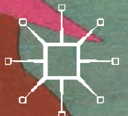
GENDER, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

BODIES IN RESISTANCE

GENDER AND SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE AGE OF NEOLIBERALISM

Edited by Wendy Harcourt



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Wendy Harcourt
Editor

Bodies in Resistance

Gender and Sexual Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism

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macmillan

Editor
Wendy Harcourt
ISS Erasmus University Rotterdam
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Gender, Development and Social Change
ISBN 978-1-137-47779-8 ISBN 978-1-137-47780-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016957770

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Original cover design by Serena Dinelli

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Series Editor's Preface to *Bodies in Resistance: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism*

As with my first edited book that started the series, *Women Reclaiming Sustainable Livelihoods* (2012), this collection is the product of good conversations, innovative research, friendships and memorable encounters. In the case of *Bodies in Resistance* there were two key events at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University in The Hague in 2013 (The Intercultural Dialogue on Sexuality, Reproductive Health and Rights in Development: Going Beyond the Comfort Zone [June] and Theories and Practice in Civic Innovation: Building Bridges among Politics, Markets and Gender/Sexuality) that initiated the discussions in this book.

The fruit of those discussions are now published three years later and are still vitally relevant. Neoliberalism and the new developmentalism are proving to be enduring, and the hopes for new forms of democracy continue to be sorely challenged. Abortion is an even more crucial issue with the rise of fundamentalism in different parts of the world, and also in early 2016 with the horrifying news of the zika virus transmitted by the Aedes species of mosquito leading to the risk of thousands of pregnant women having babies with microcephaly. The politics of the body as place, combining health, environment and community responses, is growing in importance in the wake of climate crisis. Feminist solidarity and social justice movements are finding new challenges with the rise of anti-migrant sentiment, the threat of the jihadist militant group "Islamic State" and continuing gender-based violence in world conflicts. The volume's detailed examination of gender and sexual politics resonates with the sexual rights

of transgender persons now widely acknowledged, and even mainstreamed with films such as Hollywood's *The Danish Girl* (2015).

As the book title suggests, the topics covered are varied: women's community ecology; movement organizing; schismatic debates within feminism; human rights, political rights and abortion; transgender; co-optation and body politics; intergenerational debates about sexual health and reproductive rights; masculinities; and research into pornography. These are discussed in specific places—Colombia, Mexico, India, Nepal, Iran, Turkey, Nicaragua, Brazil, Latin America and East Africa—as well as globally, from different points of view, reflecting diverse cultures, histories and experiences in terms of age, region, gender and race.

Particularly interesting about the book is that many of the authors write as activists first and academics second, if at all. Everyone has made a concerted effort to write in ways that bridge the gap between those two sets of knowledges, equally important in terms of feminism knowledge and movement-building, and for documenting what feminists are confronting under neoliberalism. Another unique and important feature of this collection is that many of the writers are young graduates—the upcoming generation of feminist activists and scholars.

As the Introduction explains, the institutional setting for the book is the fledging research group of the Civic Innovation Research Initiative (CIRI). The initiative undertakes research that fosters creative forms of cultural, political and economic resistance, and establishes pathways to social change. The chapters that follow reflect this CIRI approach—to understand lived experiences in the struggle for democratic power and to capture the fluidity of changing understandings of identities, bodies, emotions, networks, power relations and knowledge in today's "messy" world. This is particularly important when looking at how gender and sexual relations are changing in places that defy easy capture in a social science framing. The book contributes to this CIRI way of doing research by looking at the complexities of gendered embodiment in relation to changing economies, geographies, cultures, networks of communications, experiences of pleasures, and visible and invisible interactions.

Again as stated in the Introduction, the book interrogates historically positioned, engendered and embodied knowledge both in terms of existing resistances and in terms of the possibility for change. It looks at how power is played out in neoliberal regimes and also at how resistance is integral to challenges and changes in these regimes. The sense of frisson in these stories is why it is so important and exciting to have this volume in the series.

Acknowledgements

'Bodies in Resistance' is inspired by the courage of the people in feminist and social movements around the world. Special thanks to our colleagues and friends of the Civic Innovation Research Intiative (CIRI) at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University for providing a nurturing space where the book's initital conversations could happen.

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Notes on Contributors

Camilo Antillón Najlis is currently studying for a Master's in cultural studies at the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica-Universidad Centroamericana. He is Assistant Professor there. He has research experience in social and cultural history, gender, sexuality, violence and health, with national and international institutions and organizations. He has authored papers and books on these subjects and he is co-editor of the *Anthology of Nicaraguan Contemporary Critical Thinking* (forthcoming).

Ana Quirós Víquez is the director of the Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud – CISAS in Nicaragua and the former convenor of the national Civil Society coordinating body, the Coordinadora Civil. She is part of the Coordinadora Política of the "Movimiento Autonomo de Mujeres" (MAM). She is a human right defender of LGBTI and women.

Aniseh Asya combines her training in anthropology and international studies with a particular interest in the contexts in which human rights practices emerge and take hold. Her work in social science and law examines the manners in which individuals and social movements engage with each other and with governmental institutions to bring about gender justice. To this end, she has worked in academic institutions and with global development organisations for over two decades.

Athiany Larios is a feminist and human rights activist, a trans woman with one discourse of "we are all women", and collaborating as part of the trans and feminist movements in Nicaragua.

Geni Gómez is a feminist activist and educator. She was born in Madrid and visited Nicaragua for the first time in 1989. Adopted by the city Matagalpa, she grew roots in these fertile grounds with its long tradition of feminists with whom she has shared struggles, dreams, learnings, indignation and rebelliousness. She is part of the feminist movement in Nicaragua, through her participation in Grupo Venancia and the Women's Network from Matagalpa. After many years, she followed the Masters Program in 'Perspectives of Gender and Development' at the Central American University in Managua. That experience has opened up new opportunities for reflections, dialogues and learning that have broadened her perspective and given her new tools to contribute to the feminist movement's task of transforming inequalities.

Sara Vida Coumans is a Dutch national who was born in Nicaragua and lived in the Philippines as a child. She has been a member of the youth-led organizations CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights. She was involved in advocacy efforts around the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014 review process and co-chaired the Bali Global Youth Forum in 2012 with Rishita Nandagiri. Sara holds a Master's in social policy for development from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in the Netherlands with a specialization in children and youth studies, and she has explored contemporary Dutch debates about age and sex work in her Master's research. Sara currently works at Amnesty International as International Youth Coordinator and is responsible for designing and managing the global programme of youth engagement, including supporting youth-led campaigning and strengthening the protection of young human rights defenders.

Manisha Desai is Associate Professor of Sociology and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Connecticut. Her research and teaching interests include gender and globalization, transnational feminism and contemporary Indian society. Her most recent book is *Subaltern Movements in India: The Gendered Geography of Struggle against Neoliberal Development* (2016). Among her other books are *Gender, Family, and Law in a Globalizing Middle East and South Asia* (co-edited with Ken Cuno, 2010, Syracuse University Press) and *Gender and the Politics of Possibilities: Rethinking Globalization* (2008). She is currently completing a book on women and gender in a globalizing world for Routledge's Global Studies Series.

Claudia Espejo is a psychologist at the Universidad Piloto de Colombia. She is a member of the Asociación Herrera. She has experience in the design, coordination and execution of social, environmental, educative, communitarian and cultural projects in the public and private sector as well as in community-based organizations.

Juliana Flórez Flórez is a researcher and Associate Professor at the Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Culturales Pensar, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá. She was a scholarship researcher at the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), LASA and a visiting researcher at the Latin American Studies Institute, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her doctoral thesis received an award for being the best doctoral thesis in social science (UAB) and was published in the books *Emerging Readings: The Decolonial Turn in Social Movements* (Vol. I) and *Emerging Readings: Subjectivity, Power and Desire in Social Movements* (Vol. II). Her writing focuses on critical perspectives of development, border feminism, meeting of knowledges and communitarian economy. She was co-translator of J.K. Gibson-Graham's books.

Karen Gabriel is Associate Professor in the Department of English, St Stephen's College, University of Delhi. She is also Founder-Director of the Center for Gender, Culture and Social Processes at St Stephen's College. She is currently at the ISS as a European Union International Incoming Marie Curie Fellow, where she is researching the commercial bases of pornography. Karen has written extensively about issues of gender, sexuality, cinema and the nation-state. Her book on Bombay Cinema, *Melodrama and the Nation*, was published in 2010.

Manuela Cardozo García is a psychologist with a gender approach from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Bogotá, Colombia. Her degree thesis, entitled "Movimientos sociales en la Sabana de Bogotá" ("Social movements in Bogota's savanna: Contributions for a pacifist and transformative social psychology"), initiated her interest in the body and territory in women's lives at the Escuela de Mujeres de Madrid. Currently she works as a psychologist at the District Secretariat for Women's Affairs in Bogotá.

María Teresa Blandón is a Nicaraguan sociologist and feminist, founder of the Feminist Central American Program La Corriente. She is author of several publications on the situation of women's rights in Nicaragua and Central America and a lecturer in the Master's program 'Perspectives on Gender and Development' at the Central American University in Managua.

Daniela M. Gloss is Assistant Professor at the Sociocultural Studies Department of Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, Guadalajara, Mexico. She holds a Master's in science and cultural communication from that university. Her research focuses on social anthropology, feminist political ecology, communication and social movements. Her latest research project was about the appropriations of space in defense of place processes led by groups of women. She has also participated in a multidisciplinary research project on civic organizations that defend sexual and reproductive rights, and she has worked as a communications consultant and a documentary short-film producer in civic organizations and research centers.

Wendy Harcourt is Associate Professor in Critical Development and Feminist Studies at the ISS. She joined the ISS in November 2011 after 20 years at the Society for International Development, Rome, as Editor of the journal *Development* and Director of Programmes. At the ISS she is Research Programme leader of the civic in innovation research initiative and co-coordinates the Sexuality Research Initiative. She has edited 12 books, and her monograph, *Body Politics in Development: Critical Debates in Gender and Development* (2009), received the 2010 Feminist Women Studies Association Book Prize. She is series editor of Palgrave's Gender, Development and Social Change Series, and Editor of the Routledge Series of Gender, Development and Sexuality. She is actively involved in several journal boards, and gender and development networks.

Silke Heumann is a sociologist and Assistant Professor in Women's and Gender Studies at the ISS. Her research interests include gender, sexual politics and (their relation to) social justice: social movements and discourse analysis.

Loes Keysers is a Dutch feminist activist who has been working on reproductive and sexual rights and women's health issues since the 1980s. She has been an active member of several women's networks, including as founder of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR). For 35 years she was a faculty member of the ISS, teaching and researching in the evolving domain of women, gender and generation in population and development studies. She is currently teaching part time in gender studies at Leiden University College.

Rishita Nandagiri works on abortion rights, reproductive justice and feminist organizing. She has worked with the WGNRR and consulted for a number of organisations in recent years. Currently reading for her PhD

at the London School of Economics and Political Science, her research explores women's abortion-related decision-making. Rishita serves on WGNRR's board of directors and she volunteers with Blank Noise, a collective based in Bangalore, India. She tweets on @rishie_ and dabbles in a feminist podcasting project (on hiatus), the quietude (the-quietude.com).

Cevahir Özgüler is a PhD student both in the Women's and Gender Studies Programme at Ankara University, and at ISS, where she is a member of the Population, Environment and Resources Research Group. Her PhD study focuses on gendered experiences in environmental movements with a case study from Turkey. For years she has worked as a freelance researcher with NGOs, universities and research groups in various research projects, such as on the issues of violence against women (VAW), a women's shelter house, migrant children and social movements. In addition to research, she worked at the Women's Shelter House in Ankara, and she worked to support refugees in Çorum. Currently she is part of the research project entitled "New Social Movements, Media and New Communication Technologies". She is a member of the Women's Shelter House Collective.

Jacqueline Pitanguy is a sociologist and political scientist. She has been part of the early feminist movement in Brazil. From 1986 to 1989 she held a cabinet position as President of the National Council for Women's Rights (CNDM), designing and implementing public policies to improve women's conditions in Brazil. The CNDM played a key role in ensuring woman's rights in the new Brazilian Constitution. In 1990 she founded Citizenship, Studies, Information and Action, a non-governmental organization, and she has been its Executive Director ever since. Jacqueline is a member of the National Council for Women's Rights of Brazil of the Commission on Citizenship and Reproduction, of the Brazil Fund for Human Rights, of the Women's Learning Partnership for, Peace, Development and Rights and of the Inter American Dialogue. She was awarded the Medal of Rio Branco, from the Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Medal do Mérito de Brasília.

Juana Urbina is a trans feminist activist participating in both the trans and the feminist movements.

Ana V. Portocarrero is a Nicaraguan feminist economist, lecturer and researcher at the Interdisciplinary Gender Studies Program of the Department of Social Sciences, the Central American University in Nicaragua. Her research and teaching interests include gender and

sexuality; feminism, economics and environment; epistemology, power and social change; and theories and queer movements. In particular she has worked on the following topics: “pleasure, service and feminism in Nicaragua”, “transgenderism and feminism in Nicaragua”, “discourses on climate change, development and social exclusion” and “epistemic justice, higher education and social justice”. Ana is also a member of a collective of artists, academicians and activists called Operación Queer, as well as a yoga instructor. She is doing a PhD at the ISS on the subject of climate change, international trade and food sovereignty.

Kumud Rana has worked on a range of issues relating to gender, sexuality, masculinity, conflict, peacebuilding and environmental justice in Nepal, the UK and Madagascar. She is currently a PhD candidate at the College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, Scotland, where she is studying the ‘third gender’ or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) movement in Nepal and its connections with regional and global queer politics.

Jan Reynders is an international development consultant, researcher and activist in the field of gender justice, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), engaging men and sustainable development. Based in the Netherlands, he has worked in international development for over 40 years, hands on in Bangladesh and Afghanistan, and as manager and gender policy advisor in a Dutch funding agency. As consultant he has conducted evaluations, assessments, training and assignments for policy development, program design, change management, visioning and strategizing in more than 45 countries, including in fragile/post-conflict states. He focuses on the gender dimensions of sustainable socioeconomic development, conflict prevention and transformation, GBV and SRHR, promoting gender-transformative approaches with respect to the role of men/masculinities and the intersectionality of power positions and abuse in (gender) relations. He is active in the Dutch Gender Platform (WO=MEN), and sits on the steering committee of the international MenEngage network (Europe chapter).

Chloe Schwenke is a human rights activist, development practitioner and academic with more than three decades of international experience, nearly half of it while living in Africa and Asia. She recently served as vice president for global programs at Freedom House in Washington, DC, and previously was a senior political appointee for the Obama administration at the US

Agency for International Development (USAID). Chloe currently teaches on the adjunct faculty at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University, at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and (online) at the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. She also works as an independent consultant in international development and human rights.

Patricia Veloza Torres is a student of geography at the National University of Colombia. She has experience of creating and implementing research projects (educational, cultural and environmental). She is a social activist for human rights that work with youth and women in economic, social and cultural rights, especially the right to food, and topics related to floriculture at Bogotá Savanna.

Virginia Vargas is an active feminist militant, founded the Center for Peruvian Women Flora Tristán in 1978. She has been part of numerous feminist networks and initiatives in Latin America and worldwide, such as Between Women: a North-South Dialogue, Social Watch, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Postneoliberal Agenda, Peoples Dialogue, Campaign for an Interamerican Convention of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Campaign against Fundamentalisms, Campaign for Legalization of Abortion in Latin America. Virginia was the Latin American and Caribbean NGOs' Coordinator to the NGO Forum held in September 1995 on the occasion of the 4th World UN Conference on Women in Beijing, China. In 2000 she spoke at the UN General Assembly in New York on behalf of Latin American and Caribbean women's NGOs at a special session of the UN General Assembly: Women 2000: Gender Equity, Development and Peace in the 21st Century. In 2005, at the Millennium Social Summit, she was a speaker representing Civil Society at the UN General Assembly, New York. Since 2001 she has been actively involved in the processes of the World Social Forum, as part of its International Committee, on behalf of the Articulacion Feminista Marcosur.

Guisella Andrea Lara Veloza has a BA in community education with an emphasis on human rights from the National Pedagogical University. For almost ten years she has worked in social and artistic organizations at Bogotá Savanna, especially in Madrid, Cundinamarca. Nowadays she works at the Herrera Association, where she coordinates the field of education in human rights, and she also works in educational and artistic research.

Betül Yarar was a lecturer in the Faculty of Communication, Gazi University, and a teacher in the Women Studies Graduate Programme at Ankara University until recent events when she has been forced to leave the country. She has published various books and articles on a range of issues, including popular culture, modernization and politics in Turkey, cultural transformation and gender, the women's movement in Turkey, feminist theory, bio-politics and gender and violence. Among various others, her most recent research project, which is international and is still in progress, is called "New Social Movements, Media and New Communication Technologies". The main focus of this is the women's movement in Turkey and in Slovenia. She has been teaching various courses such as body politics, gender and body politics, gender and violence, visual culture, popular culture and social structure in Turkey.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Wendy Harcourt, Silke Heumann and Aniseh Asya

This book emerged out of a series of conversations that took place among feminist activists and scholars from around the world when they met twice at Erasmus University's International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in 2013.[1] The conversations revolved around the multiple challenges imposed by changing and increasingly complex regimes of gendered power (re)configured by the influences of what we broadly termed "neoliberalism". We understood neoliberalism as "an ideology, and a political and economic practice" (Carty and Mohanty 2015: 84) which threatens to "dismantle progressive social and economic policies in a process of subjugation, co-optation and delegitimation" (Naples 2013: 133).

In this context we discussed the diverse and innovative ways in which people resist neoliberal political, economic and social forces, individually or collectively, in public and in private. The participants shared how organizations and individuals mobilize to change understandings and practices of embodiment, sexuality and gender from widely different contexts—from Bangladesh to Brazil, with equally different approaches, from decolonial and postcolonial perspectives to trans* feminism and queer politics (CIRI 2013; SRI, iBMG & KNCV 2013). The institutional setting for he volume is the ISS and, more specifically, the fledging research group of

W. Harcourt (✉) • S. Heumann • A. Asya
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_1

the Civic Innovation Research Initiative (CIRI).[2] The CIRI undertakes research that fosters creative forms of cultural, political and economic resistance and establishes pathways to social change. This type of research means recognizing frictions, contractions and contesting energies. The chapters that make up *Bodies in Resistance* reflect this CIRI approach—to understand lived experiences in the struggle for democratic power and to capture the fluidity of changing understandings of identities, bodies, emotions, networks, power relations and knowledge in today's "messy" world. This is particularly important when looking at how gender and sexual relations are changing in places that defy easy capturing in social science framing. The book therefore deliberately aims to contribute to new CIRI ways of doing research that can describe the complexities of gendered embodiment in relation to changing economies, geographies, cultures, networks of communications, experiences of pleasures, and visible and invisible interactions.

Building on the CIRI approach to innovative research, this collection of essays maps out how gender and sexuality (together with other dimensions of inequality and discrimination) become entwined in politics and political struggles in complex ways. It looks at the gender, racial and sexual politics of "bodies in resistance" in the streets, in communities, in silences, in homes and in the in-between marginal places as people fight and stand up for their territories, their rights, their integrity and their survival. The chapters from Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, the Middle East and South Asia explore the role of sexuality in the politics of power and resistance in different contexts across the globe, looking for organized and collective as well as everyday and individual forms of politics and resistance. They show how these struggles change or reinforce certain (heteronormative, race- and class-based) regimes of gender and sexuality.

The volume documents feminist movements' struggles for change in local contexts around social justice and sexual rights in Brazil, Colombia, India, Iran, Nicaragua, Mexico, Turkey, India and Nepal, and also translocally (i.e. across linked localities) in the Andean region and sub-Saharan Africa. Some chapters also explore the politics (and resistance) of doing research on reproductive rights, sexuality and sexual rights globally. Within these contexts they explore diverse responses to today's power regimes shaped by neoliberalism, neoconservatism, globalism and fundamentalism, and the new dynamic forms of social protest that the world is currently witnessing.

The book collects together subject matter as complex and different as abortion, research on pornography, global advocacy on reproductive rights, the human rights of trans* persons and indigenous rights to territory. Taken together, these seemingly unique cases contribute to rethinking, reclaiming and repositioning bodies. It is important to note that they all respond to different forms of power as inscribed on the body. It is in exploring these inscriptions of power on the body that the volume connects gender with racial and sexual politics of "bodies in resistance". In analyzing the struggles for social justice, and sexual and reproductive rights, we see resistance in terms of challenging the obvious manifestations and machinations of power as well as in understanding the conditions on which such power is based and that allow it to persist. When authoritative acts are carried out, they rely on a series of conventions that allocate power to people to speak, to ask and also to resist.

Methodologically, the book is written using feminist-situated, co-productive and reflexive methodologies incorporating insights from anthropology, sociology and development studies, politics and cultural studies, as well as observations from the praxis of "doing feminism". It builds on the histories and knowledge of feminist engagement in body politics in diverse cultural contexts and territories.

In the making of the collection we have debated how to engage in non-extractive and collaborative research practices in order to bridge the gap between academia and activism, and the tensions and conflicts of being both an activist and a researcher (CIRI 2013; SRI, iBMG & KNCV 2013). We looked at how to deal with different audiences that question the subject's position and legitimacy to be part of the "true" realm of discourses on social justice, with different, often competing or contradictory, rules and rationales. We see it as important to consider how we can feel constrained by the "moral imperatives" of different social movements, the rules and constraints of academia, or the authoritative popular understandings of gender, sexuality and feminism. We have tried to bring to the surface how these questions influence and shape our research. These challenges are experienced by the authors and by the groups and communities with whom we co-produce knowledge. They relate to issues of power and representation as well as to the different epistemologies that inform our worldviews and research (CIRI Report 2013; SRI, iBMG & KNCV 2013).

Bearing in mind these differences and constraints, the book does not seek to position all the chapters into one common frame that would encompass the many diverse approaches to "bodies in resistance". Instead, the

authors have been invited to situate their work openly within the context of their different structural, political and discursive contexts. By building on the different conversations from the dialogues at the ISS, the volume can be read as a set of collaborative "multilogues" between the different authors throughout its different stages. In addition to the many single-authored and co-authored chapters, the book includes personal stories, conversations and interviews that record conversations among the authors around specific contested issues in feminist theory and praxis, such as the inclusion of generations and "queer" identities, masculinities and perspectives into feminist engagements with social (in)justice.

The two parts of the book are structured around concepts which have a long history in feminist theory and praxis, which we now turn to in order to define how we have discussed those concepts by positioning the volume in our collaborative rethinking, reclaiming, and repositioning of bodies.

The context in which we are looking at bodies in resistance is "the age of neoliberalism". We see this as a process of saturating democracy with market values, but also as an attack on "the principles, practices, cultures, subjects and institutions of democracy" (Brown 2015: 9). As Wendy Brown underlines, neoliberalism is "a normative order of reason development … into a widely and deeply disseminated governing rationality … that is quietly undoing basic elements of democracy" (Brown 2015: 17). The chapters in explore how people are resisting the different forms that neoliberalism has taken, recognizing its global shape but also its inconsistencies that allow for challenges, resistances and ultimately change.

Why Bodies?

The book aims to reflect on key critical feminist terms, such as reproduction, redistribution, production, governance and patriarchy, within our contextualized examination of sexualities and the governance of bodies in and between the geopolitics of modern states. In making visible the counter discourses to dominant economic and social policies, the collection highlights how such struggles are gendered and are gendering bodies. This examination of embodied lives recognizes the personal, the private and the state as sites of struggle. Writing these chapters (and engaging in the dialogues that preceded and were produced alongside them) has provided the space for contributors to situate their realities and discourses in relation to issues of bodies, gender and sexuality. We consider these sites of struggle not as equivalents to each other but as tension-riddled responses

to complex and changing neoliberal regimes of power. As neoliberalism is constantly reinventing itself to stay relevant, all the while digesting various forms of resistance and amassing power, it is imperative for those who resist its negative consequences to also adapt. "Knowledge on bodies is irreducibly interwoven with other discourses, social, colonial, ethical and economic" (Shildrick and Price 1998: 3). If we understand how gendered bodies are constructed in different discourses, we can challenge norms and oppressive practices, and understand how to exercise different forms of power that can transform and change oppressive conditions.

Our focus on bodies stems from our desire to emphasize the embodied nature of experience. Bodies are sites of both normalization and resistance, since social norms of gender and sexuality are inscribed on the body. In this understanding of body politics, power is not always possessed as such, with hegemonic forces determining what one does or does not do. Rather, bodies are part of the normative construction of gender and sexuality in everyday life or micropolitics through which our knowledge and our experiences are shaped. The way that gender and sexuality are constructive include in the language we use and the practices of caring, parenting, sexual relations, health, medical and biological scientific processes.

Bodies are also about place. Much feminist theory has pointed to the body as the first place for resistance in the challenge to neoliberal global economic systems. Understanding the body as place underscores that bodies are not external to political processes but rather firmly enmeshed in them, even if they are not always the defining site for action. The lived experience of the body, and the identity and definitions attached to bodies, inform and are connected to all historically and geographically located political struggles (Butler 1993; Grosz 1994; Harcourt 2009).

The chapters explore the embodied realities of different peoples' lives and their engagement in struggles for sexual health and reproductive rights, access to abortion, an end to gender-based violence (GBV), lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* (LGBT) rights,[3] the recognition of indigenous territories, and all peoples' rights to care, love and work freely. In these struggles the body is understood in many ways: as a physical and cultural reality caught in the dualism of dominant scientific and medical Western knowledge systems; as a symbol of social/political projects through which individuals and populations are governed; as a "self" to be nurtured and honored; and as a sexualized and desired subject with fluid positionings across age, class and race, and determined by economic and political constructions of gender. Ultimately the body (however gendered) is

understood as a powerful site full of potential, and a place of pleasure and positive experiences, while at the same time it is also manifestly full of contradictions and open to constraint and abuse.

Why Resistance?

In using the term "resistance" we are aware of the debates that it has generated in relation to the danger of reducing the notion of agency to resistance (Mahmood 2001) and to the question of who has the authority to "judge" what counts as resistance and what not (Mahmood 2001; Wedeen 1999). This is not only about academic debates. Though the literature that we cite is academic, the dilemma is very practical and real: it is about how to forge social justice struggles and how a narrow idea of social justice (even with the best of intentions) can produce more injustice and inequality.

From our own experiences as researchers and feminists, we understand that power and resistance are both multiple and contradictory. There cannot be a universal yardstick to qualify agency and resistance. What we define as resistance depends on where we are positioned structurally, experientially and epistemologically. Resistance, then, cannot be reduced solely to the conscious and organized political action of defiance but instead describes an everyday practice that is shaped and motivated by people's attempts to find their own political, social and cultural positioning.

We are interested in the notion of resistance as a response to the predominant definitions of gendered bodies. That is, we are particularly intrigued by challenges that indirectly or directly undermine the oppressive effects/disciplinary impacts of prevailing normative gender, and body discourses and practices. In this understanding of resistance, not everyone deliberately challenges, or sets out to challenge, an oppressive force; even actions that are not meant to be liberating but undertaken as strategies for survival qualify as acts of resistance. In the context of neoliberalism, we consider acts that simply point to the power of neoliberal forces and the limitations of the types of resistance possible to such forces to be forms of "resistance". These acts point out the contours of the conceptual system that oppresses and confines individuals (Foucault 1970, 1972; Said 1979; Wedeen 1999).

The process of speaking to and challenging power has been especially important to feminist critical thinkers who engage in the process of resignifying constructs of women as found in Western academic and media discourse by countering it with experiences in women's accounts of their own lives (Abu-Lughod 1993; Al-Ali and Pratt 2009; Mahmood 2005; Petchesky 2005). In this vein, *Bodies in Resistance* aims to continue this

counter discourse by rethinking, reclaiming and repositioning the experiences of marginalized women, men and others so that the transgressive and "resistance" value of their actions can be understood.

Why Gender and Sexuality?

We look at gender and sexuality as crucial domains of power and inequality. Following Rubin 1999; Bonder et al 2009; Correa et al. 2010 we see gender and sexuality as intimately linked but not reducible to one another. Further, we see them as always working in tandem with other relationships of power (Rubin 1999; Scott 1986). An intersectional approach allows us to analyze the way in which different forms of oppression based on gender, sexuality, "race"/ethnicity, class and so forth intersect, connect and reinforce each other, and how this informs our struggles. Ferree (2009) proposes an interactive understanding of intersectionality in which dimensions of class, gender, sexuality, age and ability are understood as already constituted through their specific relationship within historically and context-specific configurations of relationships between different dimensions:

> This version of intersectionality insists that it cannot be located at any one level of analysis, whether individual or institutional. The "intersection of gender and race" is not any number of specific locations occupied by individuals or groups (such as black women) but a process through which "race" takes on multiple "gendered" meanings for particular women and men (and for those not neatly located in either of those categories) depending on whether, how and by whom race-gender is seen as relevant for their sexuality, reproduction, political authority, employment or housing. These domains (and others) are to be understood as organizational fields in which multidimensional forms of inequality are experienced, contested and reproduced in historically changing forms. (Ferree 2009: 85)

This approach enables possibilities for change and resistance at the same time as allowing for a much more fluid understanding of power and gender that subverts apparent hierarchical givens.

Why Neoliberalism?

