by senior members to 'educate' their juniors (*bakuhanorin*) (Niner 2012: 147).
4. 'These resources were allocated entirely off budget, by a recently formed business association not subject to any accountability controls, thus heightening the risks of favouritism in rent distribution' (Barma 2014).
5. In March 2013, the Alola Foundation, the women's council, Rede Feto and the peak union body, Konfederasaun Sindikatu Timor-Leste held a national seminar to raise awareness regarding the new law (Alola Foundation 2013).

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7.4

Situating, Reflecting, Appreciating

V. Spike Peterson

Introduction

Wendy Harcourt's innovative structure for this handbook has generated stimulating and instructive discussions across topics, disciplines, generations and regional perspectives. I am honoured to have my essay included as a 'core text' and grateful for the generous engagement with it by Khalid (Chapter 7.1), Turcotte (Chapter 7.2) and Niner (Chapter 7.3). The substance of their papers is indicative of the rich, complex and politically salient work feminists have succeeded in producing in a relatively few – and intense – decades, and in spite of enormous resistance both within and outside the academy.

In responding to their chapters and rethinking my own article, I begin by more specifically situating myself, primarily as a critical theorist of IR and GPE with more than three decades of engagement with feminist studies. From that vantage point I then reflect on, and signal my appreciation of, feminist theory/practice by indicating what I consider important *analytical* (conceptual, theoretical) contributions, which I understand as inextricably *political* (empirical, 'real world') contributions. Doing so raises issues of epistemology, ontology and method that are infrequently made explicit but underpin variations in theory/practice of 'real-world' significance. These remarks then set a context for viewing how feminist scholars and activists shaped development and IR studies, my own work, the present set of chapters and possible futures.

My IR and GPE positioning

During the 1970s I spent almost eight years backpacking and working outside the US, primarily in Africa and Asia. This experience shaped my decision to earn a doctorate in IR and to focus initially on political economy and development. I began the programme at American University in 1981, so my studies and subsequent research span most of the years of feminist interventions in development and IR. I have always been drawn to philosophy and 'big

questions' – which my exposure to global injustices amplified – and what excited me most in graduate school were feminist critiques of science and the intense social theory debates under way at that time. My political economy studies enhanced the critique of capitalism that underpins all of my work, evident especially in my 2003 global political economy book and analyses of informalization. Early on, however, my research focus shifted from development studies to theoretical frameworks dominating IR (especially in the US) and how these tend to (*re*)produce inequalities and insecurities; indeed, the very conflicts and wars IR ostensibly decries. I became less enthusiastic about teaching IR than transforming its knowledge-producing premises.

To begin, my 1988 dissertation argued that early (archaic) state-making instituted and normalized structural inequalities of sex/gender, 'class' and insider-outsider status. I extended that critique to modern/colonizing states, the structural violence constituted by an international system of states/nations, and corollary but contextually varying inequalities marked by ethnic, race, class, cultural and religious 'difference' (1992). A central objective of my theory/practice has been, and remains, to learn from and contribute to feminist work that is *critical* of structural violence, especially through a lens on historical capitalism and the sex/gender, class, race and national inequalities it (re)produces.

While all 'critical' work in some sense challenges existing power relations, I credit feminists for pioneering, and most *relentlessly* interrogating, not only how power operates with regard to gender inequalities but also, and inextricably, how power operates to (re)produce multiple, *intersecting* inequalities and systemic injustices. An early breakthrough was theorizing gender and its reputed differentiations as socially constructed (not naturally given) and that as an analytical (not only empirical) category of analysis, gender is *pervasive*. As a power-laden governing code, gender (over)valorizes and privileges that which is associated with masculinity *at the expense of* that which is stigmatized as feminine (lacking agency, control, reason, strength, 'skills', etc.). This devalorization powerfully normalizes – with the effect of 'legitimizing' – the subordination and exploitation of, and various forms of violence against, that which is feminized (in embodied terms, not only females but racially, culturally, sexually and economically marginalized/devalorized males). Associating 'others' with stigmatized/feminized qualities is one important way in which diverse hierarchies are linked and ideologically 'naturalized'.

For me, then, the most critically productive feminist orientation is neither simply about male–female relations nor limited to promoting the status of 'women'. Its transformative potential lies in subverting all hierarchies that rely on the devalorization of 'the feminine' to normalize subordination. (This is not to argue for the primacy of 'women's oppression' but to recognize the analytical/political leverage afforded by investigating feminization as devalorization.)

The point here is the uniqueness of feminisms in transforming an initial critique of 'patriarchy' into critical, complex theory/practice that not only takes 'difference' seriously and analyses the intersection of structural hierarchies but also informs and facilitates more reflectively critical 'activism'. That feminists do this work under conditions marked by dismissal and hostility goes some way to explaining why whatever we do never seems (and never is) 'enough'.

Appreciating feminist theory/practice

In contrast with claims of 'objectivity' that underpin social science scholarship, feminists acknowledge that their work is informed by normative/political commitments. The specifics of that commitment vary tremendously, but acknowledging a critical perspective links and strengthens feminists even as it also works against feminist projects by fuelling resistance from those who deny the politics of all knowledge claims or repudiate gender equality. I believe critical self-reflection and activist commitments are not only integral to feminist theory/practice but also foster more complex, transdisciplinary and forward-looking perspectives.

In one sense, feminists cannot help but be self-reflective. Like all marginalized and subordinated groups, feminists must be consciously 'political'/strategic if they are to survive, much less prosper, in a typically indifferent and frequently hostile environment. For feminist and other critical scholars, this involves career- and life-defining tradeoffs as individuals juggle personal, familial, research, publishing, teaching, mentoring and activist priorities. Given uninformed and resistant audiences, feminists must also spend precious time defending their research/practice orientation and repeating basic argumentation, rather than being able to assume familiarity with starting points and moving ahead with their specific research/practice agenda.

At the same time, and significantly, not only critical commitments but activist pressures due to the diversity among women *forced* feminists to reflect critically (and uncomfortably) on how 'woman' and feminism are defined, the politics of representation and the dangers of universalizing claims. Differences of culture, ethnicity/race, class, age, physical ability, sexuality and nationality problematize 'sisterhood' claims, especially so in the development and global contexts that are marked by stark inequalities *among* women. However one assesses the success or failure of feminists to address the politics of difference, I believe feminists have taken those challenges more seriously, and moved more responsibly and persistently to address them, than most social movement groups.

In a second sense, feminists have exposed, disrupted and transgressed conventional 'boundaries' as they have pursued new questions and charted new areas of inquiry. Insofar as conventional disciplines tend towards

methodological reification, they are less open to cross-disciplinary orientations that by definition stretch or transgress familiar boundaries. Feminists argue that gendered identities, bodies, concepts and practices *permeate* social relations, so that the study of gender requires and produces transdisciplinary orientations. Moreover, and productively, transdisciplinary scholars are more likely to be exposed to, and are therefore aware of and engaged with, a plurality of methods and theoretical debates; these conditions favour (without ensuring) an epistemological sophistication that is less required or cultivated by monodisciplinary orientations. From such pioneering starting points, feminists generate more complex and encompassing analyses of power, and are often on the cutting edge of work within and outside their particular 'disciplinary homes'.

Those feminists engaged in social theory debates were especially pushed to produce more adequate analyses of 'difference'. As one response, feminists both drew upon and expanded their transdisciplinary orientations and, especially, their analyses of 'identity' and its political implications. This entailed analytical development with regard to ontological claims, epistemological debates and theoretical frameworks, as well as 'political' development with regard to activism, movement priorities, organizational politics and long-term, 'big picture' strategies. Feminists articulated critiques of essentialism, exposed the harmful asymmetry of 'foundational' binaries and interrogated dominant, simplistic understandings of 'power over' well before the popularization of French and then Anglo poststructuralism. In part due to having emerged from critical activism as well as analytical/intellectual inquiry, I believe feminist theorizing has been exceptional at remaining critically *relevant* in practice.

In sum, I especially appreciate how feminist activists/academics engage across a range of disciplines, thematic foci and analytical perspectives. Their pioneering studies were crucial in productively interrogating conventional categories, questions and disciplinary boundaries; they engaged complexity through innovative analytical frameworks; and they charted this terrain in spite of many obstacles. Contestations of theory and practice that are specific to recent feminisms have, I believe, generated uniquely incisive and inclusive analyses of power, privilege and structural inequalities. Not least, evidence of this is pervasive in the quality, richness and complexity of contributions to this handbook.

Getting to here

How did feminists develop these unique perspectives and analyses? Across diverse fields of inquiry, including development studies and IR, feminists observe a pattern in how gender becomes visible (asking: 'Where are the women?'), is investigated ('adding women') and disrupts analytical assumptions ('revising theory'). Specifying this continuum of interactive, overlapping

and ongoing feminist knowledge 'projects' illuminates important distinctions in how feminists have pursued, and might in future pursue, more socially just global arrangements. Significantly, the continuum ranges from what I will simplify here as empirical/positivist (rationalist, neoclassical) to poststructuralist (post-positivist, interpretive, postmodernist) epistemological perspectives/orientations.

In economic studies, this familiar narrative is visible in a shift from the early WID project of *including* women in the practices and benefits of development, to the relatively more critical and structural orientation of GAD, which problematized the premises of development, conventional definitions of 'work' and divisions of labour, ideologies of gender, northern domination of feminist theory and international gatherings, and linkages among global hierarchies of culture, ethnicity, race, gender and nation.

The continuum is also visible in IR, as feminists first described the male domination of governments, militaries and international organizations, and revealed pervasive male-as-norm assumptions and male-defined priorities when 'looking for women' in histories of IR and foundational political texts. Moreover, attempts to 'add women' exposed the extent to which *excluding* women/femininity was a fundamental organizing principle of conventional thought: adding women (as feminine) to constructions literally defined as masculine (public sphere, rationality, breadwinner) necessarily altered their meaning, with implications for theory. From this deeper analytical questioning, feminists problematized the premises of government and the international system, conventional definitions of authority, power, progress, security, war and peace, the interdependence of personal (domestic) and international violence, and the masculinism of capitalist, colonial and imperial practices and their production of race and racism as well as stark class and geopolitical inequalities.

In both areas of inquiry, feminists attempted to analyse how sexualities, family life, household formations, social reproduction, women's work and women's insecurities shaped, and are shaped by, local, national and transnational processes. As I note below, these critical vantage points are evident in the current set of essays, and thus reflect in diverse ways the substantive expanse of feminist work, as well as ongoing shifts in emphasis.

The handbook essays

Although published in 2013, my 'text' in this volume originated in 2009 as 'talking points' for a workshop on 'gender and human security'. As I indicate there, my chapter was a preliminary and partial attempt to explore a 'novel blend of particular literatures' – especially, informalized economies and gendered wars – typically treated in isolation (Peterson, Chapter 7.0, p. 443). During research for my 2003 book, *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political*

Economy: Integrating Reproductive, Productive and Virtual Economies, I became increasingly aware of the extent and significance of informalization, which at that point was virtually invisible in mainstream IR or GPE (as was the expanding financial sector that I situated in the ‘virtual’ economy). Among the few paying attention were development economists, who were primarily interested in how the informal, or ‘secondary’, economy related to the formal, ‘productive economy’ in ways that furthered conventional growth objectives.

I was not surprised by the economists’ focus, but I hoped that feminists among them might push harder to identify and analyse more of the problematic features of informal work. Their selective attention is probably an effect of how informal economic activities are typically defined, and how analysts pursue different questions. Dominant accounts of informality exclude domestic, unpaid labour in the household, and most treat illicit (clandestine, criminal) activities as a separate, specialized area of inquiry. Some analysts – then and since then – questioned whether a categorical distinction between formal and informal could be sustained, but I was (and remain) unaware of anyone willing to explore *both* unpaid domestic labour and illicit income generation under the topic of informal economic activities. Believing that an analysis of interconnections and inclusion of feminized domestic labour would be productive, I proposed an encompassing, relational continuum of distinctions that did not presume discrete categories (2013: 55).

As indicated in my GPE book and subsequent publications, I pursued two overlapping objectives. First, I was intent on revealing how the scale and significance of informalization ‘mattered,’ especially in IR and GPE where global inequalities ought to be investigated but were continually undertheorized. Second, I was interested in extending informalization studies to more adequately *analyse* how gender, race, class and geopolitical location figured in and were affected by the neoliberal expansion of informality. Kaldor’s work on civil, ‘new war’ conflicts became pertinent as I attempted to ‘blend’ current economic and security questions. Without denying (neo)imperialist power and priorities in (re)producing conflicts/wars (as Turcotte notes, displaced ‘outside’ the West), the expansion of *decentralized* fighting and financing warranted further investigation.

In other words, it was not the system of state violence but some of the *operating modalities* of that violence that were shifting as interactive effects of neoliberal/economic restructuring. Mary Kaldor was one of the few to attend to these altered dynamics, and especially their relationship to informalization. By drawing attention to the unprecedented scale of decentralized, *informal financing* of militarized conflicts, her work offered an additional – and for IR scholars, presumably more credible – critique of informalization than my focus on inequalities. Hence, in the ‘core text’ I hoped to ‘use’ that leverage to signal (once again) the importance of informalization for IR/GPE scholars, expose

linkages between neoliberal restructuring and how many 'wars' are being *differently* financed and fought, and demonstrate how gendered valorizations and power relations operate pervasively in these contexts.

The responses to my essay are thoughtful and significant contributions, emerging from the particular research focus and field work of each author. All bring a newer generation's insights to the complexities of development theory/practice in relation to gendered in/securities, militarism and violence. Their disparate regional and research foci – and the bibliographic references they generate – expand and enhance how we 'see', interpret and might respond to these urgent issues.

I briefly consider ways in which some of their specific points corroborate, expand and/or complicate my essay and the central themes of this section.

Khalid's chapter productively highlights the politics of discourse and knowledge production. She is specifically critical of the gendered logic of binaries privileging masculinized over feminized traits and the related 'coded racism' of advanced–backward, active–passive binaries and us–them identity categories used to justify militarism and development interventions. She notes how 'binaries underscoring colonial discourse' recur in 20th-century development narratives and a 'new' orientalism constructs 'Arab culture' and/or the 'Muslim other' as a – even *the* – obstacle to progress. The powerful institutions of 'liberal internationalism' are exposed as imperial impositions of social organization, just as the accompanying discourse of 'progress' is an ideological imposition of Western power and priorities, currently in service to neoliberal restructuring. Similarly, security discourses mask (neo)imperial objectives and the 'War on Terror' narrative pits 'benevolent, civilized and moral masculinity' of the West against the 'backward, barbaric' and deviant masculinity of the East.

Turcotte is appropriately wary of claims to war 'newness' and importantly emphasizes the need to view informalization of war economies as embedded within historical processes of structural violence constituted by colonial states and the capitalist interstate system. Her welcome attention to postcolonial scholarship further demystifies the 'state system itself as a producer of conflict': a system that normalizes and perpetuates war. A key example is the Berlin Conference's creation of states in service to Western European priorities. Turcotte also notes the power of 'othering' discourses that, as one effect, locate conflict 'outside' the West among racialized, gendered others putatively 'failing' the test of Western progress. The management discourse of population control, with its multiple direct and indirect effects, is exposed as a Western policing of gender and sexuality and yet another means of controlling 'resources', as well as justifying interventions – legitimated as 'development' projects – as if the West actually sought the 'global good' rather than its continued imperial power. Similarly, Turcotte critiques recurring representations of violated and 'victimized' women in 'geographically bound elsewheres' that 'justify' the

sensationalism and self-congratulation of rescuing 'other' women. As she notes, this far too limited orientation undercuts systemic critique and forecloses a necessary 'reimagining' of justice frameworks.

Niner's years of fieldwork and engagement with the historical struggles and current politics of Timor-Leste provide a rich case study of gender within and beyond militarized conflicts. She notes that this small nation is both marginalized and underdeveloped, yet embedded in and affected by the global order because of its location and oil resources. The case study of Timor-Leste's long colonial history and decades of violent occupation by Indonesian forces – with the complicity of Western powers – substantiates in many respects the analytical critiques foregrounded by myself, Khalid and Turcotte. Extensive, painful details demonstrate the practice and resilience of gender-dichotomized affect, experience, violence and valorization – for example, (re)privileging (militarized) masculinity, devaluing women's contributions and denying female combatants' recognition or welfare. Niner also notes the complexity of constructively addressing emotionally invested memories, resentments and commitments that typically attend decades of conflict and continue into post-conflict politics.

Assessing and forecasting

As we move along the continuum of interactive and overlapping feminist knowledge 'projects' described earlier, the emphasis shifts from gender as an empirical category to increasingly conceptual/analytical insights that expand but also complicate feminist theory/practice. The chapters in this section emerge from and blend varying locations on the continuum, with each presenting its own insights and analysis in ways that advance our collective understanding of militarism, violence, economics and security.

My overall sense is that these contributions productively build on, and also go beyond, earlier feminist theory/practice to generate astute analyses especially with regard to *interacting* processes of neoliberal restructuring and neoimperialism, hence criticizing and recasting our understanding of economic development and geopolitical power relations. Of particular note is their attention to the politics of discourse and dichotomies, critical race studies, postcolonial insights, the arrogance of imperial narratives, and the structural violence of capitalist development and the international system of states. These essays are variously (more often implicitly than explicitly) critical of orthodox (neoclassical, positivist, rationalist) epistemological starting points, which tend towards ahistorical (hence decontextualized) and unreflective (hence acritical) accounts of social relations. In contrast, the authors featured here take history seriously and also address the relevance of emotions (especially desire, fear, resentment), subjectivities, cultural variations and social imaginaries. Mainstream approaches more often deny their relevance,

and persistently 'miss' far too much of what actually *matters* in producing and responding to violence.

In these senses, feminist work is doing extremely well, and making important contributions to theory and practice. Of course, it is never that simple. We know from history and observe in the present that feminist (and other critical) efforts are also co-opted, compromised and undermined by prevailing power relations. In the context of interactive, transnational politics premised on structural violence, the dilemma remains: how to identify more adequate, social-justice-oriented policies while continually struggling to listen to, learn from and respect populations across stark differences. We need new social imaginaries, and we need to sustain that difficult 'bifocal vision': working for incremental, short-term, justice-enhancing – and often life-saving – reforms, without ever losing sight of long-term, system-transformative and truly 'world-changing' goals – always a daunting challenge and, as ever, a worthy one.

Reference

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Section VIII

Bodies, Sexuality, Queering Development

8.0

Sexuality and the Development Industry

Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly

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Introduction

A Chinese lesbian activist shows photos from her three way fake ‘wedding’, held in a Beijing restaurant to open up discussion on restrictive social and sexual norms; a Nicaraguan consultant tells the tale of how he was told the sexual and reproductive strategy he’d been commissioned to write contained ‘too much sex’; two Indian sex worker rights activists trade stories of hapless NGO efforts to ‘rehabilitate’ sex workers; and a Nigerian activist explains how she used discussions of multiple orgasms as a means to spark discussions on sex, pleasure, relationships, intimacy, polygamy and female genital mutilation with married couples in the northern Nigerian state of Minna, where Sharia law has been in place since 2000.

These and other conversations brought together over 70 activists, academics, donors and development practitioners from more than 25 countries at a workshop at the Institute of Development Studies, in April 2008. The workshop was hosted by the IDS Sexuality and Development programme and co-sponsored by the Pathways of Women’s Empowerment Research Programme Consortium, both of which are funded by the UK’s Department for International Development. It sought to explore the linkages between sexuality and the development industry. Workshop discussions sought to uncover the impacts of development on sexuality and to move towards a more constructive engagement. This special issue originates from this workshop, and includes contributions from a number of other activists and practitioners working on sexuality and sexual rights.

Sexuality and development

Even though the relation to sexuality should be obvious in many development concerns, such as population, gender, and HIV/AIDS, these linkages often

remain unseen and implicit. Some see 'sexuality' as something that only concerns sexual minorities – and reason that development ought to be concerned about the majority of poor people, not a barely visible minority. Others see 'sexuality' as about sex, and see sex as something private, embarrassing, outside the scope of development intervention. Other still see 'sexuality' as being about something that's positively frivolous when compared to the urgent problems like hunger or climate change. Few recognize the connections that exist between sexuality and all of development's sectors, or the extent to which sexuality, like gender, affects much more of our lives than our sex lives. Nor is there enough recognition that these are issues that affect us *all*.

We find in development organizations' pursuit of their core business – anti-poverty programmes, Poverty Reduction Strategy processes, women's empowerment projects, HIV prevention initiatives – deeply embedded heteronormativity, that is, an institutionalization of heterosexual norms (Jackson 2006). Where there is any mention of 'gender', it is in the form of two fixed categories, women and men. The possibility that gender identity and expression may more plural and fluid simply does not come into the picture. Onto these two fixed categories are mapped a set of assumptions. At their crudest, they portray women as powerless victims and men as brutish predators. Add to the gender binary a notion of sexuality as a biological drive or instinct, Sonia Corrêa suggested at the workshop, and the reality of other identities and forms of sexual expression is denied. This has the effect of obscuring not only same-sex sexualities, but also any forms of heterosexual social and sexual arrangements that do not privilege a normative model of the family founded on the heterosexual married couple.

So while there is little *explicit* attention given to sexuality in mainstream development preoccupations with poverty reduction and economic growth, digging a little surfaces a host of assumptions that underpin the very basis of development policy in these arenas (Altman, 2004; Adams and Pigg, 2005; Cornwall, Corrêa and Jolly, 2008). Sexuality may be missing from development institutions' policies, but it is far from absent in development practice. As many contributors to this special issue suggest, heteronormativity lies at the heart of the mismatch between the way the development industry operates and the professed concern of many of the organizations that are part of the industry with poverty reduction and human rights.

A theme that surfaced time and again at the workshop was the material power that the development industry was able to exercise, and the extent to which the way funds and funding in this field were as much part of the problem, as a means of providing solutions. On the one hand, participants urged a realism about the limits of development: 'development is not just good humanitarians helping each other; it operates with its own economic agenda. The World Bank is a bank', commented Andil Gosine. And yet, on the other, the HIV/AIDS has

given rise to employment opportunities for marginalized sexual minorities, as 'forms of embodiment emerge as forms of expertise', as Akshay Khanna noted. Funding has shaped the field, focusing engagement with sexuality on regulation and risk management. Sexuality comes to be framed as a problem by an industry driven by the search for technical fixes and magic bullets.

Analysis of the political economy of funding draws attention to the extent to which ideology rather than evidence drives programming and policy. This has been especially evident in relation to the funding provided by the US government and other influential conservative forces, including many Christian religious organizations. But it is also, sadly, the case that even the most progressive donors have at times wittingly or unwittingly contributed to undermining rather than supporting the pursuit of greater justice and equality in relation to issues of sexuality. Akshay Khanna captures these dynamics, describing the anti-trafficking lobby as 'the articulation of the anxieties of upper class/upper caste heteronormativity over sex, in an alliance with US and western European governments' moral panic over migration'. One of the consequences is that sex workers' own strategies for addressing trafficking, such as boards set up by sex workers to regulate the industry locally, are undermined by those who sponsor 'raid and rescue' missions that simply provide a further excuse for the harassment of already stigmatized and marginalized sex workers.

Heteronormativity – a development issue

All of us are affected by norms that sanction particular forms of sexuality (Jackson, 2006). Those norms may include active proscription of alternative forms of sexual expression, as in countries where same-sex sexual expression is stigmatized and illegal. Charmaine Pereira explores how heteronormativity regulates heterosexual relations as much as homosexual, for example through traditional gender arrangements, such as men's right to sexually access women, in contrast to women's monogamy. Andy Seale observes that the implications of heteronormativity can be as troublesome for heterosexuals as for those with other sexualities. But there are also more subtle pressure to conform. Jaya Sharma's contribution makes the important point that for many of us, conformity and non-conformity may go hand in hand; in some contexts, with some people, we may find ourselves conforming completely to match their expectations and find favour, while in others, we may actively and openly contest what we perceive as repressive social norms. Some people can choose whether to conform or not. Others are forced to 'choose' particular kinds of relationships, or forms of sexual expression, because there is no acceptable alternative in the societies in which they live.

What are the consequences of heteronormativity for development? The heteronormativity of the development industry means people whose

sexualities do not conform to the heteronorm are excluded from development's purported benefits. They may suffer further exclusion and stigma as a result of the industry shoring up inequitable sexual and social norms. The invisibility of those with non-normative sexualities – and especially of lesbians and FtM (female to male) transgenders – translates into an abject failure to follow through with the commitments many development agencies make to human rights, non-discrimination, participation and empowerment. Those with non-normative sexual and gender identities may be actively marginalized from many forms of employment, and where they are able to enter mainstream employment, subject to sexual and moral harassment in the workplace (Sarda, 2008; Lenke and Piehl, 2008). From a poverty perspective, as Giuseppe Campuzano's article points out, Peruvian *travestis* – people who transit between genders, and are not neatly categorized as 'male', 'female' or indeed 'transgender' – are confronted with multiple dimensions of deprivation that are directly linked to their stigmatized status in society.

Where development agencies naturalize rather than challenge heteronormative assumptions about women, men, families and work, those who don't fit the norm lose out. At the workshop, Kate Bedford shared her research on the Argentinian World Bank funded Family Strengthening and Social Capital Promotion Programme (PROFAM), showing how the turn to promoting families in neo-liberal anti-poverty programmes actively affirm highly conservative social norms (Bedford, 2008). Amy Lind's article in this special issue demonstrates that the implications of these framings of the intimate have ramifications that go well beyond the personal: 'when non-normative individuals or family units are left out of policies, their invisibility on paper translates into myriad forms of symbolic and material violence against them'.