We use the term "neoliberalism" to ground the book to the historical times in which we are living. We do not engage with it in great analytical depth. We see neoliberalism as the dominant ideology of today's phase of capitalism that is undergoing critical challenges by feminists and others as

they question expansive and evasive economic growth at the cost of peoples, environments and cultures. We write while being aware of cracks and fissures in the neoliberal "order of things" as different people around the world are rethinking mainstream neoliberal culture, economic and social relations. In this way the book contributes to a critique of neoliberalism and its extractive logic by offering embodied and gendered histories and experiences that confront dominant transnational and global structures and ideologies based on colonial, imperial, racial and heteronormative gender power inequalities and asymmetries.[4]

We are interested in the possibilities that are emerging from critiques that challenge capitalist interests. In this we are inspired by writers whose focus is on how ordinary people, in particular women, are transforming politics and economies in different locations. These experiences can be seen as suggesting new possibilities for cultural, economic, environmental and social relations. This type of scholarship decenters the neoliberal capitalist economy and looks to other forms of economies where care, commons and community predominate and the possibilities for non-heteronormative relations emerge (Gibson-Graham 2006; Harcourt and Nelson 2015).

Another influence on our work is Chandra Talpede Mohanty. In an essay with Linda Carty, she explores "the anatomies of dispossession and violence in the age of neoliberalism" and maps out feminist responses to neoliberalism, including the threat that "neoliberal states appropriate gender discourses in their attempts to explain away or justify the erasure of women's rights" (2015: 9).

Our book resonates with Carty and Mohanty's argument that as feminists recognize the ways in which patriarchal globalization/neoliberalism have impacted on women's lives in tangible ways they have begun forge transnational solidarities that are crucial to the anti-racist and anti-capitalist feminist struggles today (Carty and Mohanty 2015).

In these feminist visions of how to transform capitalism, women's mobilizing for change is seen as both an analytical and a political project that works by connecting particular sites of resistance around women's care work, community livelihoods, body politics and engagement in alternatives to hegemonic development processes. These politics are about resistance but also about the reappropriation, reconstruction and reinvention of bodies, places and place-based practices, and the creation of new possibilities of being-in-place and being-in-networks with other human and non-human living beings (Harcourt 2013a, 2013b).

Therefore, while describing the critical engagement and resistance to neoliberal capitalist practice, the book is also interested in how different groups are living and embodying their daily resistance to the neoliberal project as they ascribe importance to care, the household and personal relations in economic and political analysis and practice that link ethics, nature and culture. We explore the possibilities, as well as the difficulties and contradictions, as people "live" their embodied resistance to neoliberalism by adopting lifestyles that respect ecological limits and defy the greed, desire and gender blindness of powerful exploitative institutions.

Rethinking, Reclaiming and Repositioning Bodies

As well as engaging with the concepts of the body, resistance and neoliberalism, the collection reflects on three themes: how to rethink, reclaim and reposition bodies in relation to different feminist theories, practice and praxis.

The first theme, "rethinking", takes up Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge and the constitutive "nature" of discourses and their central role in the reproduction of social relations of power and inequality (Foucault 1976; Mills 2003; Sawicki 1991). We address the question of what Foucault's notion of power means, and can mean, for social movements' diverse and different efforts to challenge and address structural inequalities. The volume explores how the multiplicity of power relations, and their (re)production through scientific and everyday forms of knowledge, challenge social movements. For Foucault, power consists of a multiplicity of force relations that are produced and dispersed from everywhere (1990). His notion of power as multiple, diffuse, contradictory and often emanating from small, subordinate groups in society is reproduced through knowledge and through the construction of subjectivities. This points toward challenges of social movements that are very important to understand and to engage with if we aspire to an inclusive project of social, political and economic justice. These knowledge/power practices shape our subjectivities and define our very sense of self, and our identity and position in the world as actors, as researchers and as advocates (and often all three).

The second theme, "reclaiming", revolves around diverse (direct and indirect) engagements with states—understanding the "state" not as a centralized holder of power but as a hegemonic effect (Foucault 1976). It illustrates the importance of engaging with the state and also of the need

to transform power on many fronts—not only from policy or "top-down" authoritative institutions of power but laterally through relations between institutions and actors, as well as from the grassroots, including in relations of the everyday in the household and in the streets. The book looks at how to engage with the question of the hegemonic conditions on which the power of the state is based.

The third theme, "repositioning", looks at the question of how social and political change occurs to enable social movements and the people working within them to express a full set of embodied experiences. The resistance of these individuals to their assigned place (e.g. the embodied position and subjectivity of a subordinate subject) creates at times a new conception of individual identity and at others changes the parameters of when and how it becomes possible to act vis-à-vis social movements and the state. And in this we are aware that it is important to keep our analysis open to the deeper problem of feminist and other political movements' internal politics of exclusion rather than locating the problem, as always, outside the feminist space.

The book reflects on the problems and challenges of social movements and the ways in which they often unwittingly carry their own oppressions: by forging their truth, and privileging certain identities, oppressions and rights over others (Ferree and Roth 1998; Butler 1999 1990; Ferree 2009; Miller 2000; Heumann 2014a, 2014b). Following Ferree (2009), we do not see gender as reducible to our structural location in society but as informed by historically anchored ways of thinking around gender in relation to sexuality, race, class, generation and ability. This means that for feminist alliances it is important to reframe connections between class, gender, sexuality, generation and ability as an essential act of feminist transformational politics (Ferree 2009). The volume engages with the question of power relations between and within social movements, across different histories and cultures. Many of the authors illustrate how it is important to explore the inclusions and exclusions produced through identity politics and different ways of framing struggles, determining who belongs or does not belong to "us".

Overall the book aims to rethink resistance and the connections between different forms of oppression—without conflating them or placing them in a hierarchical relationship to each other (Butler 1997). The chapters are therefore not organized by theme or specific location but rather by approach to the different knowledge and experiences of bodies in resistance. Part I contributes to the discussion of rethinking, reclaiming and

repositioning bodies with reference to academic questions and debates exploring bodies in resistance through an analysis of place-based experiences of feminist movements. Part II reflects more directly on the authors' personal experiences of bodies in resistance from grounded knowledge that emerges from advocacy and policy struggles around body politics, including within academia. Throughout, the volume employs a reflexive learning process and a horizontal sharing of knowledge where all the contributors' expertise and knowledge is valued. Reflexive learning means valuing and respecting differences of approach, age, experience, gender, race and education without denying the role that power and acts of governing play in shaping those differences (Harcourt and Icaza 2014).

The Book, Chapter by Chapter

In Part I, entitled "The Politics of Place: Gender, Movements and Bodies", the chapters analyze specific experiences or resistances in different places—in Colombia, Mexico, India, Nepal, Iran, Turkey and Nicaragua—looking at the politics of place around gender, movements and bodies. The term "politics of place" builds on the work of Harcourt and Escobar (2005), which sees place as inflected with the global—not as a static state of being somehow different from the global, but rather where the global and local co-constitute each other in place. Bodies are understood as the first place, or the place closest in, and the entry point into many of the politics that the volume speaks about—around the body, home, environment and public place. Place, or more specifically peoples' relations in place as they protect and conserve, enhance and modify livelihoods, resist or build change and create connections with other places, is important in understanding bodies in resistance. Places (including "global places") are "meeting places" of different cultures, knowledge and practices where local contexts are a manifestation of transnational connectivity. In the book we see place as 'a site of becoming and the ground of a global economic politics of local transformations' (Harcourt 2014). As J.K. Gibson-Graham state, it is important to understand 'local economies as places with highly specific economic identities and capacities rather than simply as nodes in a global capitalist system. (2007: 39).

Chapter 2 by Juliana Flórez Flórez, Guisella Lara Veloza, Patricia Veloza Torres, Manuela Cardozo García and Claudia Espejo examines the politics of place in Colombia, exploring a group of young people's lived experience around bodies and territory. It looks at the Escuela de Mujeres de Madrid (Madrid School for Women), a collective of young daughters

and a few sons of flower-crop workers. Inspired by decolonial feminism and Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, they opened the school in 2010, meeting every Saturday. In dialogue with the women from the collective, the chapter's authors produce a reflexive co-production between academia and activism, looking at body politics on three scales. They examine the microscale where in an intergenerational space women can acknowledge their lived bodily experience: the bodies poisoned by insecticide; sick bodies by mechanical movements during the last 25 years; silent bodies in production chains; and injured and alienated bodies, apparently without pain. They also create a space for new ways to experience their bodies collectively through self-care, solidarity and connecting to nature. On a macroscale (territory), they have installed vegetable gardens in their houses (sharing their own knowledge and preserving earlier knowledge from their parents). Additionally, they have expanded their territory, connecting with others in Bogota and sharing experiences with women's organizations around the world via the Internet. They describe how on a mezzo-scale, sexuality emerges in the violent memories of older women who share their perplexity about sexual choices and experiences.

Continuing this place-based analysis of body politics, in Chap. 3, Daniela M. Gloss looks at reclaiming the right to become "other-women" in "other-places" with a study of the politics of place of the Ecologist Women of La Huizachera Cooperative in Mexico. She focuses on the body as a central site of struggle, understood as the first place to be appropriated and politicized through the practices and discourse of the defense of the place of a women's cooperative in La Huizachera, a Mexican community in the state of Jalisco. Gloss reflects on the reconfigurations of practices, discourses and power relations around the body as an important node that positions women's place in the family and the community. The chapter explores the resistances of these women to the socioenvironmental conflicts in the community using the four domains of place that Harcourt and Escobar (2002) describe as important sites of struggle in the framework of the politics of place. Gloss shows how women's resistance enables them to become other-women capable of producing other-places through their defense of place, or the defense of the right to produce and create new and diverse places.

In Chap. 4, Manisha Desai takes us to another discussion of place-based politics as theorized by Gibson-Graham 2008, looking at what she describes as moments of movement intersection in India with an examination of how movements are transforming bodies. She traces how the ter-

rain of social movements around gender and sexuality in India has shifted dramatically since the 1990s. Here, queer, sex worker and transgender movements are working for gender and sexual justice alongside the autonomous feminist movement and are important interlocutors for bodies in resistance. Desai identifies the process of movement intersection, when movements actively challenge, contest and cooperate with each other. She analyzes how these moments of intersection inform and transform understandings and practices around bodies, as gender and sexual justice of the different movements intersect.

In a more focused study of competing interests among different women in the struggle for gender justice, Kumud Rana (Chap. 5) looks at contesting bodies in the constitutional discussion about equal citizenship rights in Nepal. She reviews the contemporary constitutional debate regarding citizenship in an exploration of the intersection of gender, nationalism and ethnicity in the pragmatic diplomacy of Nepal. Rana analyzes how the gendered and nationalist discourse about which bodies are "truly Nepali"—used by feminists among others—has been used to curb the citizenship rights of marginalized women who have moved to Nepal. She expands the debate around citizenship rights to look at the sexual/"moral" boundaries in relation to the hegemonic institution of marriage.

In Chap. 6, Anisa Asya also looks at heteronormative institutions in her study of family-planning volunteer organizations in Iran, whose efforts she argues can be seen as a practice or performance of justice. She suggests that the sexualized, gendered roles and identities prescribed by the Islamic state and circumscribed by religious and state authorities are at once both embraced and resisted by women's advocates working on gender justice in these agencies. She argues that Iranian women deliberately adopt a pragmatic stance, working through family-planning associations in order to strategically gain increased freedom of expression and movement. She explores the benefits and challenges that arise from using existing family-oriented tropes instead of deploying women's "rights" and "equality" vocabularies to produce gender justice.

Taking up the fraught issue of abortion in their exploration of neoliberal body politics, feminist resistance and the law in Turkey, Cevahir Özgüler and Betül Yarar (Chap. 7) analyze the anti-abortion biopolitics of the ruling Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP [Justice and Development Party] and the counter discursive practices of women's movement activists. Their study looks at the period when the AKP tried to curb abortion in 2012, examining the issue through the lens of the Foucauldian notion

of biopolitics—the life of the population and the life of the body (1990). Özgüler and Yarar analyze how there are very different counter actions of activist groups within the women's movement in Turkey in their resistance to the government's attempts to end the right to abortion. The chapter discusses the various innovative ways used by activist groups to resist the policies of the AKP, examining from a critical perspective the pro-choice discourse as the general framework of these resistances.

The last contribution in Part I, by Silke Heumann, Ana V. Portocarrero and Camilo Antillón Najlis (Chap. 8), deals with the question of transgendered bodies as subjects of feminism. It is based on a dialogue with cisgender and transgender feminists in Nicaragua about the inclusion of trans* persons and politics in the Nicaraguan feminist movement. It is organized along four themes: (1) the debate about the ways and extent to which bodies shape our social position and subjectivity, and what that means for trans women's and cisgender women's relationship to a heteronormative social order and to feminism; (2) the debate around gender performance and different interpretations of what it means to reproduce or challenge patriarchal gender orders; (3) the discussion around the inclusion of new/diverse bodies in feminist spaces, and the fears and possibilities associated with that; and (4) the multiple points of convergence that were identified by both cisgender and transgender feminists. The chapter sets out possibilities for a trans* feminist agenda that allows for a truly intersectional perspective and explores how dominant notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality oppress all of us in different, yet interrelated, ways.

Part II, entitled "Points of View on Gender Politics, Rights and Bodies in Resistance", turns to personal reflections in different feminist political spaces in policy arenas. The authors speak largely about their international cross-cultural and intergenerational experience of advocacy in different areas of body politics, looking at strategic ways they have engaged in different gender politics and rights movements.

Chapter 9 by Wendy Harcourt opens with a candid exploration of her role as a feminist activist in the development industry in the broad area of body politics. She raises questions about the co-optation of feminism in development practices and programmes in her personal reflections on an "ethnoscape of encounters" (Appadurai 1996) in a South Asian training course on gender, generations and sexuality. She recalls her discomfort during this and other encounters in her transnational work, visiting and working with feminists in the "other places". She asks how authentically feminists from the Global North, can act for the recognition of body poli-

tics as it is played out in the Global South. She argues the issue is not so much co-optation but rather acknowledgement of how to act from the "privilege of the middle" as feminists work as teachers, activists and advocates.

Continuing this line of interrogation, in Chap. 10, Harcourt joins two other "northern feminists", Sara Vida Coumans and Loes Keysers, in an intergenerational trialogue about global body politics based on the experiences of the three women in global activism and advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The conversation explores the generational shifts in SRHR issues in an attempt to understand the changes and historic or emerging issues framing SRHR in feminist discourses on global body politics. The discussion spans four decades and is a frank examination of some of the difficulties among generations in terms of positionality, race and gender—including the silence around men and transgender in many of the public debates about SRHR.

In her contribution (Chap. 11) ironically called "Post-What?", Rishita Nandagiri pushes further the book's reflections on global advocacy and its disconnects, with a close look at "The Cairo Legacy and the Post-2015 Agenda". She deepens the issues raised in the preceding chapter with a direct challenge to older feminists to provide space for engagement with, and to learn from, younger feminists. In her three "open letters" she introduces the key issues that younger feminist activists from the Global South are addressing in global advocacy around reproductive rights and sexuality as part of their resistance to older women in the movement.

Another provocation to feminist advocates in the field of SRHR comes from Jan Reynders (Chap. 12), who asks, "Where are the Men?". In personal reflections on manhood, masculinities and gender justice, he shares his personal and professional frustrations about his decades of experience. He argues that feminist men in gender equality debates are too often marginalized. While his story of the last few years is more positive with the increasing success of new movements such as MenEngage and the growing voice of both women and men feminists, he insists that men need to be part of the solution and not only seen as the problem.

Moving from the global to a national context, in Chap. 13, Jacqueline Pitanguy shares her personal story of body politics, including a detailed narrative of human rights and public policies in Brazil. In conversation with Wendy Harcourt, she explores the institutional responses to sexuality and

gender in terms of laws and policies around transsexuality, abortion, and gay and lesbian rights. Given her well-recognized, longstanding commitments and contribution to the important changes made in the Brazilian context, the interview provides insights into how to infiltrate (and ultimately resist) the hegemony of conservative ideas in legal, social and cultural discourses. Pitanguy describes how different actors negotiate body politics, and underlines the importance of human rights discourse in challenging conservative understandings of bodies, reproduction, family and ethics.

Another well-known Latin American activist, Virginia Vargas, shares her reflections on the challenges facing bodies in resistance in the broad Latin American context (Chap. 14). Her exploration of the new epistemologies in Latin American feminisms is a probing consideration of decades of feminist activism. She looks at decolonial feminism and changing perspectives on women's sexuality in a series of Latin American feminist encounters. Vargas narrates how these encounters are creating an important space for indigenous women, Afro-Latina youth and sexual dissidence movements to debate and discuss diversities. Articulating these differences is unsettling the older feminist perceptions of the "body politic". She points in particular to the "the body as a territory" as a discourse that connects with indigenous women's movements in their struggle for territory, as well as to a new view of gender provided by transvestites and by transgender women, based on their sexual embodied knowledge and experience or resistance.

Karen Gabriel in her introspective piece about engaging in research into pornography (Chap. 15) examines another set of resistances within feminist and academic scholarship. She points to four lines of resistance involved in doing porn research. She identifies resistance to the researcher from established and institutionalized academia; the researcher's social and professional circles; other researchers in the field; and those in the pornography industry. In the context of the politics of sexuality, Gabriel speaks of the body of the porn researcher as a site on which these multiple resistances are played out and how, in her case, they are determining the outcomes of her research.

The final contribution (Chap. 16), by Chloe Schwenke, similarly explores a very personal story of bodies in resistance with her view of trans* emergence in Africa and feminist responses. She explores the emergence of a new demographic—African trans* feminists—and considers the relationship between African trans* activists and African feminists in comparison with similar relationships and frameworks in

the USA. She describes a growing community of male-to-female trans* Africans that is emerging as a new social movement and gaining its own identity. Speaking as a transgender activist from the USA working in solidarity with trans* globally, she sets out seven areas she sees as being key to understanding feminism and trans* activism in political, cultural, civic and academic conversations.

Conclusion

As the varied topics covered suggest, the authors are from very different places and histories. Many of them are young aspiring academics, others are retired, some have known each other for decades, others have met through writing this book, but all are actively engaged feminist activists committed to making the mix of histories, experiences, activism and academia inform their work.

As we hope this book will show, co-production of knowledge with an awareness of difference (inside and outside academia, and across age, race and gender) is possible even if this means blurring the boundaries of what is acceptable academic research. The chapters in the book speak about academia and to activism, seeing the borders dividing them as porous. They interrogate historically positioned, engendered and embodied knowledge in terms of both existing resistances and possibility for change. They look at how power is played out in neoliberal regimes but also how resistance is integral to challenges and changes in these regimes. Above all, the stories speak of and are aware of the contradictions, dangers and risks. The sense of frisson in these stories is why this type of scholarship is so important, difficult and exciting to do.

Notes

1. The two events were Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) on Sexuality, Reproductive Health and Rights in Development: Going Beyond the Comfort Zone, 3–6 June 2013 at ISS, The Hague, jointly organized by the Sexuality Research Initiative of the ISS, the Institute of Health Policy & Management (iBMG) and the Dutch Tuberculosis Foundation (KNCV), thanks to funding from the Rotterdam Global Health Initiative and ISS Innovation Fund; and Civic Innovation Research Initiative (CIRI) Forum 2013 on Theories and Practice in Civic Innovation: Building Bridges among Politics, Markets and

Gender/Sexuality, 8–10 October 2013—ISS of Erasmus University, The Hague.

2. The CIRI aims to weave "together non-hegemonic narratives about how people on the ground are overcoming profound obstacles in their direct challenge to social, political, economic and cultural inequalities" (Biekart et al. 2016). Through exploring these narratives, the CIRI analyzes the obstacles and possibilities for social change (see http://www.iss.nl/research/research_programmes/civic_innovation_research_initiative_ciri/, accessed 8 February 2016).
3. LGBT can be extended to include I (intersex), Q (queer) and A (asexual). We have chosen to use this term because it is the most commonly used across the places we are working—for example, in the conversations about transgender and feminism in Chaps. 7 and 15. In Chap. 16, Chloe Schwenke explains the term "trans*" (note 1).
4. Here we deliberately reference "experiences" instead of "realities" because we opt to use a language that is inclusive of peoples' interpretations and conceptualizations of their embodiment alongside the concreteness of their physical and material conditions.

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PART I

The Politics of Place: Gender, Movements and Bodies

CHAPTER 2

Politics of Place at the Women's School of Madrid: Experiences Around Bodies and Territory

Juliana Flórez Flórez, Guisella Andrea Lara Veloza, Patricia Veloza Torres, Manuela Cardozo García, and Claudia Espejo

Introduction

Madrid, the location of our research, is a municipality located in the Sabana de Bogotá. It borders on Colombia's capital city of Bogotá, along with other municipalities (Soacha, Sibaté, Mosquera, Funza, Facatativá, Chía, Cota, Cajicá, Sopó and Zipaquirá). These districts are very close to Bogotá, and this proximity increases the tension between metropolitan and rural areas that has characterized the region since the twentieth century. Today, 14 percent of Madrid's inhabitants live in rural areas. However, they should not be considered to be peasants (Cardozo and Suárez 2014) (Fig. 2.1).

Dedication: To our dearest friend, Augusto Tyuasusa Malaver, an indigenous teacher of the Muisca people, who was murdered at the time we were writing this chapter, whose loving spirit is now spreading over the Sabana de Bogotá.

J.F. Flórez (✉) • G.A.L. Veloza • P.V. Torres • M.C. García • C. Espejo
Instituto Pensar – U. Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_2

Fig. 2.1 Hand-drawn map of Madrid in Colombia

This tension has escalated because regional actors (both state and private) tend to see the territory only from a developmentalist perspective—that is, from a modern conception of change oriented toward productivity, private profit and exploitation of the territory as a resource. This economic model focuses on productivity instead of centering on people's lives or the survival of our planet.[1]

Perhaps the developmentalist project that has contributed the most to the continuous urbanization of Madrid is the export-oriented flower industry that has developed in this region over the last 40 years. The rich lands that were once devoted to livestock and agricultural products for local supply are now occupied by 85 flower companies. This means that Madrid has the largest concentration of flower producers in Colombia—the "Beautiful Flower of the Sabana", says a local government campaign. It was hoped that the settlement of these companies would "catapult" the territory toward development. However, this has not been the case.

Those of us who live in Madrid grew up seeing our mothers (and some our fathers) working for flower companies. We have also worked

there. After many years of living among crops, neither our mothers nor we, the future generation, have seen the promised development come to fruition.

Like the rest of the young people in Madrid, we have three options in this situation: to follow this path of desolation, to migrate to Bogotá (where there is more labor competition but better educational possibilities) or (much more difficult) to discover and create new life and labor options based in our territory. We chose the last one and created Asociación Herrera, in conjunction with other regional collective organizations and with the academy (where we also work).

Our point of departure is the premise that discovering and creating new life options based in our territory is only possible through intergenerational work. Therefore this chapter focuses on collective actions carried out by female elder workers (some of whom are our mothers) who, after several years of routine work, left the flower industry, bravely faced the labour market as workers discarded by the capitalist system, and organized themselves collectively into the Escuela de Mujeres de Madrid (EMM [Women's School of Madrid]), supported by Asociación Herrera and now seeking work other than that offered by capitalism.

Our working hypothesis is that these women are carrying out territory-based collective actions that allow the reframing of Madrid beyond the development model that is predominant in Madrid and the Sabana de Bogotá. We will analyze the potential of such actions by using the concept of politics of place, a key contribution from feminism emerging from the overlap between critical development studies and geography. The concept refers to the articulation of place-based transformative collective actions.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, we look at Madrid as a territory that has been impoverished by developmentalist projects. Second, we focus our attention on the effects that the flower-growing industry has had on the bodies of female workers. Third, we describe the EMM, which is made up of ex-workers in the flower sector, housewives, women who work as household employees, care providers and other women working in the informal economy. Fourth, we examine the potential of women's collective actions to articulate politics of place. Fifth, we argue that the politics of place articulated by the EMM have facilitated women's transit from wage-earning employees to cooperative workers. They have also transformed the way women experience their bodies. We also argue that these process could offer new guidelines to reframe the territory and surpass the developmental logic.

Madrid: A Territory Impoverished by Development

The collective organizations of Sabana de Bogotá are mainly articulated through the Red Agroecológica (Agro-Ecological Network), and Raíces de la Sabana and the Red Popular de Mujeres de la Sabana (Popular Network of Women from the Sabana de Bogotá). Both networks, along with other organizations, articulated the Encuentro Social y Popular Sabana (Sabana Social and Popular Meeting). There we identified the development projects implemented in the territory. Along the same line of thought, in previous work we identified five ways in which development has taken place in Madrid (Jazmín Pérez, Guerrero Peña, l Vega Ravelo, Veloza Torres, Veloza, Sánchez Amézquita and Flórez Flórez 2014).[2]

Regional Economy Based on the Mineral-Extraction Industry

If you see Madrid from the top of the surrounding mountains located to the south east, you can see La Herrera, our sacred lagoon, devastated by around 12 industrial mining companies that extract diverse materials for construction purposes (Palacio 2010). Indolent diggers work among the moaning of the spirits of the Muisca cemetery, where you can still find interesting indigenous vertical graves, as we found out after a walk led by Augusto Tyuasusa Malaver, a Muisca indigenous teacher.

The Militarization of Daily Life

In the center of Madrid there is a military airport that looks like a round *patch*.[3] Over the next five years the military occupation of the territory will grow when CATAM (Colombian Military Airlift Command) moves to the zone. As in other war regions of the world, the militarization of daily life is justified by security discourse; it is shown as an equivalent of peace, as the condition required for fostering national development. The settlement of CATAM in Madrid will bring about an increase in the patriarchal-military siege on women and girls, the number of pregnant girls, and the rates of female prostitution in the municipality, mostly involving young women. It is also likely that the curfew decreed seven years ago, as well as the "social cleaning" cyclical measure (selective beating and murders) against young boys whose physical appearance and sexuality do not match social norms, will be maintained.

Turning the Territory into the Dry Port of a Large City-Region

Since the 1990s, some public and private entities of Bogotá and Cundinamarca have planned regional development based on increased competition. With that purpose in mind, they intend to promote business dynamics by turning the municipalities of the Sabana into zones that are both functional and marginal to the capital city. This scheme will become a reality through the Bogotá City-Region Plan. This has been promoted by the Regional Commission for Competitiveness, which sets forth the guidelines for land use and planning for the capital district and the department, coordinated by the public sector, private companies and universities—usually private ones. According to these guidelines, the "best" alternative for the development of the municipalities is turning them into the dry port of a large city-region, a big free-trade zone, a large warehouse for the storage of import and export products, and the ideal space for automobile sweatshop assembly lines where women are the perfect workers (owing to their "delicate" nature).

The Tertiarization of the Economy, and the Flexibilization and Precarization of Labour

The local government announces the introduction of jobs in industrial parks, warehouses, financial entities or fast-food restaurants as a way of fostering regional development. It is also proud to announce the possibility for young people and older women (who used to work on the flower crops) to work as household employees in the new residential areas under construction, either for the business class or for families who wish to find small townhouses and dwelling spaces at a lower price than those available in Bogotá.

The Export-Oriented Flower Agroindustry

The characteristics of this production sector[4] (specialization, business aperture and reprimarization of economy) and the support from the national and local governments have favored its expansion in Madrid (Fig. 2.2).

For the last four decades, these companies have been the labour referent for local people. The flower sector generates 68 percent of employment in the municipality (Local Mayor's Office, 2014); it provides employment to 67,804 people (DANE 2009). Since most workers are women

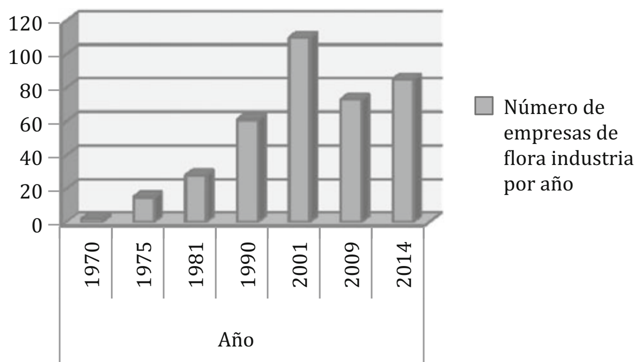

Fig. 2.2 Fuentes: Universidad Nacional-Sena, ASOCOLFLORES (2010), DANE y Gobernación de Cundinamarca" (Veloza and Lara 2014)

(60 percent in the administrative sector and 62 percent in the production sector), we could say that it is a feminized sector. In the next section we will discuss the impact of this developmentalist project on the bodies of female workers.

Alienated Female Corporality: Poisoned, Sick and Silent Bodies

Female workers start work at around 6:00 a.m. The sky is still dark and morning mist comes down, close to the ground, during *heladas*.[5] Work begins but women do not know exactly when it will end. They may work for an average of 16 or 18 continuous hours in the high seasons (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, US Independence Day, etc.). Their work is characterized by precarious labour conditions that seriously damage their health and a progressive flexibilization of basic labor rights (pension, healthcare, fringe benefits, etc.). Younger women are usually unaware of this situation. It has been denounced by the Corporación Cactus and some labor unions (Sinaltrainal and Untraflores), in conjunction with worker organizations from the Netherlands and Kenya, which share the same economic activity.

In the flower industry, work is divided into two productive stages. The first is cultivation, which is carried out in high-temperature (35 °C and

40 °C) greenhouses where three main tasks are performed: flower sowing, growing and cutting. For this stage a system of seed beds is used. Each bed is 1 m wide and up to 30 m long. Each worker is in charge of 60 or more beds. (When the industry was first established, the number was 5–8 beds per worker.) The second stage is harvest, which is carried out in low-temperature warehouses where there are dozens of table lines. This is the place where flowers are classified, packed in bouquets and then stored in "the cold room", where they will be kept until they are ready for exportation.

In both stages, work demands certain adaptation and accommodation of the human body according to the flowers' needs; paradoxically, the body of the flowers is more relevant in the process than women's bodies. Let us look at the various bodies shaped throughout the flower-production chain.

Poisoned Bodies

In *sowing*, women have to bend their bodies and kneel on soil that is moistened by water and pesticides. This curled-up position (at an angle of over 90°) harms the vertebral column and the knees; and respiratory diseases may derive from the humidity and exposure to low temperatures. This has a negative impact on the body cycles of menstruation and pregnancy. This is the step in the work process where there is more contact with pesticides:

> Working for a flower company is very good, there are many advantages but also many disadvantages because you kill yourself, the sunlight, the sunlight kills you little by little. I have always worked in cultivation … and the pesticides! They become part of your body. I have witnessed that. Some people have retired […] and they are already sick because of the contact with those products; many of them have died, they don't have the chance to enjoy their pension because they get sick. You never get sick when you're there, it's unbelievable. (Female worker, File AH, 2012)

Agrochemical substances have a negative impact on men, too, since male workers are usually responsible for watering and fumigating the crops. Effects do not show immediately in either women or men, so it is difficult to diagnose the symptoms as an occupational disease. In many cases, the diseases leave an indelible trace that invades the whole body (e.g. dermatopoliomisitis). The same applies to the effects of excess heat in the greenhouses, that poison the skin and brings about skin disorders—mainly skin spots that sometimes develop into cancer.

Although this is a serious situation, poisoning is an aspect of occupational healthcare that has been ignored by the flower industry. Besides ignoring the seriousness of the effects that pesticides have on women' bodies and their offspring, diseases are not classified according to the level of toxicity. Some female worker told us that breathing in chemicals can in some cases cause death, while absorbing them through the skin may cause intoxication that reveals itself gradually (Terres des Hommes, 1990). In a study on occupational disease carried out in the flower industry, Vilma Castellanos (1990) concluded that nearly 95 percent of the chemical compounds used can be absorbed through the skin, 87 percent via the mouth and 73 percent through the respiratory system. In any case, medical care by the companies involved is very poor and the small number of studies on the subject makes it impossible to identify the diseases that are derived from the use of pesticides or from excess heat in this kind of work.

Injured Bodies Due to Repetitive Movements

Flower *maintenance* involves watching over the "appropriate" growth of each flower. It requires weeding, budding off (taking any "unnecessary" buds off the stem) and cleaning up flower beds.

Women's posture is determined by the type of flower being grown. Roses are some of the flowers with the highest exportation demand. Their height can reach up to 2 m. In order to take buds off, women must step on plastic cases and stretch their arms. Then they step down, move the case to the next stem and step up again. These repetitive movements harm their back, waist and shoulders. To speed up the production process, in some companies women must wear stilts so that they can stand at the right level. This posture increases leg pain and varicose veins. While taking buds off, the women's faces brush against the plants' foliage, which has been irrigated with chemicals. This causes serious skin and eye problems.

To cut fresh flowers, women use mechanical scissors that require great effort from the hands and arms. There is therefore widespread diagnosis of carpal tunnel and rotator cuff problems among the workers. Some women have had up to three operations to solve the same disorder.

Silent Bodies in Production Chains

In the *post-harvest* stage there is the aesthetic (literally cold) part of the process (3 °C–5 °C) in the noisy storehouses where dozens of tables are

arrayed in lines, where workers occupy fixed positions. Some companies play music to stimulate and entertain their staff. Flowers are received and prepared for exportation. They are classified, organized in bouquets, carefully inspected and then stored in a cold room until they are taken to the airport.

These activities cause health problems, such as pain in the carpal tunnel, the rotator cuff and the back. Since female workers must stand up for several hours, many of them report varicose vein problems. In addition, activities here are more repetitive than in the harvest stage and are performed in silence. There is simply no time to speak.

In some companies the schedule for cultivation is 8 hours, while harvest activities may extend from 11 to 14 hours. In high seasons the number of hours can be extreme. The workers remain silent and simply wait for the end of their shift:

> I have different schedules in the post-harvest stage; right now I am breastfeeding, so I start working at 7 am and I finish at 3 pm … It's 8 hours … But at Elite we have to work a minimum of 9 hours a day. We work until 10, 11, 12 pm or 1 am; we have to work until we are told we can stop. Therefore, your feet, your arms, your hands, your whole body hurts … In that kind of work … sometimes you work for 18, 20, or 22 hours. (Interview with female worker, File H, 2013)

Sometimes the women must go from the greenhouses (35 °C–40 °C) to the post-harvest warehouses (3 °C–5 °C), or vice versa. The temperature change can produce respiratory problems that are often ignored by the women so that they can keep on working. Generally speaking, female workers ignore their bodies. Sidelining pain is a common behavior among those who do this kind of work. The production of poisoned, sick and silent bodies configures an alienated female corporality, an *experience of bodies apparently without pain* and a labor experience in which the pain is unavoidable.

The flower industry could take the necessary measures to recover women's corporal awareness by alternating their body movements; allowing them to stay outside for a reasonable time following fumigation; respecting their medical restrictions; providing chairs at the workstations; including sunblock and sun visors among the equipment provided to workers; increasing occupational and health wellbeing activities; and increasing the time available for lunch.[6] All of these measures require a real commitment from companies to heir employees' health:

> Flower workers are exposed to all sorts of labor risks concerning health: ergonomic, chemical, physical, biological, psychological and social risks. The situation is even more complex because it is difficult for many workers to have their diseases acknowledged by the company doctor or the EPS [El Perpetuo Socorro (Spanish healthcare provider)] medical service, and because in some cases companies are not ready to take effective care of their employees' health. (Escuela Nacional Sindical 2004)

When studying the effects of the flower agroindustry on the bodies of female workers, we see the body as a place of conflict where the first contradiction of capitalism (capital-work) is expressed: it is in the bodies of female workers where work is clearly subject to capital. Similarly, when identifying the developmentalist projects implemented in Madrid, we see the territory as a place of conflict where the second contradiction of capitalism (capital-nature) is expressed. It is in the Sabana de Bogotá where we can see how nature is subject to capital and that it is conceived as an "exploitable resource".

These contradictions are interrelated. What does the body of a female worker in the flower industry tell us about the territory? As mentioned by Veloza and Lara (2014), those women use dark nail-polish colors to hide the residue of black soil under their nails; when they look in the mirror they are used to seeing more and more freckles and skin spots on their faces; and women's bodies have a strong smell of rubber and sulfur that causes them to be noticed everywhere. The transformation of women's bodies cannot be separated from the transformation of the territory.

The connection between the two has been theoretically elaborated by the indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta in Colombia. The way they see health is based on the assumption that the human body becomes sick when the surrounding territory is sick. Therefore they say that in order to heal their bodies, the territory must be healed (Mama Santos Mojica, c.p. Nogueira 2011).

During the last 40 years, the territory of the Sabana de Bogotá has been sick due to the absorption of agrochemical products used in agriculture, the impossibility of changing crops, the contamination of the Subachoque river, and the increasingly dry water sources. The milk that people drink is produced by cows fed with the surplus of poisoned flowers that are not exported. From the indigenous perspective, it could be said that the pain that female workers of the flower agroindustry feel is an expression of the pain of the land; and the alienated corporality is an expression of the

alienation of the territory (of their biodiversity and water sources) by the flower sector. As stated at the beginning of this paper, if we want to discover and create new life options and territory-based work opportunities, we would need to make that life and work involve with dignity women's bodies as well as their territory that support them. The next paragraph summarizes a possible solution.

Body, Territory and Education for Dignified Work: The Pedagogical Proposal of the EMM

"Our Main Enemy Is Fear, and It Is Inside Us" (Domitila Barrios de Chungara)

About three years ago we met Norma Inés Bernal, a Catholic critical nun who worked as a social worker for a flower company for 17 years. With her we organized a number of workshops addressed to female workers of the flower industry with the purpose of reflecting on their situation. Surprisingly enough, several women attended the workshops, both young and old.

Some women had been fired without dismissal compensation, and others had retired with a pension and were waiting for the payments to come. Being inspired by Gibson-Graham and their analysis of the regional economy of the Latrobe valley located to the south east of Australia, we saw staff reduction and layoffs in the flower agroindustry of the Sabana de Bogotá not only as an act of injustice but also as the interruption of the ritual practices of subjection to regional economy and, therefore, as an occasion to cultivate subjects who can desire and create non-capitalist economic practices; it could be a time not to feel defeated but to be open to new desires. We felt it was necessary to meet again.

Through community radio, posters, social networks and word of mouth, we convened another workshop. Nearly 40 female workers attended. They were mothers, friends, neighbors, teachers, wives, daughters or sisters. All of them were somehow related to the flower agroindustry. We realized that most of the population of Madrid has some kind of connection with this sector. We identified the need in the long run to maintain a pedagogical space for women.

With the cooperation of some colleagues who are sensitive to and acquainted with the situation of workers in the flower agroindustry, we

made up a work team to reinforce our proposals and pedagogical projections in terms of policy and methodology. We were greater than we had expected.

After a few trials[7] the EMM was finally born on February 19, 2011 as the main project in the area of human rights education of Asociación Herrera.[8]

The EMM is a pedagogical space for intergenerational meetings for popular women. The dynamics of the association has allowed the inclusion of diverse women (according to age, race/ethnicity, sexuality, religion, education or experience with organizations). They could be peasants and could also be living in precarious urban areas, employed and unemployed women with different work experiences (e.g. in the flower agroindustry, domestic service, healthcare, informal trade and domestic production) but sharing the same experience: not being owners of the means of production.[9]

To design an intergenerational educational project required a deep understanding of how the capitalist project behind the flower agroindustry has been installed in women's lives. We became aware of the context in which women grew up, of the meaning of being the daughters of men and women who have worked with flower crops, and of the consequences this background had on the territory and its people.

With this recognition as our point of departure, the pedagogical proposal of our school gives a new meaning to work-oriented education, as seen by Freire. The idea is to help women move from resignation to active indignation so that they can take action and create new alternatives for themselves and for their territory (Veloza and Lara 2014). We recognize the connection between education, work and economy, and then we try to find different paths toward a body–territory continuum beyond the options offered by capitalism.

As popular women, we cannot separate our teaching either from the work we do or from economic activities. While we try to think of ways to transform our gender relationships, we also think about how to make a living. In the terms of Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013), we think of ways to cultivate not only our occupational wellbeing but also our material, physical, social, community and environmental wellbeing.

The EMM is supported by contributions from participants, the solidarity of other organizations, including the Red Popular de Mujeres de la Sabana, the Corporación Cactus and influential allies (in Tarrow, S. 1999 sense) with academic colleagues.

In terms of the theoretical and ideological background of the EMM, popular education and feminism are the most important references. These give sense and meaning to the political subject of our education project: popular women.

We see feminism as a social movement, a critical theory and an epistemological paradigm (Margot Pujal 2007). From this three-fold perspective, feminism provides our pedagogical project with a historical review of the various forms of oppression that we, women, have suffered at different points in history and in different societies, and also of the actions we have taken to change those forms of oppression.

Rather than sticking to a particular feminist trend, we are interested in borderland feminism. That is, we wish to nourish our pedagogical proposal from different feminist currents. Thus, in our pedagogical exercises, we do not consider mutually exclusive (1) recognizing the civil rights that we enjoy today but that our grandmothers did not (e.g. earning a salary, as proposed by liberal feminism) and (2) recognizing the need to fight against unequal work distribution for women (as proposed by socialist, Marxist and anarchist feminisms). In our pedagogical exercises, valuing the importance of female values and questioning the gender roles as a natural difference (as defended by radical feminism) have been extremely useful. Black feminism (along with Chicana, post- and decolonial feminisms) provides an intersectional perspective from which women are conditioned but not determined by different oppression systems (patriarchy, capitalism, racism, heteronormativity and monotheism). We have discussed with women of EMM in different and interrelated oppression systems.

While feminism has woven itself into daily work at the EMM, older women participating in the Educational process do not recognize themselves as feminists; they feel that this movement is for academics and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), far away from their reality. That is why we insist that educational institutions and popular organizations are situations where feminism should be overtly introduced, and those rural women's fights should not be separated from the theoretical and practical discourse of feminisms in Latin America.

On the other hand, we understand popular education (introduced by Brazilian Paulo Freire) as the leading Latin American current of critical pedagogy for liberation committed to social transformation. This trend of thought sees women, and human beings in general, as individuals capable of recognizing their own fears, and the fear of undertake a process of individual and collective emancipation. Popular education also makes us aware

of the creative power of educators—our capacity to examine, criticize and transform reality.

How are popular education and feminism articulated? It is a two-way benefit. Through the concept of intersectionality, feminism invites popular education to go beyond the binary and romantic view of what is considered "popular". In addition to sex/gender and class identities sexuality, race/ethnicity and diverse spiritualties emerge as key identities for the development of pedagogical processes with popular women. If we do not limit women's oppression to class and patriarchal exploitation, we can identify multiple processes of oppression—even considered natural by popular culture. Examples of these can be found in artistic expressions (e.g. songs and sayings).

On the other hand, popular education provides tools to put into practice the emancipation proposal of feminism. It offers didactic activities and translates their claims so that women's context can be pertinently considered while analyzing their oppressive conditions and transformative possibilities. In short, feminist emancipation is promoted at the EMM through the following pedagogical principles of popular education (Veloza and Lara 2014):

1. We initiate activities with physical exercises for internal healing. We believe that working with the body is essential when developing individual and collective transformation processes.
2. With the women we discusses educational content and its relevance to their experience, family and work. Reflections follow an inductive and experiential approach. In other words, we start by discussing a particular topic based on the experience of each participant. Problems related to the topic are then shared and, gradually, women's knowledge and argumentation reach a higher level, become more meaningful and enable them to attain a new interpretation of reality. It is important to relate the content to women's daily lives because knowledge that has no meaning in everyday life is worthless—it has no resonance with people's feelings.
3. Assuming that the education process spirals, it goes back to concepts, nourishes experiences, jumps and moves back when necessary. Gaining knowledge is not seen as a linear process in which previous content is required learn more complex information. On the contrary, it is assumed that all fields of knowledge have a certain degree of complexity, that they weave together in thought and that they allow us to establish connections between concepts in everyday life.

4. We value the subalternized knowledge of the Sabana de Bogotá, especially that of peasants and indigenous knowledge, who have not had the chance to determine the change model they want to have, or the story of visibility and recognition that local women want to write down and tell. It is precisely this subalternized story of women at the Sabana that helps us to recognize our processes, opinions, knowledge and experiences which are focused on the people and the territory rather than on private profit.
5. Finally, we recognize that the experience of other organizations throughout the world and the literature on social movements help to nourish our own practice.

The popular women category, as seen from the convergence of feminism and popular education, captures two key ideas for transformation: on the one hand, what is popular is the result of multiple oppression systems; on the other hand, emancipation requires the development of pedagogical tools derived from the context and lives of those who generate transformation processes.

However, the fact that transformation processes are led by popular women—as J.K. Gibson-Graham (2010) suggest—means that their poverty and apparent incapacity, rather than the place where daily action is postponed, is the space where that action takes place.

Within this theoretical and political framework, and with the support of other organizations (the *Red Agroecológica Raíces de la Sabana and the Red Popular de Mujeres de la Sabana*), at the EMM we have developed activities related to topics such as new technologies, technical training in organic farming, social movements around the world, sexual and reproductive health, the body and sexuality, alternative economies, social cartography, collective memory, social and environmental conflicts of the region, collective work (*minga*) in the crops of the network's organizations, agroecological and handicraft fairs, and the celebration of important days in the municipalities.

While developing these activities, the women in school began to identify a common point of reference: working the land.

Politics of Place at the EMM

Cultivating the land has become the strongest bond among women of the school. They plant and maintain organic crops on three levels: small vegetable gardens at home, a community vegetable garden located in the

Asociación Herrera, and a crop (2000 m^2) in a field that was temporarily assigned by the local government in the rural area Los Árboles, located in Madrid. The large crop is taken care of by ASOQUIMAD, a productive association created by some of the women of the school, who work there a few days a week.

Around the cultivation processes they have articulated a series of collective place-based actions that have great potential to transform their lives and, at the same time, to change the developmentalist logic that prevails in the territory.

Conventional theories of social movements would probably ignore that potential. As modern theories generally do, they tend to analyze transformation processes by giving pre-eminence to time over space (as Virilio says) and to space over places (as Massey maintains). They study the time dimension (usually in terms of globalization), considering space as the background of collective action and places as the casual scenarios where that action takes place or, even worse, as the point of reference to a pre-modernity trait that limits the potential for transformation.[10]

As a counter balance, during the last two decades, some proposals have emerged that highlight the importance of space and places in collective transformation processes. Examples of these are the *spatiality of resistance* (Paul Routledge 1997), the *spatial politics of social movements* (David Slater 1997) and the *geographical turn* (Ulrich Oslender 2008) in the study of social movements.

According to Oslender, the turning point of this kind of proposal means recognizing that social movements are responding not only to the pressure exerted by the state and the national and foreign capital but also to the spatial conditions that affect their mobilization structures and articulation. On the other hand, the turning point also means highlighting the specificities of the places where social movements emerge and the potential of their actions to transform those places. Let us take a closer look at the geographical turn.

The inspiring journal issue *Place, Politics and Justice: Women Negotiating Globalization*, edited by Harcourt and Escobar (2002), suggests that the concept of *politics of place* is a key contribution from feminism emerging from the overlap between critical development studies and geography. The concept refers to the articulation of place-based transformative collective actions.

In order to follow the trail of the politics of place, the authors point out four conflict scenarios where women have greater transformation potential:

their body, their home, public space and the environment. As explained by Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002), analyzing these four scenarios means that political change can only occur if daily relationships are transformed in such a way that women can act with more autonomy in each scenario.

Let us discuss the potential of the organic cultivation practices of the EMM for the articulation of politics of place.

The politics of place put an emphasis on the *knowledge* generated by women's organizations regarding the place they share (Harcourt and Escobar 2002). In the vegetable gardens at home, women of the school exchange peasant knowledge and techniques (e.g. ways of cultivating, harvesting time, recipes, and organic and natural pesticides) that they inherited from their relatives, saw when they were young girls in their hometown, or learned through experience. Surprisingly enough, they also share techniques that they tried for the first time in the flower industry and now reproduce creatively with their own organic crops. An example of such a technique is elevated crops that avoid the cultivator having to bend her body.

These politics, as Dirlik (2002) sustains, have the capacity to create a new *language* for reformulating, developing and finding new ways of thinking and acting. The work of J.K Gibson-Graham helps to make the point. The authors defend the dislocation of the language of economy from capitalism, the search for a new language away from capitalocentrism.[11] They trail the various economies that many organized communities around the world have tried, and they identify forms of *work* other than paid work, conceptions of *enterprise* other than the capitalist enterprise, and types of *transaction* other than capitalist market exchange (Gibson-Graham 2010). Regarding the organic crops of the EMM, a new language of economy is coming into use. Work is conceived not only as paid work but also as an activity compensated for by alternative forms of payment, such as reciprocal labor (work exchange at the vegetable gardens) or payment in kind (e.g. with seeds or fertilizers). In fact, transactions are not limited to market transactions; there are also some alternative market transactions, such as the bartering of farming products (flowerpots are swapped for potting soil), or local and direct trade (selling products at Madrid's local market on Saturdays). Furthermore, there are some non-market transactions like, such as gift-giving or gleaning (from seedlings that encourage schoolmates to have their own vegetable gardens, to a car, and including collecting books, pieces of furniture, kitchen pots, etc.). A few months ago, women of the school began to refer to their project as a

non-capitalist enterprise, a cooperative. They see themselves as potential associated workers and owners. They believe that it is feasible to create peasant-basket with their own products and other local products. This process has moved slowly and with some hesitation (see***).

The politics of place highlight the audacity of women to create places where they can cultivate themselves and others outside developmentalism. Julie Graham said,

> Perhaps because their economic identity is unstable, multiple, flexible and ever-changing, perhaps because their gender and economic role are usually undervalued, perhaps because we are also women, for any reason whatsoever, we have seen that women are willing to re-invent themselves and to explore the economic potential they have at hand, no matter how ignored or undervalued it has been so far. Although they must make a small investment in the institutions and identities imposed by Capitalism, they are open-minded to alternative economic relations. The lack of a well-defined economic identity and the little value their traditional roles have for society—their social value and the rights they are entitled to—seem to set them free to carry out projects. Men are usually more reluctant to change and feel trapped in their situation. (Graham 2002: 20)

In this sense the politics of place allow us not only to move forward in the analysis of post-development in the Sabana de Bogotá but also to pay tribute to those audacious women who manage to create in their territory alternative workplaces different from those offered by the flower industry. As explained by feminist Yvonne Underhill-Sem (2002), the politics of place accentuate the transforming potential of women's agency by showing their active participation in changing their living conditions through daily activities that are usually ignored and, we would add, underestimated by the patriarchal logic.

Although the politics of place imply a methodological bias for local scale, it does not mean that it gives an ontological pre-eminence to place over time and space or global scale. Otherwise we would suffer from the mistake mentioned at the beginning of this section. In order to avoid confusion it is worth taking certain analytic precautions. These will help us not only to understand the potential of the EMM's organic-crop practices to articulate the politics of place but also to provide a theoretical density to the concept.

First caution: The politics of place are not attached to concrete actions and are opposed to abstraction. If we pay attention to this

precaution, the idea that space is an abstraction whereas place is a concretion is put in doubt. As Oslender points out, the place is tangible but can also be traced in our mind; similarly, the space, apparently intangible, becomes concrete at times.

The concretion of space has to do with materiality. David Harvey (1990) explains that the objective material qualities of space (and time) that are crucial for social life are a source of serious conflict. In the same line of thought, Gustavo Montañez Gómez (2011) maintains that the physical aspect of space is critical because it is in urban or rural spaces where people have a productive base—in the broad sense of the term. Therefore neither can space be considered abstract, nor can we say that a place is concrete.

Therefore the politics of place developed by the EMM involve not only concretions (e.g. more square meters devoted to cultivation by rural people rather than by enterprises) but also abstractions (e.g. the aforementioned processes of complex thought inherent in the knowledge and techniques promoted by women working on crops).

Second caution: The politics of place articulate practices of resistance that are based on both place and space. Following this precaution, the common opposition between two mistaken equivalences—space-oppression and place-resistance—is questioned. It is incorrectly assumed that space is the reiteration of oppression and that place is pure creation, and therefore that space and place are opposite each other. Massey (2002) suggests should not be opposed, quite the contrary: one is the correlation of the other. At this point it is relevant to consider that place is the greatest expression or highest degree of the symbolic appropriation of space (Schneider 2006). Place reflects people's sensitive and meaningful experience of space in daily life.

Space—conceived in terms of conflicts and disputes—involves not only oppression dynamics but also permanent creation processes (Massey (2002), Lefebvre (1991), Oslender (2008)). Likewise, although places are promoting resistance processes, they may also accommodate oppression processes; this was foreseen a long time ago by second-wave feminists when they denounced the double burden of work at home and the glass ceiling at work.[12]

The politics of place, then, are not opposed to space, nor do they neglect the proliferation of oppression in places. Thus their versatility lies in their capacity to challenge the hegemonic representation of space and also to reinvent it, in their power to help individuals to find "spaces where

they can act freely and [...] exert their own, localized forms of power" (Allen 1999, quoted in J.K Gibson-Graham 2010: 50).[13]

From this point of view, the politics of place of the EMM are generating new ways of using space. Examples of these are warmer roads to pass slowly from one crop to another, or alternative weave -different of to pass from the burning greenhouses to the post-harvest cold warehouses.

Third caution: The politics of place do not imply opposition to either time or global dynamics. If we pay attention to this precaution, the twofold emphasis of time over space and place, and consequently the emphasis of global scale over local scale, are put in doubt. We will analyze this conceptual precaution in more detail because it is easily reproduced in the literature on social movements.

This double emphasis can be clearly identified in the work of Giddens. Let us discuss the first: the emphasis of time over space and place. In his book *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), Giddens poses crucial questions: What is the dynamic nature of modernity? What drives the expansion of modernity (from Europe to the rest of the world)? Some of his fundamental arguments are the separation between time and space, and the disembedding of local or, which is the same, the separation between space and place. According to him, the first separation leads to the second, and both conditions are necessary to pass from a premodern to a modern society.[14]

The analyses of social movements tend to reproduce this emphasis on time, as though actions do not occur in a spatial frame or in particular places. They seem to forget that space—as explained by Montañez Gómez—has a temporal density, a complex, functional and relational content that is, in turn, historical. It is precisely this temporality (in which disputes between human and non-human actors take place) which also determines the configuration of the territory.

From this last perspective whereby time, space and place are differentiated rather than isolated, what seems more attractive about the politics of place is not their capacity to create resistance to global timeframes (places are not oblivious to time) but their potential to transform temporalities or to create new ones (obviously associated with other space frames), no matter how difficult that task may be. Under the *feijoa* and black-fig trees of the community vegetable garden (on the premises of Asociación Herrera), unhurried temporality is quite different from the accelerated pace of the production chains in the flower agroindustry. The hill standing in front of the community vegetable garden inspires a dilated temporality that

contrasts with the hustle and bustle of the downtown areas of Madrid and Bogotá. The relentless activity of snails and other pests that devastate crops slows down and stalls production processes: they are a setback.

The second emphasis—of global scale over local scale—has to do with the totalizing and universalizing the nature of modernity adopted by the critical theories of Enlightenment. It also has to do with the conception of globalization as the seal of modernity expansion (Escobar 2003). In order to illustrate the idea, let us consider Giddens' theory again. According to him, the insightful nature of modernity—that is, its capacity to examine and reformulate practices constantly—is intrinsically globalized. This trend implies, besides other things, that what is not modern will sooner or later disappear. In other words, local premodern practices will be absorbed by global modernity.

Literature on the topic has slowly incorporated various notions that bring to an end this emphasis on what is global over what is local.[15] However, the emphasis keeps on being reproduced: "Think globally, act locally", says the well-known slogan, as though local practices were not a source of knowledge (or a source of reflection), and as though certain actions could not be coordinated globally.[16] By ignoring the passage from one scale to the other, as Harcourt and Escobar (2002) suggest, such analyses end up leaving the pathetic dilemma for local practices to disappear or to adapt to global practices.

In contrast, the politics of place fall within a perspective that recognizes the transit from the global scale to the local scale, and vice versa. In this respect we observe that the women of the school produce organic fertilizers in their own gardens by putting together formulas that circulate globally in virtual networks. Similarly, we observe a local exchange of didactics among women's organizations—for example, exchanges between the EMM and the Escuela de Comunicación Popular Mirabal created by Fuerza Femenina Popular in the municipality of Funza. As a result, we can see the implementation of politics thanks to the transit through different scales of the territory.

However, recognizing the transit from one scale to another does not deny the risk of reproducing locally the global manifestations of power. At the EMM, there are advantages and disadvantages of (patiently but sometimes unsuccessfully) growing organic seeds instead of using the more "successful" and fast-growing transgenic seeds provided by the Instituto Colombiano Agropcuario (ICA [Colombian Agriculture and Livestock Institute]).

As a result of this analysis, it can be said that the participants at the EMM are managing to articulate the politics of place in their territory—in this case, collective actions related to organic crops that have great transforming potential. But what is being transformed, where is this transformation leading and how does transformation contribute to weakening the developmentalist configuration of their territory?

A Meaningful Territory: Moving from Paid Work to Cooperative Work and Emancipated Corporality

In this final section we specify the changes that women have experienced as a result of their participation at the EMM concerning organic crops, the transforming effects it has had on their lives, and the guidelines that such politics of place provide to reframe Madrid and bypass the developmentalist logic.

Let us begin by examining the type of transit that these policies of place have generated. To articulate collective actions related to organic crops was possible thanks to the coincidence of three circumstances: (1) the accidental gathering of some women at the abandoned patio of Asociación Herrera while waiting for young women to begin the training workshops at the school; (2) the workshops on organic crops and the visits to collective organizations with long experience of the topic (e.g. Agrosarare from Arauca, women of the middle zone of the Magdalena river basin, and Asoquinua from Tenjo) that the women of the school made in the Red Agroecológica Raíces de la Sabana (promoted by Corporación Cactus), which encouraged them to have their own vegetable gardens; and (3) the hesitant acceptance of the persistent invitation of two schoolmates for women to participate in AsoQuiMad. The synergy of these three turned organic crops into the central activity of the school. It is with these crops, in these places where women have—not without difficulty–tried strategies to move toward forms of alternative work from the capitalist flower agro-industry in which they were involved for several decades.

The time women devoted to growing and maintaining the vegetable gardens (on the three scales) and to their training in organic crop techniques made it easier for them to face their dismissal from the flower agro-industry (paraphrasing what J.K. Gibson-Graham say) not as a defeat but as an opportunity to open up to new desires; not only as an act of labor injustice (which it was) but also as the end of the ritualized practices of subjection by the regional economy of the Sabana de Bogotá based on the export-oriented flower industry; and as an opportunity (obviously risky)

to cultivate themselves as workers with desires that are different from those possibilities driven by capitalism. A wide network of support was necessary to initiate this task: Asociación Herrera, Corporación Cactus, other organizations from the Red Agroecológica Raíces de la Sabana and the Red de Mujeres Populares de la Sabana, collective organizations in other parts of the country, and women themselves giving support to each other.[17] The three conditions that emerged from the network enabled women from the school to initiate a work transit that they knew intuitively but did not look for explicitly—n those alternative crops, in those fields, where they tested strategies looking to shift toward other labor possibilities different from those possibilities stimulated by capitalism. The women of the EMM moved from being rejected by the system as wage-earning ex-workers involved with private industrial flower crops to being cooperative workers in collective organic vegetable gardens. They moved from earning flexible, relatively predictable pay to receiving income which is rather uncertain but dignified.