Even in areas of development work where we might have expected a more progressive approach to sexuality, heteronormativity holds sway. Where HIV interventions come to be modelled on idealized representations of normative sexuality rather than on actual lived sexualities, they are obviously going to miss the mark. We find in some areas of AIDS policy and programming a heteronormativity that weaves together moralizing with a fundamental failure to get to grips with the complexities of people's lived sexualities (Berger, 2004; Boyce et al., 2007). We find in Gender and Development unhelpful gender myths and essentializing views about women's and men's sexualities that deny women sexual agency, fail to address men's vulnerability and ignore transgenders altogether (Jolly, 2007); we never hear about women desiring, pursuing or enjoying sex with men, let alone with each other.

These stereotypes are echoed, and reinforced, in HIV prevention discourses. Deevia Bhana and Rob Pattman's contribution highlights the extent to which unhelpful myths and stereotypes are reinforced in education about HIV that stresses the sexual irresponsibility and abusiveness of men, and the

vulnerability of women. Their article, based on research with young women in South Africa, shows how teenage girls are 'far more agentic than research has pointed to, acting on desire and pleasure, and not simply passive victims conforming to gender roles and norms'. Prevailing HIV prevention discourses emphasize predatory men and assume that women are simply victims of male irresponsibility; this, as Bhana and Pattman's study shows, can have the effect of making it difficult for girls to carry condoms, wear what they like or talk about their sexual desires. Uganda-based researcher Chris Dolan spoke at the workshop of the outrage he felt at the extent to which it became barely possible to talk about male vulnerability to sexual violence because of assumptions about men as predators and women as victims. Heteronormativity, he argued, so obscures men's sexual abuse of other men it makes it difficult for male victims of sexual violence to be recognized.

Heteronormativity does not only shape the external face of development, it is also just as pervasive within the very heart of the industry: in the everyday lives of its institutions. Carolyn Williams' article addresses difficulties faced by staff members of these agencies whose sexualities do not conform to the presumed norm of heterosexuality. Despite the existence of supportive policies on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) employment rights in UK institutions, such as the Department for International Development, LGBT staff experience myriad forms of discomfort and exclusion, less because of overt homophobia than heteronormative organizational culture. And the kind of commitment to sexual diversity found in the human resources policies of these institutions does not translate into their external policies and programmes. Enter the word 'lesbian' into the search box on the website of any international development agency, and if at all anything comes up – and for many, the search yields a blank – it is human resources (HR) policies, rather than initiatives or programmes. Williams' article underscores the need to make issues of sexuality as much a matter for the heterosexuals who assume that everyone around them is heterosexual, as for the sexual minorities who experience the exclusionary effects of the residual heteronormativity of these institutions and the work that they do.

How can the development industry engage more constructively with sexuality?

What, then, is to be done? The contributors to this special issue offer a number of suggestions. Many would reject a simplistic 'add LGBT and stir' approach, which, similar to the long-rejected Women in Development (WID) approach, involves incorporating sexual minorities into existing development policies and initiatives without addressing the fundamental issues of inequity and power that underpin them. Rather, several contributors emphasize, what is needed is something far more radical: revisioning development through a lens

that permits far closer attention to some of the issues of power that have emerged in the analysis of development through a sexuality lens.

A first step in doing this is to recognize that 'the development industry' is no monolith and that there are many people who work within it who profoundly disagree with the way the industry has dealt with sexuality to date. Several participants at the workshop argued for the need to reclaim our own location within this industry and use this as a space from which to speak and to challenge assumptions. Stella Nyanzi commented:

According to the development industry, women like me are all heterosexual, living in villages, married, pregnant, with children, and so on. So I think it's important for someone like me to say I'm part of development, in order to challenge those assumptions.

Carolyn Williams pointed to the need to take the questioning of assumptions a step further:

Maybe we're not all heteronormative, but there's lots of normativity in LGBT and sexual rights work. We need to be critical of ourselves and our essentialism, even when talking about resistance. We're all part of that industry too.

Reclaiming 'development' as a space for activism, one in which a positive approach to sexuality is something that we and other activists can demand and make possible, allows us to view the industry in an entirely different way.

One lens through which development can be re-envisioned is that of a focus on pleasure, rather than on misery and harm. There's an obvious connection between sexuality and pleasure – although sexuality is about far more than sex, as Charmaine Pereira emphasizes. And it seems obvious that pleasure should be at the very heart of making sex safer. Yet as Camilo Antillón Najlis points out, in the context of Nicaraguan organizations working with HIV, the tendency to stress problems and risks and downplay the pleasures of sex ignores the realities of many sexual encounters and thus makes for ineffective prevention. He argues

As long as the development industry in Nicaragua does not take all these elements into consideration, its efforts to improve people's quality of life regarding their sexuality will continue to have limited effects and...reinforce negative stereotypes.

Addressing these issues has been an focus for Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways (WWHR) in Turkey, and the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR), as Liz Amado's article describes.

WWHR's Pinar Ilkkaracan spoke at the workshop of WWHR's Women's Human Rights Education Programme, in which modules on sexuality and sexual rights affirmed sexual pleasure as a human right. Dorothy Aken'Ova from INCREASE in Nigeria talked of the skepticism she had been greeted with when they began to work with the right to pleasure in northern Nigeria

There were people around who believed that we couldn't talk about sexual pleasure. They asked us, 'How can you justify working on pleasure when we have such a high rate of maternal mortality in Nigeria? You're wasting your time, you should be focusing on saving the women who are dying.' But I was convinced that we could do this very delicate work that was described as taboo, that was sometimes criminalized. I was convinced that if we could discuss women's sexual pleasure, we could discuss anything.

A couple of years ago Wendy Knerr and Anne Philpott of *The Pleasure Project* started to compile examples from around the world of initiatives that used pleasure as an entry point for making safer sex sexier. From workshops in India on the 'economics of pleasure' to the promotion (and banning) of vibrating condoms, the examples that they came up with have rich lessons to offer. Their article reflects on the possibilities. Pleasure-based prevention efforts have found unlikely allies, and success in the most unexpected places. Getting over erotophobia may take persistence, but their work shows just how much the results can pay off.

Pleasure-based development?

But can such an approach go further still, and address wider development goals? Just as in HIV prevention, conventional development approaches have often failed to deliver. There's been wave after wave of new approaches – 'community-based', 'rights-based' and, more recently, with the new aid modalities, 'results-based'. What would '*pleasure-based development*' have to offer other areas of development work? One obvious area is women's empowerment. The assumption has been that what matters most if women are to be empowered is for them to have greater access to economic resources and political representation. Both are, of course, hugely important. And yet, there's a more fundamental starting point for empowerment: being able to enjoy – in all senses – rights over our own bodies.

Re-focusing narratives of sexuality on pleasure takes us towards what might appear an unexpected entry-point for work on women's empowerment. Knerr and Philpott ask 'can the sexual health sector promote women's right to pleasure as a HIV prevention tactic and means for empowerment?' They cite Dorothy Aken'Ova, who argues, 'if this delicate, taboo thing – sexual pleasure –

could be negotiated by women, then almost anything can be negotiated' and contends that women's pursuit of their own sexual pleasure can be a pathway of empowerment. Women's exploration of sexual pleasure, she suggests, has some of the women INCREASE works with to happier and more equal relationships with their husbands, while others report it started a process that led them to leave husbands who were not giving them what they want in life – let alone in bed.

Such a pleasure-based approach also offers the prospect of restoring to all people the right to seek a pleasurable sexuality – including people whose sexualities are often denied, such as people living with HIV, people with disabilities, and older people. Nelson Otwoma, Nancy Opiyo and Cephas Kojwang's article shows how HIV prevention messages targeted at keeping HIV negative people negative give positive people the message that they should stop having sex altogether. All too often, they argue, these kinds of messages stigmatize, exclude and abuse HIV positive people and deny them a right to their sexuality. Leaving HIV positive people out, treating them as if they are 'beyond prevention', leads to inadequate strategies that can end up reinforcing prejudice and stigma. Where HIV positive people have got involved in prevention, they have broadened the frame beyond the narrow, and highly normative, approaches that have come to characterize HIV prevention. They have brought into the debate a concern with sexual and reproductive rights, including the right of positive people to sexual pleasure.

Focusing on pleasure brings attention to the positive, joyful, aspects of sex and sexuality. Yet, as workshop participants pointed out, it holds its own dangers. One is that of simply substituting one constraining norm for another. As one participant commented, 'let us not set up a new norm that sex is good and we should all have it. What about people who get pleasure elsewhere, or those who are celibate by choice?' Their concerns, echoed by others, were with making pleasure the new orthodoxy and turning it into a prescription.

Questioning categories, asserting rights

As Sonia Corrêa and others at the workshop remind us, what we know from research on sexualities is that people's sexual identities can be almost endlessly fluid, changing over the course of their lifetime, in different contexts or relationships. They defy easy categorization. Traditional LGBT politics depends on identification with a category; to claim LGBT rights, people need to define themselves as L, G, B or T. Add Q – for questioning, as well as for queer – and the whole process of categorization begins to unravel.

And yet there's also a creativity to the political uses to which labels can be put that needs to be recognized. As new sexual identities come to be created, people are able to put them to use politically. The power of labelling is not

easily subverted. But where those who are labelled have contested the way they are represented, claimed other labels and asserted their own meanings, such categories have gained political salience. The category MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) is an interesting example, as Andil Gosine's article shows. Developed as a way of addressing the need for HIV prevention amongst men who had sex with men but did not define themselves as 'gay', it has now become an identity label of its own, used by 'MSM activists' to define their right to exist as well as to engage in shaping HIV prevention policy. And yet, as Akshay Khanna's tale of the *laundanach* shows, these categories can also be used to discipline and subject those who are placed within them.

Like MSM, WSW (Women who have Sex with Women) is an unstable category: some of those who are put into this category have sex with men as well as women, and some have sex with MSM, placing them at higher risk of HIV than many other women in some contexts. Karin Lenke and Mathilda Piehl's article challenges a number of assumptions about women who have sex with women, and their invisibility in development policies, as well as HIV prevention. Perhaps it takes the category WSW to get the development industry to recognize that lesbians exist. Herein lie further hazards, however. Much depends on how and whether lesbians wish to gain such visibility: some may much prefer to remain 'hidden', beyond the gaze of the development industry and the stigmatization that can come with being labelled as an object deserving of development's intervention. As one Indian lesbian contended, 'visibility does us no good at all, it just brings further stigma and discrimination'; it's better, in her view, that lesbians retain the cloak of invisibility. As Kate Bedford reflected at the workshop: 'The question is: is there a realm of visibility that's appropriate, and if so, how do we secure it?'

The issue of the basis on which sexual rights are defined, as of the categories used to mark out sexual identities, raises a broader issue. Development agencies' efforts to address what they perceive as wrongs may (inadvertently) cause further harms. As the dialogue between sex worker rights activists Nandinee Bandhopadhyay, Cheryl Overs and Meena Seshu so powerfully illustrates, there can be a massive gulf between what actually works for people and what development agencies think can help them. The tale of the transgender sex worker who ends up doing more sex work to feed the cow she is given for 'income-generation' says it all. Who are the 'experts' here?

Chinese activist Xiaopei He gives an example of an alternative way of doing things. She describes how, together with a group of friends, she set up the first *tongzhi* (queer) hotline in China just over a decade ago. Their approach took as its entry point what is now a recognized wisdom: 'we did not invite outside people. Instead, we were all the experts on our own issues.' It's a simple point, one that advocates of participation in development have been making for decades. But it remains just as necessary to continually re-state it. Especially

in fields over-crowded with those who think they know what's best for people and whose 'solutions' – from 'raid and rescue' to abstinence-only programmes – are part of the problem for those on the receiving end.

Shifting mindsets

How difficult and slow it is to reconstruct mindsets and policy discourse, when sexuality is at stake. Sonia Corrêa

A huge amount of work needs to be done to address the ignorance that persists about why sexuality is a development issue, what the negative effects of what the development industry is doing are, and what can be done to address this. As is evident from the examples given here, development agencies *are* already addressing issues of sexuality, but in ways that are often highly problematic. Changing narratives of sexuality becomes critical in contesting oppressive norms and restrictive categorizations (Corrêa and Parker, 2004; Parker et al., 2008). This calls for deepening our understanding of sexuality by recognizing that such narratives are the products of particular social and historical contexts, and looking more closely at the potential for pleasure and positive experiences rather than only seeing sexuality as a problem. Several contributors suggest a queer perspective can help to highlight the extent to which the categories that are so familiar a part of development and AIDS prevention narratives constrain those who use them from seeing the people whom the categories are supposed to be describing. We can learn lessons from what has happened when categories have been created to try to deal with the mismatch between culturally specific identity labels and lived practices in different contexts. And we can also learn a lot by looking more closely at what is taken for granted, whether in terms of sexual categories or institutions.

Xiaopei He offers an example of how this might be done. She highlights the extent to which the institution of marriage serves to legitimize, but also create the possibility for, particular kinds of relations and pleasures. As she puts it, 'anyone can suffer from it, whether gay or straight; on the other hand, marriage can be the site of a mix of pleasures, affections and happinesses'. It is, she argues, what marriage comes to represent and reinforce that is the problem. She describes how through a 'fake' marriage, Beijing activists created a space to explore norms and assumptions, and to think beyond them. She reports, 'we wanted to challenge the norms of heterosexuality and monogamy, and open a space to talk about the realities of our relationships and sex lives, and how to make these safer'. The conclusion? 'We can create our own forms of relationships, in spite of what social norms say about gender and sexuality.'

The development industry appears to offer little scope for love, for joy, for laughter or for any other form of pleasure, let alone sexual fulfilment. And yet it

is all of this that makes us all fully human, and which constitute the well-being, freedom and human rights that many development practitioners would wish everyone to be able to enjoy. The way 'the poor' are represented in development discourse, it would seem as if they would want nothing more than the means to feed themselves and support their (heteronormative) families. But this is not the reality of most people living in poverty the world over.

Denying people the possibility that 'development' could mean for them a better life, in all respects, is to do them an injustice. It is not just that sexual rights are fundamental to any other rights – after all, without rights over our own bodies, we can't enjoy even the most basic of human rights. It is that for all of us, whether we are poor or rich, however we define ourselves in terms of our gender and sexual preferences, sexuality matters. It matters because the norms that constrain and enable certain forms of social as well as sexual expression affect every single one of us. Rather than allowing these norms define how the development industry engages with sexuality, we need to build that engagement on a foundation of respect for difference, fairness and freedom – norms that should be at the heart of what most of us would like development to represent.

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8.1

Redressing the Silofication between Sexuality and Development: A Radical Revisioning

Stella Nyanzi

Introduction

What are the links between sexuality and the development industry? In what different ways does development impact upon sexuality? These two questions are at the heart of the seminal essay written by Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly, and entitled 'Sexuality and the Development Industry'. Published in 2009 in the journal *Development*, the article highlights key issues emerging from a workshop held in April 2008 that gathered over 70 activists, academics, donors and development practitioners from more than 25 countries. Concretely framing this workshop within the development paradigm, the setting was the Institute of Development Studies, and the co-hosting programmes were both funded by the UK's Department for International Development. The workshop was groundbreaking because it juxtaposed and linked two hitherto seemingly disparate and unrelated subjects: sexuality and development (Bedford 2005; Kleitz 2000).

Assembling a diverse combination of individuals representing different groups of powerful actors and then facilitating them to focus on the interactions between sexuality and development was no small feat. Activists, academics, donors and development practitioners worldwide are often willing to admit their intense involvement in development work, just as they are quick to deny participating in sexuality-related projects. Unless their day-to-day work activities are directly focused on aspects of human sexualities, such as sexual health, sexual rights, sexual well-being, sex education, safe-sex commodities, legal regimes governing sexualities, sexuality studies, many individuals and groups do not immediately recognize the multiple ways in which sexualities colour, inform, influence, shape, impact or interact with their undertakings. However, the work, processes and outputs of the distinct groups of powerful actors engaged with the development industry intrinsically draws from and feeds into each other's (see Figure 8.1.1). They support, facilitate, implement,

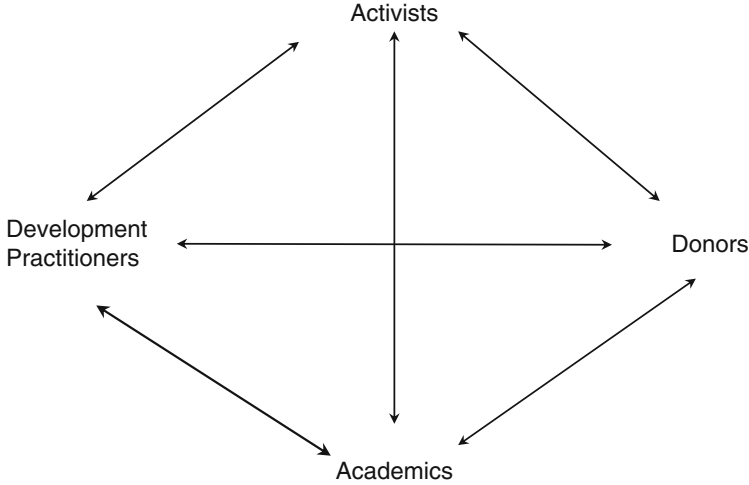


Figure 8.1.1 Relationships between diverse development actors

build upon, assess, challenge, complicate, undo or conflict each other's undertakings. Thus if one group of actors is involved with the broad topic of human sexualities, this will affect the agenda and activities of other actors. The workshop was important for creating synergies, illuminating powerful contrasts and showcasing diverse multilevel comparisons within and among the different actors.

In this chapter I reflect upon the contents of Cornwall and Jolly's (2009) essay, analyse its strengths and highlight some outstanding issues critical to the links between human sexualities and the development industry specifically in relation to recent developments in the geopolitics of legal reforms governing non-conforming gender identities and non-heteronormative sexual orientations in the developed and developing world. I offer my reflections from the vantage points of having been one of the 70 participants at the groundbreaking workshop, and currently being involved in research and advocacy about sexual and gender minorities in Uganda.

Strategies for the silofication of sexuality within development frameworks

A major shortcoming of a lot of development work, discourse and theorizing is the stubborn refusal to acknowledge the centrality of sexualities, particularly those that transcend heterosexual reproductive health. The interlinkages, diffusion and connectedness between development and sexualities are invisibilized, erased, silenced and ignored if not denied outright. Various discursive

strategies and explanatory frameworks are employed to sideline sexuality from development. Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 5–6) elaborate on this:

Even though the relation to sexuality should be obvious in many development concerns, such as population, gender, and HIV/AIDS, these linkages often remain unseen and implicit. Some see ‘sexuality’ as something that only concerns sexual minorities – and reason that development ought to be concerned about the majority of poor people, not a barely visible minority. Others see ‘sexuality’ as about sex, and see sex as something private, embarrassing, outside the scope of development intervention. Others still see ‘sexuality’ as being about something that’s positively frivolous when compared to the urgent problems like hunger or climate change. Few recognize the connections that exist between sexuality and all of development’s sectors, or the extent to which sexuality, like gender affects much more of our lives than our sex lives. Nor is there enough recognition that these issues affect *us* all.

Scholars of human sexualities in Africa variously highlight how African feminists engaged in development work including policy, programming, service delivery, donor funding, activism and advocacy, scholarship and research generally marginalize the important area of sexualities. Women’s empowerment strategies, such as WID, and its precursor GAD, as well as Gender Mainstreaming and Affirmative Action for Girls, all focus on the hard-core development areas of agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, trade, clean fuel, rural electrification, poverty alleviation, hunger, climate change, sanitation, security, conflicts, displacement, forced migration, education, public health, marketing, micro-finance, microentrepreneurship, access to safe water, but not sexualities, sexual rights, sexual well-being or sexual citizenship. This confirms Harcourt’s (2009: 5) assertion:

Talk about the actual experience of pain, pleasure, strain, sexuality, birth, health and disease is rare in development policies. These issues are side issues to ‘macro’ discussions on trade, finance and economic growth, yet embodied experience of women and men is at the core of what it means to live through what ‘development’ imposes on people.

For example, the exclusion of lesbian women’s reality in a lot of feminist thinking about development echoes Rich’s (1980: 632) critique of feminist scholarship for the ‘virtual or total neglect of lesbian existence’. In this way the complex development issue of human sexualities is trivialized as less important, relatively unserious, flippant, frivolous and thus not warranting urgent attention, particularly when compared with other development issues.

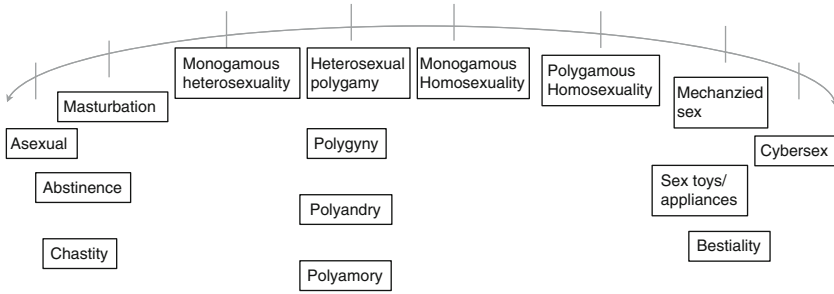


Figure 8.1.2 A continuum of sexual cultures in Africa (adapted from Nyanzi 2006)

Another strategy that isolates human sexualities is adopting a minimalist approach to the ambivalence, complexity, flux, flexibility, contradictions and tensions embedded within the label 'sexuality', although there is an array of possibilities along the continuum of human sexualities (see Figure 8.1.2). Minimalists limit sexuality to only the problematic category of sexual minorities which Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 5) described as 'a barely visible minority'. This strategy instrumentalizes heterosexism by refusing to recognize the need to interrogate and focus on the unmarked category of 'the heterosexual subject' or 'the heteronormative majority' (see Richardson 1996).

Furthermore, the claim that sexuality only concerns sexual minorities is problematic because it refuses to acknowledge the inevitable fluidity, flux and negotiatedness of human sexualities. While it is possible for individuals or groups to claim fixed rigid sexual categories, more often than not there is back and forth movement from one category to the next, along the continuum of possibilities of human sexualities illustrated in Figure 8.1.2. Moreover, bisexuality attests to the possibility of some individuals belonging to more than one sexual category – that is, simultaneously homosexual and heterosexual (Stobie 2003). Based on the appropriation of bisexuality in repressive regimes, Nyanzi (2014: 66) highlights the importance of recognizing bisexuality:

Where do bisexuals fit within the dual division between homosexuals and heterosexuals? Given the instrumentalization of bisexuality as a protective decoy for some homosexual Africans living in highly homophobic national regimes, widespread neglect and denial of bisexuality erases a significant component of queer African subjectivities and experiences.

Thus sexual categories are not bounded because individuals shift between categories, just as much as some individuals can legitimately belong to more than one. It is critical for the development industry to shift from the minimalist paradigm to the holistic approach that requires an interrogation of all forms of human sexuality. It is also important to recognize that heterosexuality,

bisexuality, asexuality and homosexuality are all heterogeneous in their meanings and performance.

Another tactic of silofication is within the conceptualization of sexuality. As Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 2) highlight, 'others see "sexuality" as about sex...'. Yes it is true that sexuality is about sex. However, the concept of sexuality is about so much more than merely focusing on sex. For starters, 'sex' is an ambivalent label that means so much more than just the sexual act. According to Vance (1991), 'the term "sexuality" covers a broad range of topics... includes many wildly different things: intercourse, orgasm, foreplay; erotic fantasies, stories, humour; sex differences and the organization of masculinity and femininity, and gender relations...'. Thus it is deeply nuanced, heterogeneous, historicized and highly contextual. Vance (1991) further reveals that sexuality is a contested political domain of struggle, which she describes as

an actively contested political and symbolic terrain in which groups struggle to implement sexual programs and alter sexual arrangements and ideologies... Although socially powerfully groups exercised more discursive power, they were not the only participants in sexual struggles. Minority reformers, progressives, suffragists, and sex radicals also put forward programs for change and introduced new ways of thinking about and organizing sexuality.

Therefore restricting sexuality as being only about sex necessarily erases the deeply layered, multifaceted and ambivalent qualities of this label. No wonder then that this limited understanding of sexuality also invisibilizes the numerous links which sexuality has to the similarly nuanced and multipronged concept of development.

The last strategy for isolating sexuality from the development industry that Cornwall and Jolly (2009) briefly mention is relegating sex to the private realm, which is deemed to be embarrassing and thus outside the scope of development interventions. This artificial divide which designates sexuality to the private realm and development to the public realm is not only an incomplete representation but also erroneous. It is a simplistic fallacy that has been repeatedly disproved by contemporary events in the global chronology of sexual rights. The shifting boundaries of the private and public realms related to sexualities are evident in the changing extent to which national politics and legal reforms permeate this terrain with diverse regulations and controls.

Simplistic gender binaries within mainstream development

The bulk of mainstream development work is premised upon taxonomic gender binaries that limit their gendered analyses to polarized dichotomies between men and women, male and female, masculine and feminine. Based upon

patriarchal configurations of social relations, the simplistic understandings of gender within mainstream development are asymmetrical. Men are constructed as stronger than women. Men are positioned as more powerful than women. Men are projected to own and exercise power over women. These two gender categories are narrowly constructed as always in opposition to each other. Moreover, mainstream development construes gender categories as fixed, static, natural and thus a given. Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 6) aptly capture this limited conceptualization:

Where there is any mention of 'gender', it is in the form of two fixed categories, 'women' and 'men'. The possibility that gender identity and expression may be more plural and fluid simply does not come into the picture.

The notions of gender fluidity and gender neutrality are central to the self-definition of diverse individuals and communities of non-conforming gender identities. However, alternative gender categories that transcend the two polarized gender binaries of male and female are generally ignored by the development industry. This urgently raises some critical questions for consideration. What is the place of non-conforming gender identities within the thinking, practice, policies and politics of the development industry? Why are non-conforming gender identities generally excluded from the efforts – including research, funding, programmes, policies, service delivery, practice and other interventions – of the development industry? How, if at all, is development work appropriate, relevant, specific and targeted to the multifarious needs and issues of individuals and communities of non-conforming gender identities? In what different ways would the development industry change if it integrated non-conforming gender identities into its agenda?