An important consequence of this transit has been women's experience with their bodies. As suggested by Harcourt and Escobar (2002), in bodies we find a privileged conflict area where the changes caused by the politics of place can be observed.[18]

The body emerges as common referent in women's daily conversations. It also plays a key role at the beginning of all curricular activities at the school. In various ways, women's bodies seem to be, as Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002) suggest, a conscious and material path toward the strengthening of their political identity. Let us discuss these transforming effects in relation to the reading we have proposed.

The consequences of toxic substances absorbed into industrial flower crops are practically irreversible. Thus we cannot talk about a radical transformation of the women's *poisoned bodies*. Poisoning is present in the territories where agroindustrial crops exist and in the bodies of ex-workers. Nevertheless, the use of natural pesticides in organic vegetable gardens allows the production of clean, safe food and provides an opportunity to stop the growing spiral of poisoning.

In addition, this practice has the subtler but meaningful effect of inverting the work practices that produce poisoned bodies. While female workers involved with agroindustrial crops avoided touching the (poisoned) flowers, in their organic vegetable gardens they seek to have contact with their plants. While they followed a rapid, chemical care procedure with carnations (a flower typically grown in the industry), they perform calm rituals

in their gardens whereby they even caress and talk to plants. Plants are cared for because they will, in turn, care for the women when they become safe food for their bodies. In this new labor ritual, tending the plants does not imply poisoning either their bodies or the territory; it means taking care of both. Being painfully aware of the irreversibility of the poisoning process in their bodies, women generate new work practices that take into account their material wellbeing (payment) that is not at the expense of their physical wellbeing (health). As in the case of women's mobilization in rural China in the 1990s, analyzed by Lau Kim Chi (2002), the issue of the body as a place of struggle for women is not limited to the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights; it also includes health, nutrition and food autonomy and sovereignty (see alimentary sovereignty).

On the other hand, moving from being wage-earning employees to cooperative workers has brought about a radical transformation in women's silent bodies. As the prohibition of talking in the post-harvest chains no longer exists, joyful conversations, shared reflections and jokes have emerged in the vegetable gardens. Conversations not only create a positive and joyful work atmosphere but also introduce new topics that women did not have time to talk about before. Some of them reveal intergeneration gaps that previously went unnoticed. Perhaps the most important topic is sexuality. For example, older women are shyly amused in their perplexity around sexuality, a theme that emerges in memories of older women about sexual violations in contrast with the experience of younger members.

Silence was a naturalized discipline imposed for several decades of routine when the women worked in the flower agroindustry. The abolition of silence—an interruption of a ritualized prohibition—has an important symbolic value in the process of work reappropriation. Putting a stop to silence requires women to be in command of their own words before others. Speaking in public a meetings, teaching lessons on urban agroecology and making presentations at national events are some of the activities that require cooperative workers to improve their language competence and self-confidence.

The need to nourish self-confidence as a skill also reveals the symbolic poverty resulting from the Fordist model of work organization. In the silent packing chains and under the pressure of high production targets, there was no chance to explain a mistake or to ask questions, and the options to mediate in conflicts were few (work sanctions, wake-up calls, and physical and verbal violence). Today, women can ask for favors in their vegetable gardens and, therefore, generate satisfactory solidarity practices.

However, they must also face the misunderstandings that occur when they speak; they need to find spaces for conversation where they learn to regulate speaking turns so that the acts of injustice they experienced while working as wage-earning employees are not repeated.

This work transition is also producing deep changes in women's sick bodies. Achieving an awareness of their own maladies has been the first step in each meeting at the EMM. The ritual exercise of body healing is also a therapy to eradicate poison from their bodies. Lately we have incorporated corporal exercises focused on women's pleasure, enjoying and practicing taking care of each other. These include beauty masks made from natural products obtained in their vegetable gardens, theater sketches representing female archetypes, aromatherapy, massages and *biodanza*. This space that is destined for corporal pleasure is sometimes a difficult challenge to face because some of us are the daughters women of the school.

Even though productivity is central to the school, women are no longer stressed by production targets imposed by others; they discuss the type of work to be done, they negotiate the work goals and rhythm according to their capacities, maladies, diseases and family needs (e.g. care required by children and elderly people). Through these negotiations, women have formalized the right to rest and leisure, a work practice that was totally unknown to them and is clearly explained by Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002: 44). However, they still hesitate about when to rest, and about what percentage of production should be devoted to their healthcare while harvesting and distributing their products (e.g. hydration expenses during sales rounds).

On a microscale, the EMM has generated the appropriate conditions to experience a corporality that is not pain-related and does not consider pain to be inherent in work. Women are now capable of expressing pain more autonomously and showing solidarity with others' pain. However, they stubbornly want to bear long painful journeys in which they are no longer aware of their sick bodies or the need to take care of them. When reflecting on this topic, they remember the work sacrifices of their childhood. An entire life devoted to work—sometimes in the rural areas first and then in the city—produced female bodies full of pain and sacrifice. However, the women now believe that these corporal experiences can be reassessed. Their challenge is to stop seeing themselves as workers with great capacity for working for a long time and making sacrifices; and not to be indifferent to their own pain. They know that the process will be slow but worthwhile.

The politics of place implemented by the EMM can produce more autonomous corporal experiences that are more closely related to the territory. In this sense, they follow the ancestral indigenous principle already mentioned. At this point the key and final reflection of this chapter has to do with the potential of such politics of place to draw a new space/spatial (and time/temporal) order different from the one drawn by the developmentalist projects that impoverished Madrid. We have identified some possibilities of transformation with respect to three of the projects mentioned at the beginning.

Regarding the monocrop practice of the flower agroindustry, the politics of place of the EMM—and of other women's organizations in the Sabana de Bogotá sharing the same goals—suggest a biodiversified territory sustained by food sovereignty as a political option to take care of the population through the provision of safe, inexpensive food products and the recovery of the health of the territory (rivers, water sources, air, soil acidity, etc.). As concluded by the Encuentro Social y Popular Sabana, food sovereignty is a common goal for the whole region that implies "a food production, distribution, commercialization and consumption circuit leading to the construction of a peasant production model" (2013). This would be an economy focused on the people who actually work and produce, and on the territory that makes their work possible.

With respect to the dramatic transformation of the territory into a large dry port of the city-region, the politics of place related to organic crops suggest a territory also determined by the practice (both old and new) of cultivation. The monotonous landscape mostly filled with large storehouses would be replaced by one full of crops of various scales and diverse property ways. Inspired by Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013), we can imagine them: some crops would be private property (like the vegetable gardens at home), others would be collectivized private property (like the collectivized vegetable garden of Asociación Herrera), and still others would be communal abandoned public property (like the sown field in the municipality of *Los Árboles*) and so forth. Among the organic crops there could be one or two storehouses and a few crops for the flower agroindustry, wich be respects of the labor rigths and the enviromental rigths of the territory.

Finally, concerning the development of the tertiary sector of the economy and the issue of job flexibility and precariousness, organic crops open up new opportunities in the territory to experiment with new forms of work other than paid work. These work alternatives can show whether women's attempts to generate income other than from a salary succeed or

fail. They allow them to discuss who should decide about the production surplus and make them recognize our dependence on others (humans and no-humans).

Over a long timeframe, these attempts would involve the new knowledge acquired in the workshops held by the agroecological network, the recovery of the rural practices that the women saw when they were young girls in their hometowns and, of course, the creative reappropriation of practices they undertook for several years in the flower agroindustry.

Without fully ignoring their sorrow from wasting so many years working in the flower agroindustry, women make positive comments about the vegetable gardens and believe that these are places where they are not underestimated because of their age, and where they can do things they never dreamed of (giving lectures, acting out, traveling with friends, etc). Women of the school are aware of the fact that, for the time being, their work with organic crops is much less stable than their previous work for the flower agroindustry, which provided them and their families with economic support for the last three decades. However, they also have inspiring challenges, such as learning how to drive the car they received as a present, or maintaining good relations with the local government, which allows them to use the land at the district of Los Arboles, or even getting their own piece of land.

Most of us—the women who started Asociación Herrera—will have to get away from the association at some time, so it will not be possible to keep the house open. An alternative would be to move the house from the center of Madrid to a rural area in our town where we can meet with male and female peasants who are mostly working for the flower agroindustry. We do not know what the outcome of such a meeting would be but we do know that the point of departure is the intergenerational dialogue. We wish to turn the association around in terms of producing a generational change so that older women take the place of younger women—a forward–backward replacement as seen from the time perspective of the Andean indigenous philosophy. We hope that as a result of this process, when looking back, older women will be able to repeat the words of Doña Nelly Guevara, one of the participants at the EMM: "I like this life better."

Notes

1. We follow here the critical perspectives of development suggested by post-development, feminist and radical critics of development: Arturo Escobar, Boaventura Sousa Santos and J.K Gibson-Graham.

2. See also ‘Peace and Post-Development in the Sabana de Bogotá: Asociación Herrera’s Collective Actions concerning Commons’ In: John Losado (ed.) Critical Perspectives on Development in Latin America (ed.) Bogotá: Universidad San Buenaventura (in press).
3. *Parch* is a term coined by the School of Rural and Environmental Studies of Universidad Javeriana.
4. Flower-growing is common in various countries across four continents (Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas). In Europe, flowers are mainly cultivated in the Netherlands, but also in Italy and Germany. In Africa they are mostly grown in Kenya, but also in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. In Asia, flowers are produced in China, India, Malaysia. In the Americas, besides Colombia, the USA, Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Brasil are flower producers. In addition, in the Middle East, flowers are grown in Israel (Patricia Sierra 2003).
5. The average temperature in the Sabana de Bogotá is 13.5 °C, but in the early mornings, from December to February, it drops dramatically owing to the so-called *heladas* (freezes). A freeze is an atmospheric phenomenon whereby temperatures fall to 0 °C and create a 1.5–2 m-high cold air mass over the ground. It affects crops and can be observed at different times throughout the year. It occurs in the Sabana de Bogotá from December to February.
6. In the municipality of Tocancipa, the lunch break is 15 minutes long (legal advice service, Corporación Cactus).
7. Previous attempts were “Women’s School: Body, Territory and Identity”, “Building Images to Narrate our Own Stories” and, “Women’s Encounters to Portray our History.”
8. Asociación Herrera’s work is organized into three fields of action: human rights education; community memory and territory; and arts. Each field has specific projects and coordinators but they are closely interrelated.
9. Muy probablemente la mayor militarización de Madrid en los próximos años, nos llevará a contactar a trabajadoras sexuales.
10. For further analysis of this perspective, see Juliana Flórez (2010).
11. For a detailed explanation of this concept, see Gibson-Graham, 1997 “The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)”. Standford: Standford University Press.
12. We remember with sorrow the so-called *piqueteaderos.* For an in-depth discussion of the topic, see Oslender Chapter 3 *La espacial-*

ización de la resistencia: Perspectivas de espacio y lugar en la investigación sobre movimientos sociales.

13. It should be noted that we prefer to use the word "oppression" rather than "power" because we, together with Judith Butler (1997), value by valance (structure and agency).
14. This British sociologist raises the following issue. In premodern societies, time was linked with space (and with place). With the invention of the mechanical clock and its diffusion, expressed in the worldwide homologation of calendars and time standardization in different regions, time became uniform and was separated from space. Such "emptying of time" is a precondition for the "emptying of space" because it has causal priority over space because [...] "the coordination through time is the basis for the control of space" (1990: 29). The author goes on with his colonial argumentation: in premodern societies, space and place largely coincided, but with the coming of modernity, the development of the empty space led to the separation of space and place. Space can be represented without reference to a privileged locale and there is a possibility of substituting different space units, conditions both expressed in the world maps of the "Westerners" where, according to their colonial and androcentric point of view, the perspective does not play a significant role and space is independent of any particular place or region.
15. The notion of *globalization* intends to close this gap, as do the redefinitions of globalization expressed in terms of the process of *local globalization and global localization* presented by Sousa Santos (2004), or the two-fold concept of *local stories–global designs* suggested by Walter Mignolo (2000). On the other hand, according to J.K. Gibson-Graham, the concept of space proposed by the feminist movement: "A feminist spatiality embraces not only a politics of ubiquity (its global manifestation), but a politics of place (its localization in places created, strengthened, defended, augmented and transformed by women). In this admittedly stylized rendering, feminism is not about the category 'woman' or identity per se, but about subjects and places. It is a politics of becoming in place" (2011: 46).
16. Examples of this are the actions in which the organizations of the Sabana de Bogotá participate: the International Women's Network Against Militarism conference, the International Working Women's Day (March 8), the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25), Labor Day (May 1)

and the International Male and Female Flower Workers' Day (February 14).

17. We refer here to the idea that capitalism conceals the innate interdependence of individuals. Butler (2009) maintains that if we depend on people we do not know and we manage to survive, it is because of a "social network of hands". J.K. Gibson-Graham (2010) completed the idea by saying that our work is possible thanks to the work of others.
18. In other works we will analyze other fields of conflict that were addressed in the debates at the EMM. Discussions included, for instance, the need to decontaminate the rivers that run through or pass by Madrid, the need to nourish EMM land (environment), the relevance of EMM presence in the local marketplaces, EMM participation in the local government (public field), as well as the unfair practices within couples and families (private field at home).

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CHAPTER 3

Reclaiming the Right to Become Other-Women in Other-Places: The Politics of Place of the Ecologist Women of La Huizachera Cooperative, Mexico

Daniela M. Gloss

Introduction

My opening claim is that the body is the first, central and conflictive space for women defending their place, in this case Cooperativa Mujeres Ecologistas de la Huizachera (COMEH) appropriate in their defense of place. This includes claiming the right to construct themselves as bodies and subjects, a process which has a complex social nature because the bodies and identities of these women are traversed and constructed by power relations, practices, discourses and meanings that permeate their community, family and social public space (Harcourt and Mumtaz 2002; Underhill-Sem 2002).

I understand bodies not only as spaces in which subjects are socially constituted but also as spaces and instruments of social production. In this sense the body is a political landscape and a fundamental node of sociocultural power relations interwoven in different places. Place-based

D.M. Gloss (✉)
Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_3

strategies of women are focused toward changes in the power relations that weave together the various dimensions of their social lives (Harcourt and Mumtaz 2002). These strategies include acting in the four domains of place and their daily lives: body, home, community and public social space (Harcourt and Escobar 2002).

This chapter was developed in the framework of a qualitative research project that involved a set of participative methodologies, semistructured individual and group interviews, and ethnographic tools for the production of information such as participant observation and a field diary. The project aims to describe and analyze how the appropriation of space is configured and reconfigured in defense of place processes. I spent nine months visiting the community and worked with the cooperative as an external advisor in strategic communication issues, and the cooperative worked with me in the production of data for the research project. The methodological frame for qualitative research in cultural studies suggested by Saukko (2012) was used as a guide because it allows the integration of three main dimensions—contextual, dialogical and autoreflexive—which I address in the different sections of this chapter.

I begin with a brief description of the social reality of the members of the COMEH and the socioenvironmental conflict their community faces. Second, I introduce the concepts and theoretical frameworks that helped me analyze the appropriation of space, and therefore the social production of places of these women in their defense of place. Third, I analyze how body, home, community and public social space, as places, are altered or reconfigured in their objectified and subjectified dimensions and reappropriated through these women's activities in their cooperative. Last, I present some conclusions and their relation to my position in this process.

The Ecologist Women of La Huizachera: Living in Multiple Marginalities

The women of the COMEH work and live in La Huizachera community in the municipality of El Salto, Jalisco, Mexico. La Huizachera is a community at the margins of the city of Guadalajara. Although it is considered part of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, it is demarcated by two cultural and physical frontiers: Calzada Independencia Avenue and the peripheral ring. In colonial times the San Juan de Dios River flowed where Calzada Independencia Avenue is today. Spaniards settled on the west side of the river and forced the *chichimeca* indigenous tribes that

lived there to move to the eastern side of the river, which divided them (Castro et al. 2007). In 1910 the San Juan de Dios River was confined in an underground pipe and Calzada Independencia Avenue was built. This avenue, as well as the peripheral ring, still bear the cultural, class and ethnic divisions of colonial times, with the poorest and most marginalized sectors of the city located on the eastern side and outside the peripheral highway (Castro et al. 2007).

The socioenvironmental conflict lived in La Huizachera is multiple. The main and most palpable evidence of this conflict is an open sewage canal called El Ahogado that traverses La Huizachera and flows into Santiago River, one of Mexico's most contaminated rivers. Older members of the community have been witnesses to the environmental degradation of the area, the canal and the river. They still recall when there was clear and clean water, good fishing during a Sunday picnic, and the fertile soil of this formerly small and almost deserted rural area of farmers and fisherman.

Inhabitants of La Huizachera, along with several civil associations, researchers, and NGOs (Lu 2006; Greenpeace 2012; McCulligh 2013), have studied and pointed out for several years the high levels of pollution of both El Ahogado canal and Santiago River. The pollution is due to the illegal discharge of heavy metals and other toxic substances from factories and agroindustries. This, combined with poor air quality and a lack of basic services, including a source of potable water, a sewage system and a garbage-collection services, is the cause of a variety of respiratory, skin, renal and cancerous diseases that the inhabitants of this community and other nearby populations suffer.

The socioenvironmental conflict lived in La Huizachera involves the neglect by both the government and those companies responsible for the neglect and disregard of environmental and health policies. It is traversed by practices and discourses that are part of community life and are used as power devices (Agamben 2011) by a diversity of institutions, such as the state, the Catholic Church and the private sector. It also involves "paralegal" actors (Reguillo 2008), such as drug cartels.[1]

The community is aware that there is a connection between members of the local police and drug cartels. This maintains an atmosphere of insecurity and generalized violence, in which the inhabitants of La Huizachera are left at the mercy of the drug cartels. Faced with this, some members of the community have found it safer to make friends with the drug cartel so that they can ensure the protection of their families. Others feel safer with guns in their homes because they know the police will not protect them.

On the other hand, the local government and the Catholic Church, as well as a civil association, maintain symbolic dominance over the practices and political involvement of the community. The Catholic Church and the civil organization promote a volunteer association that demands several productive activities from its members, who in exchange for their work are rewarded with a discount on a food package that the civil organization sells at the end of the month. Receiving this “reward” requires full engagement in the organization’s activities, and absences are only allowed if individuals can offer a medical justification.

In La Huizachera, buying votes is common practice. While the government gives away washing machines, fridges and beds, the community continues to need potable water and sewage systems to avoid the summer wastewater flooding their streets and homes. Preferring another political party or opposing the local government is often punished. Veronica, a member of the cooperative, tells how the garbage truck never goes by her block because her neighbors favor a different political party than the one at the head of the municipality (Veronica, personal communication, June 12, 2014). As the inhabitants of La Huizachera have found it useful to make friends with the drug cartels, they have also found it advantageous to have connections with the local government’s representatives to avoid reprimands and to gain from personal favors.

The COMEH was formed in 2012 as an initiative of the Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario (IMDEC [Mexican Institute for Communitarian Development]) based on a participative review with members of the community, carried out between 2007 and 2008. This showed that the most relevant concerns were air and water pollution, the scarcity of potable water and sewage systems that were experienced in the area’s context of poverty, unemployment and violence (Romo and Prieto 2012).

Carmen, an IMDEC representative, and Ana, a local woman who was involved in two previous attempts to build a cooperative of ecologist women, formed an alliance to drive the initiative. Together they networked with women involved in different activities in the community, such as a voluntary association that assembles at the local church, and other activities held at the government’s community center. The objective of the cooperative is to create alternative solutions to the grave social, health, environmental and economic situation of the community in order to improve the quality of life at the individual, familial and communitarian levels through domestic and community gardens, agroecology and the construction of domestic ecological technologies.

In the face of such a complex socioenvironmental conflict experienced by a community, the cooperative's course of action has concentrated on different forms of autonomy: personal, economic and overall subsistence and productive autonomy for the family. Achieving these goals is critical for the women and their families' survival. In individual and collective urban gardens, the women of the COMEH grow vegetables organically using agroecological techniques. By consuming or selling their home-grown vegetables and fruit, they contribute to the domestic economy of the family and provide them with a healthy diet. At the same time, these women try to take care of their environment by "healing the soil", which was made unfertile by the many sources of pollution in the area, making their own compost and applying other agroecological techniques.

Ecotechnologies such as dry toilets, ecological stoves and ovens, water filters and rainwater tanks have helped the women's families and the cooperative to achieve efficient and cheaper consumption of water so that they no longer have to buy from water trucks, which are around 40 times as expensive as the potable water provided by the city government in other areas (Romo and Prieto 2012).

The cooperative's project has, on the one hand, explored different types of knowledge around agroecology and ecotechnologies, as well as alternative medicine, and, on the other hand, has worked to empower the physical and emotional health and sexual and reproductive rights of the women. This project is an example of the material and symbolic ways of defending places, starting with the body and moving on to the home, the community and social public space. This defense of place is concentrated on the reconfiguration of practices and discourses that allow people to signify and relate to nature and other people in alternative ways—a complex and conflictive process that I argue gives birth to other-women and other-places.

Analyzing the Politics of Place Through Sociocultural Lenses

From Giménez's (2005) perspective, territory is a space appropriated by a certain social group in order to ensure its reproduction and satisfy its vital needs, which include material and symbolic needs. I define appropriation as a process marked by conflict that allows the recognition of how territory is produced, regulated and protected (Giménez 2005). The territorial system produced at a specific time and in a specific space is based on

two possible appropriation dimensions that are interrelated: one mainly utilitarian (an objective dimension) and another fundamentally cultural and symbolic (a subjective dimension).

A territory or a place exists as long as it is perceived and represented by those who inhabit it (Giménez 2005). As Escobar (2010) points out, power inhabits meaning, as well as culture, and these are the primary devices of social power. Therefore the struggles for place turn into struggles for meaning and are central to structuring societies and the production of places. In this way the politics of place are directed to the political nature of culture, recognizing that these politics are produced through struggles for meaning and the interwoven relationships between power and culture (Harcourt and Escobar, 2002).

Giménez (2007) has a similar understanding of culture and defines it as the social organization of sense through meaning guidelines that were historically transmitted and embodied in symbolic forms through which individuals communicate and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs in historically specific and socially structured contexts (Giménez 2007: 31). Culture is determined and determining, structured and structuring (Giménez 1996). In this chapter I use Giménez's theoretical proposal to analyze the appropriation of space in defense of place processes, which I conceive mainly as a defense of the social production of meaning.

This can be reached through Giménez's conception, from a genetic constructivist perspective, of the appropriation of space and the two dimensions of this process: objectified and subjectified forms of culture (Giménez 2005). Objectified forms of culture include objects, geosymbols, institutions and directly observable practices; subjectified forms of culture comprise social representations, identity processes in relation with feelings of socioterritorial belongingness, and interiorized collective guides of perception and action (Giménez 2002).

In this chapter the appropriation of space is understood as the social production of places, which includes an objective and a subjective dimension of culture, integrated by practices, discourses, meaning and power relations that give social sense and diverse forms of existence to physical spaces and nature. The politics of place framework enables us to distinguish that appropriation, specifically in processes of the defense of place, works, as stated above, in the four main domains of the politics of place: body, home, community/environment and social public space (Harcourt and Escobar 2002).

Appropriating the Body, Overcoming Fears

To analyze and explain how this appropriation of spaces and social production of other-places works, I look at two main concepts embedded in culture: first, identity, which has to do mainly with subjectified forms of culture, and, second, social practices, which are mostly related to objectified forms of culture. Although I present them separately for analytical purposes, subjectified and objectified forms of culture are interwoven and cannot be understood as separate from each other.

The relationship between identity and social practices can be explained form Bourdieu's argument that a socialized body has a generative and creative capacity that constitutes a source of kinesthetic knowledge with structuring power (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1995: 26). From Berger and Luckmann's (1968: 68) perspective, humans are a body and have a body at their disposal, so their experiences are localized between being a body and having a body in a social system or world. In this way, human beings cannot be conceived in a state of static interiority but have to externalize their selves through activity and then through practice (Berger and Luckmann 1968: 68).

Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002) identify that the first level of the politics of the body is where women define their identity and their struggle for social justice that necessarily includes gender demands. In these processes, each body's biography and corporal experience, lived and perceived as women, allows the construction of alternative perceptions of being and place that have a political meaning. This construction will form the base for political action in the four domains of the politics of place (Harcourt and Mumtaz 2002). From this perspective, the body is considered to be a political and central scenery that connects all the spheres of social life. It reflects and communicates, with visible and invisible marks, its experiences and the power relations, practices, discourses and institutions that shape it and its environment. Bodies as places talk about the objectified and subjectified forms of culture that construct them.

Giménez understands identity as the set of interiorized repertoires, representations, values and symbols through which the social actors, collective and individual, mark their frontiers and distinguish from others in a determined situation, all of this inside a historically and socially structured space (Giménez 2002: 38) In this way it is convenient to talk about identity as a subjectified form of culture, and a first level of the politics of the body in which women of the COMEH deconstruct and reconstruct themselves as

subjects and political bodies in their home, group, community and social public space.

When I asked each of the women to describe themselves, they identified first with their gender as a group of belongingness, as “women”, and second with the term “ecologist”. Both identifications suggest the politicization of their identities because they are intentionally emphasized to strengthen their common base of action (Giménez 2002). Nevertheless, specific identity and personality traits that unite these women transcend their main identification as “ecologist women” or the fact that they all live in La Huizachera. Based on their biographical narratives, it is possible to see that all of these women have been active in diverse spheres of their lives, have been involved in community-based activities, and have come from rural and farmer families. This is why their activities at the cooperative are so appealing and emotionally valuable: they touch the roots of their biographies.

The women’s contact with soil and nature has not only been about physical work but is a personal and deeply emotional task in which the group’s solidarity, care and friendship have been fundamental. These connected emotions emphasize the relational aspect of identity (Giménez 2007). Ana remembers that she was depressed by the time she started her work at the cooperative and says that working with the soil, plants and other women has been like a healing therapy: “You heal when you start reaping yourself” (Ana, personal communication, October 7, 2014).

According to Zibechi (2012), current Latin American social movements and civic groups tend to develop alternative productive activities that enable their autonomy and, as a result, increase their members’ self-esteem. In this way the activities of the women in the cooperative, and the possibility of harvesting and taking home the fruits they sow, are tangible proof of their work and knowledge, and therefore of their productive capacities as women in a context that constantly nullifies the possibility of developing these capacities.

The cooperative, and specifically the community garden, is a place where its members can spend time as they like, a time that they consider their own, independent from their activities at home; a time to build something of their own and share it with other women like them. They take this time to prove to themselves that they are capable of learning and applying their knowledge to produce something they can share with their families and community. Cato (2012) points out that autonomy, self-fulfilment and having a social mission are generally the main motivations for women in cooperative entrepreneurships.

The social relationships and affective ties that shape the cooperative's organization have taken different and less vertical forms; gradually the cooperative has started working as an extension of the family. Ana mentions that she needs to go out of her home, to be valued and to be taken account by others. She considers that her friends at the cooperative fill her with love: "with love we can heal the earth, in the earth we are working [...] it is important to love each other, it is not only about loving your husband ... this is a different love" (Ana, personal communication, October 7, 2014). One of the seven traits that Zibechi (2012) identifies to describe this kind of movement and community-based scheme is that their organizational forms are based on the family: not the nuclear family but in new and complex forms of extended family relationships in which women play a fundamental role.

These family-based forms of organization go against capitalist and hierarchical forms of organization (Zibechi 2012). Affectivity and expressing feelings are taken into account and embraced in every process of the cooperative, but there are also spaces designated to work specially on their individual and collective emotional health. The members of the cooperative felt it necessary to introduce a 20-minute space for "unconformities and hugs" to express their feelings about life and their work in the cooperative. This was suggested because knowing what each of them is feeling and experiencing, especially when there are tensions, will guide them regarding how to talk to, treat, support and take care of each other. Care is key to thinking about these women's activities and their focus on each of the domains of the politics of place From Boaventura de Sousa Santos' (2009: 127) sociology of emergencies, the vision of future from a linear time perspective can be substituted by a future of plural and concrete possibilities, utopic and realistic, that are constructed on the present specifically through activities of care.

The cooperative is a place where women can gain autonomy from their families and work on personal projects. This inevitably impacts family life and how women relate to people and spaces at home. Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002) point out that family and home are central to the configuration of women's identities but can also be spaces of control and restriction. For the women of the cooperative, the family is a main source of recognition and home is the place where they invest most of their time and affection. All of the cooperative members see themselves in the future as examples for their families, specifically for their daughters and sons, and for the other women of their community. They bring activities from the cooperative to their

homes and community in expressions of care that include and articulate people, nature and the environment in multiple ways.

Achieving these objectives requires great effort from the women of the cooperative to reconfigure and introduce a diversity of practices that can be transferred from the cooperative to their homes and community. They take with them a reconfiguration of power relations that constructs and traverses them as subjects. These practices can be seen as a second level of the politics of place because subjects construct and inhabit places through them. Focusing on practices that configure and reconfigure subjects and places implies thinking about systems of structured and structuring dispositions that are constituted in practice and oriented toward practical functions (Bourdieu 2007: 92).

Bodies are the first conflictive scenery of women's defense of place because what is initially disputed is the power over their own bodies. In this process of claiming the domain of the body, its production and representation, the women of the cooperative started to loose the fears that are strongly rooted in their community culture and that are reinforced by their families through gender roles and behavioral guidelines that are validated in their context. Castells (2012) suggests that collective action starts precisely with communicative action, as a process of putting in common specific experiences, identifying with each other and generating collective meanings that can enable groups of people to shift from emotions such as fear and anxiety to enthusiasm and other-future alternatives.

The first fear that the women lost through the cooperative is the fear to speak, to find their own voices and make them heard. Finding their voices was achieved by turning the cooperative into a safe learning place, coordinated and mainly integrated by women, where a diversity of knowledges and meaningful life experiences are shared. In this place, everyone can teach. Zibechi (2012: 23–24) considers that these kinds of collective are educational subjects that produce education in movement. From this perspective, the climate and human relationships of the educational context are more important than pedagogy and content. The atmosphere that women of the cooperative try to create through their activities is one of trust and empathy. Knowing that they can safely learn and share knowledge that can benefit their families and community strengthens their self-esteem and encourages them to develop their communication skills and verbal expression.

The second fear that women of the cooperative have conquered is going outside their homes and traveling in their community, and without

male company. Gradually they have lost fear about going to places where their female bodies are vulnerable. This fear is closely related to what the community considers safe and insecure and what other people would say about them. In La Huizachera, activities outside the home that are not related to family, church, the voluntary association or supporting a political party have a negative value (Giménez 2007) and are considered gossipy and lazy.

By overcoming these fears, the women of the cooperative depend less on the male members of their families to talk for them or to "take" or "walk" them somewhere. Taking these steps has motivated the women to claim the streets and public space as also theirs to use, share and inhabit. Through this, along with their work at the community garden, other members of the community have lost the fear of traveling through some areas.

Conquering their fears has motivated the cooperative's constant claim of spaces as bodies and their right to build diverse and other-places, but it has not been easy. This body and space appropriation process has been long and conflictive for each woman. When joining the cooperative, almost all of them faced opposition, rejection and disqualification inside their family and community. The gender roles and behavior guidelines, as subjectified forms of culture, determine the limits of their own bodies, which at the same time are linked to the limits of the community, and these to a social system (Douglas 1973). As the bodies of the women start to deviate and mobilize toward and outside the limits of these roles, which depend on the organizational structure of their community, a self-defense mechanism of the structure is activated (Douglas 1973). The initial rejection of the women's project responds to this mechanism.

The existing tensions around how women of the cooperative have taken control of the definition of their own identity and the mobilization of their body in space unmask some of the power relations that characterize their community and family life and culture. Alexa, Daniela's daughter, is the only supporter of her mother's activities at home:

> Apart from her cooperative, her relationship with our family is good. But when she has to go out, everyone gets mad at me because I am the one that encourages her. (Alexa, personal communication, October 17, 2014)

Transgressing the limits of the assigned roles and spaces for women of the community represents a threat to male members of their family and representatives of the institutions that reinforce those roles, such as the

Catholic Church, who keep a dominant position in power relations. These actors' privileged position is due to the social role they develop in the control and production of economic capital that sustains the family home, and in the second case, the symbolic capital that orients practices and behavioral guidelines of the community (Bourdieu 1990).

The women of the cooperative have confronted these obstacles collectively because they share the same situation. They have engaged in communicative action (Castells 2012), sharing their feelings and supporting each other to keep going forward with their projects. In this way the cooperative works as a secondary but crucial source of recognition and differentiation that motivates this redefinition of their own identity, in its subjectified forms of culture and their biographical experience (Giménez 2002).

The cooperative's goals are strongly oriented to prove their families and community that they can accomplish their projects and be the women they never believed they could be. This identity project[2] is built from relations and tensions with the members of the family, the cooperative and the community. The activities of the cooperative have inspired a diversity of personal projects that have moved from home to the pursuit of personal projects to become "accomplished women", different than their past selves. The women of the cooperative have moved from thinking of themselves only in terms of their social roles as mothers, daughters, aunts, wives or grandmothers to being active subjects in their community (Touraine 2007).[3]

The Warmth of the Stove Brings Family and the Cooperative Together

The women's development in the cooperative and overcoming their fears as described above have improved their relationship with their families in terms of affectivity and communication. Working in the cooperative, producing food from their own gardening, being able to speak freely and travel to other places without their husbands all provide their identities with a positive value in ways that are recognized by the cooperative and also by people from outside the community. Giménez (2002) points out that identity has a distinctive value for the subject that can be positive or negative according to how the subject and society relate to it. As the women distance themselves from the dominant material and symbolic forces of their community that try to impose a legitimate identity and categorize any alternative as negative, the positive value of their identities is reinforced.

Through their relationship with their family, the women of the cooperative try to demonstrate and affirm these positive values of their identities. Martha says that her activities at the cooperative have helped her communicate how she feels to her children: "I tell them what we do at the cooperative. Sometimes they listen to me, sometimes they don't, but I feel they understand me more. We didn't communicate like now, I almost never told them: son, I love you" (Martha, personal communication, October 17, 2014).

For Martha the cooperative has been a place of personal realization where she has had the chance to express and work with her feelings in order to understand from a different perspective her life as a woman and her role as a mother. About her and her children's personal freedom for making choices, she thinks,

> In the past I told them "I am your mom and you have to do this". No, they have to decide as well, based on what they like. I like plants and it is where I spend most of my time. That is why I have to give them the chance to decide who they want to be. (Martha, personal communication, October 17, 2014)

Martha acknowledges that through the cooperative she has discovered the possibility of choosing who she wants to be and that her children have the same right. In this way her activities at the cooperative not only push forward her desires for self-fulfillment but also inspire a wish for her daughters' and sons' self-fulfillment in their own way, acknowledging the value of the singularity and diversity of their identities.

The reconfiguration of everyday life practices through the women's activities at the cooperative has modified the practices, and with them the sociospatial dynamics, of their families and the meaning of home as a place. Ana remembers proudly when she decided to claim a lot at her house that used to be a parking lot and today is a beautiful garden:

> This was my sons' parking lot, they always had their van here but when I planted here they told me "Mom, you invaded our lot!" And I answered them: "No, you're crazy, how is it I invaded your lot? This is my house and you haven't respected it, from here to there I don't want you to park […] this is for your own good too." (Ana, personal communication, October 17, 2014)

Ana acknowledges that her home had never been hers until she was able to use some of its space herself as a woman and mother. This defense implies

a defense of her place at home and the space she feels her body needs and deserves, but at the same time she believes that planting there benefits her family and she considers it to be a place for all. By occupying and transforming physically and symbolically her sons' former parking spot, Ana altered the practices and power relations that shaped and defined it and produced an other-place (Escobar 2010), reconfiguring her home as a place too.

As part of the objective and subjective transformation of what might be considered "microplaces" at home, the women's practices of production and consumption are reconfigured; they contribute more explicitly to the family economy because they produce a considerable part of the vegetables and fruits they consume. Through the ecotechnologies they have built, they save water and cooking gas, which also reduces expenses at home. These efforts have also helped them to take into account and value the domestic and care labors they perform at home as a job and as a direct contribution to the family's wellbeing.

Ana remarks that her ecological stove, apart from saving gas, has also worked as a regular meeting place with her family. The cooperative also uses the stove to make tortillas and traditional dishes to sell at the local market and raise funds for the cooperative. When she is not working with the cooperative, Ana makes her own tortillas and sells them to save money and allow her to visit her mother. Through the productive activities that women develop as part of the cooperative, or individually, they can provide for their homes but also acquire economic autonomy to pursue their own projects.

With the ecological stove, Ana's home has gradually transformed into an important meeting, recreation and production place that has started to integrate the members of the cooperative and her family. In this way the group and family dimensions have started to converge and articulate. This convergence has a notable impact on the organization of the cooperative: the relationship between the members has become much more intimate. After attending an agroecological farming school, the cooperative learned how to build an ecological oven and built it in Ana's home. Ana's husband joined the construction labor, which was a great accomplishment not only for Ana but for the entire cooperative: he was one of the most reticent husbands toward their activities.

When the women started working at the cooperative, they had much more support and understanding from their daughters than from their sons and husbands. Slowly, the daughters started joining their mothers

in the cooperative's activities. Some of them joined other ecologist groups in the area and the younger children joined a group coordinated by the IMDEC.

The projects of the cooperative have begun to converge with the families' projects and they have even generated new productive ideas between mothers and daughters. Some women consider the cooperative and the community garden a life project and a legacy that they can leave for their daughters and daughters-in-law. That is why they constantly seek to include and invite them to join the cooperative or its activities.

During nine months of fieldwork I observed a gradual integration of the male family members into the cooperative's activities. The activities they had chosen to join include tasks they knew about, such as construction or preparing the land for sowing—activities with which they are familiar because they are related to their working experience. Knowing the cooperatives activities, having relative autonomy over their work and the opportunity of learning new agroecological techniques have helped to dissolve the threat of the cooperative for the men. This has led to more interaction of the men with their wives' and mothers' realities and experiences at the cooperative. Through this inclusion of the male members of the family, the women of the cooperative have felt more acceptance and support from their sons and husbands toward their activities at the cooperative and other aspects of their lives.

The cooperative and the women's families started converging through the conflictive, and sometimes contradictory, reconfiguration of identities, practices and power relations inside and outside the women's bodies and homes. The place of La Huizachera is transformed and reconfigured in both objectified and subjectified dimensions. What is interesting is how these reconfigurations or sense of otherness cannot be contained and reach out beyond the community and social public space.

Networks Weaving Inside and Outside the Community

The interweaving of solidarity and support networks (Harcourt and Escobar 2002) has been notable in the trajectory of the cooperative.[4] These networks have evolved since the cooperative was formed. The organization creates a diversity of bonds with different actors, including national and international NGOs (INGOs), and other cooperatives and collectives. Sporadically the cooperative is visited by people who offer to

share their expertise regarding relevant issues for the women, such as alternative medicine or agroecology, and volunteers or students doing their social service sometimes join the activities. Recently some international companies supported the group with construction material and volunteers as part of their social responsibility programs, which gives this evolving network an entangled and occasionally contradictory character (Saukko 2003) inherent to their "glocality" (Harcourt and Escobar 2002).

The relationships and connections that result from these bonding processes or networks of solidarity and support respond to four functions of the cooperative: protective, communicative, educational and economically supportive.

In relation to the protective function, people from outside the community might witness and register any confrontation, negligence or attack from other members of the community, and legal or illegal actors who do not agree with the cooperative's activities and want to denounce it. Some of the actors in these networks have sufficient social capital to make public through the media any kind of menace toward the cooperative's project or its members' wellbeing.

The second feature of these networks is that, through them, members of the cooperative have been able to communicate and bond with each other, and with other groups and communities with similar problems or projects:

> There we realize that we are all struggling […] The struggles are different because of what each group wants, but at the end it is a fight we are all fighting, for the same end. We exchange experiences most of all. And we meet other people and make friends with other women. (Rocío, personal communication, October 17, 2014)

The exchange of experiences in these support networks has given place to empathic dialogue between diverse people and groups that enables them to identify similarities in a framework of differences. Touraine (2007) identifies this process as intercultural communication that implies a dialogue between individuals and collectivities with the same principles but different historical experiences in order to position themselves in relation to others. According to Castells (2012), although each mind builds its own meanings through interpretation, this process will be determined by the communicational environment that will have an effect on the production of meaning and power relations. In these spaces the women of

the cooperative feel safe, appreciated and understood. This collective production of meanings stimulates the formation of other-places, local and global at the same time, valuable in their diversities where people can share, accompany and incorporate different kinds of knowledge.

The third function of these networks constitutes collective learning spaces in which people can share their experiences, activities and results with others. The women of the cooperative have incorporated some of the experiences that other groups of women have shared with them, such as the idea of a collective savings bank to maintain their autonomy and finance their activities, or to use as an emergency found. On the other hand, the cooperative has also been able to exchange knowledge and products with other people in alternative places, such as barter or farmers' markets.

The fourth function of these networks is that they provide economic support, working hands and advice to achieve and sustain the cooperatives' projects. The IMDEC works as an important articulating node of these alliances because it has been involved in the conformation of the cooperative and has accompanied the process since. This association has been able to provide economic support for various civic projects in the state of Jalisco, including the cooperative. Tu Techo AC, another civil association, has connected the cooperative with international companies that are interested in supporting civic initiatives.

In the context of this last critical function, the question about the cooperative's autonomy arises, given the possible interests and agendas that other organizations might pursue through their support, especially IMDEC, which has been the most involved in the collective. I posed this question to Carmen, whose contract with IMDEC had just finished. Her response was that IMDEC's agenda has less weight than before because the women of the cooperative are making their own decisions and have created a distance from IMDEC in their communication and prioritization of their needs and interests (personal communication, February 25, 2015). This is indicated by the practice of the cooperative to have two meetings a week: one where they include external advisors and another where only members of the cooperative assemble to discuss their projects and the advisors' proposals.

The social networks that the Internet offers have also been useful tools for sharing the collective's activities and reach people from other municipalities, cities and countries. Nevertheless, the women of the cooperative are part of a great majority that represents the global communicational

and learning gap. Beyond having or not having access to a computer and the Internet, most of these women did not have access to basic or secondary education. Because of this lack of basic literacy, most of the women of the cooperative have great difficulty in reading and handwriting, so computer literacy is not an easy task to achieve. As a result, the cooperative's online spaces are not run by members of the cooperative but by external advisors. Administrating their own social networks on the Internet has remained as a pending challenge for the cooperative, but not a current priority because the most meaningful way of knitting these networks has been face to face.

Being a Body in Resistance: Vulnerability, Complexity and Contradictions

Since I started this research project and met the women of the COMEH, I have had no doubt that it was the beginning of a personally ambitious, difficult and uncomfortable life and political project. The first days I spent with them reminded me of the women in my family, their love for plants and agriculture, their personal stories and their central role in taking care of the family. My road to La Huizachera was built by my grandmothers' and grandfathers' stories and my parent's migration from Argentina to Mexico, their divorce and my own migration to another city. The visible and invisible marks of my own body can trace these stories and the paths that I have traveled.

When I talk about this life project, I refer to a personal/political commitment that the women of the cooperative have helped me to understand. The most relevant piece of this project is learning: with them collectivity; the affective and love bonds that join them, both conflictive and contradictory, where the emotional and physical care of each woman and the group is fundamental. What I share with these women is the ability to care and the value of caring (Harcourt 2015). We are preoccupied women, preoccupied enough to occupy our own bodies and care enough for ourselves and for others, starting with the ones we love. Being preoccupied and occupied results in constant changes and efforts; it is uncomfortable but it also provides opportunities to learn and experiment, grow, ramify and expand like trees.

When I arrived at La Huizachera and met its women, I was shocked and partially disappointed because of their simple humanity. They did not resemble the heroines that I had read about or seen on documentary

films. Now this first illusion shames me. They became my heroines exactly because of their humanity. Resisting is not easy; it is contradictory[5] and conflictive; it is swimming the countercurrent with sharks around you, being vulnerable and making mistakes, learning to apologize, having personal interests and being selfish sometimes; it is resisting pain, like growing up, but it leaves traces and seeds. The women of the cooperative sometimes fight among each other. Through mistakes and conflict they have learned to love and relate with others without shrinking or disappearing as women. This is hard and sometimes painful for everyone involved, but this other kind of love and care spreads, as their families' affective ties are healthier and stronger, and they inspire people from inside and outside the community, such as me.

My experience with the ecologist women of La Huizachera has led me to recognize my own humanity, my physical and emotional vulnerability, and to embrace them with their imperfections, but also with their potential. I have been able to strip myself of the masks I have had to put on according to the roles I have played and I have discovered that the mask I found hardest to take off is the one that helped me to hide, especially as a researcher—that of a vulnerable, emotional, mortal and human body. We have been hiding what happens backstage too long, failing to notice that it is the most important part of the process: the process itself. This is a major challenge because it demands us to assume responsibility, exposing and stripping ourselves, being vulnerable, complex and contradictory, and embracing these things. This is what the women of the cooperative have taught me about being a body in resistance.

Notes

1. From Reguillo's (2008) perspective, these are groups that are parallel to legal orders with their own codes, rules and rituals.
2. From Castells' (1999: 30) perspective, this is a "project identity", which he describes as the actors' construction of a new identity based on specific cultural materials that would redefine their position in the social structure and, in doing so, they try to transform the whole social structure.
3. Touraine (2007) explains that being a subject requires someone to recognize their own transformative, creative and reflective potentialities through an interpellation or a specific situation that menaces or damages a person's life. The recognition of others as subjects allows

communication and integration between individuals. This mutual recognition of subjects integrates social and political organizations.

4. Understood from Harcourt and Escobar (2002) as non-hierarchical and auto-organizational oppositional networks formed by the interweaving of diverse elements united by complementarity and common experiences. Networks are linked to diverse places, neither local nor global, and can be understood as "glocal".
5. I should like to specially emphasize this feature related to my view and analysis of resistance processes, which is compatible with Saukko's metaphor of networks for analyzing social realities: "The metaphor of networks views reality in a more 'messy' way, not in terms of clear categories but more as a tangle of interconnected events and issues that call attention to complexities and contradictions" (Saukko 2003: 25).

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CHAPTER 4

Moments of Movement Intersection in India: Informing and Transforming Bodies in Movements

Manisha Desai

Introduction

The terrain of social movements around gender and sexuality in India has shifted dramatically since the 1990s. It is vastly different from the 1970s and 1980s when the autonomous feminist movement was one of the only ones that addressed these issues. Today the queer, sex worker and transgender movements are also working for gender and sexual justice and are important interlocutors for the autonomous feminist movement. In this chapter I examine moments of what I call "movement intersection", when movements actively challenge, contest and cooperate with each other. In particular I examine how these moments of intersection inform and transform understandings as well as practices around gender and sexual justice of the movements that intersect.

I analyze two such moments: the Seventh National Autonomous Women's Movement Conference in 2006, when hijras challenged its exclusion from the conference; and Voices Against 377, a coalition of many movements and NGOs, which emerged in support of decriminalizing

M. Desai (✉)
Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, USA

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_4

sodomy.[1] On the surface the former appears to be a moment of challenge and the latter a moment of cooperation. However, closer analysis reveals that both moments are more complex and entail contestation as well as cooperation between movements. Furthermore, such moments of intense intersection contribute to ongoing reflection among movements and are productive even when the outcomes are not always the intended ones. I conclude by examining why such movement intersections were possible at this particular juncture in the history of social movements in India and what that suggests for social justice movements more generally. I suggest that it is a consequence of the changing nature of social justice movements in India; the response of social movements to the increasing inequalities and injustices stemming from liberalization of the economy and the increasing dominance of Hindutva in national and regional politics that has been impacting all movements; and finally the influence of transnational movements and the increasing digital networking enabled by access to the Internet.

My analysis thus suggests that while neoliberalization and transnationalization have been accurately seen as sources of NGOization of social movements with its attendant deradicalization and governmentality (e.g. Alvarez 2009; Desai 2008), they have also facilitated increased movement intersection that has informed and transformed the movements that intersect.

The Seventh National Autonomous Women's Movement Conference

The National Autonomous Women's Movement Conference (NAWMC) was a product of the burgeoning autonomous women's movement in India that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g. Gandhi and Shah 1992). The "autonomous" in the name referred to autonomy from political parties, particularly from the left, which had been among the prime organizers of political protest in independent India. In this the women's movement was part of a larger political trend across the subcontinent at the time known as non-party political formations (Sethi and Kothari 1983). These new political actors not only sought autonomy from political parties of the left but also challenged their primary focus on class—subordinating caste, gender and other social axes of domination—and their centralized, hierarchical and bureaucratic methods of organizing. In short, the autonomous women's movement, along with others, sought

to “democratize democracy” or “reinvented revolution” (Omvedt 1993). At the time the autonomous women’s movement was made up of small groups of primarily urban, educated, middle-class and upper-caste women (Gandhi and Shah 1992; Omvedt 1993). This was somewhat ironic given that they were a response to the subordination of women’s issues and their relegation to women activists in many rural movements in India in the late 1960s and 1970s. It was, however, not surprising because many of the mass movements and non-party political formations of the time were organized by activists from these backgrounds.

What led to the first NAWMC in 1980 in Bombay was the 1977 Supreme Court judgment in the custodial rape case of a 14-year-old tribal girl called Mathura (Report of the National Conference 1980). The petition to challenge this judgment had been circulating among the newly formed autonomous women’s movement groups. In addition to gathering signatures to overturn the appeal, on March 8, 1980, women also marched in 15 cities in India to protest the judgment. When the Supreme Court rejected their petition, the autonomous groups decided to shift their strategy to launching a campaign to reform existing rape legislation. To discuss this shift, the Forum Against Oppression of Women, a Bombay-based autonomous group, organized the first NAWMC, entitled Perspectives for the Autonomous Women’s Movement in India. Some 200 women from 32 autonomous groups from all over India participated and discussed the anti-rape campaign, the role of the state in women’s oppression, the autonomy of the women’s movement, and movement strategies of “case work” vs. consciousness raising (Report of the National Conference 1980). Since the first conference, six others have been held over the years. The second conference in 1985 was also held in Bombay, in which 600 women participated. The third took place in Patna in 1988 with 750 women, the fourth in Calicut with 1500 women, the fifth in Tirupathi in 1991 with 2000 women and the sixth in Ranchi in 1998 with 3000 women. Each successive conference was marked not only by increased numbers of participants but also by the diversity of women’s groups. This included diversity of ideologies, issues and strategies, and also of women—urban, rural, *dalit* and *adivasis*, among others. It was after a gap of nearly a decade that the seventh conference was held in Kolkata in 2006.[2]

Much had changed around gender and sexuality in that decade which led to the moment of movement intersection in the lead up to the seventh conference. As the declaration of the seventh conference noted, the NAWMCs have been held

> in response to our need to link up with each other, to share experiences and build friendships, express solidarity with each others' struggles, strategise and formulate joint action plans for the future. Over the years, the Conferences have evolved as a space for expression of our ideas, politics, and struggles—where no one voice is more important than another, but rather, where the spirit of democracy, sisterhood, and solidarity seeks to encourage debate and dialogue. (Gopal 2007: 1)

The conferences have always been women-only spaces and, while over the years there have been many conflicts around class, caste, party, methods of organizing and strategies, who constitutes the category of "women" was not among them. However, this changed at the seventh conference when the National Coordination Committee, made up of representatives from autonomous groups across the country, had to decide whether to include hijras at the conference.[3] Hijras along with sex workers had mobilized and become visible and vocal in the decade since the last NAWMC.

The transnational context of HIV/AIDS prevention, and the emergence of sex worker and transgender movements, had shaped their mobilization. HIV/AIDS-prevention groups transformed hijras and sex workers from stigmatized groups to dangerous vectors of transmission and thereby targets of prevention efforts. As Dutta (2013), among others, has shown, such outreach and mobilization by the state, international development agencies, the global transgender movement and the "HIV/AIDS industry" was problematic because it legitimated only certain gender/sex variant groups—such as transgender and men who have sex with men—for inclusion in development programs and as citizens. Other expressions of lower-caste gender/sexual variance were delegitimized and excluded from the constitutional protection of citizens, and were often exploited within the HIV/AIDS industry. However, such selective inclusion did not prevent sex and gender variant groups from organizing their own movements and mobilizing the rights discourse to challenge their exclusion.

Among the first groups to do so was the Darbar Mahila Samawaya Committee (DMSC), established in Kolkata in 1995, the largest sex workers union in the country with more than 60,000 members, including trans, hijra and sex workers with diverse sexual practices. Since then not only has the DMSC organized sex workers across the country but it has also hosted three National Sex Workers Conferences. In 2011 these efforts resulted in the formation of the All India Network of Sex Workers. It is made up of 80 male, female and transgender sex worker organizations

across the country and represents about 3 million workers. As a result of such organizing efforts, hijras, and some queer groups, began to reflect on their relationship with the autonomous women's movement. The main issue of contention was that of identity and solidarity. Most hijras identify as women while some do as transgenders. Given this what should be their relationship to the autonomous women's movement, which is primarily organized as a women-only space.

This came to the forefront at the conference in Kolkata, when the National Coordination Committee had to address the issue of whether to open participation to hijras. Many felt uncomfortable about allowing "men" into a women-only space, despite the reality that most hijras identify as women. After much debate and discussion, the committee decided to allow those hijras who identity as women, but not those who identify as transgender, to participate. Members of the committee noted that while they recognize and support the rights and movements of hijras, there was still a need for women-only spaces. Also, they rationalized that in the past decade many transgender spaces had emerged, so hijras who did not identify as women were no longer isolated. Despite this, many female participants at the conference were uncomfortable with this compromise. The conferences are fairly intimate spaces where women live in close quarters for three days, and for some, hijras are "men" despite their self-identification as women. Such discomfort did not carry over into the sessions and discussions. Sessions on marginalized genders and sexualities were among the best attended. Even when many women had conceptual differences, they were moved by the experiences of individual hijras and saw themselves as being involved in the same larger struggle.

Thus the issue was not only about which bodies can claim which gender but also about the politics of women-only spaces for gender justice. While the implications of allowing hijras to participate in the NAWMCs are an open question, there is cause for optimism if one looks at how the autonomous women's movement responded to another struggle of the past decade— that of sex workers.

Given feminists' opposition to the objectification and commodification of women's bodies, and the violence and victimization associated with it, accepting sex work as labor no different than other forms of labor, was not easy for many in the autonomous women's movement. Thus the shift in discussion from prostitution to sex work is itself significant. Along with the issue of the nature of the work was also the issue of agency, choice versus coercion. Many feminists question whether women freely choose to

engage in sex work. They argue that while sex workers may not be coerced to engage in this work, given limited opportunities for other work it is not a choice per se but a survival strategy. Some sex workers and feminists challenge such reservations and argue that many women do choose it and that feminists who do not recognize this share the anti-trafficking discourse of rescue and rehabilitation. As a result of such differences, Shah (2011) argues that the autonomous women's movement and the sex workers movements developed separately, and many feminists eschew sex workers as feminists engaged in similar struggles. Yet, given the mobilization of the sex workers over the past decade, the seventh NAWMC included many sex worker organizations and had many sessions on sex work. The sessions included ones in which sex workers saw their work not only as freely chosen labor but also on the same continuum as modeling, but also those in which participants saw it as a tool of patriarchy.

As many scholars and activists have argued (e.g. Shah 2014), one can support the rights of sex workers and see their work as a form of labor without necessarily arguing that it is always freely chosen. Shah (2014) shows that sex work is one of many livelihood strategies for poor, migrant women with little formal education and limited skills. They see it as a response to their *majboori* (helplessness) but not necessarily as *jabardasti* (coercion). Thus one can recognize agency without conflating it with free choice, and also recognize that sometimes sex workers, like others, are victimized and experience violence.

This more nuanced understanding of sex work has raised other questions for feminists as the DMSC reformulated sex work as entertainment work and organized a National Conference on Entertainment Work in 2007. At the conference it declared:

> We firmly believe that … (we, sex workers) provide entertainment to our customers. We provide sexual pleasure. Everyone has the right to seek pleasure and happiness. Like … other entertainment workers of the world we use our brain, ideas, emotion, and sex organs, in short, our entire body and our mind to make people happy. As entertainment workers, we seek governmental recognition and, fulfillment of our just professional demands…" (cited in Dutta and Sircar 2008: 3)

While this reflects the current trend in transnational sexuality rights movements and scholarship (e.g. Harcourt 2009) to move beyond pain and marginalization to a more positive sense of sexuality and pleasure, as Dutta and Sircar (2008) note, it also has implications for politics and solidarities.

On the one hand, it redefines sex work as entertainment and hence draws a parallel with the work of artists and performers at the same time as it brings the discussion of sexual pleasure into the public space from that of the private space of monogamous marriage or academic discourse. However, on the other, it creates new tensions because other entertainment workers seek to differentiate themselves from sex workers. This was the case in Mumbai when "dance girls" and "bar girls" who were faced with the closure of the bars and loss of their livelihood mobilized under the slogan of "We are not sex workers".

While sex workers continue to challenge the autonomous women's movement through such rearticulations, their major focus continues to be on livelihood as evident from the consultation organized by the All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW) in New Delhi in August 2013.

> One of the major demands raised by the community was for "the recognition [of] sex work as work". To explain this demand, AINSW representatives pointed out that almost a third of their families survive solely on the sex worker's income, thereby coming under the woman-headed household category. Their other major demands were due recognition as citizens and entitlement to all the rights given to other informal sector workers; because of the specific nature of their work, wherein there is no typical employee-employer relationship or permanent place of work; an end to the violence that is a part and parcel of sex work; and, more importantly, the repeal of the proposed amendments in the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act that sought to criminalize sex work as well as the clients of the sex workers. (AINSW 2013)[4]

When the national network focuses on the political economy of sex work, it has the complete support of the women's movements as reflected by the participation of feminists at the consultation.

Similarly complex and contradictory dynamics are evident in Voices Against 377.

Voices Against 377

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1860 by Lord Macaulay to address unnatural offenses which included carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal. Such an unnatural offense could lead to imprisonment for life and a fine (Misra 2009). This provision enabled the police to harass gay men meeting in parks in

New Delhi and it was to protest this harassment that AIDS Bhedbhave Virodhi Andolan (ABVA [Struggle Against Discrimination against AIDS]) organized its first protest outside the New Delhi police station. In 1994, ABVA filed the first litigation against Section 377, claiming that it violated the constitutionally protected right to privacy. The petition did not come up for hearing until 2001, at which time ABVA, a volunteer-based organization, without a full-time lawyer, was unable to sustain the legal action.