Contemporary Western society recognizes two categories of non-conforming gender identity – namely, intersex and transgender/transsexual identities. Trans people are a diverse community comprising transvestite or cross-dressers, transgender and transsexual (male to female or female to male). Several non-Western societies also contain alternative gender categories that are indigenous to the local culture. Native Americans historically had two-spirited, three-spirited, four-spirited... up to twelve-spirited peoples with various gender compositions. *Hijras* in India are among the local alternative gender categories. In Japan there are five officially recognized gender categories. Several countries legally recognize a third gender category. *Gor-jigen* from Senegal and the Gambia, *yan daudu* from Nigeria, *woubi* from Abidjan, *kyakula kikazi* from Uganda and *moffies* from South Africa are examples of the names of effeminate men in local languages from across Africa. Traditional healers who are venerated as spirit mediums called *sangomas* in South Africa and *tangomas* in

Swaziland are also believed to be possessed by the gendered spirits of their ancestors that may demand transgender expression.

Patriarchal understandings of gender fuel heterosexism, heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinities because they rigidly fix men as powerful, brutish predators and women as powerless, docile victims. This polarized understanding of gender is reproduced in mainstream development work. Consequently, men are ignored by a lot of mainstream development work:

To be sure, disregard of the *intersection* of gender and poverty/unemployment in *male* lives haunts not just gender studies; it also troubles studies of poverty and of development . . .

(Ratele 2008: 517)

Thus development programmes targeting gendered empowerment are overly focused on interventions aimed at improving the lot of women and girls by mitigating problems arising out of their inequality to and subjugation by men and boys. According to Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 6),

Women are portrayed as victims of men: objects of male desire, of rape, of unwanted sexual attention. Women's sexual agency never comes into the picture; we never hear about women desiring, pursuing or enjoying sex with men, let alone with each other.

This confirms Tamale's (2007: 19) explanation for the absence of lesbian identities which consolidates heterosexism and patriarchy. She states that,

Somehow, the dominant phallogentric culture maintains the stereotype of women as the passive recipients of penetrative male pleasure; sex that is not penetrative does not count as 'real' 'sex'.

Consequently, the development industry invisibilizes inequities based on gender reversals in which women are the potential aggressors and men the victims. Likewise the victimization of men by other men also goes unnoticed when patriarchal configurations of gender are the norm in development work. Specific examples include battered men caught up in domestic violence cycles, bullying of boys and young men within institutions, sexual abuse of men – a widely used tactic of war, sex trafficking of men usually from developing countries by powerful female tourists and expatriates from rich developed countries. All these systemic violations based on gender reversals do not receive due attention, strategic thinking and targeted interventions from the development industry because they do not fit the patriarchal gender stereotype of

powerful men who wield power over victimized women. Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 8) highlight Uganda-based researcher Chris Dolan's outrage about

the extent to which it became barely possible to talk about male vulnerability to sexual violence because of assumptions about men as predators and women as victims. Heteronormativity, he argued, so obscures men's sexual abuse of other men, it makes it difficult for male victims of sexual violence to be recognized.

Within this oversimplified patriarchal understanding of gender, which is based on biological determinism and essentialist readings of the body, it is difficult (if not altogether impossible) to appropriate the role of men as partners or collaborators in the development programmes for women's empowerment. Likewise, programmes focusing on affirmative action for men are difficult to conceive, design and implement if gender is approached from only the patriarchal paradigm.

Preponderance with heteronormativity in the development industry

In responding to the central question about the links between sexuality and the development industry, Cornwall and Jolly (2009) characterize development organizations' pursuit of their core business to have deeply embedded heteronormativity, which they define as 'an institutionalization of heterosexual norms' (Jackson 2006). Heteronormativity is a powerful ideology which prizes heterosexuality as the norm and thereby pathologizes alternative modes of sexuality. Reproduction is the sole function of sexual activity. Since heterosexuality is based upon polarized constructions of essentialized gender binaries, non-conforming gender identities are also pathologized within heteronormativity. Heterosexism is the basis for drawing boundaries and defining what sexuality and gender identity is normal, acceptable, good, right and moral. Using models of the erotic pyramid and the charmed circle, Rubin (1984) theorizes the uses of heteronormative lenses to evaluate sexualities.

To appreciate the gravity and negative consequences of this characterization of the link between sexuality and development, it is necessary to ask the following critical question: What is wrong with development being heteronormative? Answers to this are considered by Cornwall and Jolly (2009).

Negative framing of sexuality

Funding availed for development work sets the agenda of issues that are prioritized and problems that are targeted. When development has a preponderance for heteronormativity, there is a negative framing of sexuality which is limited

to only patriarchal and heterosexist possibilities. Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 6) candidly flag that 'What Gender and Development has to say about sexuality is overwhelmingly negative and deeply heteronormative.' A key feature is the widespread framing of sexuality as a problem that needs to be solved. The pleasure, power and progress available within sexuality are missed and thus dropped off the radar because they do not fit within the negative framing that capitalizes on a problem that needs fixing. It seems to me that for those fronting this negative approach to sexuality, if it is otherwise conceptualized as a pleasurable, powerful and progressive frontier then it becomes irrelevant to development practice which focuses on intervening to solve dire problems:

Funding has shaped the field, focusing engagement with sexuality on regulation and risk management. Sexuality comes to be framed as a problem by an industry driven by the search for technical fixes and magic bullets.

(Cornwall and Jolly 2009: 6)

Development sectors where this negative framing of sexuality is stretched to the limit include HIV prevention programmes and safer-sex interventions. Although the developed countries of North America and Europe targeted the homosexual transmission of HIV in the early days of the epidemic, the notion of 'an exclusively heterosexual African AIDS epidemic' dominated intervention efforts on our continent. Homosexual transmission was widely refuted based on erroneous beliefs about a singular African sexuality that was innately heterosexual. Epprecht (2008: 1–2) analyses the historical developments, logic, circulation and entrenchment of this heteronormative idea:

The problem resides in the notion that a singular African sexuality exists and that it exacerbates the risk of HIV transmission particularly for women. The hypothetical singular African sexuality includes, above all, the supposed nonexistence of homosexuality or bisexuality, along with Africans' purported tendencies toward heterosexual promiscuity, gender violence, and lack of the kind of internalized moral restraints that supposedly inhibit the spread of HIV in other cultures.

It is noteworthy that in his analysis of the approach taken to solving the problem of HIV transmission, Epprecht (2008: 3) nails the head of a highly framing of sexuality as a problem to be fixed by diverse development resources. He states that

An essentialized, singular African sexuality also suggested a problem that could be fixed with education, aid dollars, and Western advice drawn from painful experiences fighting AIDS in the early 1980s.

This echoes the problematic conceptualization of sexuality that needs problem-solving from development.

Exclusion of non-heteronormative sexual orientations and gender identities

The exclusion of non-heteronormative sexual orientations and gender identities becomes standardized practice of the development industry. The attention of development efforts is given to the diverse heteronormative majorities at the expense of non-heteronormative minorities. Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 7) describe this well:

What are the consequences of heteronormativity for development? The heteronormativity of the development industry means people whose sexualities do not conform to the heteronorm are excluded from development's purported benefits. They may suffer further exclusion and stigma as a result of the industry shoring up inequitable sexual and social norms. The invisibility of those with non-normative sexualities – and especially of lesbians and FtM (female to male) transgenders – translates into an abject failure to follow through with the commitments many development agencies make to human rights, non-discrimination, participation and empowerment.

In the politics and praxis of righting the wrongs against invisibilized and marginalized social groups, it is important to identify and name them publicly. The public articulation and positive identification of excluded social groups, sexual categories and gender identities is a critical first step in reclaiming their equal citizenship, human rights and civil entitlements to development interventions. Thus by naming lesbians and female-to-male transgenders among those excluded as a consequence of the heteronormative concentration of development efforts, Cornwall and Jolly (2009) provide a progressive example of redressing the previous erasures, silencing and invisibilization done by other development practitioners and academics (Jolly 2011).

Subsequent to exclusion by the development industry, non-heteronormative social groups lose out from benefiting from the resultant policies, programmes, interventions, service delivery, research and scholarship. The heteronormative ideology inherent within development thinking thereby flows from the written documents and impacts people's lives during the implementation of programmes and service delivery. This confirms Lind's (2009) observation that

When non-normative individuals or family units are left out of policies, their invisibility on paper translates into myriad forms of symbolic and material violence against them.

Overly concentrating on heteronormating within development practice yields the prevailing bias towards sexual and reproductive health programmes focused on improving the indicators of heterosexual women of reproductive age through maternal and child health programmes, safe motherhood initiatives, emergency obstetric care, availing contraception and targeting teenage pregnancies. When international development aid focuses on sexuality, it dwells on improving the lot of heterosexual women and their infants, to the exclusion of men's issues as well as non-reproductive sexualities (Miller 2000).

Marginalization within development organizations' human resources

An interesting paradox highlights that while heteronormative policies are routinely translated into exclusionary heterosexist development practices and programmes, pro-diversity human resources policies of development funding organizations are often difficult to implement. Consequently, some staff of international development organizations such as the UK's Department for International Development are marginalized and excluded, less because of overt homophobia than heteronormative organization culture.

Redressing development's approach to sexuality: A radical revisioning

A radical revisioning of development is the necessary way forward. Having eloquently diagnosed the problems within the ways that the development industry engages with sexuality, Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 8–12) proceed to discuss more constructive modes of engaging development with sexuality.

Refocusing upon the fundamental issues of power and inequity is central to the radical revisioning of development. The proposal is much more than 'a simplistic "add LGBT and stir" approach ...' (Cornwall and Jolly 2009: 8). Instead it involves an engagement with, assessment of and outright overhaul of diverse structural, systematic and societal factors that cause, facilitate, maintain, circulate and reproduce asymmetries of power based on patriarchal, heterosexist and heteronormative ideologies. Development discourse and practice must open up to avail spaces as crucibles for the conception and maturation of fresh innovative forms of resistance to oppression and injustices that are sexualized and gendered because they are alternative, divergent or contradictory to the heteronormative majority.

Reclaiming our individual subject locations with the industry is important for articulations that question, challenge and complicate heteronormative assumptions. Rather than situating radical critiques of development work outside the development industry, it is important that the critique is situated within it and therefore as arising from the deep underbelly of the development machine. Contestation, interrogation and critique emergent from within the

development industry is much harder to deny, ignore or dissociate from. Furthermore, such a strategic location would clearly illustrate the non-monolithic character of the development industry.

Resistance from within the development industry necessitates an insistence on constant questioning of assumptions because even when non-heteronormative approaches are taken, Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 9) quote a conference participant who highlighted that 'there's lots of normativity in LGBT and sexual rights work...'. Just as conducting a gender analysis is now an integral component of any proposed or undertaken piece of development work, questioning any underlying assumptions based on heteronormativity must become standard practice within the radical revisioning of development.

It is important to reclaim development as a space for activism which problematizes, questions, challenges and transforms dominant modes of thinking and doing business as usual. Since the work and impacts of the development industry not only touch every aspect of human life but also reach all over the globe, this radical revision that integrates activism has the potential to enhance the transformative effects of development's implemented projects. Rather than narrowly focusing merely on the basic needs of food, shelter, water and so forth, the development industry can be reclaimed as a terrain of political action that fosters the demands for equal rights, and the campaigns for the more equitable distribution of resources. Struggles for the articulation and claims of minority rights of marginalized, excluded and invisibilized social groups must be enacted within the spaces that development creates and offers.

A major change that is proposed is a paradigm shift that turns the attention of the development industry into pleasure rather than solely focusing on the problems confronting people in targeted societies. Compilations of case studies from the Pleasure Project, which documents pleasure-based efforts, confirm that it is possible to delink erotophobia from the broad development industry. Pleasure-based development would drastically transform HIV-prevention services, safer-sex interventions and women's empowerment programmes. Furthermore, pleasure-based development would enhance the rights of *all* people to pursue the right to seek a pleasurable sexuality, including those whose sexualities are often denied such as people living with HIV, people with disabilities and older persons. The authors highlight the caution against 'making pleasure the new orthodoxy and turning it into a prescription...' (Cornwall and Jolly 2009: 10) specifically because there are people who derive their pleasure from sources other than their sexuality, just as there are those who choose celibacy. Freedom of choice must become a reality for the diverse human beings involved in the development industry, be they recipients or actors.

In addition, a radical revisioning of development requires that categories of analysis and intervention are interrogated and reconceptualized from the perspectives of those who are categorized. The essay specifically addresses the category of those labelled 'the poor' as well as a range of sexual categories. First,

the widespread stereotypical representation of poor people – who are the main beneficiaries of development efforts – does not capture their diverse realities. According to Cornwall and Jolly (2009: 9),

The way ‘the poor’ are represented in development discourse, it would seem as if they would want nothing more than the means to feed themselves and support their (heteronormative) families. But this is not the reality of most people living in poverty the world over.

This echoes Harcourt’s (2009: 13) observation that

There are uncomfortable contradictions at the centre of the body politics of development where those defined as economically poor are treated as objects rather than subjects of their own lives.

When target recipients of development are wrongly conceptualized then the interventions designed for them are inappropriate, inadequate and irrelevant to their multidimensional needs. Furthermore, when potential beneficiaries cannot identify themselves in caricatures produced to represent them within development discourse and practice, there is a strong likelihood that they will distance themselves from the programmes.

Second, placing people into sexual categories must be undertaken with caution because ‘people’s sexual identities can be almost endlessly fluid, changing over the course of their lifetime, in different contexts or relationships. They defy easy categorization ...’ (Cornwall and Jolly 2009: 10). In this regard, the categories LGBTI, LGBTQ, MSM, *launda nach* and WSW are briefly analysed for their politics, complicatedness and instability. Decisions about whether to heighten visibility or rather to maintain invisibility because a group prefers to remain hidden must involve the targeted beneficiaries through participation in development. Rather than reliance on outsiders to act as experts in development work, it is important to involve members of the benefiting communities because they are the experts of their own lives. Two workshop participants’ stories illustrate that insiders are the best experts in their own contexts – namely, Xiaopei He’s example of queers setting up their own hotline in China and Akshay Khanna’s discussion of boards set up by sexworkers to regulate the industry locally.

Some missing pieces: Repressive laws, subsequent economic sanctions by development partners

Writing my review from the positionality of an anthropologist conducting ethnographies of sexualities in contemporary Uganda, I am hard-pressed to insert two important components that are missing from the groundbreaking essay by Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly. These are the new repressive legal

regimes governing sexualities in specific locations in the world, such as Uganda, Nigeria and India, and the contentious politics of withdrawing development aid and bilateral funding as either deterrents or punitive economic sanctions against repressive governments (Nyanzi 2013). From my vantage point, these two components contribute to maintaining the silo between sexuality and development.

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8.2

Puhngah/Men in Skirts: A Plea for History

Andil Gosine

Introduction

I remembered an old joke while writing this chapter. It goes like this:

Three Christian missionaries leave Europe for Africa to spread their gospel. But soon after they reach land, the three young men get captured by members of a native tribe and are taken to their chief. The three young men plead their case and good intentions, and instead of just killing them, the chief gives them a choice: *puhngah* or death. The missionaries are relieved. None of them knows what *puhngah* is, but they think whatever it is must surely be better than death. The first missionary steps forward and says he chooses *puhngah*. The chief takes him aside and buggers him. The second missionary makes the same choice, and the same thing happens. Seeing what has happened to the other two, the third missionary decides he would rather face death than be sodomized and announces his choice. 'I choose death,' he says. 'OK,' the chief replies, 'death by *puhngah*!'

Puhngah doesn't just feature in this joke, which I have heard told many different ways while growing up on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. It was also the name of a game I witnessed at the Catholic boys high school I attended. The first time I observed its enactment, I was 13 years old and had just joined the school's photography club. Besides learning how to print photographs and possibly meet new friends, the big reward for membership was that the darkroom was a rare air-conditioned, private space at the school. The small group of boys who belonged to the club were a friendly band and our meetings were informal, relaxed affairs; in Trinidad vernacular, you would say most of the time we spent 'liming'. At some afterschool get-togethers in the darkroom, most of the boys would play *puhngah*. From what I remember, one boy, challenging another's masculinity, would incite the call to *puhngah*, and next would be the

game itself. Two, or sometimes three or four, boys would stand opposite each other in warrior pose, ready for battle. The 'battle' took the form of wrestling, but its main focus was on hip-to-hip or hip-to-buttocks, hands-free gyration, in which each boy would try to subdue the other through *puhngah*. Sometimes the boys remained fully clothed through the whole exercise. Sometimes shirts came off. Bragging rights to sexual virility and masculine prowess went to the boy who 'beat' the other(s) into submission.

There is a lot in *puhngah* to unpack. Both the joke and the game efficiently announce and process major tensions and contradictions that inhabit sexual cultures in Trinidad, in the Anglo-Caribbean and, more generally, across the global South. They recall representations of peoples of the global South as sexual savages. Through the retributive acts of the chief in the joke, *puhngah* also suggests how colonial attempts to discipline homosexuality were taken up by postcolonial states following the retreat of European powers and the claim of independence. Emerging states' responses were not unlike the chief's, as they too refused colonial power represented in bodies but maintained its forms of representation of and discipline through sexuality. Finally, the fact that both the game and the joke survive and resonate more than 500 years after colonial encounter underlines the continuing resilience of these tensions. *Puhngah* invokes the facts of history that have formed contemporary sexual desires – which are themselves too unwieldy to fit easy categories and characterization – and expose truths about the perseverance and affects of sexual anxieties. *Puhngah* shows the context and logic into which development interventions about sexuality enter, but to which many of their lead instigators have not paid enough attention. Thinking about sexuality in international development demands serious contention with the broad and long history that *puhngah* references.

In their important 2009 essay, Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly outline some of the perils of ignoring sex in the international development industry, and make a strong case for recognition of and stronger advocacy of sexual rights, including rights to sexual pleasure. Culling their arguments from a gathering of 70 activists, academics, development workers and donors that had met at their then home institution in the UK the previous year, Cornwall and Jolly put forward compelling evidence of the invisibilization of sexuality. Many working in the field view sex 'as something private, embarrassing, outside the scope of development intervention', they pointed out, while others 'see "sexuality" as being about something that's positively frivolous when compared to the urgent problems like hunger or climate change' (Cornwall and Jolly 2009: 526). Just a few years later, it probably cannot now be claimed that sexuality is 'missing from development institutions' policies' (Chapter 8.0, p. 526), as sexual rights have become increasingly viewed as a legitimate concern globally. Due to the foregrounding of HIV and AIDS as a global health

concern and the simultaneous increased representation of non-heterosexual sexualities that has accompanied the decriminalization of gay sex in most global North and many global South countries, one can surely say the persistent and hegemonic heteronormativity of development is being undermined. While Euro-American-centred frameworks that fix sexuality still dominate, there is much more openness and recognition of sexuality as a fluid experience, and much more criticism of the production of reified sexual identities. And mind-sets are changing such that even such conservative institutions as the World Bank and *The Economist* have constituted themselves as champions of sexual rights. We are, however, only beginning to grapple with the complexity of sexuality in development. While this past decade of scholarship and activism in the area has crucially deepened and broadened analysis, there remains much work to do. Despite the important ways in which debates on sexuality in the development industry have quickly shifted in recent years, inadequate attention has been given to the historical contexts, and their consequences, that gave shape to present challenges. In this chapter I document and consider an example of the kind of incident that is used to justify development interventions related to sexuality and sexual rights. Examination of the response of sex rights organization Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) to charges laid against a group of 'crossdressing' men in Guyana reveals and underlines the importance of careful historical analysis in taking on this kind of work.

Men in skirts

On 9 February 2009, seven Guyanese persons ('the Seven') were issued fines for their participation in an illegal act carried out within the preceding three days: they were men dressed in 'female clothing' in public. Three days earlier, some of them were on their way to *Laugh It Off*, a local play at Guyana's National Cultural Centre in Georgetown that featured 'transvestite' characters. Appearing in court to answer the charges, four of them entered pleas of 'guilty' and three entered pleas of 'not guilty'. Those who pleaded that they were 'not guilty' insisted that they were wearing 'unisex' clothing. They described their wardrobe as including 'passa passa' tight jeans,¹ a jacket with tights, hard jeans and a jacket and tube-top; the case prosecutor insisted that all of the men were dressed in skirts. The four who pleaded guilty were involved in a minor skirmish after being taunted and assaulted, and were aged 20–21. Their clothing descriptions included a jersey and overcoat, a skirt, a designer top, a black dress and a short skirt with a red top. According to some of the arrested persons, police officers photographed them and then demanded that they take off all of their 'female clothes' in front of several police officers. After the detainees stripped, the police told them to bend down to 'search' them, as a way to mock their apparent homosexuality. They were then ordered to put on 'men's clothing'. One of the

people arrested, Seon Clarke, also known as Falatama, said: 'It was one of the most humiliating experiences of my life. I felt like I was less than human.'² In handing down sentences totalling GUY\$45,000 (US\$225), Chief Magistrate Melissa Robertson-Ogle condemned the gender 'confused' men who were not fulfilling their 'proper' role. They were, she said, 'a curse on the family'. 'Go to Church', she implored, 'and give your lives to Christ.'

This case, and a related, respondent, constitutional challenge it prompted, provides a striking demonstration of the rearticulation of racialized and gendered colonial discourses of sexuality as postcolonial nationalism. The series of events that unfolded from the moment the Seven encountered police while in their chosen clothes were, I believe, prefigured by Guyana's experience of colonization under British rule. Against the contentions in much of the public debate in Guyana that characterized the Seven's behaviour as foreign, and those of the police and judiciary as actions taken in defence of Guyanese sovereignty, it is clear that the state, and much of the public, response to the arrests privileged colonial norms and regulations. Three aspects of this episode demonstrate continuities between the work of sex to justify colonial expansion and these contemporary measures taken to control and contain sexual liberation: the application of a law that was imposed by Britain during its colonization of Guyana; the anxieties expressed over men 'cross-dressing'; and Magistrate Robertson-Ogle's moral condemnation of the men on religious grounds.

The law under which the Seven were charged and fined is itself a remnant of the British colonization of Guyana between 1813 and 1966. It was first introduced in Guyana in 1893 as a component of the Indictable Offences Act, and survived sovereign Guyana's constitutional review in 1980. As set out in Section 153(1)(xlvi) of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, Chapter 8:02, the Guyanese criminal code prescribes sanctions against anyone 'being a man, in any public way or public place, for any improper purpose, appears in female attire; or being a women, in any public way or public place, for any improper purpose, appears in male attire...'.³ Other sections of the Guyanese code also criminalize relationships between people of the same sex. Section 351 of the Criminal Law (Offences) Act punishes committing acts of 'gross indecency' with a male person with a two-year prison sentence. Section 352 criminalizes any 'attempt to commit unnatural offenses'. This includes a ten-year prison sentence for any 'male [that] indecently assaults any other male person'. Finally, Section 353 states that 'Everyone who commits buggery, either with a human being or with any other living creature, shall be guilty of felony and be liable to imprisonment for life.'

These laws were developed in service of British colonial expansion. Their purpose was two-fold: to mark the colonized peoples of Guyana, which by 1893 had included the descendants of African slaves and Indian indentures brought by the British, as well as Guyana's indigenous population, as savage; and to

justify the imposition of controls to curb their savagery, as evidenced by sexual and gender expression. A suit brought forward by some of the arrested persons and the Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) lays out how these imperatives continue to be pursued in a law that contravenes commitments enshrined in Guyana's constitution.⁴ On February 19, a notice of motion was filed before Guyana's Supreme Court for redress claiming, among other relief, to have section 153(1)(xlvii) of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, Chapter 8:02, invalidated as irrational, discriminatory, undemocratic, contrary to the rule of law and unconstitutional.⁵ Calling Section 153(1)(xlvii) 'archaic' and 'colonial' in a press statement released to bring attention to the suit, SASOD argued that 'the 2009 "cross-dressing" crackdowns and prosecutions provided clear illustrations of how discriminatory laws are facilitating grave human rights' abuses, in spite of the existence of an entrenched regime of human rights protection in the Guyana constitution'. The motion pleaded that 'the Chief Magistrate was improperly influenced by irrelevant considerations, discriminated against the Male to Female (MtF) Trans on the basis of religion, and violated a fundamental norm of Guyana as a secular state.'⁶

SASOD's complex response drew on contemporary forms of sexual rights advocacy. Its suit invoked the idea of a 'transgendered' subject that has become a mainstay of contemporary LGBT discourse.⁷ 'The first to the fourth named applicants are transgendered persons who are accordingly compelled to dress in the manner of the gender with which they identify,' stated note no. 10 of the motion. An additional note also explained the meaning of transgender,⁸ suggesting that it would be a 'new' term in the Guyanese context. But SASOD was also careful to situate the case within a longer historical context. For example, besides pointing out the colonial roots of the law employed against the Seven, the motion specifically challenged Robertson-Ogle's decision through a greater historical contextualization of religion. The judge had advised the men to 'go to church and give their lives to Christ'.⁹ In a letter to the editor published in *Starbroek News* on 16 February 2009, SASOD said the judge's statement 'should concern every Guyanese':

In a multi-cultural, multi-religious society such as Guyana, all should be entitled to the freedom of religion, which is generally recognized to also include the freedom not to follow any religion. In a democratic society, there should be separation of church and state, and judicial officers in the execution of their duties should exercise impartiality in rendering decisions and professionalism when providing guidance to citizens. The Acting Chief Magistrate's comments imply otherwise, strike as highly inappropriate and raise questions which other local rights groups have recently highlighted, about the appropriate role of religion in state institutions, and fair treatment under the law.

SASOD reiterated this position in the constitutional challenge it filed:

by instructing them to attend church and give their lives to Jesus Christ the Chief Magistrate discriminated against them on the basis of religion, and violated a fundamental norm of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana as a secular State, in contravention of Articles 1, 40, 145 and 149(1) of the Constitution.

An editorial appearing in *Starboek News* on the same day went further to draw examples from other religious traditions present in Guyana where cross-gender dressing is not considered a transgression. 'The sentiment against men who express "feminine" behaviour is very widespread in Guyanese society', the editors acknowledged, 'even though traditional Indian and Eastern religions do not share the hard-line disavowal of such expressions as Christianity and Islam do.' For example, 'In the ancient Indian epic, Mahabarata, a famous warrior is an open cross-dresser who does not elicit any opprobrium. In modern Thailand, there are national beauty contests for transvestites.' The references in the *Starboek* editorial – the ones to India and Africa in particular, since Guyana's largest populations are of Indian and/or African ancestry – is an effective criticism of the judge's invocation of Christianity. They also undermine nationalist arguments pitched with a different rationale. To the nationalist voice that characterizes 'cross-dressing' as foreign, SASOD responds that it is a part of the traditional cultures of at least a large section of the country's population. The reference to 'modern' Thailand's beauty pageants, on the other hand, assuage anxieties that link any non-normative heterosexual practices to either contemporary Euro-American powers or 'primitive' sexual cultures from which most of Guyana's populations came.

Back to the beginning

'Men in skirts' has been viewed as a problem, and been duly punished, in the Americas since the beginning of European colonization of the region. The most cited and circulated example took place in the territory now called Panama, at the start of the 16th century. According to Italian historian Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, in 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovered that

the village of Quarequa was stained by the foulest vice. The king's brothers and a number of other courtiers were dressed as women, and according to the accounts of the neighbours shared the same passion. Vasco ordered forty of them to be torn to pieces by dogs. The Spaniards commonly used their dogs in fighting against naked people, and the dogs threw themselves upon them as though they were wild boars or timid deer. The Spaniards found

these animals as ready to share their dangers as did the people of Colophon or Bastabara, who trained cohorts of dogs for war; for the dogs were always in the lead and never shirked a fight.

(Boorstin 1983: 257)

These performances of gender were condemnable because they upset the then prevailing European disciplinary norms. As conveyed in the historicization of Balboa's massacre at Quaraquera, the spectacle of 'men in skirts' represented to the colonizers evidence of transgressions of gender and sexuality that demanded discipline, including through genocide. To them the skirts were evidence of unmanliness and the possibility of sodomy. It was a theme repeated across the British Empire.

For centuries, narratives of sex and sexuality have been violently wielded to oppress and dehumanize people of the global South. In both the *puhngah* joke and game, homosexual sex is the main iterant, with the submissive man subjected to real or symbolic penetration, and humiliation and subjugation, by the 'winning', active aggressor. The mix of missionaries and 'natives' in the joke further establishes that while natives have some ease with homosexuality, at least in the role of aggressor, Europeans are terrified by it – or at least terrified by a public baring of their homosexual desires. So terrifying is the public witnessing of their engagement in homosexuality or desires for homo-sex that death is a better option for the third missionary. This distinction corresponds with characterizations of the global North and South that precede but were certainly concretized through European colonization. *Puhngah's* natives, both the warriors of the joke and the game, are continuous with colonial representations of people in the global South as primal, sexual savages.

For centuries, people in Africa, Asia and the Americas have been characterized as 'libidinous and shameless monkeys [sic], or baboons' (quoted in Joffe 1999: 20) whose sexualities were proof of their lack of civility. For centuries, evidence of familial and sexual attachments that lay outside normative European heterosexual fantasies were cited as a justification for the colonization of lesser civilized peoples of the global South, including management of their sexuality. For Africans, Asians and indigenous Americans, proof of their civilized humanity lay in their mimicry of European sexual norms, which meant the imposition of heterosexual marriage and the criminalization of sexuality. As Ann Laura Stoler concluded, 'The management of sexuality, parenting, and morality were at the heart of the colonial project' (1992: 550). This management took all kinds of forms, from the spreading of religious doctrine setting out to save sinners, to the passage of legislation that would effectively institutionalize particular forms of heterosexuality. A report published by the ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) in 2008 listed more than 80 countries with forms of anti-sodomy legislation, the majority of whom had simply

inherited British penal codes (Ottosson 2008). These laws, like *puhngah*, are an emphatic reminder of colonialism's perpetual and audacious weight. More than 500 years after the 'first encounter' between native and colonizer, the latter's particular and purposeful racialized anxieties about sex still hang over the existence, and inhabits the psyches, of natives' descendents. It's why the joke gets a laugh, and why the boys play the game. Generations past the official end of colonial rule in many Caribbean states, we are still in the early throes of processing its hold. Colonialism's ultimate charge that we, the people of the third world, are less human than those belonging to the nations that colonized is hard to shake. But in the photography darkroom, the boys offer a remarkable reply to this injury. The game begins with a re-enactment of humiliation ('you are not (hu)man enough') and a demand for proof ('show me that you are (hu)man enough'), but it quickly evolves into a mockery of colonialism's charges, as the boys inhabit – and take pleasure in inhabiting – that which was supposed to reveal their monstrosity, their lack of civility. Theirs was a revolutionary reply; if only leaders of postcolonial states were similarly spirited. Following the fall and/or retreat of colonial powers in the 1950s and 1960s, emergent states were tasked with 'development'. Through reforms mandated by the newly formed Bretton Woods institutions, they were to work towards the kinds of advanced societies of their former colonizers. Not surprisingly, reforms mirrored those of the colonial era, including those related to sexuality. As in the game, reforms could only begin with the problematization of their sexualities. Unlike the game, postcolonial states sought victory not by usurping the old and imposed colonial measures of civility but by aspiring to meet them.

Puhngah gestures toward the redemption that colonialism's conquered peoples still seek, represented not just by the chief's retributive rape but also in the field of desire itself. The boys' attempts to subdue the others in the game is as much an assertion of masculinity as it is an expression of the carry-over of colonial anxieties about, and hierarchies of, sex, 'race' and gender. *Puhngah* embodies the necessary contradiction of engaging colonial imaginations of non-white peoples' monstrosity to simultaneously refuse them. Like the jokesters and boys, administrators in newly emergent states have similarly had to work through complex contradictions in their national development. But, for the most part, theirs has been a far less ambitious or successful anti-colonial gesture than the chief's. In the joke, at least, the tribe turns the imaginations of the coming missionaries against them. The chief's reply forsakes the use of sexuality to gauge civility; 'you think we're savages that need to be saved,' he seems to say. 'I'll show you our savagery.' There's no such retaking of the terms in the application of Guyana's punitive decency laws. Like many other postcolonial nation-building development projects, both reaffirm colonial measures of civility. Through their maintenance of anti-sodomy laws and accompanying staunch defence of heteronationalism, postcolonial states

like the ones described here reveal themselves to still be haunted by colonial representations of their sexualities, and still governed by colonists' measure of civility. The chief throws out the colonial agenda in the joke; postcolonial states still aspire to meet them. It is into these complex histories and tensions that emerging queer actors in international development enter. 'The way "the poor" are represented in development discourse,' Cornwall and Jolly conclude, 'it would seem as if they would want nothing more than the means to feed themselves and support their (heteronormative) families. But,' they add, 'this is not the reality of most people living in poverty the world over' (p. 12). The reality is, as they agree, all people, including poor people, are complex subjects with complex desires and complex histories. We must work from and towards this acknowledgement.

Notes

1. 'Passa passa' refers to a street party culture that is said to have originated in Kingston, Jamaica, with a reputation for sexualized dance performance.
2. SASOD press release, 19 February 2010.
3. Other offences under the same provision reveal its colonial heritage: 'exposing for sale cattle in improper part of town (iv); beating [a] mat in [a] public way in town (vii); cleansing cask, etc. in public way (xl); driving cattle without proper assistance (xv), etc.' The section, which treats various offences mainly in relation to towns, also includes sanctions against discharging a cannon within 300 yards of a dwelling house; beating or shaking a mat in a public place between 7.00 am and 6.00 pm; roller-skating on public roads; and flying kites in Georgetown and New Amsterdam (except for a portion of the beach between imaginary straight lines running due north from the bandstand on the sea wall and Vlissingen Road in the case of the former and the right bank of the Berbice River north of the bandstand on the Esplanade, in the latter).
4. In the suit, SASOD describes itself as

a non-profit organisation whose registered objects are to advocate for the human rights of all persons in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to encourage acceptance of diversity in a plural society, and to work towards the elimination of discrimination particularly on the grounds of sexual orientation and identity as well as gender identity and expression.
5. The five applicants named in the suit included four of the arrested men – Quincy McEwan, Seon Clarke, Joseph Fraser and Seyon Persaud – and the Guyanese NGO SASOD.
6. The motion argued:

153(1)(xlvii) of the *Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act*, Chapter 8:02 of the Laws of Guyana is vague and of uncertain scope as well as irrational and discriminatory on the ground of sex, rendering it a violation of articles 1, 40, 149 and 149D of the Constitution and thereby null, void and of no effect.
7. In its lawsuit, SASOD chose not to use another strategy mentioned by several Guyanese commentators who reframed the episode as gender inequity. That is, if men can't dress like women, why are women who dress like men not similarly punished? One of the respondents to the streeter, Linden Fields, said:

As far as cross-dressing being an offence goes I think it is a ridiculous idea. If men are being charged for cross dressing then women should be charged as well. All men who cross-dress aren't necessarily gay but the majority are and so what if they are? Homosexuality has been around since biblical times and has been there from creation from what is said in the bible.

Another commentator, 'true guyanese', said that while he was not supporting the people arrested, 'PEOPLE WEAR WHAT THEY WANT TO BE COMFORTABLE IN ... JUST LIKE SOME FEMALES LIKE TO WEAR JEANS AND TEE-SHIRTS WITH SNEAKERS ... THAT DON'T MAKE THEM A MAN ... IF THAT THESE PEOPLE LIKE THEN WE NEED TO LEAVE THEM ALONE ...'. 'billp' added: 'What's good for the GOOSE should be good for the Gander. I have [not] seen any women charged under the said laws for wearing Men' attire in public places.'

8. SASOD's deposition included a definition:

Transgender persons refer to people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth, including cross-dressers, female or male impersonators, pre-operative, post-operative or non-operative transsexuals. Trans people may define themselves as female-to-male (FtM, assigned a female biological sex at birth but who have a predominantly male gender identity) or male-to-female (MtF, assigned a male biological sex at birth but who have a predominantly female gender identity); others consider themselves as falling outside binary concepts of gender or sex.

9. Her attitude was reflected in newspaper comments on the story. Toussaint, in the street: 'and at the same time they are messing with God's creation, that is themselves.' Clive Knights, public sector employee:

When God created this world he made man and woman so why should we have a third party? Cross-dressing is that third party's way of stamping their presence in society and should be made an offence. Guyana's moral standard is dropping and our society seems to be accepting homosexuality. I think this is a spiritual war between the devil and God's children.

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8.3

Pink Space and the Pleasure Approach to Sexuality and the Development Industry in China

Xiaopei He

Introduction

In 2008 I attended a workshop organized by Andrea Cornwall and Susie Jolly at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Brighton, UK. The workshop discussed the links between sexuality and development industry, analysed the impacts of development on sexuality, and looked at how to engage in both fields in more constructive ways. The many activists and academics gathered at the event shared their knowledge, offered their insights and provided analysis. I found it theoretically and practically inspiring and stimulating for my work at Pink Space, a sexual rights NGO in China.

Pink Space believes that sexual rights are for everyone, whether you are poor, gay or living with disabilities. Much of our work is with marginalized people who are oppressed due to their gender and sexuality. We work with people with disabilities, including mental disabilities, women with HIV, wives of gay men, transgender sexworkers, and also lesbians, gay, bisexual transgender and queer people.

We face many challenges and frustrations in our work, including people saying that poor people need only food or jobs and that sexual rights are 'too much' of a luxury for them. We are also confronted by the mainstream development understanding of sexuality as dangerous or problematic 'issues' that have to be fixed or solved, ignoring the side of sexuality that is about pleasure and fun. We agree with Cornwall and Jolly that development seldom challenges heterosexual norms and is comfortably embedded in heteronormativity:

Even though the relation to sexuality should be obvious in many development concerns, such as population, gender, and HIV/AIDS, these linkages often remain unseen and implicit... few recognize the connections that exist between sexuality and all of development's sectors, or the extent to which

sexuality, like gender, affects much more of our lives than our sex lives. Nor is there enough recognition that these are issues that affect us all.

(Cornwall Jolly 2009: 5, 12)

These issues we face everyday in the field as we try to work differently while working on sexuality in development.

In this chapter I address three issues that Cornwall and Jolly's article raises about how development can engage with sexuality. I analyse Pink Space activities and films in order to look at how a pleasure approach to sexuality can empower poor marginal women and why development needs to challenge heterosexual norms.

I argue first that sexuality is a basic human right for everyone and that development should ensure that sexuality is inclusive. Second, I explore the positive sexuality approach and how it empowers women by recognizing their agency and power, and overcomes negative 'victim' approaches to sexuality in development work. Third, I look at how development assumes heterosexual norms and disadvantages poor, gay and disabled people on the margins even further.

Recognizing sexual rights as basic human rights in development

Too often, development work treats sexuality as sexual minority issue, ignoring the sexual desires and needs of the poor. The right to food, jobs, healthcare and education is recognized but poor peoples' right to sexuality is ignored.

Cornwall and Jolly state:

Some see 'sexuality' as something that only concerns sexual minorities – and reason that development ought to be concerned about the majority of poor people, not a barely visible minority. Others see 'sexuality' as about sex, and see sex as something private, embarrassing, outside the scope of development intervention. Others still see 'sexuality' as being about something that's positively frivolous when compared to the urgent problems like hunger or climate change.

(2009: 5–6)

In Pink Space, we see sexuality as a fundamental starting point for development work. Poor people need not only food, jobs, education and healthcare but also, importantly, sexual desire. We work with people with mental disabilities, many of whom are the poorest of the poor. Pink Space began working with people with mental disabilities in 2009, when we visited a mental institute in Beijing suburb for three weeks in order to conduct art workshops. We aimed to explore the sexual desires and needs of people with mental disabilities, how

they express feelings and emotions, and what they do to fulfil their sexual desires and needs.

The institute had 12 residents. The director of the institute had been puzzled about how to acknowledge and 'restrain' the sexual desires of people with mental disabilities. It was after she invited Pink Space to the institute and expressed her concerns that we decided to run art workshops there in order to understand the issues of sexuality and disability.

We worked with Jose Abad, who is a gay artist with a disability, and who has immense experience of using arts and working with people with different kinds of disability. We designed a three-week art workshop using dance therapy, cutting paper, dolls, a fashion show and eating feasts. We documented the workshop through photographs and made a film, *Love You Too* (2009).

Before we entered the institute, we asked the permission of the participants or their guardians to take photos for the purpose of documenting the workshop. Some parents did not give the permission for their children to attend the workshop. The director of the institute felt that this was due to their shame of having children with mental disabilities and the fear of disclosure.

However, that did not stop their children from participating. A 22-year-old resident whose father refused to let him attend our workshop insisted on sitting in the class everyday, and refused to leave the workshop each time the staff tried to drag him away. He succeeded eventually and stayed for the entire event.

Every morning, by 6.00 am, three hours before the workshop started, participants would surround our dormitory and shout through the window: 'Teacher, when are we going to have our class?' Each day, all the participant would sit in the classroom long before the workshop was due to begin, waiting for it to start.

Normally the institute residents do not have regular classes. They sit in the yard or in their room everyday, watching TV or playing jigsaw puzzles. No wonder they were longing for classes so badly. One participant was overjoyed and could not stop jumping when we had our dancing movements in the first class. He held my hand and jumped for a long, long time. My wrist still hurt a couple of months later.

Because they express their needs and feelings differently, people with mental disabilities are not considered the same as others, and their basic rights as sexual beings are ignored. There is little space for people with disabilities to express or learn about their sexual desires, let alone to satisfy them.

The art tools we used in our workshop helped the participants to express their desires and bodily pleasures. We brought magazines and asked participants to cut out the images and photos to express their desires of 'family'. One young man cut out photos of a handful of handsome young men to form his ideal family. He called one good-looking young man his father, another his mother, and the most good-looking young man was himself. A woman cut out a photo

of a house without people but with pretty flowers in front and said that it was her new home. We learnt later that she had been forced to marry an older man she disliked before her father passed away and that she refused to live with him.

We received clothes as donations from friends for the workshop. Participants were encouraged to dress up in the clothes they liked. People with mental disabilities or who live in and out of institutes have very little choice about the clothes they wear. Choosing clothes became a very exciting activity for the participants. A young girl wore high heels for the first time. Stumbling to a mirror, she did not speak a word but showed a victory sign to the mirror, and made a long, gentle cheering noise.

We created a walkway for the participants to model on a fashion 'ramp'. It was moving to see them walking with their heads held high in the clothes, shoes and wigs they had chosen. They showed off their beauty and their empowered selves to each other and to the camera.

We also had a tantalizing feast for the participants with fruits and cakes. Even though some participants were unable to speak a full sentence, they could express their excitement, enjoyment and pleasure to see and taste the delicious food on the table. A young girl who was usually silent kept calling out the name of another participant and kept feeding him the food she chose for him. Other participants started feeding each other. One energetic man began putting cake and cream on other people's faces, and the other participants also started putting the cream on each other. The feast was full of emotion and fun and they all showed great satisfaction at the end.

With food and other materials, these people with disabilities expressed their sexual desires and needs; they used art, food and clothes to express their desires and emotions – desires and needs that are too often ignored and overlooked by development work.

As Cornwall and Jolly state, the way 'the poor' are represented in development discourse, it would seem as if they would want nothing more than the means to feed themselves and support their (heteronormative) families. But this is not the reality of most people living in poverty the world over (2009: 9).

Poor peoples' right to study, right to choose and right to jobs are denied, but also their right to express, to desire and to express their sexuality are denied and they are left unfulfilled as sexual human beings.

Cornwall and Jolly argue:

It is not just that sexual rights are fundamental to any other rights after all, without rights over our own bodies, we can't enjoy even the most basic of human rights. It is that for all of us, whether we are poor or rich, however we define ourselves in terms of our gender and sexual preferences, sexuality matters.

(2009: 9)

Denying one's sexual desire is denying one's humanity. If development does not recognize the desires and needs of people with disabilities, this silencing leads to discrimination, violation and deprivation. We believe that development should be about enabling people to express their desires as well as access economic resources and political representation.

Empowering women in development with positive sexuality

As Cornwall and Jolly observe, development work seldom deals with women's sexuality:

Mainstream approaches to women's empowerment seem to have left behind one of the most important aspects of the debates that spurred feminist engagement with development in the 1970s and 1980s: sexuality.

(2009: 2)

In the Chinese context, either development fails to deal with sexuality or it is about rape, violence, trafficking and sexually transmitted diseases, confirming Cornwall and Jolly's observation of the negative presentation of sexuality in development:

Women are portrayed as victims of men: objects of male desire, of rape, of unwanted sexual attention. Women's sexual agency never comes into the picture; we never hear about women desiring, pursuing or enjoying sex with men, let alone with each other.

(2009: 2)

As Stella Nyanzi (Chapter 8.1) states, 'The pleasure, power and progress available within sexuality are missed and thus dropped off the radar because they do not fit within development framework.' The negative framing of sexuality in development automatically assigns women as passive objects and powerless victims, and leaves little space for women to articulate their desires, to have agency and power, and let alone to claim their sexual rights.

Cornwall and Jolly argue that 'if this delicate – taboo thing – sexual pleasure could be negotiated by women, then almost anything can be negotiated and contend that women's pursuit of their own sexual pleasure can be a pathway of empowerment' (2009: 10).

Empowering women requires a reframing of sexuality in order to reflect and embrace the positive side of sexuality. I present below Pink Space's work with women with HIV in order to show how a pleasure-based approach makes it possible to allow women to talk about sex and sexuality positively, rather than seeing women as victims of negative experiences of sexuality.

In 2008, Pink Space began working in Beijing with a group of women with HIV. We brought together women with marginalized gender and sexual identities to talk about their sexual desires and experiences, and share their views and lives. Over time we held many Pink Space meetings inviting HIV positive women, sexworkers, transgender people, wives of gay men, lesbians and bisexual women to discuss together their sexual desires and pleasures. We observed that just creating a space to share their thoughts was empowering.

In our first Pink Space meeting, we brought together women with HIV, lesbians and bisexual women. For many of the women with HIV, this was the first time they had met a lesbian, and vice versa. We first encouraged the women with HIV to ask any questions they had about lesbianism and bisexuality, and also urged the lesbian and bisexual women to answer the questions (He 2005).

The lesbians and bisexual women shared their feelings, experiences and practices of sex, love, relationships and desiring women or men. Many candid questions were asked, such as: Why do women love women? How do women have sex with women? Can women have orgasms without a penis? What is bisexuality? Can lesbian women love women with HIV and have relationships with them? How about children?

A bisexual woman spoke about how she had thought of herself as straight before she accidentally entered a lesbian bar in Beijing and fell in love with a woman there. She told us that she finds both men and women attractive, and follows her own feelings when it comes to romance or sexual relations. A lesbian couple who were seeking a sperm donor spoke of their hope of giving birth to a child. A woman with HIV told how she had in the past sometimes had feelings for other women. Another woman with HIV spoke about how she still dreamt about having sex with her late husband, who had passed away more than six years ago. She told us about the discrimination she faced as a widow, and how she had to marry a man for whom she had no feelings. She said she used a boiled carrot wrapped with cling film as a dildo, and she would reach orgasm calling out her late husband's name. She locked her new husband out of her bedroom. Her refusal to have sex with him led to domestic violence, injuries to her arms and legs, and broken locks and windows in her bedroom. Another woman with HIV after finding out that she was infected was sent away from her family, but her ex-husband wanted to stay with her. They had regular sex without condoms. He said he wanted to have what she had and die together with her.

Many women found that Pink Space meetings created the place to share joy, laughter and moments of freedom. An HIV-positive woman stated with an emotional sigh: 'This meeting has brought us laughter, which does not happen so often.' Laughing can release tension and pain, and give people courage and confidence. One day after sharing stories, she told me that being HIV positive is better than being a wife of a gay man, as wives of gay men could not enjoy

a sex life or share their experiences with others as they were ashamed of their husbands' sexual identity. She felt being HIV positive allowed her to enjoy her sex life and share emotions with her partner. She told me that she had advanced liver cancer and had six months to live, and that she wanted to do something meaningful in her limited time.

I was amazed by her attitude towards life and death. I suggested that she should tell her life story. She said that she did not write, so I provided her with a digital recorder, a digital camera and a video camera. She began to make a voice and video diary. I helped to transcribe the recordings and created an online blog for her.

I visited her every day to listen to her life story, either at home or hospital. I found out that she did not tell her son that she had HIV, nor that she was dying of cancer. I tried to persuade her to tell her son so that he could see his mother one last time and avoid any regrets, but she was fearful that he would be unable to take the stigma of AIDS and that it could ruin his future. In order to protect her son, she would make a sacrifice and not see him even for one last time. It became my goal when visiting her every day to persuade her to tell her son that she was dying. I never saw her son. Much later, her partner told me she never had a son. After her death, my colleague and I tried to understand her story and wondered how to make a film of her life. We were full of doubt about the 'lie' of protecting her son. Was it her imagination or a lie? If it was a lie, why did she tell it?

My initial thought was to tell the story of a woman with AIDS who was not afraid of dying. However, 'not afraid of dying' could not bear the weight of her story. During the editing process, we fell into a trap regarding 'truth': we could not tell when she was telling the truth and when she was fabricating a story. And if it was fabrication, we couldn't understand why she was doing it. Our editing reached an *impasse*. After two years of reflection, we finally understood: this was not a record of her life; rather, it was her 'deducing' her own life story. She seized the power to tell a story, decided which figures would appear in it and even arranged dramatic events. We were no longer entangled in the question of truth or falsehood but followed her wish to express her suppressed, or as yet unsatisfied, desires.

People often think that the director and camera operator are in complete control while actors are in a passive position, and that the researcher has absolute authority while those being researched have an inferior status. But this woman, suffering from terminal liver cancer, overturned this truth. She grasped the microphone and the video camera to tell a story that controlled the director and dominated the researcher.

People often think that LGBT people suffer from the deepest oppression and vilification. Instead, this woman told her story about people you have never heard of with their deeply buried desires. People are oppressed only to

the extent that they have no voice. People think that the Chinese economy has developed and society has progressed. Her film reveals the existence of the urban poor: illiterate, unemployed, drug-addicted, violent; dumped by the rapid pace of development and ensnared tightly by sickness and exclusion.

People think death is terrifying, but this terminally ill woman could laugh about it. How could she have such power? I recall at the first Pink Space meeting she came to, she seldom talked. She was quiet but smiled when she heard others making sex jokes or telling sexy stories. The last Pink Space meeting she came to, she heard wives of gay men sharing their tears and their desires and longing for sex, care and emotion. She did a vocal solo of 'This is Love' at a restaurant and won applause from all the participants who came to the meeting.

The space for women's sexuality helped women like her to feel empowered and to reach a point where they could produce their life story. We finally made the film *The Lucky One*,¹ which is now online with over 100,000 hits. It was selected to be shown at the 10th Chinese Independent Film Festival in 2013.

A positive approach brought a positive result. Our work shows that women with marginalized sexual identities love to talk about sexuality freely and positively, which is not only fun and empowering but also helps to build alliances, confidence and movements that allow them to advocate for their human rights in general and sexual rights in particular.

It also shows that development work on sexuality should not assign women the role of victim. Women with agency and power can offer so much more. Sexuality has many aspects. When development deals with rape, harassment and trafficking, it has to recognize also the pleasurable side of sexuality, and how to take it into account for the purpose of empowerment.