At that time the Naz Foundation India Trust, a New Delhi-based HIV/AIDS-prevention NGO, together with the Lawyers Collective, a legal rights organization in New Delhi, took up the case and petitioned the Delhi Supreme Court to strike out the part of Section 377 that criminalizes private consensual sex between adults. This more limited appeal was in deference to child rights groups that were opposed to the repeal of the entire law because it was one of the few measures that could be mobilized in cases of sexual abuse of minors. Although initially dismissed due to lack of *locus standi* because the Naz Foundation was not an aggrieved party, the Delhi High Court had to hear the case because the Indian Supreme Court ruled that it could proceed as a public interest litigation.

To strengthen the case and provide testimonials from people who had been aggrieved, a coalition of NGOs formed Voices Against 377 in 2003. This included human rights, child rights, feminist and LGBT groups. While the initial petition had been in response to a health issue—that is, the inability to work with those most at risk of HIV/AIDS—by 2001 it was framed as an issue of human rights because by then there was a visible LGBT movement in India as well as many groups working on the reproductive and sexual rights of minority groups such as Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA), Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues (TARSHI) and People for the Rights of Individuals of Sexual Minorities (PRISM) (Misra 2009).

Voices Against 377 engaged in a countrywide campaign to raise awareness among the general public, the media, students and health professionals. Its activities included demonstrations, public meetings in cities around the country, press conferences and a signature campaign. In 2006, Voices Against 377 filed a formal petition in support of the Naz Foundation's public interest litigation. This extensive cooperation among varied groups working around different rights and social justice causes was, in part, a reflection of the visibility and recognition of the LGBT issues in India that had begun in the early 1990s. From a primarily urban, educated, upper-class movement, it became more widespread as

a result of the HIV/AIDS-prevention work. Khanna (2013) argues that the HIV/AIDS industry, a translocal network of government, corporate and development NGOs, produced both transnational governmentalities for surveillance of bodies and also new subjectivities and identities, such as men who have sex with men (MSM), commercial sex workers, injecting drug users (IDUs) and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), that could be mobilized for social justice. While the repeal of Section 377 brought together different movements, it also demonstrated tensions between LGBT and queer perspectives, which were resolved productively in the context of the legal challenge.

Ironically, the queer movement emerged in opposition to the petition. The opposition was a national alliance of pro-feminist, anti-classist/casteist, anti-communal queer groups (Khanna 2013). As Khanna (2013) notes, they opposed the petition on political and ethical grounds. Politically, the groups argued that the petition was not sensitive to issues of class and gender. The Naz Foundation's petition had focused on decriminalizing private, consensual same-sex practices. For the queer movement, this left intact its regulation in the public realm, where a majority of working-class kothi and hijra same-sex interactions occur. Thus inadvertently the petition protected the rights of upper-class gay men, most of whose sexual practices occur in private, while ignoring those of poor men. Further opposition was based on their ambivalence about the state and its relationship to the public/private distinction. This was influenced by the feminist movement's opposition to the ways in which privacy arguments were used by the state to justify its inaction in addressing domestic violence.

This opposition was based on a specific understanding of queer politics. As two activists from the queer movement note,

> To speak of Queer politics is, in some sense, different from just speaking of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, kothi, and hijra communities. Queer politics does not speak only of the issues of theses communities as 'minority issues', but instead it speaks of the larger understandings of gender and sexuality in our society that affect all of us, regardless of our sexual orientation. It speaks of sexuality as a politics intrinsically and inevitably connected with the politics of class, gender, caste, religion and so on, thereby both acknowledging other movements and also demanding inclusion within them." (Narrain and Bhan 2005: 4)

In addition to such conceptual opposition around politics, the national alliance also disapproved of the way in which the Naz Foundation filed the

petition without consulting other groups working on sexuality. This was not only an affective issue, relating to hurt feelings, but also an ethical one, regarding its commitment to inclusive and democratic practice.

In recognition of their opposition, the lawyers collective initiated a series of national consultations that included the LGBT and queer communities. This outreach, along with the opposition from an NGO that was an AIDS denier, and offensive remarks from the Home Ministry, resulted in the queer movement changing its opposition to the petition and working with Voices Against 377 to ensure a legal victory. Thus, Khanna (2013) argues that Voices Against 377 was possible due to the shift from LGBT to queer politics, evident in the support of other movements, yet identity-based LGBT politics became the basis of the petition. The queer groups were not against identity politics but saw it as one part of a larger struggle. Yet they recognized that in the context of a legal strategy, queer is not legible in the human rights frame based on a liberal citizen subject. And to the delight of everyone, this "carefully crafted compromise" succeeded: the Delhi High Court struck out Section 377 in 2009. Unfortunately this turned out to be a short-lived victory because in December 2011 the Supreme Court of India reversed the ruling of the Delhi High Court, in effect recriminalizing sodomy. Puri (2014) argues that this ruling shows that sexuality is generative for what she calls a sexual state to demonstrate its regulatory capacity, or state effects.

It is to avoid such state effects that scholar activists such as Akshay Khanna have articulated sexualness instead of sexuality as another basis for politics. As Khanna (2013) noted of that brief victory, although the ruling brought a successful end to the campaign, s/he could not help feeling that the victory was also a betrayal of the queer movement. The queer movement, s/he argues, was about a challenge to identity politics based on the biomedical assumption of sexuality as personhood and the location of non-normative sexuality within discrete sexuality types, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, kothi, queer, jogappa, hijra and aravani.[5]

Khanna (2013) notes that there is a multiplicity of idioms through which gender diversity and sexualness are articulated in India:

> In short, same-sex desire in the Indian context cannot be considered to be contained within discrete bodies. Further, same-sex sexualness is far from "marginal" to India, either spatially (Boyce 2007; Boyce and Khanna 2010), in praxis or indeed in moral, social and religious discourses. To understand the sexual in the Indian context, then, we need conceptualisations that

> displace the centrality of personhood. It is in this context that I offer the neologism of "sexualness" as distinct from "sexuality". It enables the consideration of eroticism and desire that flows through people, their embodiments and experiences, without constituting them as subjects. (Khanna 2013:124)

S/he further argues that we are creating language in which sexuality will be spoken of in the future so it is important to be attentive to it. And given the transient existence of the juridical sexual citizen, such alternative articulations are important to keep queer politics alive in other registers.

Context for Movement Intersection

Given the often contentious histories of interactions between movements, what made such moments possible? I suggest that such movement interactions are made possible due to factors specific to the Indian context as well as factors relevant to transnational movements in the times of neoliberal globalization. The factors specific to Indian movements are the nature of what came to be called the "new social movements" (Omvedt 1993) and the rise of Hindu fundamentalisms that challenged the gains made by autonomous feminist and other new social movements in India. Omvedt (1993) called the movements that emerged in independent India in the late 1960s—such as women's, dalit, environmental, informal sector workers—new social movements. Their newness, she argued, like that of the new social movements in the West, was evident in their new issues and analysis (i.e. those of caste, gender and environment) that had not been part of earlier left or Gandhian movements; new actors (i.e. women, dalits and farmers) who had not organized around those identities; and, above all, a new politics based on participatory democracy, non-hierarchical informal structures, and recognition of the interrelatedness of issues such as gender, caste and class that had been subordinated to class in the left movements. These new social movements, she argued, thus reinvented revolution in independent India. I suggest that this new politics has explicitly and implicitly informed all social movements since then, which makes such movement intersection possible.

This new politics was further consolidated with the emergence of Hindutva, or Hindu fundamentalism, in the late 1980s, which posed a challenge to many social justice movements, especially the autonomous feminist movements, LGBTQ movements, and sex worker and transgender

movements. As a result, many social justice movements began to work with each other, despite their differences, because they shared a vision that was being undermined by the Hindutva forces.

Other factors that enabled such productive intersections are the active participation of Indian feminists and queer activists in transnational movements around gender and sexualities. This has brought activists from various social justice movements in India into conversation with each other in national and transnational contexts, contributing to their openness to each other's movements and issues. The emergence of the Internet and digital networking has furthered ongoing conversation among activists that has also contributed to such movement intersection.

However, such transnational organizing and digital networking is marked by the neoliberal conjuncture which carries with it some market sensibilities but also highlights the need for collaboration in the context of increasing inequalities that impact all social movements. The market sensibilities are evident in the funding of movement organizations and NGOs, and its attendant governmentalities. But this has not meant a total shift in master frame as Ray and Katzenstein (2005) suggest. In discussing the changes in social movements in India, they argue that the master frame of social movements, particularly those addressing issues of poverty, in contemporary India had shifted from Nehruvian socialism to market sensibilities. The above analysis I suggest shows that the master frame of contemporary movements is inspired not by market sensibilities nor by Nehruvian socialism per se but by the politics of new social movements in India, though the market sensibilities do leave their imprint.

The neoliberal conjuncture in India, as elsewhere, has also increased the precarity of all social groups mobilized by the movements around gender and sexuality. As such, it has highlighted the need to address not only class issues but also its impact on gender and sexuality, and hence the need for solidarities and common cause. For example, hijras challenged autonomous feminists to rethink their understanding of the relationship between gender, identity and embodiment. While many participants at the seventh NAWMC continued to see hijras as "men", they also engaged in discussions about how to work with them in their common struggles for gender justice. Thus the inclusion of hijras informs and transforms not just the conceptualization of the feminist movements but also their political practices.

Similarly, the discussion of sex work at the conference and the engagement with the political economy of sex work demonstrates both shifting understanding but also the practice of solidarity around common struggles. However, the rearticulation of sex work as entertainment work raises

further issues of solidarity because some entertainment workers seek to differentiate their work from sex work. This demonstrates that movements around gender and embodiment are fluid and cannot determine politics in any predetermined way.

Likewise, despite the recriminalization of sodomy, the Voices Against 377 campaign not only gave rise to the queer movement but also informed feminist understandings and practices or example, the testimonies provided to the Justice Verma Committee, constituted by the Indian government to "provide for quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals committing sexual assault of extreme nature against women" (Justice Verma Committee Report 2013: 1), insisted on recognizing not just the rape of women, but also of men and transgender people as well as the rights and dignity of sexual minorities. Additionally, the differences between the queer and LGBT perspectives and the articulations of sexualness have been echoed in the feminist, sex workers, and transgender movements—for example, the debates and participation in Voices Against 377 influenced the DMSC to provide space to the Anandam collective of hijra and transgender sex workers.

Thus moments of movement intersection enable us to expand the ways in which we think of interactions between movements that share a project of gender, sexual and social justice. Often these interactions have been theorized as time-bound coalitions or collaborations around specific goals or events that are often contentious and undermined by "exclusive identities and solidarities" (e.g. Ferre and Roth 1998). Recently, Whittier (2014) has attempted to go beyond the limited conception of such interactions as coalition, spillover and opposition to theorize "collaborative adversarial relationships" to conceptualize the relationship between ideologically opposed movements that collaborate for a shared goal, such as the anti-pornography feminists and conservatives around trafficking. My analysis has highlighted how movements are informed and transformed in their ongoing understandings and practices following moments of intersection with other ideologically congruent movements. Such ongoing change might eventually be more productive as movements recognize their own responsibilities to be more democratic and inclusive.

Notes

1. *Hijras* are both third gender and third sex (Bakshi 2004). Born anatomical men, they undergo voluntary castration and penectomy (when "possessed" by the goddess Bahuchara Mata), dress as women

and perform at key Hindu lifecycle rituals, such as marriages and births.

2. The reasons for the gap ranged from lack of funding to the increase in number of groups and divisiveness among them, and the lack of will/ability among the groups to undertake such a large gathering.
3. Personal communication with Nandita Shah, one of the members of the National Coordination Committee.
4. The Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act of 1956 seeks to regulate sex work, and rescue and rehabilitate "prostitutes".
5. Kothi, jogappa and aravani are terms in Hindi and Tamil for men who have sex with men.

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CHAPTER 5

Contesting Bodies in the Constitutional Debate About Citizenship in Nepal

Kumud Rana

Introduction

Feminist[1] resistance to the relegation of women to passive, second-class or non-citizenship has been a long and contested journey. As Tønnessen states, "Nationality and citizenship are constructed and contested identities and the reference to women as markers of the boundaries of the nation as an imagined community is well known and instructive" (Tønnessen 2008: 464). She quotes Joseph when she further goes on to state that, "The imaginary of 'women ', authenticating a place of 'belonging', a community of kin, a safe haven for family, a 'home' has animated the most powerful rhetoric of nation" (Joseph 2000: 6). Feminist theorists have used the concept of democratic citizenship in demanding equal civil, political and legal rights and duties as full citizens of the state. They have found both emancipation and exclusion within this understanding of citizenship. Young has critiqued the liberal conceptualization of citizenship as dependent on a set of Eurocentric, patriarchal gendered arrangements and practices that inherently favor men and privilege the heteronormative two-parent family (Young 1990, 1995). Indeed, Pateman (1988) in

K. Rana (✉)
University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_5

their discussion of private and public spheres argue that women's exclusion is integral to the liberal theory and practice of citizenship. In spite of these contestations, the idea of citizens as rights-bearing bodies remains an important vantage point from which women demand equality based on gender and sexuality. State citizenship has proved to be a useful political tool for women to claim their place as legitimate actors who can mobilize themselves and others (Yuval-Davis 2012).

In the process of claiming legitimate spaces, citizenship for women continues to be entangled between the "normalising forces of modernity and the essentialising forces of nationalism and exclusion" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 2005). In this chapter I highlight such contestations in a study of equal citizenship rights for women in Nepal. I explore how the female body is a site of both normalization and resistance (Harcourt 2009) within the biopolitics of national sovereignty. I am interested in how, as mothers, women are normalized as the biological reproducers of the nation; and as mothers of citizens tied to a "common" or "true" origin, their bodies become the markers of the boundaries of a nation (Yuval-Davis 1997). Yet women around the world have to struggle to gain recognition as individuals with independent rights in order to pass on citizenship to the very children to whom they have given birth.

As a masters student inspired by the world of feminist scholarship, mentorship and friendship that I had found at the ISS in the Netherlands, I returned to my home country of Nepal in the fall of 2012 to study what I believed to be a noble fight for the emancipation of Nepali women from a system that had always treated them as second-class citizens. I conducted my study at a time when Nepal was writing its first "people's constitution" through a 601-member strong Constituent Assembly (CA) elected in 2008, after a decade-long violent Maoist insurgency. My research initially focused on the struggle to establish equal citizenship rights for women in the new constitution—mainly the rights of mothers to confer citizenship by descent to their children independent of the father, a move that aimed to resolve statelessness among the children of single mothers. I decided to interview political leaders within the CA, specifically members of the various committees[2] directly associated with citizenship provisions.[3] During the course of my study I realized that the claims made by a certain broad group of women from the hill caste/ethnic groups of Nepal (both those within political parties and those within civil society groups[4]) often relied on an inherently exclusionary understanding of state citizenship

cloaked in a language of nationalism and patriotism. While they engaged in critical resistance against the state that refused to grant their bodies the legitimacy of rightful citizens, this resistance was made on behalf of only those bodies that they believed truly belonged to the nation—that is, *Nepal ko chhori* (Nepal's daughters) but not *bideshi buhari* (foreign daughters-in-law)—which specifically affected a historically marginalized group called the Madhesis living along the border with India.

I argue in this chapter that a neoliberal understanding of citizenship goes hand in hand with the neoliberal interpretation of women's empowerment, which often overlooks the importance of how intersections of different identities affect the lived experiences of different groups of women (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 2005). In the case of Nepal, this definition has overlooked intersecting discriminations based on caste, ethnicity and sexual orientation, thus homogenizing the category of "Nepali women" and dictating what a unified agenda for the Nepali women's movement ought to be (Tamang 1997, 2009b, 2011).

I elaborate this argument in the following sections. First I explore feminist critiques of nationalism and citizenship in order to show how women's bodies play a vital role in the creation and demarcation of national boundaries; as well as how the positioning of these bodies as second-class citizens is important in maintaining a gendered nationalism that supposedly preserves the sovereignty of these boundaries. The second section provides a brief account of the historical context for the creation of a distinctive Nepali nationalism that is exclusionary, based on gender and ethnicity. The third and fourth sections elaborate on the struggles of Nepali women's rights activists against such gendered nationalism, the effect of which spills into the country's citizenship provisions. However, these struggles show how the resistance only takes into account particular aspects of nationalism that relate to women's identities as mothers but not necessarily other intersecting identities. While it is true that the embodied experience of the female body (as lovers, service providers, victims and mothers) often becomes an entry point for women's political engagement (Harcourt 2009: 24), the chapter dwells on why it might not be enough to examine this "embodied experience of the female body" alone. It asks how these bodies are inscribed by dominant political and sociocultural structures in such a way that some bodies matter while others do not (Butler 1993, cited in Harcourt 2009).

Female Bodies in the Biopolitics of National Sovereignty

Yuval-Davis in her book *Gender and the Nation* writes, "Much of the explanation of women's oppression has been related to their location in a different social sphere from that of men. Two such binary divides have been the public/private and the natural/civilized domains" (Yuval-Davis 1997: 5). This relates to the positioning of women as second-class citizens and how this division has been used to exclude women from freedom and rights (Yuval-Davis 1997). Women (along with children, minors, the insane, foreigners and criminals) were considered passive citizens who "would not at all contribute to the public establishment [and hence] must have no active influence on public matters" (Agamben 1998). Since nation and nationalism were defined by men who were seen to "embody the political and economic agency … while women [were] the (unpaid) keepers of tradition" (McClintock 1991), women, therefore, did not possess equal citizenship status as men. "A woman's political relation to the nation is thus submerged in a social relation to a man through marriage. Citizenship in the nation is mediated by the marriage relation" (McClintock 1991: 112). Studer (2001) talks of the "marriage rule" whereby a woman automatically acquires the nationality of her husband upon marriage because she is (in) voluntarily foregoing her previous nationality to come live with her husband. This rule, or coverture, meant that women's legal status was under the protection of her husband. Hence, according to a 1907 Expatriation Act in the USA, a woman would automatically forgo her nationality and obtain that of her husband's upon marriage (Becker 1999; Parrenas 2006). Canning and Rose (2001) explain that this is because "women, it was presumed, were only weakly attached to the nation, and would transfer their loyalties to the homelands of their … husbands" (Canning and Rose 2001: 438). The US Cable Act in 1922 released women from the natural derivative of their husband's citizenship (Becker 1999). Similarly, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Nationality of Married Women of 1957 required signatories to "disregard women's marital status in their nationality legislation".

While this was lauded as emancipatory for women, it had negative repercussions for aliens—now immigrants were denied entry even if married to a citizen (as in the USA, as described by Becker 1999). Increasing restrictions on immigration as well as a transnational feminist campaign for equal citizenship meant that neither of the foreign spouses would be

allowed easy entry through naturalized citizenship. Chen (2009) also presents the case of women's nationality in Taiwan, whereby their membership of the nation was dependent on her marital status, and shows how national boundaries are constructed through the exclusion of certain groups, such as foreign wives and interethnic or mixed-race children.

Yuval-Davis and Werbner (2005) describe how women often used two strategies to overcome such representations of powerless, passive citizens. "One way … was 'to stress their superior "maternal" qualities of caring, responsibility and compassion as key constituents of citizenship' which highlighted women's empowering difference. The other path was to demand equality between men and women" (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 2005: 7). The following two sections show how the same strategies were adopted by women's rights activists in Nepal through an exploration of the false universalism of masculine interpretations of citizenship, which "cannot be the basis for a female emancipatory politics" (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 2005).

The Political Context of the Debate About Citizenship

This study is situated within the context of Nepal's efforts to write a new constitution post-2008 and the increasing assertion of rights among historically marginalized ethnic groups after a decade-long Maoist insurgency against the monarchy.[5] The focus is the time period of the first democratically elected CA between 2008 and 2012, where unequal citizenship provisions for women were hotly debated. I focus on three dominant intersections of nationalism, gender and ethnicity in order to analyze problematic discursive strategies of gender equality (as gender neutrality) and national identity (as a uniform *Nepalipan* or Nepaliness, which Lal (2012) describes as 'the essence of being an authentic Nepali') that have dominated the debate. The discussion needs to be understood within a broader context of the historical sociopolitical marginalization of Madhesis maintained through a hill-centric, anti-Indian discourse of Nepali nationalism.[6] The sociocultural proximity of (and frequent intermarriage between) Madhesis and Indians across an open border has relegated the former to the position of quasi-foreigners whose loyalty to the state is constantly questioned. Restrictive clauses in citizenship provisions in the 1960s, such as fluency in the Nepali language and an ambiguous

claim to "Nepalese origin", meant that a large number of people in the Madhes were not able to acquire Nepali citizenship.[7] The lack of access to citizenship remains a major grievance of the Madhesis against the Nepali state.[8]

The exclusion of the Madhesis is closely linked to the geopolitical positioning of Nepal between two emerging world powers competing for influence over the country—Tibet (or China) in the north and India in the south (with which Nepal shares an open border). The way this has shaped Nepali nationalism subsumes the debate about equal citizenship rights for women, specifically when it comes to whether and what kind of citizenship should be granted to children born of Nepali women and foreign men.[9] Nepali citizenship is based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* (citizenship through descent based on a common bloodline). The gendered ideology of tracing nationality through patrilineal lineage became entrenched in citizenship provisions following the Nepal Citizenship Act of 1964 that was carried into subsequent constitutions—namely, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, which remained effective until the promulgation of the Interim Constitution of 2007. Although the 1990 constitution was promulgated after the first democratic movement in Nepal, with extensive support from women across political parties and civil society, citizenship provisions still gave continuity to the legitimacy of only men to pass it on to their children.[10]

In response to entrenched socio-cultural and political exclusions of various groups based on class, caste, ethnicity and gender, a 2006 democratic movement in Nepal (Janandolan II or the Second People's Movement), followed by a Madhes Uprising in 2007, led to the first election for a CA in Nepal in 2008.[11] This CA was the most inclusive so far in the parliamentary history of Nepal and there were high hopes that the demands of marginalized groups would be addressed in the new constitution.

Citizenship Through Descent: Critical Resistance as Mothers

Nepali women leaders from political parties within the CA, within the Inter Party Women's Alliance outside the CA, and women's rights advocates from civil society organizations such as the Forum for Women, Law and Development have been engaged in a long battle of *critical resistance* (Hoy 2004) against gender discriminatory provisions within the Constitution of Nepal. Hoy, drawing from Nietzche, defines critical resistance as the resistance against domination in order to achieve emancipation (2004).

During the new constitution writing process, women leaders prioritized equal citizenship rights for women as the first step to ensuring equality in other spheres. They focused on the lack of a mother's equal rights to confer citizenship through descent (*jus sanguinis*) to her children owing to the problem of statelessness among those children living with single mothers.[12] With this background, women CA members proposed that the language of the existing provision be made more flexible. Instead of the proposed provision in the new constitution that in order for a child to be eligible to apply for Nepali citizenship both their mother and father must be a Nepali citizen, women CA members proposed that the requirement be changed to either parent being a Nepali citizen for the child to be eligible. They called for the language to be changed to "mother *or* father". The campaign for the "or" provision was driven by the lived experiences of single mothers and mothers with foreign spouses who have so far been unable to transfer citizenship to their children due to restrictive provisions from the 1964 Citizenship Act. Though a Supreme Court ruling granted mothers equal citizenship rights, this had yet to be instituted in law and implemented with effect. The Interim Constitution of 2007, which allowed citizenship on the basis of either parent being a Nepali citizen, nevertheless came under fire because of a restrictive clause that said that if the father were to be later identified as a foreigner, the child's citizenship would be changed to that under naturalization, with constraints on civil and political rights. The fact that this was only applied to children with single mothers or mothers with foreign partners was a limitation on women's right to freely choose a partner, and a constraint on her right to family life and a domicile in her home country.

In order to counter this, women leaders within the CA consciously framed their argument from the angle of maternalism—that is, if it is women who give birth to and raise children, why is it that they are not allowed to pass on citizenship to their children? As Werbner (2005) illustrates in the case of political motherhood and women's activisms around the world, Nepali female political leaders also stressed the superior maternal qualities of caring and responsibility during the interviews I conducted with them. They focused on what Yuval-Davis and Werbner (2005) call "women's empowering difference" as mothers to resist a masculine construction of citizenship. This was largely in response to constant harassment faced by single mothers from state authorities even after the Interim Constitution of 2007 gave mothers the right to confer citizenship independent of the father. Local authorities have often been reported as having

asked claimants to bring along their fathers—including cases where fathers have long been dead, unknown or unwilling to accept the children as their own. Political party leaders—both male and female—have also publicly placed the blame on women who did not think about the implications of sleeping with or marrying foreign men. As such, women who freely chose to exercise their sexual rights were perceived as deviant, while women who bore children out of rape or prostitution were to be granted some clemency as "special cases"—they could transfer Nepali citizenship to their children by declaring in the certificate that the father was not known. However, if the father was later found to be a foreigner, her children would be stripped of citizenship through descent and given citizenship through naturalization.[13]

Women leaders within the CA were undoubtedly engaged in resistance against patriarchal constructions of citizenship that did not yet respect them as full citizens. However, the question remains whether this was indeed a *critical resistance* to domination for the purpose of emancipation. Hoy (2004) cautions that mere resistance to domination might lack a positive vision of what is to be achieved through access to power—that is, he stresses the need to think along the lines of what the resistance is for, instead of what it is against. Resistance without critique, he says, is blind because it only "knows how to say 'no', not how to say 'yes' to a different view of society that would change the status quo" (2004: 6).[14] In the following section I will elaborate why this resistance, under the political circumstances of the time, fell short of being emancipatory by failing to challenge the status quo.

Citizenship Through Naturalization and the Politics of Belonging

According to existing provisions in the Interim Constitution of 2007, foreign wives could apply for Nepali citizenship immediately after they started the process of renouncing their former citizenship. However, there were no provisions for foreign men to acquire Nepali citizenship on the basis of marriage to Nepali women.[15] This was discriminatory against Nepali women who married foreign men. Campaigners for equal rights thus stipulated that provisions for the naturalization of foreign spouses should be equal for Nepali men and Nepali women who marry non-nationals—that is, both foreign male and foreign female spouses should be able to apply for naturalized citizenship with the same criteria for eligibility. The discourse of equality that was dominant in discussions within the Committee

for Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles (CFRDP)—tasked with drawing up citizenship provisions within the CA—was a principle of what Verloo and Lombardo (2007) call "equality as sameness" or gender neutrality. This comes from a liberal feminist stance that proposes gender-neutral treatment as a reaction against the privileges enjoyed by men. This seemed to fit perfectly with Nepal's commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979) as well as the UN Convention on the Nationality of Married Women 1957, which prevented women from automatically losing their nationality upon marriage to a foreigner.

There were two options for citizenship through naturalization that were discussed within the CA in Nepal under this principle of gender-neutrality - the first option discussed was the provision of immediate citizenship to foreign spouses of both genders upon marriage to a Nepali national; the second option was the imposition of the same waiting period for both. The first option was dismissed by leaders of dominant hill-centric parties.This was because of the revival of nationalistic concerns in Nepal in the aftermath of the Maoist insurgency and emerging ethnic tensions wherein foreign men—who were believed to pose more of a threat to national sovereignty—could not be allowed immediate citizenship in the same way as foreign wives. There was a general agreement between all political parties within the CA in Nepal that a rigid policy that restricted the immediate assimilation of non-nationals would be adopted regarding citizenship, especially when it came to the naturalization of foreign spouses, and more specifically foreign male spouses.[16] Nationality was automatically associated with patriotism whereby only a "real Nepali"[17] who was born and raised in Nepal could be truly loyal to the country. The nation, in this case, was likened to a woman who needs protection (Kandiyoti 2004) from those outside the family, community and, in this case, nation. A female leader from the CPN(UML)) made it clear in her statement that women leaders were under pressure to prove their patriotism because they were chided by men for not giving due consideration to "national issues" such as state security as opposed to the lesser concerns of gender equality. She explained,

> It is wrong to accuse women of not looking at it [citizenship] from the perspective of state security. We have always called for equal provisions putting nationalism at the centre. Women were the first ones who said those that have come from India should be made to wait at least seven years—the day

> after they come, their blood isn't Nepali, their culture isn't Nepali. This was first raised by women. I've not heard of men oppose the idea of granting immediate citizenship to [foreign] women. So how are women weak with regards to nationalism?