Challenging heterosexual norms in development

Why must development work challenge heterosexual norms? Cornwall and Jolly indicate that

Those norms may include active proscription of alternative forms of sexual expression, as in countries where same-sex sexual expression is stigmatized and 'illegal'; and 'the development industry' is deeply embedded with heteronormativity, full of institutionalisation of heterosexual norms.

(2009: 7)

From the work of Pink Space with lesbians, we found that if development work does not challenge heterosexual norms, it will put already disadvantaged people into an even more marginalized positions. Pink Space's film *Our Marriages – When Lesbians Marry Gay Men* shows how heterosexual norms oppress people, homosexuals or otherwise.

In our work we encounter lesbians and gay men who enter into 'contract marriages without sex' for the purpose of alleviating social and family pressures of getting married. Such contract marriages are widely practised nowadays by lesbians and gay men in China. Lesbians and gay men meet online or offline, negotiate the terms and conditions of their marriages, and perform the weddings once they reach agreement. The oral or written marriage agreements usually state no sex, no emotional and financial sharing, and whether or not living together or having children.

Such contract marriages have received much criticism. Some women say that loving women but involving men in their lives is not feminist. Some gay and lesbian activists and organizations say homosexuals should come out rather than using marriage to remain in the closet. Others who believe in marriage say contract marriage is simply a cheat. And others use Western theories or queer theories to criticize the Chinese practice of 'contract marriage'.

Pink Space spent two years following four lesbians who were looking for gay husbands, witnessing their weddings with gay men, and listening to what they have to say about why lesbians and gay men enter into contract marriages. We produced the film *Our Marriages – When Lesbians Marry Gay Men*² in order to explore the institution of marriage and how heterosexual marriage norms create inequality.

As one lesbian states in the film, being a lesbian is unacceptable in her family. Her girlfriend had to vanish whenever her parents showed up in their home. Another lesbian said that in Chinese society it is simply intolerable for someone to be single, so involuntarily she felt obliged to meet numerous men introduced to her by her family, relatives or neighbours.

One lesbian speaks in the film about how her gay husband didn't think that he needed a marriage, as he had already come out to his parents and took his boyfriend home. But since he is not from the same city, his career and promotion required him to have a local resident permit (*hu kou*), so he needed to marry a woman. Also, for his emotional life, he needed to show to his boyfriend that he was allowed to stay in the same city, which required him to have the local resident permit, so he needed to marry a woman. Therefore he married a lesbian to obtain the privileges, rights, benefits and opportunities that only belong to married heterosexuals. Another lesbian explained that she had to have a huge wedding ceremony so that her family would not lose face. Though her wedding ring was chosen by her girlfriend, it was placed on her finger by her gay husband at their wedding.

These experiences show how heterosexual norms and the institution of marriage are deeply rooted in society. Heterosexual marriage is a currency that brings many benefits: promotion, job security, relationships, social welfare and respect, as well as other social and economic advantages. Marriage can buy social respect and citizenship rights. Those who do not marry or cannot marry

are second-class citizens, excluded from economic benefits and social respect. Marriage determines who is included and who is excluded, representing deep social discrimination and inequality.

Marriage enforces the norm of heteronormativity, but the LGBT movement, by demanding same-sex marriage, also reinforces the social norm that sex should only happen within marriages that, in the end, are not so different from heteronormative marriages. The four Chinese lesbians who married gay men challenge norms and show ways for development to work on inclusive sexuality.

Cornwall and Jolly describe heteronormativity, citing a participant at the IDS workshop:

conformity and non-conformity may go hand in hand; in some contexts, with some people, we may find ourselves conforming completely to match their expectations and find favour, while in others, we may actively and openly contest what we perceive as repressive social norms. Some people can choose whether to conform or not. Others are forced to 'choose' particular kinds of relationships, or forms of sexual expression, because there is no acceptable alternative in the societies in which they live.

(2009: 7)

LGBT people, asexual people, single people, divorced people, widows, sexworkers and their clients, people with HIV or disabilities, and those who are unable to marry or find it difficult to marry are excluded from social respect and economic benefits, and ultimately they lose their full citizenship. The appeal for same-sex marriage is a main agenda item in current LGBT movements in the West. On the surface it is about the fight for marriage rights for LGBT people. However, it discriminates as with heteronormativity by excluding people who are unable or unwilling to marry. Development needs to question the institution of marriage because of its inherent discrimination of those outside the institution. The film shows the importance of challenging the norms of the institution of marriage, recognizing how they create inequality and social injustice, which bring social exclusion and discrimination. The development industry needs to recognize the institution of marriage as the problem, and to challenge inequality between married and unmarried people, instead of providing support for LGBT campaigns for same-sex marriage.

Conclusion

I have drawn upon the activities and films of Pink Space in order to show how development needs to take up sexuality in its work for human rights, understanding sexual rights not as a luxury or extra but as important as food,

healthcare and education. Treating poor people as sexual beings with desires will enable development to bring about a better life for socially and culturally marginalized people. Recognizing positive sexuality and a pleasure-based approach to sexuality recognizes people's agency and power. As development starts to challenge heterosexual norms we will be able to create a more just society where people can practise their desires in all kinds of relationships.

Notes

1. *The Lucky One* is online at http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzQ0OTUwNjIw.html, accessed 1 August 2014.
2. The film won an honourable mention in the Berlin ifab film festival 2014. It has been screened in the UK, the US, Thailand and Germany, and it is due to be screened in Taiwan, Myanmar, Pakistan and India. The film is not online, respecting the wishes of one of the protagonists.

References

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8.4

Sexuality and the Development Industry: Reflections Six Years On

Susie Jolly and Andrea Cornwall

Introduction

Six years ago we published the piece on sexuality and the development industry reproduced here, coming out of a workshop in 2008. We argued that the development industry makes sexuality invisible, and subjects it to implicit assumptions, even in such areas that obviously intersect with sexuality, such as population, gender and HIV and AIDS. We described the heteronormativity and gender stereotypes in development, with people being assumed to all fit into two categories – men and women – with women being portrayed as powerless victims and men as brutish predators. We spoke of how the narratives of empowerment and subordination assume a heterosexual subject, and privilege normative models of family founded on the heterosexual married couple.

We called for the development industry to engage more constructively with sexuality. We cautioned against an ‘add LGBT and stir’ approach and called instead to challenge the fundamental power issues of heteronormativity. We advocated pleasure-based development, not to make pleasure the new orthodoxy and turn it into a prescription but to restore possibilities for pleasure to people whose sexualities might be denied, such as young women, people living with HIV, people with disabilities and older people. And we called for recognition that women’s sexuality not only consists of oppressive experiences but also encompasses possibilities for pleasure. Above all, we argued that development needs to bring greater well-being and better lives for people, not just economically but also in terms of freedom, fairness and respect for difference, including how we define our gender and sexual preferences and how we choose to live out our sexualities.

Six years later, what has changed? For a start, our positions have changed. We have both left the IDS. Susie has moved one step into the development industry and is currently a donor at the Ford Foundation Beijing Office supporting sexuality education in China. Andrea has moved one step away from

the development industry and is now Head of the School of Global Studies at Sussex University. However, we maintain our views on the need for new perspectives on sexuality in the development industry.

The development industry has changed. We use the term 'development industry' to describe an amorphous and contradictory set of international funding streams and associated institutions, including official development assistance, private foundations, faith-based funders, new philanthropy and corporate contributions. Over the past six years, sexuality-related issues have become more visible in this set of bodies. At the same time, heteronormativity endures, although sometimes taking new forms. At this juncture we are delighted to have this opportunity to republish our piece and be in dialogue with three participants from the original conference on which it was based: Nyanzi, Gosine and He. They bring an activist and academic perspective to this issue, and also share contextual factors from their different environments.

What has changed?

Greater visibility of sexuality-related issues – but opposition as vocal as proponents

Gosine argues that sexuality is no longer missing from development institutions policies, as sexual rights have gained increasing legitimacy globally. Indeed, there have been major changes. Both LGBT and advocates for women's SRHRs have fought for and gained platforms in discussions of the post-2015 agendas. In October 2014, the Sexual Rights Initiative, together with national activists, made submissions at the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council on issues including sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to abortion and contraception, sexual orientation and gender identity, and sexuality education. In September 2014, the UN Human Rights Council adopted resolutions on female genital mutilation and on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the US, Obama's first term saw the lifting of the global gag rule on abortion and suspension of aid conditionalities requiring the promotion of abstinence, although these changes may be more indicative of the US political context than of a shift in the development industry itself. In 2013 the Supreme Court ruled that the anti-prostitution pledge was unconstitutional. In November 2014 the US Department of State and USAID hosted a conference entitled Inclusive Development and LGBTI and Human Rights, bringing together over 30 countries' agencies, bilaterals and multilaterals. UNDP and USAID have together launched the initiative Being LGBT in Asia.

Yet international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda currently under discussion have failed to take more progressive stances than in the 1990s. For example, paragraph 96

of the Beijing Platform for Action, which asserts women's rights to control their sexualities, and definitions of reproductive health as including relationship satisfaction coming out of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, have not been affirmed or exceeded in subsequent official agreements. Visibility has increased but corresponding policies and action on sexuality are yet to come. And there is an ever more vocal chorus of opposition to sexual rights from Christian Right organizations and conservative states.

Sporadic discussions of pleasure amid the overall persistent understanding of women's sexuality as primarily a site of violence and disease

International development organizations continue to consider women's sexuality primarily as a site of violence. A Google search for 'women sexuality international NGOs' or 'women sexuality United Nations' (31 August 2014) generates several items on rape and violence at the top of each list. Indeed, this is an urgent problem. One in three women has experienced either physical or sexual violence from their partner, and 7% of women experience sexual assault by a non-partner at some point in their lives.¹ Nevertheless, subsuming the entirety of women's sexuality under a rubric of violence and disease does not help solve the problem. Instead, it reinforces stereotypes of women as always victims, without possibilities of agency in relation to their own desires, and dovetails with discourses advocating women's chastity and young people's abstinence, to further disempower these populations (Jolly 2010). Fundamentally, the frames and funding have not shifted. The world is more visibly insecure than five years ago, and high-profile incidents of violence against women and girls remind us of the persistent and urgent nature of this challenge. Our argument still stands that it is more effective to address violence with a comprehensive approach to sexuality that raises the possibilities for non-violent relationships. However, this argument may be harder to hear in the current environment.

Nevertheless, sporadic challenges are made to the 'women's sexuality = violence and disease' paradigm – for example, some discussions on the Oxfam website,² and in *The Guardian* newspaper.³ The Gates Foundation is funding the design and development of more pleasurable condoms.⁴ And a brave and exceptional group of individuals and organizations on the frontlines in the global South and North are using pleasure and positive approaches to sexuality as an entry point to empower women and marginalized communities. These include sexuality workshops with rural women's rights activists in North India; human rights training in Turkey that teaches women that sexual pleasure is their human right; and using comic theatre to change attitudes to sexual health and gender norms in Mexico.⁵

Xiaopei gives examples of the thirst for pleasure and discussions of sensuality, playfulness, love and romance that she encountered in a home for people

with mental disabilities in Beijing. She and Jose Abad, a queer disabled advocate from Spain, stayed in the home for three weeks to run workshops on sexuality for the residents. Every morning at 6.00 am, three hours before the workshops started, participants would crowd round their dorm in eager anticipation. She remarks how these highly marginalized people with mental disabilities were often considered to have other priorities than sexuality, or to need only protection from sexual abuse. They were desperate to engage with topics of sexual pleasure. She also tells stories of HIV-positive women enjoying sex and enjoying talking about sex, which were shared and experienced in Pink Space workshops, and how empowering and affirming these workshops were. She testifies to the power of positive approaches to sexuality, and illustrates the inaccuracy of the development stereotypes of women's sexuality as being a site of only suffering.

LGBT: More resources but problems in action

On LGBT there are real changes. In 2007, for LGBTI rights in the global South and East, funding totalled just over US\$10 million, with 328 grants made, and the largest grants going to LGBTI groups based in the global North but working internationally. In 2010 some 713 grants totalling over US\$35 million were made to support LGBTI in the global South and East, and of the 11 largest grants, 5 went to organizations in Africa, 2 to organizations in Latin America and 4, one of which was for regranting, went to organizations based in the global North (Fundress for LGBTQ issues 2011). Resources are unevenly spread, however, with more funding going to organizations led by gay men than to those led by lesbians, trans or bisexuals. And funding for HIV, which has constituted a potential channel for sexuality-related funding since the 1990s, started to flatten with the global economic crisis in 2008. Nevertheless, total funding remains at a completely different scale from that for LGBT, with US\$7.9 billion disbursed for international HIV support by donor governments (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and UN AIDS 2013). Overall, resources for HIV or LGBT remain a small proportion of international development funding. Official development assistance reached US\$134.8 billion in net disbursements in 2013 (OECD 2014). And with the likely increase in relative importance of corporate contributions and new philanthropy, new funding patterns will emerge.

We welcome more resources and visibility for these issues. The shift to greater visibility of LGBT has been hugely important symbolically and can bring strength and legitimacy to LGBT movements. In Beijing, one of us was recently approached by a lesbian organization with the question: 'Each of the main LGBT groups [in China] have their own UN agency. Do you think we can get UN women?' This was a question which positively showed their perception of proactive possibilities within these relationships.

At the same time, we also wish to monitor the new normativities that emerge. The World Bank has launched a programme to examine the costs

of homophobia. Arguments about these costs echo instrumentalist arguments that we should invest in women because it is good for the economy/families. Such arguments may be of value in that they may convince some of their audiences who respond to economic framings, but they also reinforce problematic assumptions, such as that gays are good only as long as they contribute to the neoliberal economy, and that economic underperformance is due to homophobia rather than to a warped world economic system.

Ways of being LGBT may be imposed by donors with Western models of sexuality. For example, how does the Swedish International Development Agency combine its support for LGBT with its abolitionist stance on sexwork when the reality is that transactional sex is an important livelihood strategy for many people who are marginalized on account of their sexuality (e.g., single women, LGBT people) in the global South and North? Anecdotal evidence suggests that this contradiction can be mitigated in certain circumstances by intelligent and committed implementers. However, they do not always have the leeway or desire to do so.

He in her essay gives an example of an indigenous formulation of queer relationships that may challenge LGBT models promoted by some Western donors. She describes marriages of convenience between lesbians and gay men, which could be understood as a surrender to homophobia, or a pragmatic use of the marital contract with similar pros and cons that it offers to heterosexuals. She describes how one man married a lesbian in order to gain a local resident's permit so that he could stay with his boyfriend and demonstrate his commitment to him. How do donors respond to such formulations? A lesbian activist who created a website for gay men and lesbians to find each other for this kind of marriage applied to take part in a study tour to the US funded by a US donor organization. She was declined. She asked the contact in China why she did not get in and the off-the-cuff reply was that that her activities did not fit with their goals. He calls for the development industry to recognize the institution of marriage as the problem, and to challenge inequality between married and unmarried people, instead of providing support for LGBT campaigns for same-sex marriage.

At the same time as increasing visibility for LGBT in development, Nyanzi alerts us to new repressive legal regimes in Uganda, Nigeria and India in relation to LGBT, and the contentious politics of withdrawing development aid and bilateral funding in response to these repressive regimes. These regimes both build on colonial history and draw strength from contemporary US Christian evangelism. Several donors have funded documentation of the role of American evangelicals in promoting homophobic laws in Uganda.⁶ This is an intelligent use of development funding to address issues of sexuality and Western imperialism. Calls for the withdrawal of development funding as a sanction do the opposite: setting the North up as an arbiter for civilized

sexualities, and withdrawing funding from people of all sexualities in the global South.

Trans* visibility – opening a space for change

Gosine reminds us of the continuities between colonialism and development's disciplining of sexuality and ordering of gender. He cites British colonial laws in Guyana which penalize men's dressing as women and sexual relations between men, a law which was used against seven Guyanese people in 2009, accusing them of being men dressed in 'female clothing' in public. The late Giuseppe Campuzano, in a previous essay, outlined a parallel trajectory in colonizing and development forces' imposition of gender binaries in Latin America (Campuzano 2010). Nyanzi also cites several alternative gender categories indigenous in non-Western cultures suppressed by subsequent colonial development. Gosine examines the ways the Guyanese state, in the 2009 incident, sought to uphold these colonial gender orders to demonstrate they have become 'the kinds of advanced societies of their former colonizers'. Gosine also outlines the ways that a Guyanese sexual rights organization attempted to defend the seven persons with a nuanced response to the charges that engaged with nationalist anxieties, evoking diverse gender expressions as both part of indigenous culture and part of the contemporary cosmopolitan world.

The increasing visibility of the trans* movement internationally may be shifting some of the essentialisms with which discourses of LGBT and women tend to be plagued, with contributions from organizations such as SASOD being a key part of this change. And the messages are reaching the edges of the development industry. In China, the UNDP recently hosted an event to celebrate International Transgender Day. In Berlin in December 2013, Global Action for Trans* Equality, Open Society Foundations and Wellspring Advisors partnered to host a convening of 22 trans* and intersex activists with 24 foundation and bilateral donors. Susie was happily able to take part.

Even trans* can be co-opted by normativities and colonialist dynamics. At the Berlin meeting, an Argentinian activist questioned why US agencies supporting LGBT continue to take people on study trips to the US when countries such as Argentina are far advanced over the US in terms of laws. And one US trans* activist and development professional at the conference actually described Africa as 'uncivilized', and framed the problem as simply a lack of access to gender-affirming surgery and legal possibilities to change sex, with no suggestion that a diversity of gender expressions might be needed.

However, the conference conclusions overall were highly constructive, including recommendations for donors to support peer-led funding models; enable local communities to identify their own language, problems and

solutions, and to allow their priorities to drive funding strategies; and document histories of gender non-conforming identities and non-binary gender expressions.⁷ We hope that the development industry moves beyond the gender binary without simply scripting a normative 'third gender' category of trans*. If these diversities could be taken beyond the issue of transgender and applied to allow the development industry to go beyond the stereotyped and rigid gender categorizations for all people, and focus instead on challenging discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual rights for people of all genders, this would be an amazing step forward. There are hints of such possibilities. For example, the WHO website describes how 'There are a number of cultures... in which greater gender diversity exists and sex and gender are not always neatly divided along binary lines such as male and female or homosexual and heterosexual.'⁸

Conclusion

Over the past six years, sexuality has become more visible and more spoken about in relation to development, by both rights advocates and opponents. Sporadic challenges emerge to the paradigm of women's sexuality as only about violence and disease, but the overall framework endures. Resources for LGBT rights have increased, but so also have resources for homophobic campaigns, although the amounts are hard to track (Horn 2009). Even when LGBT rights advocates gain the upper hand, new normativities risk emerging. Will LGBT, particularly the possibilities illuminated by trans*, be incorporated into a gender normative and colonialist tradition of development, or will they break through the gender binaries and neoliberal frameworks to contribute to real alternatives? At present, heteronormativity continues to define the ways in which the development industry responds to issues of sexuality, categorizing LGBT in one corner – presuming their sexuality to be fixed status rather than fluid self-expression – and everyone else in the other. Those who are in the unmarked category of the sexual majorities are assumed to conform to a set of normative ideals of heterosexuality, including marriage. Rather than focus on the effects of discrimination, and the structural violence that it produces and is produced by, there is an emphasis on identities and on individual freedoms. Vital as the right to relationships of our own choosing is, it is crucial not to lose sight of these structural inequalities and of the very material implications of discrimination. Six years on, these come, for us, into ever more clear view as a priority for activism and action that can make sexual rights for all an issue that is not restricted to those who identify with a particular identity but which is about being fully human and living life with dignity.

Notes

We would like to dedicate this piece to the memory of the inspirational Peruvian artist-activist Giuseppe Campuzano.

1. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/violence-women-girls/en/>.
2. <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/lets-talk-about-sex-why-sexual-satisfaction-pleasure-should-be-on-the-international-development-agenda/> (accessed 2 December 2014).
3. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/feb/18/sexuality-and-development-best-bits> (accessed 2 December 2014).
4. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2013/11/Gates-Foundation-Awards-Grants-to-Test-Ideas> (accessed 2 December 2014).
5. We bring together these and other examples in *Women, Sexuality and the Political Power of Pleasure* (Cornwall and Jolly 2013), and indeed many of the contributors to that book took part in the Sexuality and the Development Industry workshop we held in 2008, and many have been grantees of the Ford Foundation.
6. For example, the film *God Loves Uganda*, supported by Ford Foundation, ITVS and Open Society Foundations among others.
7. 'Advancing Trans* Movements Worldwide: Lessons from a Dialogue between Funders and Activists Working on Gender Diversity', conference report – 3–4 December 2013 – Berlin, Germany, http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/advancing-trans*-movements-worldwide-20140917.pdf (accessed 6 January 2015).
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Section IX

Visions, Hopes, Futures

9.0

Feminism as Transformational Politics: Towards Possibilities for Another World

Peggy Antrobus

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Consequences of September 11th

Another world is possible . . . but only if we seriously address the intolerance and injustice that generate the crises that plague the world today. There is a high level of consensus about these crises. Indeed, they are so well-recognized that they have the familiarity of a mantra: increasing gap between rich and poor within and between nations and the spread of poverty; increasing violence at all levels; the spread of religious fundamentalism and attacks on women's rights; HIV/AIDS; continuing environmental degradation. All of these were evident before September 11. The attacks on targets in the USA and the US-led response simply serve to exacerbate them while distracting attention and deflecting resources from them.¹

But the attack and response of the USA and its partners also served to shed a powerful light on the linkages that lie at the heart of our crises. These include the links between political struggles for the control of resources and the military might used to prevail in these struggles, including the use of terrorism to achieve political and military ends. There is also the link between terrorism and the use of religious fundamentalism to exercise the control over people that would make them willing accomplices in these political missions. Finally, there is the link between religious fundamentalism and the control of women.

This article is adapted from a paper on "Feminism as a transformational politics:

Women's leadership now", presented at the Department of International Development Studies, St Mary's University, Halifax, Canada, 21 September 2001.

Fundamentalism in all religions is an extreme form of patriarchy and, as the experience of Afghanistan under the Taliban shows, when women's lives are jeopardized everyone suffers: when men deny women their human rights they lose their own humanity and are capable of the most outrageous acts – crimes against humanity.

A catalyst for change

The overwhelming expressions of sympathy and solidarity with the USA in the immediate aftermath of the attacks provided an unprecedented opportunity for a major breakthrough in consciousness leading to a choice “to create a world where love speaks louder than hate, where compassion speaks louder than anger, where peace speaks louder than violence and where forgiveness speaks louder than revenge” (Fox, 2001: 25).

More concretely, the choice was to stay mired in injustice and intolerance, to leap forward to a future of hope for those concerned with the escalating violence, persistent poverty and continuing degradation of our environment, or to jump back into the abyss of violence and retribution. This was an opportunity for a real shift in understanding the underlying causes of the attacks – racism, excessive capitalism and sexism – and for devising the policy to address them.² Unfortunately, instead of the path of peace the expressions of solidarity were converted into an alliance for a war on terrorism that is so full of contradictions that it lacks credibility, and undermines the achievement of the laudable goal.

The inevitability of the choice

On the other hand, in many ways, it was inevitable that the USA would opt for retaliation, and that it would receive overwhelming support for this both from the majority of US citizens as well as from the rest of the world. We live, after all, in a patriarchal world where masculinity is defined as the capacity to exercise overwhelming power when attacked: the most powerful country in this patriarchal world could not act otherwise in attempting to protect its citizens.³ That its actions may in fact have exposed us all (not only US citizens, but people worldwide) to greater threats of violence, and abuse of human rights, were never considered in this paradigm. If ever proof were needed of the pervasiveness of patriarchy in our world, this was it! No one looking at the images of leadership in today's world can fail to notice the absence of women. But the absence of the physical presence of women symbolizes not only the absence of women in decision-making but also the lack of priority given to matters of primary concern to women because of prevailing gender systems and norms.⁴ This is true of the non-Islamic world as well.

Another world is possible... But only when women and men confront the fundamental injustice of a system that privileges one experience of humanity, and one that seeks to dominate and control all those it constructs as "Other" – whether the Otherness is based on class, political affiliation, race, ethnicity, religion, country or gender. That system is patriarchy, and it robs men of their humanity as much as it robs women of their agency.

How will this be done? Ultimately, this is a question of leadership, at all levels – within the apparatus of the state as well as within civil society organizations.

What kind of leadership? What will it take to reinforce the good in people? Are integrity and good intentions sufficient? Many of the heads of international agencies – such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank – and political and business leaders speak the language of social justice (including gender equity), human rights, democracy and participation, but act otherwise. Part of the problem is that no account is taken of the structural factors in operation, both local and global.

We need more than integrity and good intentions in our leaders. We need leaders who recognize the complexity of the task, the links between economic, political and social systems (including the prevailing, sexist, gender system) and the necessity for all these elements to be addressed, not by a single entity but by many different sectors and actors – government and civil society, political parties and religious organizations – all acting within a framework of indivisible and universal human rights (including women's rights). But more than sound analysis is needed.

In their paper "NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: A 21st Century Civic Agenda", Michael Edwards and Gita and Chiranjib Sen conclude that social change requires a recognition – and conscious integration – of three bases of change: "value systems, institutional processes and subjective states" and three systems of power: "economic power [as] expressed in the distribution of productive assets and the workings of markets and firms; social power [as] expressed in the status and position awarded to different social groups; and political power [as] define[d by] each person's voice in decision-making in both the private sphere and public affairs... which combine to produce a 'social order' " (Edwards, Sen and Sen, 2000).

According to this argument, our failure to achieve the kind of social change we say we want can be attributed to our failure to address all these dimensions. First, according to the authors, "few theoretical systems acknowledge [the need for this integration], and even fewer institutions use it as a framework to guide their practice" (p. 3). Second, while there is now a fairly good understanding of the ways in which economic, social and political power combine to produce a social order, there is still a tendency to steer clear of naming that order.⁵ The paper names it: "the social order that is emerging under globalizing capitalism

is one which excludes or oppresses certain groups of people, especially women in labour-rich economies and those with less access to skill and education wherever they live". Third, and most important for my own argument, the authors note that "the most neglected of the three bases of social change is change at the subjective level",⁶ the personal transformation that is required in our leadership, at all levels – political, corporate, religious and within civil society – in order to realize another world.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is frequently equated with leadership that is ethical, and ethics is often associated with religion or with advocacy around human rights. However, as feminist theologians, human rights advocates and ethicists have pointed out, conventional concepts of ethics – like everything else in a world that is patriarchal – is shaped by men's perspectives and specifically excludes women's experiences. The ensuing contradictions are clear to anyone prepared to see them. Indeed, in the case of the major world's religions, the contradictions between their statements of principles and their treatment of women are the sharpest of all. There is not only a glaring absence of women in leadership positions in all of these "great" religious traditions, but they all have fundamentalist tendencies that construct women as "Other".

Another world is only possible if we confront the patriarchal roots of our present crises.⁷ While this is a challenge to a much wider range of disciplines than those encompassed in the social sciences,⁸ I think these can also shed a light on the relationship between women and the patriarchal state and between globalization and the spread of religious fundamentalism.⁹

Transformational feminist leadership

The need for feminist leadership in pointing a path out of our crises was never as clear to me as in the aftermath of the attacks and launching of the counter-attack. The link between patriarchy and war, and the gender differences between men and women's responses to security, were so clear that I kept thinking that there was something that the women's movement should be saying, and doing, about the situation. As I reflected on this, a friend of mine drew my attention to "The Demon Lover", now reprinted with a post-September 11th introduction and afterword on the "core connection between patriarchal societies and the inevitability of terrorism".

In her 1989 introduction, Robin Morgan expresses a similar sentiment:

Unless the majority of the human species, which women constitute – the majority that has lived daily and nightly under a terrorism so ancient and

omnipresent as to be called civilization – unless that enormous body of ordinary experiential experts addresses and engages this issue, it can never be understood, much less solved.

(Morgan, 2001: 18)

In fact, women, sometimes individually and sometimes through their organizations in many countries, not least of all in the USA and Britain, took a number of initiatives, from writing articles to organizing petitions against the war, from volunteering to help the victims to reaching out in solidarity to women from Afghanistan in exile, and women's organizations¹⁰ and UNIFEM (UN Development Fund for Women) itself have been active in ensuring that the UN encouraged the participation of women in the post-Taliban reconstruction of the country, and in organizing meetings of Afghan women so that their voices could be heard.

I am not referring to women in formal positions of leadership. Indeed, in a sense, few of these women exercise leadership as women. On the contrary, it is precisely because they have identified themselves with male models of leadership that they have attained the ranks of this kind of leadership: they do not represent a challenge to the status quo; they can be trusted to play the game according to the rules; trusted not to rock the boat. The women who are in formal positions of leadership today are not in a position to initiate opposition to the use of force: the two women in North America who have done so, one in the US House of Representatives and one in Canada, have already been branded traitors, and are going to need the support of all those who oppose fighting terrorism with the escalation of terrorism by the declaration of war on Afghanistan.

We need women's leadership because the crises we face today can be related to patriarchy and the gender system that serves to reinforce and perpetuate patriarchy¹¹ – a system that privileges men and all the values associated with male privilege: the devaluing of everything related to the female – caring, compassion, co-operation, gentleness. We need leadership for a paradigm modelled on the mother who gives generously of her time without counting the cost: the gift rather than the exchange economy.¹² Patriarchy, reflected through all the structures and institutions of our world, is a system that glorifies domination, control, violence, competitiveness and greed. It dehumanizes men as much as it denies women their humanity. So we need leadership that will explore and expose these links and challenge patriarchy. The only leadership that does this is feminist leadership.

Over the past few years I have been reflecting on the kind of women's leadership needed for social transformation toward a world where money does not define value nor legislate survival; where all the categories and processes of parasitism and hate – racism, classism, ageism, ablism, xenophobia, homophobia –

are regarded as belonging to a shameful past; where war is recognized as expressing unnecessary patriarchal syndromes of dominance and submission in a ridiculously sexualized death ritual using phallic technological instruments, guns and missiles of ever greater proportions; where the psychosis of patriarchy is recognized, healed, and no longer validated as the norm.¹³

My definition of women's transformational leadership is: "feminist leadership with a passion for justice, a commitment to change things, beginning with oneself". Each part is important. Why feminist? Transformation is a neutral term. It is meaningless unless we say what it is we want to transform. To do this we need an analysis. For the purposes of challenging patriarchy it must be feminist analysis – an analysis of male power that links this to other forms of oppression. Why a passion for justice? Leadership must feel passionately about social justice, and must see that there can be no social justice without justice for women. Why a commitment to change things? Because many people feel passionately about social justice without a commitment to act for change.

Why a commitment to personal change? Because personal transformation must be the beginning of social transformation: the only thing over which we can exercise control is ourselves; because working for social justice is full of risk and because we can only do this work if we find a source of power within ourselves that does not depend on the approval of others, one that cannot be taken away by external forces.

Why feminist?

In the public domain, gender ideology is continuously produced, reproduced and reinforced through institutions such as the church, the school, the state, the judiciary, the media and the market, but the starting point in the process of socialization lies in the household. Here a network of customs and traditions, cultural practices, laws and institutions constructs the female as subordinate to the male and ascribes to her responsibility for the reproduction of her own subordination and for asymmetrical relations between men and women within the family. The woman lays down the foundations of patriarchal control in the private domain through her earliest interactions with her male partner and children.

Gender ideology makes women the carriers of the culture of male superiority and privilege and women – through their acceptance of this ideology which instills a belief in their need of men as lovers and fathers of their children, as providers and protectors – are heavily invested in this. Women hesitate to act on their own behalf because they do not easily jeopardize the safety, security and well-being of their children or their families. The church and other institutions of society reinforce this through the ideology of the "good mother".

The exploitation of women's time, labour and sexuality is fundamental to the continuation of the dominant political economic system. For example, because women are socialized to do domestic work and take care of people, the state can transfer responsibility for family health and nutrition to the household, where the labour does not have to be paid for.¹⁴ Similarly, the market capitalizes on poor women's desperate need for income and the notion of the "male breadwinner" to pay them the lowest wages, and treat them as a reserve labour force.

Finally, state, market and civil society combined manipulate women's sexuality – their relations with men, children and other women, their image of themselves – in the service of the dominant ideology.

In the past few years feminist scholarship has begun to explore and reveal these links between women's subordination and the forces that perpetuate the exclusion and subordination of whole sectors of society (even whole countries and continents!). Feminists have been at the forefront of the critique of the crisis of reproduction and of the environmental crisis, from the perspective of women. This is not surprising since women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, economic activity and the care of human beings, and therefore between economic growth and human development. They are the workers in both spheres – those most responsible, and therefore with most at stake, those who suffer the most when the two work at cross-purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two (DAWN, 1995: 21).¹⁵ The combination of feminist scholarship and feminist activism has in fact fuelled the transformation of the women's movement into a political force with an agenda for social transformation that goes beyond the focus on women's well-being to women's perspectives on every aspect of life. However there are a number of issues to be addressed before feminism as a transformational politics can be effective. By failing to address issues such as diversity in the women's movement (class, race and ethnicity, age, politics, institutional and geographical location, sexuality, strategic choices and so on) and women's relations with men, calls for women's leadership will be meaningless for a project of social transformation of the systems and relationships that "keep the best at bay".

Personal transformation

But even as we address these issues, and even as feminist scholarship in many fields has come close to cracking the code that would demonstrate the clear relationship between patriarchy, the gender system it promotes and many of the major problems confronting our world today, the fact that none of these analyses and findings has led to major change or direction at the institutional level is evidence not only for the strength of patriarchy but also for the complexity of gender relations and for women's ambivalence to changing this.¹⁶

This is where the issue of personal transformation becomes central for women's leadership. Ultimately, women's ability to challenge and change the systems and relationships that "keep the best at bay" depends on their ability to change themselves and their own relationships to themselves and to others. We women have to come to terms with, and tap into, our own power.

Feminist practice has not yet come up with the philosophy that would allow women to confront the powerful forces pitted against them without placing themselves in jeopardy, or with a way for women to cope with these forces on a daily basis. And yet women do cope with the complexities, contradictions and crises within themselves and in the world around them. Those who have come closest to doing so seem to act out of a deep consciousness of themselves as spiritual entities, linked to a force greater than themselves. They are empowered by the spirit within themselves, and by tapping into a power greater than themselves.

It is not easy to speak of spirituality in the secular women's movement. The mention of the word "spirituality" is to conjure up institutionalized "religion", which is often oppressive and disempowering for women. Certainly, the religious fundamentalism that underlies the attacks in the USA as well as the attacks on women in Muslim countries, and among Christians as well, is the opposite of the relationships of mutuality and respect that we seek. At the same time, even institutionalized religion plays an important role in the lives of many women. People also relate spirituality to a culture that encourages disengagement with the world. This is not what is needed either, if we are speaking of social transformation toward the creation of a more secure and equitable society. The leadership needed today is leadership grounded in "the consciousness of the oneness of humankind" (Baha'I statement delivered at the Beijing Conference, 1995), a grounding essential for the solidarity needed to heal the wounds of a world divided by religious beliefs.

The nurturing of the spirit within each of us will help strengthen our movement in a number of ways. It will help address major problems of relationships within women's movements: the tensions, the pettiness, the power struggles between women which stem from insecurity and a low self-esteem, from competition over men and scarce resources, factors which lead too many to say "women are their own greatest enemy". The process of spiritual growth also helps us to relinquish the need to control others, to recognize that the only person we can control is our self and our own responses to any situation. In addition, many of us know that if our work were not grounded in an awareness of the spirit within us, we could not continue. Those who work for social justice for women risk all manner of misrepresentation, ridicule and even the loss of family, friends and livelihood itself. Some risk their lives. We need to find that power within, a source of power that cannot be taken away from us, that cannot be destroyed by external forces.

Conclusion

How this story ends will certainly depend on how we all deal with Others, starting with the most fundamental template of otherness, patriarchal definitions that view women as Other and use this to deny us our full humanity and agency. Universal and indivisible human rights must be adopted as the ethical frame to address the inequalities and problems created or exacerbated by globalization, and in particular women's human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. This is a challenge for women's transformational leadership, for feminist transformational leadership.

Notes

1. This article is adapted from a paper on 'Feminism as a transformational politics: Women's leadership now', presented at the Department of International Development Studies, St Mary's University, Halifax, Canada, 21 September 2001.
2. The underlying causes include the economic policies that lead to poverty and alienation for Muslim communities and other marginalized communities around the world and serve as a breeding ground for the extremism and rage that exploded in New York and Washington: the greed and selfishness expressed in international trade negotiations, and the insensitivity to suffering that allows the rich and powerful to turn away rather than confront that reality; the racism that blinds the West to its responsibility for creating many of the conditions that have divided communities and countries; and the politicizing of religious fundamentalism, the same fundamentalism that denies women their human rights and robs men of their humanity.
3. It is not accidental that those in the USA who are most virulent in the pursuit of militaristic solutions to the crisis are those who would also reverse many of the advances of women's rights in the USA as well as in the rest of the world.
4. Patriarchy would always give greater priority to "guns" over "butter". Consider the ease with which billions of dollars were allocated to the war in Afghanistan by the same political assemblies that cannot find far fewer dollars to guarantee universal health care, education, social security or basic housing. Consider too the billions spent on the military in countries where people are most deprived of basic needs.
5. In fact, part of the frustration experienced by activists today is the apparent refusal of the power structure to acknowledge that their policies are an obstacle to the achievement of the goals they propound – social justice, democracy, environmental conservation, national security.
6. While the authors acknowledge that it is "exceptionally difficult to achieve", they assert that "it is rarely possible to generate sustainable changes in human behaviour simply by altering the rules and institutions that govern our lives" (p. 5).
7. In its pioneering book prepared as a platform document for the NGO Forum for the Third UN World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985, DAWN analysed the interlinked systemic crises in economic, social, ecological and political spheres. Today, after nearly 20 years of on-going analysis of emerging trends, the network is getting closer to analysing the deeper cultural linkages to patriarchy.
8. This is a task for anthropologists and psychologists among many.
9. This has been the focus of much of DAWN's recent analysis, as a visit to their website would show.

10. For the past several years there have been campaigns in support of Afghan women, as they suffered under the burden of Taliban rule. Since the attacks a number of women's organizations have been convening meetings in solidarity with Afghan women.
11. Gender is one of the "central axes around which social life revolves", writes Michael Kimmel of the State University of New York at Stony Brook in his endorsement of Judith Lorber's book (1994). But Lorber also shows that gender is a "central social institution, analogous to the state or the market". We have to explore patriarchy and the gender system it promotes to understand the fundamental changes required to make another world possible.
12. US philosopher, philanthropist and writer Genevieve Vaughn (1997) has written about the gift economy, contrasting it with the exchange economy.
13. This is taken from a statement prepared by a group of feminists meeting at a Workshop on Feminist Strategies held at the Women's University of Norway in July this year. It is very similar to the vision contained in the DAWN platform document (Sen and Grown, 1987: 24).
14. This is at the heart of the policy framework of structural adjustment.
15. DAWN's platform document prepared for the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. In a poem written in 1984, on the eve of the Third UN World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi, I referred to women as "holding the keys to the relationships and systems that keep the best at bay".
16. As I write this I am deeply aware of the fact that there are probably many books on the subject. I hope that readers will draw them to my attention.

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9.1

Hopes and Struggles for Transformation: Reflections from an Iranian Feminist

Mansoureh Shojae

Introduction

Peggy Antrobus' article, 'Feminism as Transformational Politics', shows how 11 September 2001 was a critical historical moment that exposed how deeply militarism, fundamentalism and patriarchy determine our world. In her analysis of patriarchy she calls for feminism to provide a new form of leadership in order to help the world crisis to be resolved. She envisages a new form of leadership that will create a world shaped by feminist approaches and principles. She asks that feminist scholars and activists join forces to construct such leadership.

Although this is a deeply appealing proposal, one that I share, my response based on my experiences as an Iranian feminist sets out how hard it is to put such feminist leadership into practice. The interrelation between feminist activism and feminist scholarship needs to be well defined. Following Antrobus' argument, while leadership requires knowledge, it is important not to overemphasize academic knowledge as the way forward. Feminists have to be well aware of the context, the structures we live in, and this knowledge needs to be found in the struggles of everyday experience, not only through academic scholarship. We need to be careful not to propose a form of new feminist elitism in our vision of future leadership. Learning from my own country, Iran, I believe academic power under totalitarianism can be misused and become just another arm of the state.

That being said, I think it is important to elaborate how and through which mechanisms feminist transformational leadership – in the utopian way imagined by Antrobus – could be achieved. My question is whether this leadership could be possible just by combining feminist activism and academic feminism, as a magic formula without the existence of a dynamic feminist movement, without the support of ordinary women giving legitimacy to such an alliance reaching out to political power.

Feminist leadership today

Antrobus wrote her piece in 2002. Now, 13 years later, we can look back to see what has happened. Certainly, the aftermath of September 11, as Antrobus pointed out, exposed the interconnection between militarism and fundamentalism, and reinforced the prevailing patriarchal system. However, at the same time, these events gave rise to another phenomenon – the emergence of women’s movements in different countries against militarism. There were strong movements in Morocco, Iran, Egypt, Burma, Malawi and Liberia that have resulted in female political leadership. These women’s movements have influenced public opinion and helped to shape a non-violent and peaceful discourse.

The question is whether the increasing number of women in political and economic positions has led to feminist leadership? The answer is a mixed one. I am not in a position to comment on all situations, but I would like to attempt to answer by reflecting on the situation in Iran. In this chapter I explore how Iranian feminists have tried to work towards leadership from below. Iran is an oppressive and patriarchal regime and has created major restrictions for the formation of female leadership at the top. However, I will seek to show how there has been leadership from below among social movements. These have provided an intrinsic and multilayered power within society. These are part of the ‘other world’ that is possible, as Antrobus claims, in the search for justice and peace. Feminist activists coming from this bottom-up approach have created a social leadership to which feminist academics and other movements have joined. As a result, peaceful and justice-oriented leadership can be a collective achievement of non-violent and peaceful social movements.

The struggle remains to bring these feminist visions and hopes into political power. I reflect on the questions around feminist leadership and alliance-building as raised by Antrobus by presenting the recent history of the feminist movement in Iran since the 1980s, and in particular since 2002. I believe this historical review is vitally important because it is through history that we begin to see how feminist transformational leadership can be formed, and how difficult it is for women in countries such as Iran to exercise full power and agency. Like Antrobus, I have vision and hope for the future of Iranian feminism in and outside the country. The story is one of a struggle for another world not only as feminists but also working in alliance with others in order to try to defeat patriarchal unjust society.

Feminism in Iran

The history of feminism in Iran begins in the late 19th century, and the struggle for women’s rights was part of the social, political structure of modern Iran

throughout the 20th century (Sanasarian, 1982). Women were important actors in the Islamic Revolutionary Period in 1979, when the movement against the Shah was formed. The women's movement also reacted strongly against the provisional government of Islamic revolution, against the abolition of the Family Protection Act and when Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the implementation of Sharia laws in the country, demanding women dress 'properly' and were banned from professions such as the judiciary. Knowing full well the implications of these laws, women responded *en masse*. On 8 March 1979, International Women's Day, thousands of women appeared on the streets, demonstrating against the forced hejaab (veiling) and the abolition of the Family Protection Act (Shojaee 2009).

The regime moved quickly to suppress the women's movement, disband all women's organizations and reduce women's presence in public life. Almost 2,400 women lost their jobs. Terrible years from 1983 to 1988 followed, with mass executions and eight years of war with Iraq. Then, during the reformist presidency of Khatami (1997–2005), women were able to re-establish independent organizations, and to elect some female representatives in Parliament. This period saw the publication of 15 women's print magazines, one newspaper and two digital feminist magazines. Women activists were still under governmental pressures and control, but less so than during the revolutionary years. One of the most important events in this period was that in 2003 the Nobel Prize was awarded to Shirin Ebadi, a women's rights and human rights defender. This turned the international spotlight on the Iranian women's movement.

In 2005, soon after the establishment of Ahmadi Nejad, a number of organized women's groups initiated activities against legal gender discrimination. These movements worked on a variety of issues, including anti-violence, anti-war and anti-discrimination activities; others on feminist writing and thought in on- and offline journals; some organized the Anti-Stoning Campaign; and almost all joined to create the One Million Signatures for Equality Campaign. This campaign was designed to help reform discriminatory laws and came about when police attacked a women's peaceful gathering in June 2006. Its goals are to eliminate discriminatory laws for Iranian women. During the Ahmadai Nejad presidency (2005–2009), the campaign's founders¹ and a number of young women members were arrested and imprisoned.

The coalition of 'women for civil demands' in the 2009 election

Despite considerable suppression during the first two years of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first presidency, the Iranian women's movement flourished with the One Million Signatures Campaign, Mothers for Peace, Women's Square, Women's International Charter, the Society of Reformist Women and so forth (Mahdi, 2004). These different groups came together to focus on the

elimination of legal discrimination. This was a risky choice because if women protest against these laws, they can be labelled as political opposition and charged with the crime of 'Action against national security'. Due to the severity of the oppression with mass arrests, the women's movement became scattered, which made the institutionalization of the movement very difficult. Women activists and journalists were forced to hide and to be constantly on the move from the Intelligence Ministry and Sepah (religious army).

From 2008, during the fight against a reactionary 'family bill', some of the organizations within the movement, such as the Society of Reformist Women, which had been hoping to use their influence to impose change on the power structure, began to change strategy. As a result, intellectual religious women moved closer to the Islamic feminist discourse and away from a general feminist discourse. The secular women's movement encouraged a compromise, both in practice and in theory, between its members and the Islamic activists. This made it possible to form new multifaceted unions and coalitions among women's groups.

Prior to the ratification of the 1975 Family Protection Law, a man could marry four wives and have a large number of temporary marriages. As a result of the 1975 law, a man could marry a second wife only by permission of the courts (with a valid reason to obtain this permission) and after obtaining the express consent of his first wife.² After the revolution, this law was not observed. As a result, men could marry without informing their wives, without adequate financial resources and without needing to seek permission of the courts as in the period before 1975. In 2007 the members of Parliament decided to eliminate the reformed article. Women's activists responded by forming a coalition in order to lobby their members of Parliament. As a result, the proposed Family Protection Bill was rejected and returned to judiciary commission of the Iranian Parliament to reconsider the bill's most discriminatory provisions.³ Women activists went underground and spent the last months of Ahmadinejad's first presidency waiting for an opportunity to resurface.

With the 2009 general elections there was a loosening of autocratic control and an almost a semidemocratic atmosphere. Taking advantage of that opportunity, the women's movement formed the coalition Women for Civil Demands during Election Times based on mutual goals and ideals. It joined the general civil uprisings and the newly formed Green Movement to demand civil rights and greater democracy.

'We vote for women's demands'

The women movement's involvement in the period before the 2009 election was a turning point in Iranian feminist movement history. The movement entered the 2009 election with two clear demands: first, for Iran to sign up to

CEDAW; and second, for the amendment of a number of discriminatory articles in Iran's constitution, in particular articles 19, 20, 21 and 115.

The collation of these demands under the slogan 'We vote for women's demands' announced the women's movement's presence in the political sphere, albeit without the support of any election candidates. However, this, in my view, served as a timely reminder of the women's movement agenda. On the one hand, this 'female tactic' worked – the issue of legal rights for women was adopted and incorporated into the agendas of all candidates. On the other hand, the strategy – along with the protests for free elections, and based on workshops and direct contact with people on the streets and in public spaces – helped to push forward the notion of demand-oriented discourse. The cooperation terminated a week before the 2009 presidential election. This temporary coalition had shown how women's leadership was involved from a bottom-up agenda that was not about capturing power and political gain but rather using opportunities to bring forward the demands for women's rights and gender equality (Ahmadi Khorasani 2012).

Establishing an alliance between the women's movement and the Green Movement

Feminist leadership in this period operated along three lines:

The first approach saw changes to legal discourse as the only possible and legitimate strategy for the women's movement. This approach verged on making it sacrilegious to change previous strategies, especially those used during the One Million Signatures Campaign. This faction was not keen to engage with the Green Movement.

The second faction put full force behind the Green Movement in the belief that its democratic discourse could work as an umbrella to cover all other submovements, running the risk of diluting the women's movements demands.

The third faction worked to create a two-way connection between the women's movement and the wider democracy movement, bolstering public uprisings while still protecting the women's movement's specific agenda. The resulting Women's Green Coalition maintained an identifiable two-way connection with the democratic movement and thus played an important role in pushing the legal and anti-discriminatory discourse of the Green Movement forward.

The Women's Green Coalition came into being on 8 March 2009. The presence of influential female Green Movement leaders, such as Zahra Rahnavard,⁴ was, on the one hand, an important reminder of women's legal and gender

responsibilities in the Green Movement and, on the other hand, an opportunity to advocate anti-discriminatory discourse within the Green democratic movement.

The presence of activists in street protests and among the opposition movement

During the rise of the Green Movement street protests, women activists showed their commitment to the united struggle to achieve democratic demands. Women who had originally taken to the streets with the slogan 'We vote for women's demands' now continued their march with two new slogans: 'I will claim your vote, my martyr sister!' and a public slogan: 'Where is my vote?' Their extensive participation in Green Movement protests enabled them to share with other movements the experiences of the women's movement and provided channels for reflection and sharing of news and opinions about the Green Movement on the internet.

The Women's Movement's organizational capacities provided leadership for the overall Green Movement, building from the reformist government time and during the four years of women's coalitions. The Women's Solidarity Committee Against Social Violence, Mourning Mothers and Green Coalition were all formed during the eight months of resistance after the presidential election of 2009.

The Women's Solidarity Committee Against Social Violence was formed to spread the discourse of non-violence. It highlighted the violent and suppressive behaviour of the government against peaceful and legal rallies of the people and contrasted the intimidating and threatening atmosphere of executions against the peaceful and public civil conduct. They led the way in the Green Movement to show how to fight the violence with non-violent strategies to try to end the cycle of violence. Women judged that even given the huge suppression and violence by police and Ministry of Intelligence officers, they were safer than the activists in other social movements and therefore led the way to prevent violence in society that threatened them, their family and society. Women leaders spoke openly in public about the need to end violence, including governmental violence.

In addition to the strategic and directive leadership of Women's Movement activists, the female presence in the Green Movement was also noteworthy for another reason. The massive presence of diverse female supporters gave the Green Movement a different appearance – literally in terms of appearance and clothing. The accentuation of a feminine aesthetic had a great influence on the performance of the civil uprisings. Women wore contemporary dress and make-up to mark the Green Movement's identity. Unlike in the time of the Islamic Revolution where women dressed in defiance of the Shah by wearing the hijab,

in 2009 during the Green Revolution, women were free to dress as they chose; there was no need for a 'uniform' to show they belonged to the movement.

The rupture between the Women's Movement and other civil society organizations

Violence repression after the 2009 presidential election halted the social movements from pushing further in their demands for democracy. The civil movement unravelled in the face of international tensions and sanctions, regional unrest, a fear of war, economic pressures resulting from the elimination of state subsidies, unemployment, the closing of factories, harsh sentences for political and social activists, and their massive migration abroad. The deteriorating conditions also caused a major crisis among women activists. The different factions started to apportion blame to others about the Women's Movement's engagement in the Green Movement.