The subsequent proposal for a equal waiting period of 7–15 years for foreign spouses of both genders was met with protests from Madhesi leaders within the Women's Caucus. Simkhada and Pathak (2010) also report in their review of CA meetings that "the citizenship issue created a tense environment in the house after some Madhesi members warned of a Jihad inside the CA". They argued that the rights being enjoyed by Madhesi women were being taken away under the pretext of equality. A female Madhesi leader was indignant about the same waiting period being imposed on women as on men; her demand was that immediate citizenship for foreign wives be retained because women are in a more vulnerable position than men since they leave their family to relocate to a foreign land.[18] It is important to note that she is of Indian origin and was married to a Nepali Madhesi. She recounted her story as follows:

> I got married and came to Nepal when I was 13 or 14 years old. I entered politics without my citizenship certificate. The practise before was that the wife's citizenship would be approved if the husband had a Nepali citizenship. My husband had not "okayed" my citizenship back then—maybe because he didn't understand [it's importance]. It was difficult for me to get my citizenship [later] … After the democratic movement (of 1990), there was a surge of people looking for their ethnic identity. We now needed citizenship. I hadn't had one even when I had been working in Nepal for 7–8 years. The government delegation tasked with distributing citizenship didn't give me mine because they said Indians couldn't get it … even though there is already a provision of naturalization after marriage, my husband hadn't "okayed" [registered] our marriage yet so I had missed acquiring a certificate earlier. (personal interview, female Madhesi Brahmin leader from the Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Anandidevi))

The above statement reveals a number of things. First, it questions the universal egalitarianism of democratic citizenship in a situation where a person spends most of their life within the territory of a country and yet fails to be recognized as an equal citizen. It also alludes to the subjugated position of women in Nepali society when the Madhesi leader says that her husband had not "okayed" her citizenship. It reinforces claims about

the vulnerable position of women in Nepal where they may not be able to directly oppose their husband's decision. This is confirmed by another female leader from the Madhesi community who was also born in India and settled in Nepal after marriage to a Nepali man.[19] While she interprets an acknowledgement of legal rights within the relationship between husband and wife as a matter of trust between the couple, she was careful not to problematize the fact that the final decision of whether she should apply for Nepali citizenship rested with her husband. However, she acknowledged that there are cases where "Madhesi women's husbands do not make citizenship certificates for their wives because it will give the latter their rights". This concern about women's subjugated position in Nepali society most likely led her and other Madhesi women to advocate reinstating special privileges for women when it comes to naturalized citizenship. Their argument was that making women wait many years would add to their already dependent position, with possible denial of family and property rights in cases of divorce, or death of or abandonment by the husband. While recognizing gender hierarchies within the institution of marriage, Madhesi women nonetheless did not problematize this hierarchy but rather took this as a given.

Further Deliberations, 2012–2015

The first CA was dissolved after it reached its fourth deadline in May 2012 without promulgating a new constitution. It failed to reach a consensus on five contentious issues, including citizenship, although state restructuring and forms of governance under a new federal structure dominated high-level political negotiations. A second CA elected in November 2013 promulgated the new Constitution of Nepal on September 20, 2015. This constitution has retained immediate citizenship for foreign wives but remained silent about any provision of naturalized citizenship for foreign husbands. It has also gone back to the controversial "and" provision regarding citizenship through descent where both parents have to be Nepali at the time of the birth of a child in order for the child to be eligible for citizenship by descent. If the father is a foreigner who has not acquired Nepali citizenship at the time of application, the child will be eligible only for naturalized citizenship. It is important to note that since foreign wives can easily acquire naturalized citizenship under the current provision, their children with Nepali men would be eligible for citizenship by descent. However, since the constitution makes no provisions of

naturalized citizenship for foreign husbands, their children with Nepali women might never be eligible for citizenship by descent. They would only be able to acquire citizenship by naturalization, which is given at the discretion of the state—meaning that it is left up to the discretion of local government officials, many of whom have so far posed constant hindrance to children of single mothers or children born of Nepali mothers and foreign fathers.

Since 2012 there seems to have been some unity among Madhesi and non-Madhesi women leaders when it comes to the equal rights of mothers to confer citizenship by descent on their children. In this regard, hill/ethnic women leaders—now joined by Madhesi women leaders—continue to make demands from an apparently legitimate position of Nepali *chhori* (Nepal's daughter) who are entitled to human rights equal to those of Nepali men. However, disagreements persist regarding whether a *bideshi buhari* (foreign daughter-in-law) should be given any special treatment at the expense of a *bideshi jwain* (foreign son-in-law). This has further divided women's rights activists along ethnic lines.

Amid disputes about power-sharing and the allocation of ministerial portfolios in the then Maoist-led government (*The Kantipur Post*, May 5, 2012), the allies among Madhes-based Madhesi Morcha and the opposition group of the Nepali Congress showed signs of softening their respective demands regarding naturalized citizenship for foreign spouses—that is, retaining provisions of immediate citizenship for foreign wives and applying equal provisions for men and women with a shorter waiting period than the proposed 15 years. Throughout the debate between 2008 and 2012, male leaders from both Madhes-based and non-Madhes-based parties had not expressed any serious objection to the provision that allowed foreign women immediate citizenship. They justified the provision as according (foreign) women special rights because of cultural and marital practices. Madhesi men's insistence on immediate citizenship for women with full political and non-political rights could also be seen in the context of the decreasing constituency in the Tarai after a directive by the Home Ministry required all voters to present their citizenship certificates in order to register themselves on the voter's list.

Madhesi leaders (both men and women) called for protectionist provisions for women without wanting to challenge the institution that was already subjugating women's position within marriage, the family and the state. A Madhesi leader referred to the practice of relocating to the

husband's place after marriage as a "duty, culture and tradition". Almost all leaders from across gender, ethnicity and political affiliations either failed to challenge this gender essentialist notion that sees women as "cultural carriers" (Peterson 2000) or observed it as a reality of women in Nepal, the transformation of which will simply have to wait. Matters were further complicated by increasing distrust between groups due to closed-door negotiations between certain male leaders from particular parties. A leader involved in these negotiations commented, "The top three or four leaders sat down and made decisions."[20] Female CA members were repeatedly called upon by these men for advice about the citizenship provisions only to have the provisions regress back to strict control over women's independent rights.[21] However, it should be noted that the women who were formally and frequently consulted were from the non-Madhesi parties, meaning that Madhesi women were represented solely by their male counterparts.

Conclusion

The debate in the realpolitik of Nepal has been a play of power in claims to representation. Despite passionate debates and arguments—primarily from women leaders—it is largely a select group of powerful men dominating Nepal's politics who make the final decisions. These decisions are influenced by political strategies to form alliances or gain/retain power and support, as was evident in the study, and it is largely elite groups within categories of gender or ethnicity that make claims to represent diverse constituencies.

Whatever the strategic interests of different groups, a "sexual policing of nationalism" (Nagel 2000) was being carried out through normative heterosexuality as a central component of nationalist ideologies. Women advocating for "gender equality" in citizenship through descent could not go beyond the binary of men vs. women, and they consciously chose to recentralize women's gendered roles within families. This might be taken as a strategic move to reframe what could be construed as liberal, Western claims of individual rights (for women) in order to seek more resonance in a society that privileges collective rights. However, during this process of reframing or reclaiming rights while making it more palatable to local understandings, women leaders found themselves entrapped in the same language of collective rights (for Nepali nationals) claimed at the expense

of those who they thought did not belong to the (national) collective. Hill caste/ethnic groups of women forged ahead with their position of equality as "equal treatment" with little consideration of how equal restrictions for foreign men and women might affect the socioeconomic rights of vulnerable groups of Madhesi wives living in a highly patriarchal society.[22] The opposition between proponents of the women's movement in Nepal (represented by hill women from hill-based political parties) and Madhesi women point at a denial of multiple subjectivities, needs and interests. The former's claim to universal rights to equality gave them the legitimacy to frame their feminist agenda to serve a nationalist interest; while the latter's claim to special protection for women without problematizing the essentialist and patriarchal institution of marriage further complicated matters, stalling any formal consensus. While it is only right to situate any movement or resistance within the sociopolitical context in which it evolved instead of an ideological standard (Batliwala 2008), taking into account the embodied experience of the female body (in this case as mothers) is not always adequate within emancipatory politics. Nepali women's experiences as mothers became a crucial entry point for women's political engagement (Harcourt 2009) within the debate about equal citizenship rights for Nepali women. However, it is crucial to examine women's experiences from an intersectional perspective if we are to engage in an open dialogue about what Butler (1993) calls the broadening of possibilities within emancipatory politics by challenging what appears to be natural and essential.

This also applies to transnational feminist movements and their roles in creating and sustaining feminist discourses of particular inclinations. In the case of Nepal, international and national NGOs often form the bridge between transnational and local movements, and drive the development and human rights agenda within the country. With the "women's movement" in Nepal largely appropriated by development aid agencies (Tamang 1997, 2009b, 2011), it is likely that these agencies influence discourses around women's rights and empowerment.[23] While the UN and other international bodies in Nepal had actively supported women CA members in lobbying for equal rights of women to confer citizenship by descent to their children, they refrained from commenting on the debate about naturalization except to assert that such provisions should not create statelessness among children. This aspect of the study is out of the scope of this chapter but it could form an important subject for further research.

NOTES

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Sondra Hausner and James Sharrock for providing valuable comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. I am also grateful to Dipendra Jha, Darshan Karki, Pranika Koyu, Subin Mulmi, Manjushree Thapa and Bhaskar Gautam for later discussions that provided further insights into the debate about citizenship and ethnic assertions in Nepal. However, the views expressed in this chapter and its limitations are my own. This study would not have been possible without the generous time of the participants, the financial support of Nuffic, and the guidance of my thesis supervisors, Silke Heumann and John Cameron at the ISS, Erasmus University, the Hague. I am also grateful to participants of the Bodies in Resistance Seminar held at the ISS in April 2015 and those at the 12th Nepal Study Days organised by the Britain-Nepal Academic Council in April 2014 at the University of Oxford for providing critical feedback on this chapter. Last but not least, I would like to thank Wendy Harcourt for her constant editorial support throughout the process.
2. Namely, the Committee for Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles (CFRDP, responsible for drafting citizenship provisions), the Constitutional Committee (responsible for overseeing all provisions), the National Interest Preservation Committee, the Dispute Resolution Sub-Committee, the Women's Caucus and members of a High Level Task Force (including a select group of top political leaders from different parties who negotiated and made final decisions outside the CA).
3. I also interviewed women political leaders outside the CA, such as those in the Inter Party Women's Alliance formed by women leaders across political parties to address women's issues in the new constitution. Other interviewees included women's rights activists in (I)NGOs, journalists and other members of civil society. This chapter, however, focuses only on the contestations between Madhesi and non-Madhesi women political leaders from across parties.
4. It is important to note that this study is limited to interviews with female political leaders whose views and positions might differ from those of feminists and women's rights activists who have also engaged in a lengthy battle for equal citizenship rights for women

long before the CA was formed in 2008, most notably the Forum for Women, Law and Development.

5. 2008 marks the first constituent assembly elections in the political history of Nepal, a culmination of the 10-year violent Maoist insurgency. The first session of the assembly voted for Nepal to be a federal democratic republic, thus abolishing a 204-year-old Shah monarchy. The first king of this dynasty, Prithvi Narayan Shah, was credited for unifying various principalities into a single nation of Nepal in the mid-eighteenth century when the British were already colonizing small kingdoms into present-day India.
6. From the 1860s until 1951, aristocratic Ranas—then the de facto rulers of Nepal—let migrants from India develop the Tarai's economy when their attempt to settle hill-origin Nepalis in the region was not so successful due to its unfamiliar, malarial terrain. With the construction of Indian railroads along the border of India and Nepal in the late nineteenth century, occupational- and business-caste people from India established trading settlements from the border up to the inner Tarai (Gaige 2009). This group of business people, along with others who migrated from India before or after them, formed a distinct category later known as Madhesis. However, other groups of people also reside in this area, including indigenous people such as the Tharus, who generally do not identify themselves as Madhesis.
7. Such exclusion was primarily driven by the state's attempt at homogenization as a prerequisite to establishing a formal nation-state (Onta 1996) with a discourse of nationalism that was not simply centered on the monarchy and the Hindu religion and culture—with which the Hindu Madhesis would have identified—but also was distinctively hill-centric, thus confirming the exclusion of people from the plains (Gautam 2008). Malagodi (2013) further argues that Hinduism, the Shah monarchy and the Nepali language were constitutionally sanctioned narratives in the construction of the Nepali state.
8. Writing in the context of statelessness in South Asia, Jha (2010) mentions that there are 1.5 million people from the Tarai region who are de facto stateless. While the numbers of stateless people in Nepal are contested and often used without citing a credible source, reports from a 1994 Dhanapati Commission by the government of Nepal documented between 3.4 and 5 million people

without citizenship certificates (UN 2011). A campaign by the government to provide citizenship certificates to people born or living in Nepal before April 1990 was initiated after the Madhesi uprising in 2007, but there were widespread reports of Indian citizens allegedly acquiring Nepali citizenship certificates through illegal means (Republica 2011). This has plunged the debate further into the realm of national sovereignty and the need for a rigid policy that filters out unwanted non-citizens.

9. Seira Tamang (2009a) explains the historical context of "national imaginings of manly Nepali citizens" as the *bir* (brave) *Gorkhalis* (people from Gorkha, a former kingdom in Nepal) who kept the country independent from the invasions of the British East India Company in the nineteenth century, thereby asserting Nepal's sovereignty in the emerging world of nations. Hence the 1950s were a time for Nepal to shift the discourse from the land of the *bir* (brave) to that of one striving for *bikas* (development) (2009a). However, in order to deflect from the humiliation of being labeled as an undeveloped country and the receiver of foreign aid, Nepal has often proudly asserted its position as a country that was never colonized. Masculine bravery and independence, therefore, was always part of the narrative of a Nepali identity and a "developmentalist" state in the making. The masculine construction of the warrior class or the Gorkhalis, as Des Chene (1991) explains, was also exclusionary of Madhesis from the southern Tarai region since the British construction of the brave Gurkhas included only select indigenous ethnic groups from the hills.
10. It is significant to note that the first cases to be filed at the Supreme Court concerning gender equality had to do with Nepali women's unequal citizenship rights in the case of marriage to a foreigner, with the first case being dismissed in 1992 but a directive being issued to amend relevant legislation after the second case in 1993 (Malagodi 2013).
11. Janandolan I or the First People's Movement occurred in 1990, bringing an end to absolute monarchy and the Panchayat system. It also established constitutional monarchy and a multiparty democratic system in Nepal.
12. "Single mothers" include all mothers who are unable or unwilling to identify or present the father of their child(ren). This includes divorced/separated women, women abandoned by their partners,

widows, sex workers, victims of trafficking, victims of rape and women who give birth before marriage and remain without a male partner.

13. Women's rights activists/groups from civil society, especially Forum for Women, Law and Development and their allies, including mothers fighting the campaign for equal citizenship rights, have rejected these suggestions because of the non-recognition of mothers as equal guardians to fathers, but also because of the humiliation that this label ("special cases") adds to an already difficult situation.
14. However, he also offers the possibility of viewing resistance as a requirement for understanding one's reasons and principles for resisting (Hoy 2004: 11).
15. This is supported by records from the office of the chief district officer (CDO), Kathmandu, which shows no foreign men having received naturalized citizenship through marriage to a Nepali woman in the past year (personal observation and interview with CDO staff). The staff member confirmed that there is no provision of citizenship through naturalization for foreign men based on marriage.
16. Personal interview with a male and a female hill Brahmin leader from the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) [CPN(UML)], respectively.
17. Personal interview with a male Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [UCPN(M)] leader from a hill Brahmin group.
18. Personal interview with a female Madhesi Brahmin leader from Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Anandidevi).
19. personal interview with a female Madhesi Brahmin leader from the Nepali Congress.
20. Personal interview with a male hill Brahmin leader from the UCPN(M).
21. Personal interviews with a female hill Brahmin and a female hill Janajati leader from the CPN(UML).
22. Though proposals of marriage ID cards that would ensure social and economic rights for foreign wives were later put on the table, Madhesi women leaders were distrustful of whether these cards would actually be effective in the face of a hill-people-dominated bureaucracy with a poor record of implementation and a history of discrimination against Madhesis.

23. Tamang (2011) interprets "the task of developing 'the Nepali woman' " as having become both a national and an international project since the advent of democracy in Nepal in 1990.

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CHAPTER 6

Embodying Change in Iran: Volunteering in Family Planning as a Practice of Justice

Aniseh Asya

Introduction

Although a set of roles and identities intertwined with the construction of the Islamic state of Iran has been developed for Iranian women by religious and state authorities, women's public contributions have countered this assigned repertoire. Groups of Iranian women have adopted a pragmatic stance that optimizes opportunities linked to state policy in order to improve women's health and to secure gender justice gains in the country. The result is that at the same time as women participate in governmental campaigns for reproductive health, and at times reinforce the stereotypical roles that have been assigned to their sexualized bodies, they also benefit from an increased investment in public life, and a renewed freedom of movement and expression due to their active participation. In this chapter I refer to ethnographic research I carried out from 2006 to 2009 with groups of women (administrators, middle managers and healthcare volunteers) who are engaged in state-initiated mass voluntary initiatives to

A. Asya (✉)
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_6

enhance health and reduce fertility. Although policies date from the late 1980s and 1990s, groups still actively take up opportunities forged by leaders from 20 years ago. In this ethnographic account, I examine how women's roles are performed and how such performances are constitutive of emerging norms that influence women's practices and ultimately produce gender justice in practice.

Through the lens of the anthropology of human rights, and taking into consideration feminist critiques of law and politics, this chapter explains the significance of women's sexualized and symbolized bodies in Iranian gender justice practices and narratives. In Iran, explicit gender equality claims are met with state hostility, so women's advocates deploy strategies that deliberately avoid women's human rights language and instead draw on state language about women and their bodies. That is to say, the gender equality agenda is commonly maligned in mainstream (state and public) discourse in Iran because women and men are *not* thought of as being equal. In fact, according to this view, gender equality is understood to be a direct challenge to men's guardianship over women, and effectively as a challenge to state guardianship over citizens. In other words, gender equality is thought to be a direct affront to state claims that the government is made up of benevolent policies that are drafted and instituted for the good of the people. Thus women's advocates avoid the language of women's equality and women's human rights lest they be targeted as enemies of the state.

However, women's advocates' claims for greater healthcare or better reproductive services, when coupled with various enabling conditions, indirectly favor Iranian women's enhanced human rights. The consequence of adopting state language and furthering state policies, although these directly contradict gender equality, is that gender equality is achieved in part. Thus women thrive as community leaders with greater mobility and rights, while also enacting and reifying state ideology in which gender segregation and discrimination remain intact. This chapter describes this surprising and very particular situation in which women administrators and volunteers are at the same time working to advance and also to undermine state agendas for women. The women described are simultaneously and variously reinforcing and subverting the patriarchal views embedded in state policy. This is, of course, to be expected, since in order to operate unhindered in a space fraught with tension and where independent activism is curbed, it is best to obscure one's intentions, no matter what they might be.

Women's Volunteerism and Women's Rights After the Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which led to the abdication of the Shah, was heavily supported by women. This support for the revolution was in spite of the fact that the Shah had brought changes to improve the status of women starting in the 1960s (Kian-Thiébaut 2002). While improvements to women's status could be found in education, employment and family policies regarding divorce and child custody, the changes affected primarily the urban middle classes and the elites. The vast majority of women, hailing from low-income urban and rural areas, did not identify with these newly minted secular state objectives, and so in the period leading up to the revolution they were marginalized (Bahramitash 2004).[1]

The ideals of the revolution mobilized Iranians to struggle for justice, and the initial constitution promised universal healthcare and education, as well as additional social welfare rights. Such commitments proved difficult to implement for a number of reasons, including the invasion of Iran by Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, and the weakening of Iran's economy due to sanctions by the USA. These events made it difficult for the state to deliver on its promises of social and economic justice, so the state called on women to volunteer in many state programs. Women were mobilized to run mass mosque-based literacy campaigns, to found an army of civilians to defend national sovereignty, and generally to support rural development and reconstruction programs. Indeed, women not only provided food and clothes for the war effort but also took care of victims, some even marrying veterans who needed constant or intensive care.

The period following the revolution witnessed numerous obstacles to attaining women's legal rights. What few improvements had been achieved during the time of the Shah were reversed, and legal discrimination against women became pronounced. This was a contradictory situation because on the one hand the state relied heavily on women's support, while on the other it failed to provide them with legal rights and took away what gains had been made (Mir-Hosseini 1999). This major contradiction added to the fact that their efforts extended beyond political support and occupied a vital role in constructing post-revolutionary Iran through volunteerism, and so it led to women's rising discontent. Women inquired why the revolutionary ideals of social and economic justice were not being applied to them, and as a consequence they developed a movement to reinterpret

women's legal rights in the context of Shari'a law, which like all law lent itself to different interpretations.

Since the theocracy took literacy to be a religious duty, not only did basic literacy rates rise but rates of primary and secondary education of women rose as well. Currently, 35 years after the revolution, the number of women entering university is much larger than that of men, with 68 percent being women. This improvement in girls' and women's education has contributed to increasing support for Shari'a reinterpretation, and has transformed reinterpretation into a battleground for women's equality and equity debates. Prior to this the assembly of appointed religious experts, mandated by the constitution to be guardians and interpreters of Islamic concepts, formulated Shari'a judgments that as a rule did not confer a full range of advantages on women. More recently, however, women have been pressing for change through the Islamic legal system rather than outside it, and this is where gains have been made (Hoodfar 1996). As an example, in 1993 a law was passed in parliament, according to which women were entitled to a wage for housework (although implementation is another matter entirely).

It was in this context that women's equality organizing all but disappeared from the public sphere because outspoken equality proponents could only meet in small clandestine groups. Increasingly, even women who had bolstered state efforts became disillusioned as the government faltered when faced with state social and economic commitments. On the face of it, it appeared that women's equality proponents had been silenced, and that religious women continued to support state aims and claims. Neither is the case.

A Short History of Family Planning Efforts in Iran

A clear state policy on reproductive health was drafted in the mid-1960s, but it did not enjoy immediate widespread support.[2] Customary laws and traditions, religious injunctions and objections by religious leaders played a significant role in decision-making at every level of family planning. The majority of religious leaders considered the use of contraceptives to be counter to Shari'a, and the lack of popular support for population-control programs by religious leaders, especially in rural areas in which each child was a source of labour and thus income, figured strongly in the reasons for the failure of family planning up until the 1960s. In 1964, when the government did eventually engage in family programs nationally, birth

control was approved by a few religious officials but its use remained an uphill battle.

After the revolution and due to the Iran–Iraq War, family planning programs were put on hold. Indeed, having children was considered to be an important Islamic value. The constitution urges the population to reproduce, and Principle 10 states, "Since the family is the basic unit of the Islamic society, all laws and regulations shall strive to facilitate the setting up of a family, to protect its sanctity and to stabilise family relations on the basis of Islamic laws and ethics." The family is cast as essential to a theocratic society—indeed, "the fundamental unit of society and the focal point of growth and elevation of man" (Islamic Republic of Iran 1979). These principles regarding the role and status of women steer women's public participation to concerns in which their reproductive imperative is furthered, linking their rights to family rather than to civic and democratic participation (see also "Women in the Constitution", Introduction to Constitution of the Islamic Republic 1979). Owing to this family-oriented outlook, women are allocated lesser rights in marriage and property ownership than men, and are placed under male responsibility, while the presumption of sexual and reproductive differences between men and women means that certain types of gender discrimination are considered to be legal.

The lack of enforcement of a minimum age of marriage alongside birth-friendly policies and programmes reflecting these family-oriented views led Iran to a serious population crisis. Moreover, due to the original ideals of the revolution, the population genuinely believed that the government would provide for the food, healthcare and educational needs of all families. The population reached 50 million in the national census of 1986 and the growth rate peaked at 4 percent (Bassin 1998), with population figures climbing sharply from 33.7 million in 1976 to 58 million in 1992. This sharp growth and the state incapacity to reach its goals led the Planning and Budget Organization to propose its 1988 conference on population growth.

By 1993, a bill adopted by parliament not only reduced the existing motivation and encouragement for large families but also provided clear legal principles to enforce birth-control policies and family-planning programs. This first national family-planning law was an attempt to impose limitations on advantages given for having a fourth child, so maternity leave and kindergarten fees became the responsibility of women workers. However, the law also emphasized education and employment

opportunities for women, providing better health services for mothers and children, and expanding national social security system coverage as a source of support for the elderly. Family planning and reproductive health became significant measures of the success of an extensive social project such that women's empowerment and improving women's social status emerged as integral elements in the country's development (Asadi 2007). There was thus wide general support for women's active participation as healthcare and reproductive healthcare providers. The introduction of reproductive programs helped to reduce population growth significantly (Bassin 1998).

Sexual and Reproductive Health Volunteerism

Currently in Iran the healthcare agenda is being implemented mainly by women volunteers and administrators all over the country. Volunteers for the largest quasi-governmental volunteer movement in Iran, the Volunteer Women's Community Health Workers Organization, and administrators of the Family Planning Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran contribute to a state push to limit fertility. To curb growth, each organization privileges motherhood (the "enormous and worthy role of motherhood" as found in Principle 10 of the constitution) and family responsibilities ("the basic unit of the Islamic society"), while also promoting women's increased participation in decision-making about health. Neither of the organizations would be widely described as lobbying for women's rights: members do not "claim" rights and many assert that they are unaware of the mutual nature of their goals and those of international campaigns for women's rights. However, while these organizations may appear to be improbable champions of gender justice and women's equality, their efforts support women's diverse social roles and favor women's greater status. In this case it could therefore be argued that the achievement of women's rights need not be accompanied by the language of women's rights.

Established in 1991 to be piloted with 200 women, the Volunteer Women's Community Health Workers Organization ("Health Volunteers") was mandated to distribute family-planning material with simply trained pairs of women volunteers targeting 50–80 households. Most participants came from low-income backgrounds and traditional families (Hoodfar 1996, 1998), and they could offer only their labour (Interview with Bahramitash 2007). They were schooled in rudimentary

health and hygiene, equipped with basic materials and asked to work on curbing fertility by engaging in community training, information distribution and census-taking. By 1998 there were more than 30,000 volunteers, and some of the highest fertility rates existing worldwide at the time had been reduced (Hoodfar 1996, 1998). The mandate of the health volunteers was to supplement efforts by the state health house paid staff. They collected census material, including the names, sex and age of household members, household sanitation conditions, history of pregnancies and details of young children (Mehryar 2004). They did not have access to expensive pharmaceuticals, or elaborate medical or technical training (Hoodfar 1998). Yet even this elementary mobilization led to independent initiatives: volunteers were able to use this organization as a springboard for their claims and aims. The health volunteers, focused on contraception and the spacing of children, provided participants with a framework to engage with municipal and international authorities, to take the microphone at community meetings, and to articulate their needs and the needs of their "constituencies".

Other notable sexual and reproductive health and rights initiatives include reproductive health networking and local medical school programs (which I have addressed elsewhere), and also one of the largest NGOs in the country, the Family Planning Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FPAIRI) established in 1991. The FPAIRI, like the health volunteers, expresses discourses of women's improved rights in the context of traditional family structures, preserving the family unit which reproduces women's inequality and sexual discrimination. While the state was aiming to establish widespread insurance and access programs with highly subsidized pharmaceutical products (World Bank 2010), the health houses and the FPAIRI were each making a significant contribution to healthcare in many suburbs of cities, towns and villages. The next section details fieldwork conducted with these leading bodies. I argue that these organizations are embodying change in Iran, first by optimizing occasions to improve women's rights in the circumscribed and restricted context of state policy, and second by performing their own interpretations of gender justice with one another, outside the purview of the state.

Health Volunteers Fieldwork, 2006–2009

During my ethnographic research in health houses, the successes of Health Volunteers was frequently lauded, but anxiety about their growing

power had led the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to register each branch separately. This step was meant to prevent identification with a unified movement (Interviews with Bassir 2008 and Hoodfar 2010). Volunteers would distribute official information about family planning, but then would also collect and distribute their own, new material on nutrition, child-rearing, counselling and education. They would request remedy from municipal authorities for accidents caused by drivers when children were playing in the street, and they would make their views known to the authorities. Such unregulated activities were feared by officials to set a precedent regarding women's ability and their strength, undermining the authority of the patriarchal state, so the state officials and thus "many men did not like the Health Volunteers" (Interview with Bassir 2008).

At "Health House One", when volunteers convinced an older woman to use contraception and her husband took a younger second wife, one volunteer suggested that while contraception had improved the first wife's physical health, it had also likely resulted in a reduced quality of life when her status and decision-making power deteriorated due to being perceived as the older, incompliant wife (Interview at HH 1-1 2008). To volunteers, this outcome was clearly a disappointment. However, the intervention had contributed to a favorable individual health result while still upholding a (tribal) Baluch custom according to which a man's good fortune is thought to be linked to large family size. Volunteers felt they had failed, but they had equally helped one woman to make an informed decision. They had adapted to a controversial situation and shared their opinions freely among themselves, not only supporting one woman's choice but also facilitating public activism for choice. Two things were happening here. First, they were not rocking the boat. They were successfully imitating the influential discourses according to which it was possible to speak of individual (rather than collective) women's lives, taking up the struggle of one woman and one woman's choice. They were effectively adapting to this restrictive political and state context. While Iranian and other feminist writers might disagree, I argue that facilitating limited expressions of one woman's choice represents an engagement with power and thus the potential for change. Second, women were already performing solidarity, inhabiting their freedom of choice, and through this performance they were producing gender justice. These women did not articulate what happened in terms of women's equal right to decide about having children or in terms of a woman's right to control her body; they were establishing

new rules that allowed them to share gender justice struggles and to comment on them in groups.

At "Health House Two", unpaid workers were presented as being "essential" to the business of compiling data and the administrator insisted that volunteer participation reduced barriers in women's private lives through their opportunities for sharing. The location acted as an arena in which women's public engagement was celebrated, and women's efforts were considered to be "effective', "active" and "dedicated" (Interview at HH 2 2008), When asked why they did this work, volunteers answered that they enjoyed heightened acknowledgement and authority, although they would appreciate greater recognition of their work, and the work of all women (Interview at HH 2 2008). Their teasing and easy manner provided proof of their personal confidence and the autonomy they experienced in this context. Again, here, women were expressing choice and solidarity without naming their claims or aims as concerning women's rights.