The suppression that followed in 2010 onwards did not mean the Women's Movement had ended. Feminist leadership emerged in other places, such as the academic and professional institutions of the Society of Female Sociologists, the Society of Female Entrepreneurs and activist institutions such as Mothers of Peace and Mothers of Laleh Park. Although no longer on the streets, feminist leaders within the country continued to resist discriminating laws such as the Passport Law, gender separation at universities and the Family Bill. They held seminars and meetings with officials, produced publications, gave interviews and began websites such as The Feminist School, Toward the Equal Family Bill, Women Centre and Change for Equality. In these less visible ways the Women's Movement continued, waiting to engage once more in more open politics.

Using the occasion of International Women's Day in 2010–2011, the Women's Green Coalition held five assemblies and was in support of the Green Movement candidates at the time. In the first declaration of the coalition there were demands to join the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination, or to amend the Family Bill and criminal law alongside demands to free political prisoners. In the last declaration, published on the International Day of Non-Violence, the women condemned military intervention and imperialism, demonstrating a strong feminist intervention in political discourse. Once again, feminists were entering into the political arena not to take power but to bring their cause – that is, to end discrimination and promote women's rights in the political sphere.

Iranian feminist leadership in 2013

In conclusion, let us return to Antrobus' article and her call for strong feminist political leadership. As this brief history of Iran suggests, while political

participation might be seen as a basic point of departure for women to engage in governance and political decision-making, it is important to note that it is not about power itself but it is the means to an end. This was illustrated in the last Iranian presidential election in 2013. Then the Iranian Women's Movement saw voting as part of basic civil rights and the right to self-determination. However, systemic patriarchal domination prevented women's political participation at a higher level of leadership.

In the early stages of the Iranian presidential election in 2013, women groups began to re-establish their more political activities. A coalition named Ham Andishi emerged which included secular feminists, new-religious feminists, ordinary women and also women who were both pro-equality and close to the government. These groups, mainly demanding political participation, started to engage in the election process. This was a much less radical engagement than previously. The economic hardships resulting from sanctions, mass violations of human rights, increasing violations of women's rights and military threats led to a moderate approach both by civil society and governmental groups.

Progressive groups, including the Women's Movement, were divided on how to respond. Some turned out in large numbers during the election calling on the government to meet their demands. Others boycotted the election (e.g., civil society actors, social and political groups, some groups from the Women's Movement and a number of ordinary people). Many members of the Women's Movement decided to vote, given their demand for women to 'politically participate'. In the end, a candidate from a moderate stream with a somewhat progressive approach regarding domestic and international policies, human rights and women rights won the election.

Iranian feminism in 2014

As this short history of Iranian political processes has shown, the Women's Movement has played an important role in the struggle for social change and progress, especially when it worked in coalitions of independent and secular activists, ordinary women and pro-equality women in the struggle towards justice. When the new president failed to fulfil his promises after the election in 2013, and the violation of human rights continued, women actors once more came together to promote gender equality in policymaking and legislation, and also to modify discriminatory laws. The negative and closed structure of the Iranian political system meant that it was women, who had led the struggle, as independent secular activist feminists, became vulnerable, even if they were knowledgeable and competent. Leading the Women's Movement became the responsibility of secular and new-religious women actors. This latter group organized meetings, demonstrations and virtual activities to promote gender equality and to function as a force in order to make changes to discriminatory

and patriarchal laws. Along with these diverse groups, there were also a number of ordinary women who, through their critical activities, played an important individual role towards such changes. The aim is that by working together the Women's Movement will move forward in achieving its demands and ideals.

Domestic and diaspora feminists

The uniqueness of the Iranian Women's Movement is also its division into domestic feminism and diaspora feminism, which has existed for 35 years following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. It is important to acknowledge the role of the two groups in shaping Iranian feminism. Iranian diaspora feminism has a strong academic presence and has had an important role to play in empowering the Women's Movement in Iran towards a stronger engagement in political leadership.

Diaspora feminism has kept feminism alive since 1985 when Iranian academic feminists published the journal *Nimeh Digar* in London, when there was no visible civil society at that time in Iran. The journal was the only feminist literature available for Iranian women and it built a bridge between feminists in and outside the country. In 1990 the Iranian Women's Studies Foundation was founded in the US. Through annual conferences and invitations to women activists in Iran it forged another link between women inside Iran and those in the diaspora with a face-to-face connection. The Iranian Government was aware of these activities and labelled the foundation's organizers, and also the participants, as spies and the agents of the US and European countries. Women activists in Iran were interrogated or threatened by phone calls to stop having connections with feminists in the diaspora. This has led to a big gap between feminists in Iran and the diaspora, with diaspora feminists creating a distance from Iranian feminists inside in order to be able to travel in and out of Iran, thus reducing the potential of the Iranian Women's Movement and feminism.

Conclusion

The nuclear power negotiations between Iran and the West (2013–2014), and their effect on economic and political crises in Iran on the one hand and instabilities in the region, especially in Iraq and Syria, and the appearance of ISIS on the other hand, has negatively affected civil rights and political participation in Iran. In this situation the new government has focused on foreign policy, neglecting the promises to protect human rights inside the country. The continued violations of human rights, increasing discrimination against women and economic instabilities has led to further pessimism. At the same time, fundamentalist actors have imposed even more restrictions on women. Sadly, female

parliamentarians have kept silent on the legislation of these discriminatory and patriarchal laws.

Given the circumstances, I would argue that even the restricted presence of women in the government is not effective. If anything the situation has got worse. There have been no demands to change family law and civil rights. Instead there has been a growth in discriminatory laws against women. There are now further restrictions on job opportunities for women, specifically single women, the banning of contraception, and legislating of gender segregation at universities and workplaces. For example, on October 2014, after passing the law on the protection of the hijab in Parliament, extremist and offensive groups started to commit acid attacks against women who in the regime's eyes were not 'properly veiled'.⁵

Even if Iranian women have played an important role in the different governments, from the reformist to the fundamentalist and the moderator, they have not been able to gain leadership. What remains important, as Antrobus spells out, is for closer alliance among knowledgeable and scholar-activists with women in governance and policymaking to help change Iran's non-democratic and patriarchal political system.

Institutions such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs and women factions in Parliament could be significant in leadership if they could represent different and diverse women's attitudes and in this way pave the way for women to reach their demands. This could be further strengthened by the role of feminists in the diaspora.

Change in leadership requires pressure from below and change from above with powerful, responsible and experienced women's movements bolstered by political engagement from both intellectuals and ordinary people. Such alliances could lead to a coherent civil resistance against non-democratic regimes such as Iran, and finally move the regime towards gender equality and democratic political leadership.

Notes

1. These included Noushin Ahmadi Khorasani, Parvin Ardalan, Mansoureh Shojaee, Talat Taghinia, Rezvan Moghaddam, Nahid Keshavarz, Jelveh Javaheri, Maryam Hosseynkhah and Soussan Tahmasbi.
2. Article 23 authorizes polygamous marriages contingent upon the financial capacity of the man. It does not set specific parameters for adequate financial resources to support multiple wives, or define overall concepts of justice or equal treatment of multiple wives. Most notably absent from the Family Protection Bill is any effective requirement of consent of the first wife for her husband to enter into a second marriage.
3. In 2011 this law was again brought before Parliament for approval.
4. She was a political advisor to the former reformist president Khatami, and wife of the Green Movement's presidential candidate, Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

5. Despite all threats, women activists organized a demonstration against Parliament to protest against acid attacks.

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9.2

The Future for Women's Struggle for Social Justice and Full Citizenship: A Comprehensive Peace

Shobha Raghuram

Introduction

Peggy Antrobus' 'Feminism as Transformational Politics: Towards Possibilities for Another World' takes a sweeping view of the larger structural context of women's rights, control of resources and position in the regressive global order. Antrobus the writer and Antrobus the socialist feminist come together in a powerful indictment of the new order being created 13 years ago. She asks questions about the history of regressive forces that underwrite women's struggles, and block their agendas and political practices for equality.

Antrobus emphasizes the link between religious fundamentalism and the control over women as deliberate and causally designed. When men deny women their human rights, they lose their own humanity, a poignant truth that is often ignored. The events of 11 September 2001 led to a regression in global peace efforts and for interfaith coexistence and dialogues when the powerful nations created an alliance for a 'War on Terror'. The links that connect post-11 September 2001 to the earlier existing crises that marked the world economy are dwelt on in detail by Antrobus as she discusses the deep-rooted patriarchy-poverty gaps. Antrobus' article is a significant contribution to the history of feminism as transformational politics. It is from this vantage point that she is able to argue that militarism, terrorism and religious extremism are all extreme forms of patriarchy.

Antrobus writes in a language that echoes her insistence that transformatory politics for a gendered social change requires the language to reflect and resonate with a spirit of a deep social query leading to a complete overhaul of the world of thought and practice. She concludes with a visionary statement for a future where women's struggles will change the politics of the new order. My responses reflect on her insight, calling on my experiences working in South Asia as a development practitioner.

Hannah Arendt said that

the common world is what we enter when we are born and what we leave behind when we die. It transcends our lifespan into past and future alike; it was there before we came and will outlast our brief sojourn in it. It is what we have in common not only with those who live with us, but also with those who were here before and with those who will come after us.

(Arendt 1958: 55)

Antrobus in her search for a future where conflicts and dilemmas are resolved calls for a recognition of the realities that continue to stall the progress of women towards full equality. Her faith in another future – what Arendt terms a ‘common world’ – allows her to provide a broad map which allows me to dive deeper in understanding gender equalities in the South Asian context. I extend the vision of Antrobus to try to reflect on how we can arrive at what she envisages. In this way I contribute a pragmatic echo to her utopic vision.

Critical issues in the South Asian context

The dystopia of the times we live in where every step forward for women’s equality is fraught with untold threats, risks, violence and anger engulfing them requires a comprehensive overhauling of the system that is reproducing poverty and ‘rightlessness’. A lack of gender parity and socially non-inclusive development leading to progressive and deepening poverty have hindered humanizing and socially just progress. During the last 60 years of the emergence of the modern state, welfare needs – especially health, education, housing and shelter, and food security – are considered state obligations and commitments to the poor, but to meet them systemic and deep structural changes are required. The time has come for some serious introspection and drastic shifts in public policy. Has the experience of minimizing the role of the state during the reform period been beneficial to the poor? It is crucial to do some foundational thinking in order to reverse negative trends with constructive critique-based future action.

The examination of women’s role in Parliament provides the foothold for this discussion. Why? Because the issues raised for discussion call for nationwide mobilization, and the issue of women’s presence in Parliament and in all decision-making bodies is not just for countries in South Asia but for the world at large. So serious are the implications for a society when women do not get access to the highest political offices in the country that, for me, women’s 50% full participation is a non-negotiable.

The Inter Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by national parliaments by 1 July 2013 from 189 countries worldwide classify countries in descending order by the number of women in a single or lower

house. Rwanda is the first worldwide, with 56.3% of the seats occupied by women MPs. Cuba comes in third at 48.9% with 299 women occupying seats in a total of 612. In South Asia, Nepal ranks 24th at 33%, Afghanistan follows with 27.72% at 69th there is Bangladesh 19.7% and Pakistan ranks 70th with 19.5% women in Parliament. India is a shocking 109th with 11% representation. Bhutan ranks 121th with 8.5% of the total of 47 seats. Maldives is 128th, 6.5% of the total being occupied by women, and Sri Lanka at 5.8% women occupying 13 of the 225 seats. This is dismal, and as tragic as the economic and social disadvantages faced by women in this region.

Linking representation with poverty eradication

The political crisis of representation is linked to the overall multidimensionality of the social crisis. To quote Nelson Mandela,

Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.¹

The overall discussion of women's political participation needs to be linked to the broader climate of poverty where people living in conditions of poverty are denied access to most social security support, including health services and adequate food. The links between women's right to political office, sustainable food securities and their rights to universal health coverage, decent work and equal wages are part of the larger right to live a poverty-free existence:

The question of patriarchy and power further exacerbate women's access and participation in Parliament and other political offices, their sense of well-being, which must include active political participation. Given the nature of the unfair disadvantages that traditionally inherited societal hierarchies inflict on women's rights, unless and until the grammar of development refuses, entirely, economic, political, gender, caste-based inequalities, the issues of women's political full participation will not become part of an enhanced citizenship, which is a fundamental condition of existence.

(Raghuram 2012)

This region imposes multiple burdens of poverty and its attendant vulnerabilities on massive numbers of people. The scale of the problem is intimidating. Unless the local issues are addressed by seriously empowering changes in women's lives, the national governments will continue to avoid making the policy changes that are required to combat large-scale deprivation.

Antrobus states that women bear the largest set of debilitating conditions, given the nature of patriarchy, lack of access to health and education, and the denial of fair employment. Women in the informal sector do not enjoy equity status in labour rights in terms of wages, healthcare and child support. How do we explain why women remain left behind on indicators pertaining to human development despite the fact that they are at the forefront as contributors to a nation's sense of well-being, which includes the overall health and education indicators, income, capability, quality of citizenship, food availability, and social securities ranging from employment rights, housing, sanitation and all of the quality-of-life indicators?

Reforms have to be directed not only in economics but also in social services that respond to women's needs. In this, women's access to political power is critical among other strategies for achieving equality, propelling greater investment in public goods, given that the development discourse *vis-à-vis* state, civil society and markets has not achieved enough to fulfil the various internationally committed development goals.

Continued and persistent poverty tends to dull resistance over time. Across caste, class and gender the reality of hunger, unemployment and unpaid labour continues intergenerationally for women. Patriarchy is so starkly felt by most women that the tools for overcoming it need to be found deep in their memory of culture past and present and overcome in political participation. Full citizenship requires the extraordinary will of women to move out of the domestic sphere of unseen and unpaid domestic labour and service to the family and to exercise rights in the public arena of governance to make one's voice heard and one's presence felt. It is in this arena of engagement that the personal and the political come together to resist patriarchal anti-women policies.

Women seizing political power: What is to be done?

As I have stated elsewhere, women's lives in South Asia are marked by social discord, torture and inhuman status lasting for generation to generation. A critical mass of political power is necessary to shift the balance of scales in favour of women acquiring their rightful position in society (Raghuram 2012). Most gender issues do not feature as major election deciders. Women's rights to property, to equal wages and to safe sexual and reproductive health rights remain soft-option issues as far as political parties are concerned. The most derogatory comments against women and the use of insidious and violent language against them, literally reducing their bodies to being political tools, have not received outright condemnation, nor do they deter men who practice this form of sexual harassment from their parties.

When it comes to legislation favouring women, the male establishment drags its feet, as is evidenced in India. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation

and Prevention of Mis-use) Act was introduced in 1991 but was passed only in 1994. Rape Laws, the Anti-Dowry Bill, Maintenance Act, Child Protection Bill have taken years of campaigning by women's groups, huge time lags from the time of placing the issues with the public till the chain of social change, has touched enough social collectives to warrant elected representatives to guarantee passage and then implementation which is time consuming, often reducing the victims of abuse to further abuse (Raghuram 2013).

In some areas of South Asia, women provide 70% of agricultural labour and produce more than 90% of food, yet they are nowhere represented in budget deliberations.² In order to change this situation, women need to form solid electoral constituencies, cutting across caste, gender and class fault lines. The iron grip of powerlessness needs to be confronted by a rights-based democratic norm. The indivisibility of a poverty-free existence and the freedom of women needs to be part of political campaigns.

Secular democracy as a critical political principle in pluralistic transformational change

According to Bhikku Parekh,

the wisdom of a multicultural society consists in its ability to anticipate, minimize and manage such demands. Multicultural societies in their current form are new to our age and throw up theoretical and political problems that have no parallel in history. The political theories, institutions, vocabulary, virtues and skill that we have developed in the course of consolidating and conducting the affairs of a culturally homogeneous state during the past three centuries are of limited help, and sometimes even a positive handicap, in dealing with multicultural societies. The latter need to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, of achieving political unity without cultural uniformity, and cultivating among its citizens both a common sense of belonging and a willingness to respect and cherish deep cultural differences.

(Parekh 1999)

The political base for social transformation in South Asia has to be based on a philosophy of secular democracy derived from the constitution. The Indian Constitution provides the possibility for a just gendered and secular framework. Ambedkar, chairman of the Drafting Committee for the Constitution, announced at the time of the building of a new India that the constitution has its roots in the people and it derives its authority from the people. For citizens in search of equality and good governance, the constitution is a comprehensive guiding force for all matters regarding the state, civil society and markets.

The struggles for self-definition and other definition are so great that one cannot take this as an academic exercise. The solutions require collective political and social action where citizens see ourselves as part of the problem as well as the solution. This is the only way secular and gendered development can be advanced in a world narrowed down to power configurations by a highly skewed political economy (Thapar 2013).

Today we are very far from the idea of a common struggle/crusade. We continue to search the reasons why we fail to fulfil our civilizational capacities that would allow equal and rich existences and respectful and just diversities. As Amartya Sen states,

Social choice theory is a technical discipline, but underlying it is the motivation for exploring how a society of many human beings can live together and decide together. This broadly speaking is also the challenge of human development. And that interactive existence is also, I would argue, part of what it is like to be a human being. The interactive life need not be one of economic, social or cultural poverty if we give reason its due in the interactions we choose. That is the big challenge in front of us.

(Sen 2005)

Mary Robinson in the same meeting urged the need for an ethical globalization where security and prosperity can only be achieved through cultural diversity and respecting the rights of all:

Let us recall the words of the Universal Declaration: Everyone has duties to the community in which above all the free and full development of his or her personality is possible. In this day and age, the community is our entire globe, and human rights, which embody the fundamental values of all human civilization, are our common language.

(Robinson 2005)

The struggle is twin-edged. We have not been able to stop the deepening of poverty and we have not been able to bring deeper social cohesiveness within our societies. Interrogating transitional cultures forced by war, profit maximization and extractive development choices weighs down further on gender inequalities (Raghuram 2008). Again to quote Parekh,

A culture cannot appreciate the value of others unless it appreciates the plurality within it; the converse is just as true. Closed cultures cannot and do not wish or need to talk to each other. Since each defines its identity in terms of its differences from others or what it is not, it feels threatened by them and seeks to safeguard its integrity by resisting their influences and even

avoiding all contacts with them. A culture cannot be at ease with differences outside it unless it is at ease with its own internal differences ... What I might call a multiculturalist perspective is composed of the creative interplay of these three important and complementary insights – namely the cultural embeddedness of human beings, the inescapability and desirability of cultural plurality, and the plural and multicultural constitution of each culture.

(Parekh 1999)

Non-negotiables in public policy

The agency for solutions needs to come from the affected peoples. People in decision-making and powerful positions are creating a hierarchy of world-views that repress and distort the values of those who suffer material and non-material discrimination. It is important for all development theories and practice to oppose this hierarchy of thought by listening to common social values and purposes with theories of change derived from people living in poverty in the most vulnerable constituencies.

Social exclusions are created in an already fragmented society where the poor risk indebtedness of an overwhelming kind just to receive healthcare. In this context, women who are at the bottom of the ladder to receive state protection *vis-à-vis* services, health and education, food and equal employment suffer the consequences of privatization, deregulation and the marketization of healthcare. There are large numbers of people left out of development recognition – women in poverty, transgender people, people living with disability, children and the elderly, to name a few. The weight of scarcity conditions multiplies the burdens for those without the capabilities of health, education, access to food, labour participation on equal and fair terms, political participation and the enjoyment of citizenship.

Future challenges and the agenda that cannot wait

For researchers used to quantitative methodologies and the traditional interventions of development as instrumentalism, as construction, as progress, as modernization, the active use of the rights discourse is a major challenge. It is a learning process that takes one deep into notions of dignity, emancipation, equality and that borders on the political, the existential, the material and the non-tangible. Democracy is synonymous with the human condition in its entirety. Sen's excellent essay 'Democracy as a Universal Value' (1999)³ demonstrates the need to step beyond the economy into the rights domain.

Antrobus' insistence on the rights framework is necessary.⁴ The major rights recognized in the two covenants in 1966 – the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights – set out the rights of human beings. And yet, international assistance for the development enterprise is technical in nature and has commanded massive financial resources for the entire international community, while human rights, governance and institution-building at the grassroots level remain contested and marginalized. In the 1990s, development emerged as a US\$50 billion a year 'business' where the human rights and governance community received only 1% of the grants. Almost all the multilaterals drew their policy instruments from governments' strategic foreign policy instruments, reducing considerably the potential of domestic national governments and civil society organizations to develop community-owned participatory futures.

Much debate has been generated about the generations of rights, their applicability to state and non-state actors, and to corporations and other market leaders. There are no simple readymade answers regarding how the policy and its operationalization can occur. If public foundations are to engage more comprehensively in governance and civil society, there has to be long-term investment within the institution and wholehearted support from all the different departments of the institutions based on an operational vision. Much development aid has come into disrepute because of its inability to hold on to values and back them up with substantial/consistent financing over a long period, without neglecting either fiscal or social audit rigor.

Antrobus is right in suggesting that institutions are a conveyor belt for ideological dispersion. There is a need for internal critical reflexive practice as being the first and foremost step for institutions to sharpen their policies, in order to further enhance their support to communities in the area of gender-sensitive governance and public action. Our work on civil society underscores how historical and political the search and the attainment of freedom is. Work in governance demands a highly complex and nuanced approach to programme support and development. Health is about severe local imbalances and disparities that force people to live subhuman lives. It is about mothers losing their newborn at birth as much as it is about state investments in healthcare as critical to retaining it as a public good. I recollect registers of testimonies of women who were involved in female foeticide or infanticide, and I could almost hear the torture of living in a violently patriarchal society.

The rights discourse if fully endorsed and applied to different sectors can significantly alter the quality of people's participation and deepen the engagement of civil society with state actors. Microcredit operations with the poor, if not located in a deeply comprehensive development vision and strategy, can result in reducing the indebted and the vulnerable women to further misery and loss of the self during loan-recovery operations. It is often the case that

women register 95% loan-recovery rates but lose further their agency to make choices and live free lives. Too often such development projects fail to take into account women's subjecthood.

The reform of state, markets and civil society towards accountable social change is a process that is not solely the responsibility of the judiciary or people's organizations. The broad struggle to eradicate poverty, and for the civil and political rights of people in nation-building, is everyone's duty. The privatization of public goods can only happen at the present pace because of ineffective mechanisms in people's hands to force a policy shift. Under a specialized governance and gender justice nationwide programme it would be possible to contribute to the advancement of an enlightened public which pursues public action for redistributive justice and state responsiveness to the protection of people's well-being.

The longstanding issues of caste, class, gender, power and vulnerability fragment society. We need foundational efforts directed by the principles of social democracy-equality that strengthen public associations at the grassroots. Durable and sustainable action is required by aid organizations in order to provide support that is autonomous, crucial and efficient and that supports the effort of the state. My years of work with civil society organizations have made it clear that they are not contestants for spaces and survival. They are the authors of their destiny and we need to understand that the practice of democracy in nation states is also chartered by them. Social activists need to ensure inclusive planning in state-driven social sector work.

Conclusion

Mahmoud Darwish, the great Palestinian poet, when he was awarded the Prince Claus Fund Prize in Amsterdam in 2004, stated:

A person can only be born in one place. However, he may die several times elsewhere: in the exiles and prisons, and in a homeland transformed by the occupation and oppression into a nightmare. Poetry is perhaps what teaches us to nurture the charming illusion: how to be reborn out of ourselves over and over again, and use words to construct a better world, a fictitious world that enables us to sign a pact for a permanent and comprehensive peace... with life.

(Darwish 2004)

Antrobus also searches for this 'comprehensive peace with life'. The search for truth is the search ultimately for the realization of social justice. The oppositional axis on which the smaller or lesser cultures challenge the assimilatory cultures of the dominant knowledges and systems is a story that needs to be

told and lived by way of understanding and practice. While Darwish resorts to the fictitious world for relief and succour, efforts need to be relentlessly made to unite the world without forced assimilation, without the exercise of power and coercion by the dominant cultures over the smaller cultures, and with the integrity it takes to self-reflect as we critically view the lifeworlds of others.

Powerful vested interests have to be overthrown. There is no place for compromise on women's political, economic and social equality. The quest for the realization of rights is a lifelong commitment, nameless and inexorably inspired by the dream for a life of freedom and dignity, strengthened by the history of liberation. It is nothing less than the search for an international citizenship based on universal standards of dignity and equality.

Notes

1. See the speech at <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/extras/mandela.shtml>.
2. See *Facts & Figures on Women, Poverty & Economics*. http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_poverty_economics/facts_figures.html.
3. To quote Sen in full,

To complete this examination, we must go beyond the narrow confines of economic growth and scrutinize the broader demands of economic development, including the need for economic and social security. In that context, we have to look at the connection between political and civil rights, on the one hand, and the prevention of major economic disasters, on the other. Political and civil rights give people the opportunity to draw attention forcefully to general needs and to demand appropriate public action. The response of a government to the acute suffering of its people often depends on the pressure that is put on it. The exercise of political rights (such as voting, criticizing, protesting, and the like) can make a real difference to the political incentives that operate on a government.

(Sen 1999)

4. See also Pitanguy and Heringer (2002).

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9.3

Imagining Feminist Futures

Wendy Harcourt

Introduction

I enjoyed revisiting ‘Feminism as Transformational Politics: Towards Possibilities for Another World’ by Peggy Antrobus. I recall what a courageous article it was when it was published in *Development* in 2002 as part of a collection of intellectual activists writing about the impact of 11 September 2001. It was the moment when the US ‘War on Terror’ emerged to squash other critical global issues – racism, climate, social inequalities – at that time debated in global arenas such as the UN. September 11 marked a splintering away of many hopes in the development community around global leadership on these major issues. What I found courageous about Antrobus’ article was that she saw in the disarray of the global scene even further proof of the need for feminist leadership. She was unafraid to challenge patriarchal hierarchies and to demand change of those who make the political and economic decisions. She set out the vision of the network she led for many years – DAWN – a southern-based feminist research organization that since 1984 has actively engaged in intergovernmental regional and global high-level meetings.

As I reread the article, I found myself reflecting on what has changed in terms of global leadership since 2002. Is there more feminist leadership now? We are certainly living in a world with more global women leaders – there were 22 as of September 2014.¹ There are more women in governments – Rwanda now has 63.8% of women in Parliament and over 30 countries have more than 30% women members of parliament.² Icelander Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir was the first openly lesbian world leader and the first to marry a same-sex partner while in office (2009–2013). There is a female leader of the IMF and an increasing number of female CEOs. Such political and career ‘advancement of women’ is interesting but only up to a point. I do not think this was the kind of leadership Antrobus was calling for in her article, given the simultaneous rise in inequalities and the continuing gender gap in, for example, academe, where even in countries such as Canada only 20% of women hold full professorial positions

and only 30% are in tenure positions³ I found myself reflecting on the vision behind Antrobus' article. What would it mean to bring intellectual and activist feminists together in global leadership positions? How much would our world need to change?

My chapter both as a response to the article by Antrobus and as a conclusion to the handbook reviews briefly new feminisms today and then moves on to present a utopian vision of the kind of world we would live in if feminists could take the lead (rather than women simply making up the numbers).⁴

Feminist imaginaries

I recognize there are many different, sometimes conflicting, imaginaries of feminism that inform feminist politics and writing, and therefore GAD debates at the global level. These come from vastly different histories and cosmologies. In the last 12 years, feminism has taken new directions as the post-1995 generation of feminists (some speak of the 'fourth wave' – see Chapter 2.3) have eschewed the UN as a global arena and are creating their own mass movements and technologically creative spaces (Harcourt 2010). From the feminists in social movements on the squares using social media to bring global attention to their protest, to the superstar feminists such as Lady Gaga, Beyoncé and Emma Watson, the term 'feminist' has shifted meaning and is taking up major media space. These feminist practices speak to very different imaginaries, different forms of politics and different generational understandings of feminism than those in Antrobus' article.

Antrobus' understanding of feminist leadership is premised on the need for more women to have economic skills, greater leadership positions and higher education. It is also about changing systems and structures in order to have the right economic and social environments to enable collectively empowering decisions towards gender justice. Her vision is of feminist academics and activists coming together and changing institutions, but the slowness of political systems and public bureaucracies to make change happen contrasts with the emotion and swift changing images of the multimedia that proclaim 'feminism' in an instant image. In popular culture, unlike in the UN, there is no need for careful negotiations and concern that the term 'feminism' will undermine gains in gender equality. Look at the world attention given to Beyoncé singing in front of the light bulb lit up word 'feminist' in her September 2014 MTV award performance.⁵ Millions were viewing the performance and within hours that declaration sparked off a huge multimedia debate about what feminism is. Similarly, movie star and UN Women Goodwill ambassador Emma Watson's slightly nervous speech in favour of a feminism that invites men to join the gender equality debate had millions of hits and sparked off a series of debates about the 'f' word, now named proudly as feminism.⁶ Subsequently, US actress

Jennifer Lawrence's response to photo-hacking as a 'sex crime' catapulted the issue of sexual harassment, feminism and women's rights into the global press and online social media.⁷

Feminism in 2014 is currently part of mainstream pop culture, with icons of tough women celebrating their sexuality, friendship with women and men, motherhood, queer sexuality, and high-tech communication and consumer living. This form of opinion leadership at the heady level of superstardom exists alongside grassroots pop culture, such as the musical groups and performance artists that challenge the mainly masculine preserve of music. The protests of East European rock group Pussy Riot against Russian patriarchal church and state have been read as important feminist cultural and artistic expressions of resistance politics (Tochka 2013). Femen, a highly controversial movement begun in the Ukraine in 2008, is a network of mostly young white women activists, currently based in Paris, that fights for women's rights to be 'without fear, nor dictators, nor prisons'.⁸ Femen members use their bare-breasted bodies to protest against religion and political power as part of what they call 'sex-tremism'. This form of aggressive body politics by young (often stereotypically beautiful women) using their bodies to bring attention to religious fundamentalism and women's human rights has caused great concern in other feminist circles. Not only does their reading of religion border on disrespect of others but also their cooption within the techno-driven capitalist system using youth and beauty appears as a highly sexualized feminism (even if they claim it is reversed) that titillates the media as much as it changes it. Nevertheless, they are an interesting and visible expression of the struggle to reclaim women's bodies from patriarchal power.

There is a huge amount of spontaneous organizing by feminists often in alliance with social movements on the world's streets and squares, from student protests throughout Italy and Greece, Occupy and Movimento 15-M in Greece, Occupy in the US, and protests in Turkey's Taksim Gezi Park, in Cairo's Tahrir Square and in India against violence against women, just to name a few (Biekart and Fowler 2013; Kurian, Munshi and Mundkur 2015; Scholz 2014).

I would argue that this new generation of feminism is using social networking and multiple ways of communicating that suggest how diverse forms of feminist leadership are happening that are unmoored from institutional connections and more organized networks. Feminist ideas for political, economic, cultural and social change are expressed in a mass of blogs, twitter feeds, Facebook messages, e-journals, videos on YouTube, websites, photo stories, documentaries, digital storytelling, and data and statistics on websites. Online feminists are conversing and pushing political boundaries, remaking gender identities, strategizing and creating. These forms of communication offer new possibilities and strategies, and require new forms of intercultural and intergenerational feminist envisioning.

Returning to the 2002 article by Antrobus, her vision is grounded in the struggle for social and economic justice by changing the norms of governance institutions and systems. A dozen years later, I would add that these changes need to connect to other dynamic spaces, such as in the digital world or 'cyberspace'. If GAD is to be part of normative changes, it is an important evolution that UN Women and other agencies working on GAD are now reaching millions via stars such as Emma Watson. It seems logical that feminists working in the international development community seek to utilize the many different communication technologies in ways that reach across generations, identities and polarities, and in this way work creatively with the tensions around gender, rights, development and culture. If GAD is to reach out to such audiences then its advocates need to be much more adventurous and creative. Pop and music culture has opened up interesting spaces which can help shake feminist discourses of professionalism afraid to open up because they fear argument and difference. We need to explore and welcome the intersections where the multiple meanings of protest, culture, sexuality, politics, gender and power meet.

Feminist futures

In envisaging a feminist future, I see the quirky and serious resistances to dominant neoliberal capitalist discourses by young feminists in different cultural and social formats as full of possibility. As feminists seek to shape more gender-aware institutions, governance and democracy they are negotiating a huge range of racial, economic, cultural differences propelled by local realities and issues that cannot be explained in any universal way. This points not only to intercultural and intergenerational alliance and solidarity as suggested by Antrobus but also to a stronger intersectional approach to feminism that breaks through divisions among peoples (and some would add between humans and other species) (Haraway 2007). I see feminist futures emerging as we rethink and search for cracks and fissures in identities, changing cultures and communication landscapes.

In order to prise open the cracks in response to the article by Antrobus, I have chosen to take a utopian look at the future as one tried and true creative feminist writing strategy. For years there has been inspiring feminist utopian visions in Western European fiction, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) to Marge Piercy's *Women on the Edge of Time* (1976), and more recently Margaret Atwood's dystopian *MaddAddam Trilogy* (2003–2013) and Ursula Le Guin's science fiction about 'Earth Sea' (1968–2007). In preparing for this piece, I found my interests in feminist utopias are shared by the New York-based Feminist Press, which has an online call for 'radically imaginative pieces on what a feminist world would look like' in order to encourage a collective 'reach for unprecedented possibilities'.⁹ I see such invitations to imagine our future as

important ways to define individual and collective agency, community and belonging as we fight for systemic changes towards gender justice and women's rights. It is by firing our own imaginations that we can move towards hopeful feminist futures.

Entries from Femipedia 2059

About Femipedia

Femipedia [Fem-ee-pee-d-ee-A] is an open-source editable resource modelled on Wikipedia (created in 2001) and elaborated via the world feminist meshwork (WFM) since 2021. It is written collaboratively by 'netizens', immediately translated into 500 world languages and checked instantly as a source by Femicom nodal computers in order to link to other sources on the meshwork. All netizens have access to Femipedia on their personal armllet computer. Any netizen can add or edit the text, and put new images and links to other media. There are no explicit rules for Femipedia entries as all netizens are collectively developing guidelines in their lifelong learning centres on different 'Comcare' topics which have reached 'femiability' – that is, that meet the standards and values of the WFM established by netizen glocal assemblies (NGAs) and build on knowledge that is established and recognized as positive and constructive for diverse 'econologies'.

Some sample entries from Femipedia

Comcare

Is the political unit to which people of all ages belong in order to receive and to provide care for other people and other life forms. Comcare is the enabling environment for netizen's collective responsibility to nurture their own creativity develop collective and individual femiability in order to respect and care for all life forms. All netizens can apply to belong to a Comcare (digitally or materially) via their Femicom node. Netizens are encouraged to apply to the Comcare that best suits their knowledge of their birth or learnt econologies and where their repropartnership and procreate arrangements can be best met. Although individuals can apply it has become usual for netizens to apply in groups in order to encourage links across Femicom nodes and to keep a vibrant WFM. There is no time limit to belonging to a Comcare nor limit to how many netizens can join.

Econologies

Refers to combined economic and ecological environments, as they once referred to, which make up the holistic living resources. All netizens through their Comcares' belong, nurture and collectively thrive in their diverse 'glocal' (local within the global) econologies. Since the change to femiability

at the centre of social, economic and political cultures ecologies ensure that economic and ecological needs are understood as indivisible. Research is undertaken by different Femicom nodes in order to monitor glocal well-being and balance of ecologies. Life long learning centres continually contribute to the research and understanding of the links among the vibrancy of Comcare units and ecologies. The information is shared at the NGAs and further through the WFM. Those ecologies that were subject to major exploitation suffering from industrial pollution and resource extraction in the past are given particular focus by Femicom nodes.

Femiability

Is the set of core values that are developed debated and lived throughout Femicom and WFM, replacing the old-moded concept of sustainability. Netizens continually discuss and understand different facets of femiability that are essentially about caring for and respecting creativity and diversity in peoples and other life forms, whether individually or collectively expressed. Ensuring a healthy balance and well-being of shared resources with enjoyment and pleasure is at the core of Femicom living.

Femicom

Is the collective cultural expression of peoples living together on the planet with peace, respect and dignity for all life forms, where nurturing, care and pleasure for self and others is given the highest respect. It has merged earlier cultural institutions, bringing out only the positive values of different faiths and identities and focuses on ensuring via peaceful processes (positive and inclusive of all) there are no violations of any sort practiced throughout the planet. Femicom nodes bring together communications from Comcare units via the WFM.

World Feminist Meshwork (WFM)

Is the digital means by which peoples and other lifeforms can communicate via instant communication in all spoken and digital languages via personal armlet computers that translate across all languages. These armlets are worn in different materials according to the creative customs developed by netizens' different Comcare and depending on the resources of the ecology. Femipedia is the main means for femiable communication and is free and open to all netizens.

Netizen Glocal Assemblies (NGAs)

Have replaced outmoded parliaments and governance institutions. Each Comcare has a NGA and the outcome of the discussions, research and any

decisions relating to the econology is communicated via the WFM to other Comcare and Femicom nodes.

ProCreate

Has replaced the old concept of capitalist system of work. Now that there is an equal distribution of econological resources via Comcare decisions and Femicom nodes according to the values of femiability. All netizens are part of at least one procreate scheme where they contribute to the well-being of their Comcare(s) and econologies by giving time to nurturing people and other life forms, creating and sharing edible usable or artistic products, sharing different ideas, research, skills, care and pleasure for live forms in their econological area or via communication on WFM. All people are expected to contribute according to their natural and learned talents. Life long centres provide means and processes for people to learn and deepen talents. There are no set times for procreate processes but individual and collective goals are agreed on in NGAs.

ReproPartnerships

Has replaced the old patriarchal marriages and family structures which evolved out of existence as femiability values became rapidly adapted and different systems and structures evolved materially and digitally as econologies were spontaneously formed. Individuals, couples, groups come together to care and nurture people of different ages starting with new borns who whether born naturally or via technobody processes become part of a Comcare unit according to those who have come together in repropartnerships based on commitment to caring of a new born until they become able to become netizens according to their talents and learning abilities.

Technobodies

Using femiable technologies it is possible for people to chose a mix of biological and technological living – options are available for all people in committed forms of repropartnerships to create a newborn using biology or a mix of technologies. Pleasures are explored via peaceful and nonviolating ways of stimulating bodily and mental pleasures from stimulus of the body or brain via touch, meditation or other more advanced digital modes of engaging and exciting the imagination and senses. Health and well-being is maintained through collective care and understanding of how to look after bodies of different sizes, forms, colours, abilities and talents. With femiable technologies, reference to gender, race, ability, sexual orientation are out-moded and unnecessary understandings of embodiment.

Back to 2015

In these imagined entries I have tried to imagine what sort of world I would like my grandchildren to live and thrive in and to continue to evolve and create. It is a world where resources and leadership are shared in fluid, evolving material and digital systems that allow collective creativity and decision-making to happen inclusively. It is a utopian vision that I hope has elements of possibility as well. As we enter the post-2015 agenda we need to be asking more challenging questions, imagining more and better worlds, and different ways to achieve them. As a conclusion to this section and handbook I hope this vision inspires many and diverse pathways towards those feminist futures.

Notes

1. See http://www.jjmccullough.com/charts_rest_female-leaders.php (accessed 4 November 2014).
2. See <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif011014.htm> (accessed 4 November 2014).
3. See <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-academia> (accessed 4 November 2014).
4. I undertook such an exercise for Noeleen Heyzer, then Head of UNIFEM, during the UN Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 for a publication UNIFEM distributed there. As a new mother – my first child was born in January 1995 – I remember wanting to think forward to imagine a world for her, hopeful that the Beijing promises were to be met (Harcourt 1995).
5. See <http://www.mtv.com/news/1910270/beyonce-2014-vma-performance/> (accessed 5 November 2014).
6. For the text of the speech, see <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/emma-watson-gender-equality-is-your-issue-too> (accessed 5 November 2014) and for the performance see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0Dg226G2Z8> (accessed 5 November 2014).
7. See <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/oct/07/jennifer-lawrence-nude-photo-hack-sex-crime> (accessed 5 November 2014).
8. See www.femen.org (accessed 4 November 2014)
9. See <http://www.thefeministutopiaproject.com> (accessed 4 November 2014).

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9.4

Further Reflections

Peggy Antrobus

Introduction

What can I say about my article, and the responses 12 years later? What has changed and what has remained the same, and what can we learn as we move into the uncertain future? Writing these reflections at the end of 2014 is particularly appropriate as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the launch of the SDGs, the successor to the Millennium Development Goals of the first two decades of this millennium.

My article was written in the aftermath of 9/11, at a moment when it felt important to consider the alternative to a response that escalated in violence. Ten years later there was another moment for deep reflection and a change of direction with the global financial crisis of 2009. But, once again, the interests of the rich and powerful have continued to prevail against those of the vast majority. As Shobha Raghuram commented, ‘Sept 11, 2001 . . . lead to regression for global peace efforts and for inter-faith co-existence and dialogues (Raghuram, Chapter 9.2, p. 604).’

Writing in 2014, I am struck by the violence that permeates today’s media: carnage in Gaza and Libya; a rampaging ISIS as it seeks to rebuild an Islamic state of Syria and Iraq, redrawing boundaries established by Europeans, killing those who stand in their path; humanitarian crises in the Ukraine; the killing of unarmed young black men by white police officers in the US; a deadly disease spreading in some African countries. And these are only those situations to which the Western media exposes us. In short, as Mansoureh Shojaee points out in her contribution (Chapter 9.1), the situation has actually worsened.

What has changed?

Things have worsened, but also there have been positive changes.

The most impressive achievement of the global women’s movement is probably the institutionalization of the comprehensive and feminist-defined human rights framework that emerged from the Beijing Conference. The idea of an

indivisible set of rights has informed and supported advocacy and policy-making. A global women's movement (Antrobus 2004) continues to mobilize women everywhere to defend these gains.

Thanks to research that establishes clear links between gender empowerment and broader social change, there is undoubtedly greater awareness of the links between women's rights and the well-being of larger society (Sen and Grown 1987). Two examples come to mind.

The application by WHO and the Pan American Health Organization of the work of the Women's Network on the Social Determinants of Health, showing the link between gender and health outcomes with training and incentives in the health sector in some regions, demonstrates how people who are committed to the achievement of society-based goals such as wellness can be persuaded to take gender seriously.

Another example is the Grand Challenge programme of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that acknowledges the 'strong association...between addressing inequalities and enhancing women and girls' empowerment and agency, and improved development outcomes across sectors ranging from maternal newborn and child health and nutrition to agriculture to water sanitation and hygiene'.¹

Some may consider these examples to be about the instrumentalization of women; they represent what I termed the 'expediency' approach to women's well-being when linking this approach to the theme of 'Development' of the UN Decade for Women. However, they show that gender mainstreaming can be meaningful to women, especially those who are marginalized by poverty, racism and ethnicity (Antrobus 2000).

There are more non-discrimination laws and protocols in more places. Men have launched initiatives, such as the White Ribbon Campaign, to counter violence against women. Issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and an appreciation of the complexity of gender orientation have moved from the shadows to become part of our conversation. In some countries, such as the US, there have been major advances in gay rights, even as homophobia has increased in countries such as Uganda and parts of the Caribbean.

The most impressive change has probably been in the advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and in the use of social media to spread ideas, raise awareness and mobilize, making the past 12 years 'a living theatre of resistances and citizen's collective actions' (Francisco and Antrobus 2014). As Harcourt points out (Chapter 9.3), the net reveals 'diverse forms of feminist leadership...that are unmoored from institutional connections and more organized networks' (p. 617) using social media to focus on issues of particular concern to women everywhere.

Thanks to the Occupy Movement, the spotlight is now on issues of gross income inequality between groups of people, especially those in the US and

Europe, but also in the emerging economies in the South. And the OECD has just published a report (December 2014) showing that this can slow economic growth – a fact that may actually lead to corrective policies.

What has remained the same?

Some things, though, have remained the same. There has been no change in the unrelenting pressure to reverse the gains in women's sexual and reproductive rights achieved in the 1990s. Gender-based violence persists and inequality continues to increase in most countries. Climate change has almost reached the irreversible tipping point at which small island states such as those in the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans may be submerged as glaciers melt and deforestation continues unabated.

What can we learn from our experience of organizing and practice over the past 12 years?

I still feel we need to learn more from the last 12 years. First, what do we want from women's leadership? The goal of increasing the number of women in leadership positions in governments and political parties, banks and boardrooms and even heading international organizations has not changed the situation for the majority of women around the world. Women who get elected to high office are often those trusted by their male colleagues to play by the rules of patriarchy. They are unlikely to risk their status by standing up for women's rights. There may be exceptions but I know of none of them. If women in leadership positions are to make a difference they must have the consciousness and commitment to gender justice that can attract feminist votes and that feminist activism can rely upon. This can also be encouraged by continuing monitoring on the part of feminists who help get them there.

Second, as DAWN's platform for the 1995 Beijing Conference put it, we need strategies that reform the state, challenge the market and build the capacity of civil society to work towards these ends (DAWN 1995). This broad strategy is still essential (especially the need to reform the state). The erosion of the legitimacy of states as they lose the capacity to protect vulnerable groups and the environment has placed us all in greater jeopardy as social contracts continue to be dismantled; public health systems crumble; environmental hazards abound; well-connected public officials escape accountability; and resource-rich criminals escape justice. The 'Patriarchal Political Settlement' (O'Connell 2015) continues to work against women and other marginalized and vulnerable groups, and many feminist activists have been wary of the patriarchal state. Nevertheless, only a strong state can provide the framework of public services necessary for social reproduction; only a strong state can enforce the laws that

women have fought for; and only the state can reinstate the social contracts that (negotiate the regulations that) might curb the greed of corporations that place profits before all else.

The problem has been the co-option of the state by corporate power. Over the past 12 years, this has increased. Powerful Western states, led by the US and facilitated by 'international' institutions from the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO to the UN, have sold unregulated markets as a panacea for everything from poverty reduction to improved health, education and environmental sustainability. The role of corporate-based philanthropies within the UN has been enhanced by the new 'partnership' between the two sectors, taking us further along the road of the marketization of governance. How do we get states back on the side of the public interest? I do not have an answer, but I know that engaging the state has to be part of the agenda of feminist activism, as well as challenging the market.

Third, feminist activism has powerful tools in today's ICTs for challenging the market. What is needed is research into the involvement of corporations in human rights abuses and the use of these data to design campaigns that can affect the 'bottom line' of those corporations. This is not a new strategy: it has been used to great effect in bringing an end to apartheid in South Africa, and the work of activists such as Vandana Shiva and others has helped millions of people worldwide to understand the role of certain corporations in the spread of hunger. Advances in ICTs make the outreach greater, and potentially more effective.

Fourth, we need to rethink the goals of feminist politics. Feminism seems to be once again increasingly associated (exclusively) with the rights of individual women to material success (DAWN Development Debates 2010). The major lesson of the mid-1970s to 1990s, that feminism cannot simply be about the advancement of women but embrace an intersectoral analysis that includes class, race/ethnicity and location, seems lost in the current focus on a hyper-sexualized self with pop stars as role models, as Harcourt (Chapter 9.3) points out. Technological advances and social media like Twitter and Facebook have enhanced these images. This kind of feminism cannot lead to the changes in power relations needed for the kind of social transformation required to reduce poverty, inequality, violence and injustice of all kinds.

The goal of women's rights needs to be recast as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, a means towards the transformation of gender relations (gender justice) as an essential step on a path towards a more sustainable approach to ensuring the well-being of people and the planet (Taylor 2000).

This clarification of goals reminded me of something I wrote towards the end of the decade. In reflecting on the three goals – equality, development and peace – in relation to different approaches to women's advocacy, I likened the goal of equality to a 'justice approach' ('It is only fair if 51% of the population

is female’); the goal of development to an ‘expediency approach’ (‘If you want to achieve goals of better nutrition, agricultural outcomes, economic productivity etc.’); and the goal of peace to a ‘wisdom’ approach (‘If you want a world without hunger, fear and violence’). At this time I would say that while we may have achieved much in terms of the goals of equality and development, we still await the transformative power of the pursuit of the goal of peace.

Fifth, the struggle must be continuous. Shojaee’s chapter provides a graphic account of the emergence, decline and resurgence of feminist activism in Iran through varying political formations. Her example confirms what we have seen as we reflect on feminist leadership’s work to advance women’s sexual and reproductive rights since the pathbreaking conferences of the 1990s. Gains made at one moment may be undone in another, and this varies from place to place, country to country, so that no overarching statements can be made as to whether or not the lives of women have improved over the past 12 years.

Sixth, building the capacity of civil society to reform the state and challenge the market must involve making alliances and building coalitions. Because holistic approaches are fundamental to social change and because we cannot isolate women from the larger context of their lives, women’s organizations must pay more attention to building alliances and coalitions with other groups and networks working towards the broader goal of social and ecological justice. We have done this in the past; we have partnered with Social Watch, environmental groups, anti-war campaigns and the Occupy movement. These have yielded small and contingent victories, and we must redouble our efforts and use an analysis that focuses on the intersections of different kinds of power.

In its long-awaited book entitled *The Remaking of Social Contracts*, DAWN (Sen and Durano 2014) draws attention to three approaches to women’s human rights today: roles and impacts, gender power and the interface of different systems of power. It concludes that ‘understanding the drivers of gender relations requires delving beneath gender roles and their effects on underlying power relations that govern the daily realities of people’s lives’ (ibid. p. 20). They argue that this approach can lead to ‘a more fruitful and open dialogue and exchange between women’s movements and other social movements to which women themselves belong’ (ibid. p. 21).

Indeed, small victories and examples of local experiments are what give us hope above all. We must learn more about these, draw lessons from them and make the connections when we can. We must never give up. The achievement of a specific goal does not mean that you can rest on your laurels: you have to continue to monitor how things unfold, how the goal is being implemented.

Seventh, we must strengthen institutions that support feminist leadership and movement-building. There are institutions and networks on which we can still draw for inspiration: apart from our sustaining networks and organizations – AWID, DAWN, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, Women’s

Environment and Development Organization, Sexuality Policy Watch and those other networks with which we have worked over the years in our advocacy – Social Watch, Third World Network, the World Social Forum and many more. This work needs to be strengthened.

There has also been an expansion of human rights institutions, including the International Criminal Court, the Human Rights Council and the adoption of the Optional Protocol in CEDAW that permits individual parties who have not been able to redress grievances locally to petition the committee that facilitates the implementation of CEDAW; and, most importantly, to present shadow reports that allow groups to challenge and shame governments that refuse to implement the conventions and resolutions to which they have signed up. Feminist activism must make more use of these; greater use will strengthen their legitimacy.

Conclusion

There is a new global configuration of power and technology that people have to work through, and I am confident that this generation of ‘digital natives’ will find ways to translate the goals my generation fought for, and others that are beyond my imagination, into new methodologies and strategies for change. Harcourt’s reflection spells out in fascinating detail what some of this might look like.

I no longer think that it will be feasible for this generation to build the comprehensive transformation that informs/ed our utopian vision of ‘Another World is Possible’, but we can draw hope from the fact that there are countless initiatives and experiments undertaken by people at all levels from the Occupy Movement to small local initiatives aimed at making life better for people and grounded in a respect for the earth and all living things. Perhaps one day these efforts will coalesce, until that time when we can each do what we can, wherever we are, to move in that direction.

Note

1. See www.gatesfoundation.org (accessed 9 December 2014).

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