The Volunteer Women's Community Health Workers Organization enabled certain features of women's activism to pass under the radar (Hoodfar and Sadeghi 2009). The state enlisted Health Volunteers without rewarding them with an increased democratic voice, but these efforts facilitated the creation of the largest mobilization of women in Iran. Through the organization, volunteers redefined their roles, and they acted with increased civic responsibility and duty, resulting in their increased mobility, status and independence. They further triggered social transformations through networking and negotiating with the authorities, as their public presence challenged the male privilege system by highlighting women's shared interests. This type of engagement permits women to consider policy decisions and priorities which would otherwise remain at the level of elite administrators. Moreover, since the efforts of volunteer-run organizations and projects cannot be fully subsumed or controlled by state authorities, volunteers generated alternative ideals about women's decision-making and mobilized women in a way that the state could not wholly subvert.

FPAIRI Fieldwork, 2006–2009

The FPAIRI represents another mass mobilization that depends largely on women's activism, much like the Health Volunteers. Both groups have benefited from a strong push for volunteerism and the charity of women, as well as garnering support from government officials for population

control. Both have capitalized on state and society's support for civic participation in health volunteerism. Like the Health Volunteers, FPAIRI members implement a strategy of concessions to the state which in the words of one leader would amount to "never telling government they are wrong". Indeed, both organizations originated as governmentally organized initiatives, and this underpins the similarity of their operating strategies.

However, in 1995 the FPAIRI was expressly established (by a group of government officials) to address global gender and civil society agendas in family planning. Officials were not only concerned with the challenges of population policy but also focused on meeting "social needs" that were apparent in women's daily lives, an agenda that was supported by international financing from the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). IPPF documentation advocated an equality agenda according to which "women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies" in "a world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma" (IPPF 2005: 1). During the period in which I engaged in fieldwork, the Iranian affiliate FPAIRI did not produce such policy materials directly supporting a gender-equality agenda but it did aim to educate and provide services, and to encourage research on sexual health, reproductive health and reproductive rights.[3] Members engaged in canvassing, needs assessment and the dissemination of information in line with state priorities, all the while improving women's lives and thus their rights. While this does not amount to actively promoting gender equality, the organization, with its favorable view of civic advocacy and women's issues, did more closely approach international definitions of gender justice than the Health Volunteers had.

The FPAIRI's primary tactic against obsolescence was to avoid direct confrontation, a policy that was apparent when original board members resolved to leave the IPPF if it came into "conflict with the values of the country" (Interview with Mousavi). The FPAIRI administrators claimed that they would "declare independence" in the case of conflict. The situation that ensued was that when the FPAIRI capitulated to state policies and drew apart from the IPPF's mandate, those FPAIRI members committed to gender equality themselves had to secede from the organization (Interviews with Mousavi and Shamshiri). Pairing a non-conflictual agenda with a periodic shedding of more radical FPAIRI members ensured the longevity of the organization. It was a masterful method of operating. And if this strategy were not sufficient to ensure longevity, projects also

divided structural and endemic discriminations into simpler subjects to be addressed by "social" or "health" experts (Interview with Asghari). The FPAIRI used various forms of information and communications technology to contact a wide-ranging public. For instance, popular television and radio were favored over writing academic pieces because wide participation was sought. One of the FPAIRI's founding medical experts elected to "talk about the nation's daughters" on national television because they were "integral to local people's lives" (Interview with Shamshiri 2008-1). Her television appearances had a number of results, including that a wider audience was familiarized with gendered health and sexuality issues, women's lives were reflected in the public eye, and they acted as mass public counselling sessions. The organization thus used the media to play both a mass therapeutic and a normalizing role concerning what might otherwise remain as marginal gender and sexuality issues. This can be interpreted as contributing to women's broader community-building interactions and concerns. Another important result is that this leading expert in reproductive health and sexuality (among others) was eventually a casualty of her own widespread success because a rift emerged between her and the more conservative FPAIRI members.

While women's rights advocates often use body politics to launch into democracy and equal rights debates, instead this organization, like the Health Volunteers, simply assumes that *every* member of the public is concerned with sexuality and reproduction, and thus asserts its own significance and place in society. This assumed mass appeal is another factor that leads to state support and endorsement, and thus the longevity of the organization. In this manner the FPAIRI meets social "needs" through the technical expertise and volunteer fervour of its staff, and it is thus able to trigger positive change in Iranian women's lives.

Gender Justice in Practice

None of the gender advocates described in this chapter considers family as a primary purveyor of discrimination. Instead of deriding traditional family structures for preserving and reproducing women's inequality and sexual subjugation (see Wright 1992), these actors work through social, economic and psychological issues by locating their work at the heart of family structures. They also refuse to take up the conservative script according to which sexually and civically oppressed women can be rescued through development policy, human rights projects or military might

(see Abu-Lughod 2002; Al-Ali and Pratt 2009). Thus this type of fieldwork analysis can be considered by some as not feminist enough because it deals in conciliations with a patriarchal family and state. Conversely, premises of and conclusions from this research can also be targeted as overly militant in that they reject externally generated standards about women's rights. In contrast with both critiques, I would argue that such fieldwork chronicles the work of Health Volunteers and administrators who co-constitute grounded frames of reference about gender justice in Iran.

Asef Bayat's idea of deliberate "persistent presence", a strategy of self-consciously working for change, applies to these women's advocates who engage in accommodative practices and deploy conciliatory discourses to improve women's existing conditions (2007 and 2010). These advocates' daily practices and discourses are important strategies for instigating change. Their seemingly apolitical acts and stances can be identified as what Lisa Wedeen describes as "democratic phenomena that exist outside of electoral and other formal organisational confines" (2010: 3). Indeed, at times, individuals can have such a detailed understanding of the mechanisms by which power communicates its authority over them that they faithfully mimic these mechanisms. Imitating influential discourses is an essential skill that allows social actors to contribute to sociopolitical change while temporarily (or apparently) conceding to restrictive political contexts. This is true of women's Health Volunteers and FPAIRI advocates in Iran.

The International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group has identified community or union membership as *the* key factor to enabling women to make choices about reproduction and sexuality based on their own needs (Petchesky and Judd 1999). By providing an arena in which they can meet, these organizations furnish space for members and volunteers to create ties of solidarity, compare their lives and exercise a degree of authority in civic affairs. They meet in groups, seek guidance from each other, and forge new ideas and loyalties. All this is achieved primarily by their sustained physical presence and their shared commitment to meeting the needs of society. Their "persistent presence" and the daily practices in which they engage point to a detailed knowledge of the significance of the theocracy's language of "loyalty" to the state and "public participation", and an ability to use these state-sanctioned rules of engagement to resist discrimination and work for social change.

Women participate in state programmes or projects for sexual and reproductive health, and in doing so they may at times strengthen the

stereotypical (state) roles assigned to their sexualized bodies. But these roles are simultaneously performed in such a way as to influence women's rights practices and gender justice practices as a result. So would appealing to gender equality or demanding an end to discrimination against women provide solutions *better* than those that Iranian women already have? Would it lead to a *greater* likelihood of equitable and just rulings and practices? I hesitate to say yes because on both a pragmatic and a conceptual level, cultural reservations about ideas of gender equality are used all over the world to weaken gender equality claims at the outset. I also hesitate to say yes because no active and enduring sexual and reproductive health and rights actor in Iran makes forceful or persuasive equality claims. Unless there is a reversal of the current ideological opposition to gender equality principles and a change in the politicized rejection of feminism as an external imposition, the best way forward is the one taken by the Health Volunteers and FPAIRI.

Conclusion

Women's advocates who are working in sexual and reproductive health and rights in Iran elect to deploy accommodating discourses that echo state and religious family-oriented principles. They avoid oppositional discourses and adeptly engage in conciliatory practices that respect the role of family and demonstrate loyalty to the values that are so important to Iranian conservatives. Through the "optimization" of opportunities they actively help to shift individual and family values. Women enter the public sphere as never before, and this contributes to their improved rights through heightened status and respect in their own families and communities. Women's mass public participation increases their ability to influence other women, and in turn to impact public decisions and policies which buttress improved collective rights.

These excerpts from ethnographic encounters indicate how a pragmatic stance and a desire to participate have allowed women an increased freedom of expression and movement. Each of the actions and organizations described here represents a challenge to state practices of gender segregation in the public arena, and they challenge the state construction of itself as guardian of the welfare of all individuals, especially women. Integral to the work of these advocates is a belief that individuals can make a difference, a fostering of the creative use of information and the adoption of sophisticated strategies, all of which have been identified as essential

contributions to women's human rights organizing more broadly (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Notes

1. Conversations with Tayebe Leila Asadi, Ashraf Geramizadegan and Shahindokht Molaverdi were helpful to gain an understanding of the background to volunteering. A special thank you is due to Roksana Bahramitash with whom the ideas of this short section were first drafted.
2. I am indebted here to Leila Asadi who helped to inform these ideas about family planning in Iran.
3. UNODC website: https://www.unodc.org/ngo/showSingleDetailed.do?req_org_uid=19166.

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– Health House Three, Interview with one Ministry of Welfare representative and Health House administrator. 6 May 2008.
– Health House Four, Interview with Health Volunteers coordinator and observation of daily activities. 7 May 2008.

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CHAPTER 7

Neoliberal Body Politics: Feminist Resistance and the Abortion Law in Turkey

Cevahir Özgüler and Betül Yarar

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the anti-abortion biopolitics of the ruling AKP and counter discursive practices of activist groups taking place within the women's movement in Turkey in recent years.[1] It focuses on the debate that emerged with the attempt of the AKP to curb abortion in 2012. We use the term biopolitics to describe the hegemonic struggle over life—the life of the population and the life of the body. The chapter examines the neoliberal policies and discursive strategies that the AKP used to establish social legitimation for its attempt to prevent legal abortions, along with the parameters and limits of the activist groups within the women's movement(s) that tried to counter the law in different ways. We are particularly interested in analyzing the different approaches derived from distinct strategies of counteracting or engaging with the state's policies and legislation.

C. Özgüler (✉)
STGM, Ankara, Kavaklıdere, Turkey

B. Yarar
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

© The Author(s) 2017
W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_7

As Foucault and Agamben point out, the measurement and surveillance of the population has long been employed by states in order to discipline individualsand to transform them into political subjects. According to Foucault, if one of the basic targets of modern states and power relations is the individual, then another is the population (Foucault 1990 [1976]). For him, sex as a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species was an exemplary site for the deployment of biopower in modern nation-states. He sees biological sex as linking anatomopolitics (i.e. the disciplining of individual bodies) with biopolitics (i.e. the large-scale production and management of populations), which was employed as a standard for discipline and as a basis of regulation (Foucault 1990, 2003). Similarly, Agamben notes that through governmentality, which shifted the exercise of power from penal inspection into modern biopolitics, governments view individuals as not only political agents but also beings related to sexual production and reproduction for the continuation of biological life (Agamben 1998). Population and the body, then, have always been significant areas for state regulation. Foucault defines the "state" not as a centralized holder of power but as a hegemonic effect (Foucault 1990 [1976]). For him, power is both diverse and dispersed, and in turn positive and constitutive for any social formation and subject position.

Gender regimes that constitute and regulate the body and the population on the basis of gender and sexuality in line with the main theoretical assumptions of this book, set out in the introduction, are intimately linked but not reducible to one another. Nationalisms (whether religious or ethnic) turn the population into a subject of regulative practices and define it on the basis of certain sociopolitical components, including ethnic and religious identities. Economic strategies steer the population in terms of financial production and constitute fundamental aspects of governmentality. Therefore defining the population on the basis of a certain ethnic or religious group is the objective of the government. The government seeks to ensure the increase/decrease in population by associating it with national development or national welfare. State politics in the realm of marriage-family, and reproduction and health link economic matters with nationalisms and patriarchal regimes. These political interventions result in the woman's body and the vagina being transformed into a political space (Miller 2007a; Kasap 2013).

Within this general conceptual framework, the chapter first analyzes the mode of governmentality through which the AKP regime has gained strength since 2002 in Turkey. The chapter looks at the historical roots

of the AKP as ruling elites involved with anti-abortion politics. It examines the pro-family and pro-life discourses that emerged in the latest stage of the AKP's rule in relation to pro-natal and anti-abortion biopolitics. Finally, the chapter discusses the various innovative ways that are used by activist groups to resist the policies of AKP, examining from a critical perspective the pro-choice discourse as the general framework of these oppositions. It looks at how, even if dominant, the pro-choice approach is not the only one that women's groups follow in their resistance to the AKP's policies. By examining the debate among groups of activists with distinct identities and positions in the women's movement, we enrich a critical understanding of the dominant pro-choice approach as distinct discursive strategies mobilized for challenging the AKP's neoliberal policies.

Our analysis is based on our engagement in these debates as activist scholars in the women's movement in Turkey since the late 1990s, and as participants of the struggle around the issue of abortion in the period discussed here. This period was not only a moment when the women's movement(s) demonstrated vocally against the dominant social policies on abortion but also a moment when women's movement(s) debated among themselves how to respond to different forms of power as inscribed on the body. It was a period of major debates where diversity and different views among women emerged regarding the experience of having an abortion and regarding how to criticize the AKP's policies. This very productive process contributed to rethinking, reclaiming and repositioning bodies. We take the opportunity to write this chapter as a form of co-producing political views that base on our own activist engagements. Therefore it is a product of an embodied experience of oscillation between our related identities as activist and academic as well as between theory and practice. In other words, the very source of this chapter is our experiences on the praxis of "doing feminism".

The main aim of the chapter is to contribute feminist critique of the neoliberal "order of things" and women's movements' resistance against neoliberal forces. In the case of abortion politics it is important to expose the capacity—in positive and negative senses of the term—of various resistance strategies and approaches that are developed by distinct groups in the women's movement. Such an analysis can only be realized by paying attention to differences among participants of women's movement(s) in terms of their various identities and relationships to their bodies and bodily experiences. Not only power but also resistance is multiple and contradictory. This theoretical principle requires methodological

reflections. While turning the women's movement into a subject of discoursive analysis, one should not undermine the importance of intersectionality and the danger of the overgeneralization of one category of women over another. Knowing that there cannot be a universal yardstick to qualify agency and resistance or a single structural, experiential and epistemological position to define what is resistant, we assume the multiplicity of existing positions in women's movement as empowering. Differences can allow women to develop stronger political debates among themselves and provide inclusive perspectives that reach to diverse sections of society, strengthening positions in the struggle against powerful political elites.

The History of Abortion Politics in Turkey

In Turkey, abortion has been used in many ways for the sake of ruling regimes since the period of the late Ottoman Empire. In the early Ottoman period, for Hanafischool, which was the predominant school of Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire, "abortion was not *haram*—strictly forbidden—but *mekruh*—not forbidden but unwanted". Although the Qoran, the crucial basis of Islamic law, does not present a precise prohibition, there exist a variety of approaches in different sects of Islam (Akşit 2010; Kubilay 2014: 393; Miller 2007b). However, later in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman rulers, who were inclined to associate the size of population with militarist, economic and political power, adopted Western pro-natalist policies[2] and strived to take action against, and even prohibit, abortion.[3] In the early Republican period, in line with the state's pro-natalist policies, the related Turkish Penal Code, which came into force in 1926, continued to criminalize optional abortion.[4] As Akşit (2010) states, from the Tanzimat until the end of the early Republican period, the pro-natalist policies meant not only to increase but also to qualify the population. Here the questions of biological purity, how to preserve it and how to fortify it appeared regularly on the agenda of the state. In the "anti-natalist" policies that were established in the 1960s and have continued until today, the question of the quality of the population (in ethnic and health terms) received more emphasis while the question of "race suicide" had been replaced by anti-natalist policies. After the 1980 coup d'etat, in 1983, the new Law on Population Planning permitted abortions until the tenth week of pregnancy with spousal consent.[5] Under this law, women were allowed to have an abortion only under the condition of getting the permission of either their husband or their

parent(s) (Kubilay 2014). Finally, in 2008, under the dominance of the AKP regime, there was a return to the anti-abortion approach.

As argued in the introduction to this chapter, it is not peculiar to the AKP to be involved in the biopolitics of abortion and to attempt to curb it. However, there are special historical conditions for the re-emergence of the anti-abortion policy during the rule of the AKP, which has used particular discursive strategies and techniques to legitimize and make the policy. We argue that it is the collaboration between neoliberal, neoconservative and populist-authoritarian policies that set the appropriate conditions for the AKP's biopolitics of abortion to evolve. These policies were highly informed by religious nationalism, the heteronormative-patriarchal regime and the neoliberal rationality of the government. For that reason there is a need to unpack the peculiar characteristics of the AKP's mode of governmentality as the main context from which the recent anti-abortion biopolitics of the ruling elites has emerged.

The AKP's Neoliberal Rationality and Neoconservative Moral Regime in Turkey

Neoliberalism, which began to gain influence in Turkey in the 1980s, has been revived under the leadership of the AKP since 2002 after it went through a period of recession in the 1990s. What distinguishes the AKP's neoliberal regime is its success in combining neoliberalism and Islam, from which a new type of conservatism came into being.[6] This can be seen in the shift from the liberal to the neoconservative state.

On the basis of Brown's analysis of the present regime in the USA, it is possible to argue that analyzing the AKP's regime by emphasizing only its neoconservative ruling mentality or by reducing its mode of governmentality to its Islamist morality is not valuable. Brown (2003) rejects considering the present regime in the USA as being neoconservative. However, not aiming to contest the existence of a religious-political project known as neoconservatism, she prefers to consider it as one side of the agenda. She views the US current predicament in terms of a neoliberal political rationality that emerges as governmentality or "a mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state, and one that produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social" (Brown 2003: 37). On the basis of this argument, Brown goes further by stating that neoliberal rationality does not concern only economic policies either. As a political rationality it goes far beyond the market as well as the

state. She states that "neoliberalism is not simply a set of economic policies [...] Rather, neoliberalism carries a social analysis that, when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policy to practices of empire" (Brown 2003: 39).

In a similar manner and without getting into a debate whether the AKP's neoliberalism is closer to German ordoliberalism or US neoliberalism,[7] we argue that the AKP regime can also be analyzed with respect to its neoliberal political rationality, which concerns not only neoliberal economic policies but also their social embeddedness, which requires an analysis of popular sentiments and a moral leadership. This does not mean simply to argue that the AKP has executed neoliberal policies in line with Islam, or vice versa. Nevertheless, beyond that, the problem is to understand the new mode through which such previously distinguished aspects as Islam, market, tradition, modern, the state and so on are rearticulated.

Akdoğan, a prominent member of the AKP, defines this new political tendency as "conservative democrat" (Akdoğan 2004). It is to define yourself as conservative with regard to preserving Turkey's cultural background and adapting it to the neoliberal policies; and as democratic with regard to defending the modern political institutions and principles, including that of siding with "a restricted and defined political power" (Erler 2007). What is meant by modern institutions and the restricted form of political power is the supremacy of parliamentary democracy, majority rule and the electoral system over the military and civil bureaucracy. On the basis of this articulation of the modern with the tradition, Islam has provided an important tool for defining the new moral foundation of the political project of the AKP. It is also true that the moral and regulatory mode of governance prevails on the grounds of a new and changing set of "others". Here, a number of instruments are put into practice in order to establish national "security" and neoliberal "democracy" against ever-changing threats/terrorists/immorals.

In the sense of national security (at the domestic and international level), Islam provides a perfect issue to freeze the political process and turn it into a struggle between "good" and "evil" on moral rather than political grounds. In other words, here politics starts to talk through the terms of morality. It is this new interpretation of Islam through which new disciplinary regulations and biopolitical techniques conducted by the government and in turn by the state over the nation's citizens can be legitimized. Not only Islam but also religion in general puts an

> "'apocalyptical framework that validates [moral] absolutism', but this framework is political in the most conventional sense of the term: It has to do with how and by whom power is exercised in economy, the state, the family, and the churches. In addition, religion supplies language and symbolism through which right lays claim to the righteousness and purity of its vision." (Petchesky 1984: 245)

For Dirlik,

> The consequences of religion in state power are readily evident at a more trivial but no less significant level in the urge to sumptuary regulation of one kind or another, which not only infantilizes citizens, but also opens the way to the biopolitical colonization of everyday life … The most significant aspect of such regulation is the regulation of women's bodies, which is also the greatest source of controversy globally. (Dirlik 2012: 241)

In line with this, Dirlik argues that,

> state or patriarchal regulation—the two are intimately related—is another matter. Having made women into the mothers of the country, a religious nationalism then turns around and burdens them with the responsibility to carry on the traditions that are supposedly emblems of a national identity conceived in terms of a religion dictated from above. (Dirlik 2012: 241)

Therefore the AKP's appeal in Turkey lies as much in its successful negotiation of a neoliberal global economy as in its insistence on the revival of Islamic traditions and institutions which are strictly tied to Turkish nationalism and patriarchy. As the conventions are revived in new forms and in the name of defending local identity, they are rapidly integrated into a capitalist economy that imposes its own norms on how these revivals may be processed for their goals.

The AKP's later attempt to curb abortion should be analyzed with regard to all these characteristics of its political rationality, which have caused a certain mode of reproductive governance and a reproductive moral regime to come into being. However, it should also be considered as a response to the new activisms, especially feminist and LGBTI movements which have emerged in the last two decades in Turkey. Since they have brought a rather libertarian perspective to the issues related to gender and sexuality, feminists and LGBTI have turned into the new political targets of the new right. For Petchesky, feminism has become the left

movement of the 1970s. Embedded in the new right's "moral" offensive, there are two interlocking themes. The first is the anti-feminist backlash aimed at all aspects of sexual freedom (including the abortion issue) and alternatives to traditional patriarchal family life. Second is the anti-social welfare backlash aimed at the principle that the state is obliged to provide for economic and social needs (Petchesky 1984: 247–248). What is needed is to look at their reciprocal relations. Thus, in connection to the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas of the government, as Miller states, there is also a hidden aim to prevent women's freedom, emancipation and strength in abusing women's bodies through state policies or in "biopoliticizing women's wombs" (Miller 2007a).

Anti-abortion Policies and Discourses of AKP

Following Morgan and Roberts (2012), the concept of "reproductive governance" can be used in analyzing the AKP's anti-abortion discourses as an analytical tool to trace the shifting political rationalities regarding population and reproduction.[8] Within the field of discourse on abortion, in addition to different kinds of actor, there are also competing "rights claims" which produce new kinds of subject positions and new moral regimes. Here we draw on Foucault's notion of "regimes of truth" as the historically specific mechanisms that produce the ideas that function as true (Foucault [1976] 1990). We also adopt Fassin's concept of the "politics of life", which refers not only to how populations are governed "but to the evaluation of human beings and the meaning of their existence" (Fassin 2007: 500–501). Morgan and Roberts (2012) advance the idea of moral regimes, which refers to the privileged standards of morality that are used to govern intimate behaviors, ethical judgments and their public manifestations. Nonetheless, in the case of "moral regimes of reproduction", which are intimately related to the concept of governmentality, the focus becomes the evaluation of actions and ideologies related to generation, perpetuation and human continuity. We need then to look not only at the economic motivations behind the AKP's new abortion policies but also at the new reproductive moral regime and rights claims.

As in the case of many Latin American countries, neoliberalism provides a robust breeding ground for shifting political rationalities of reproduction of the governments (Morgan and Roberts 2012). Embracing the universal human rights discourses—in the guise of family (parental) rights and the "right to life" of the unborn, as well as natural (divine)

rights—neoconservatives seem to have appropriated the rhetoric of rights for their own sake and constituted new subject positions (i.e. the unborn) on the basis of neoliberal moral regimes. Here, older concerns about overpopulation resurface in the contradictory figure of migrants or particular ethnic groups. The two figures in the new rationality of reproductive governance are the immigrants, women and others to whom rights can be denied, versus the rights-bearing fetus-as-citizen who takes nothing from the neoliberal state.

The sphere of biopolitics is extended beyond the state in attempts to promote civil society (Harvey 2005; Keane 1988). For neoliberal governmentality, this means a shift in the state's function concerning its involvement in the market and society (Flew 2012). With this neoliberal turn, the field of regulation and social policy expands and shifts downwards to microlevels of life. As Flew states, "the establishment of the social market economy, and the measures to generalize the enterprise form through society, were accompanied by what Ropke referred to as a *vitalpolitik*, or a "politics of life". (Flew 2012: 56).

In line with these characteristics of a neoliberal mode of governmentality, the AKP's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, attempted to put a new reproductive mode of governance into play in his pro-family policy. He first requested women to give birth to at least three children for the sake of the nation's future, which, as he claimed, needed a young population. Such familism is typical of conservative welfare systems passing through the stage of neoliberal transformation, which ascribes important roles to the family as well as NGOs.

The AKP's regime promotes the ideology that all socioeconomic problems (caused by the neoliberal economic regime) can be solved by strengthening the "patriarchal family structure". Its program asks women to participate in the labor market while keeping their traditional gender roles intact. Its anti-feminist and pro-family discourses address popular fears, such as loss of job, loss of family members, splitting parents and loss of security, which are, in fact, the results of general economic and sociopolitical crises. The family not only solves economic problems but also creates a new generation, which is the basis for consolidating conservative moral foundation: "We are raising a conservative generation. Would it be better if they were raised as thinner addicts?" It is interesting to see in this statement of Erdoğan's how a new subject position, such as "thinner addicts", is produced. While the family is seen as the main important caring institution for various reasons, women, on the basis of the gender

division of labor, are turned into the main actors to provide that care. According to many feminists, it is this policy that leads to the entrapment of women in the family (Bora 2014). During the AKP regime, such thinking has led to anti-divorce policies and the stigmatization of women who have wanted to get divorce (Gedik 2015). Hence "divorced women" turned into another discursively labeled subject category which is operationalized in constituting a new moral foundation.[9]

The women's and LGBTI movements were represented by conservatives as a threat to the family system and sexual morality that the new right wants to preserve, not because it promotes the public participation of women but because of its anti-traditional approaches and attitudes. On the basis of this argument there has been a culture war where those who resisted the AKP's politics were stigmatized as immoral beings who do not have a permanent and consistent family life based on heteronormativity. The objective of this war was to take away the economic, social and political gains made by women over the last few decades (Feldt 2004).[10]

In parallel to the AKP's earlier pro-family policies, Erdoğan announced his government's abortion policy. Abortion up to 10 weeks from conception has been legal since 1983 in Turkey. When Erdoğan was the prime minister, he reported that the government worked on legislation to ban the operation after 4 weeks from conception, except in emergencies. This was the case despite the fact that most women do not learn that they are pregnant until after 4 weeks, and it is also difficult to establish the placement of the pregnancy sac during that period. At the UN's International Conference on Population and Development held in Turkey in 2012, Erdoğan argued that claiming the right to abortion was not any different from committing a murder. In the AKP's Women's Branch Conference in the same year, he went further and established an analogy between abortion and the Uludere Massacre (Zaman 2013). He also said that abortion is nothing but an insidious plan to eliminate a nation from the world stage. His attempt to promote anti-abortion policy was reinforced by several AKP members of parliament. Health Minister Recep Akdağ caused an outcry when he told reporters that, if necessary, the government would even look after the babies of "rape victims". The Mayor of Greater Municipality of Ankara, Melih Gökçek, said on television that a mother who considered abortion should "kill herself instead and not let the child bear the brunt of her mistake" (*The Guardian* 2012). Mehmet Görmez is the Head of Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate contributed to Erdoğan's anti-abortion policies from a religious perspective and said

that abortion is a sin. While disregarding other Islamic schools which do not prohibit abortion within the first 120 days of pregnancy, they generalized their interpretation to all Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Turkey.

In conclusion, in the period between 2008 and 2013, the center of governmental discourse shifted from the pro-family to the pro-life and anti-abortion rhetoric (Kasap 2013). As in Latin American and US contexts, a fetus began to be considered as a new actor who has its own rights, which are even more important than women's rights as citizens.

Since 2008, obstacles have been increased for women wanting an abortion. After the president's denunciations, unofficial social control mechanisms have led to hospitals turning away patients seeking abortions, variously claiming the procedure to be illegal or allowable only with spousal consent.[11] Although the AKP withdrew the draft law to ban abortion under the impact of widespread outcry, it imposed numerous regulations and restrictions aimed at decreasing the rate of abortion. For instance, under the proposal of the Reproductive Health Bill of 2012, abortions would only be permitted if carried out by obstetricians in hospitals. Before, the procedure was offered by certified practitioners and local health clinics. The right for doctors to refuse to perform an abortion on the grounds of their conscience, and a mandatory "consideration time" for women requesting a termination, were also introduced. These restrictions extended to discussion about banning surrogate motherhood, sperm banks and cesarean births.

The AKP's ruling elites, on the basis of the party's new moral regime and in order to marginalize abortion as a medical procedure, have also attempted to criminalize all those involved as either a patient or a doctor. This is also an attempt to rechannel sexuality into patriarchal and heterosexist forms which are legitimized with reference to Islamic codes.

Regarding the nationalist concerns of the AKP, some argue that Erdoğan is pursuing a delicate strategy of increasing Turkey's regional power with a large population while trying to balance the country's demographics in the face of a high birth rate among Kurds, a source of concern for Turkey since it is engaged in a bitter fight against Kurdish rebels who want to be politically recognized by the state (Fox News 2012). Furthermore, Erdoğan's pro-natalist statements draw on along-standing narrative of aspirations for national growth in the face of those who supposedly seek Turkey's "erasure from the world stage." The desire to forestall that dystopian scenario helps to explain AKP's gestures at other bans – on alcohol, cigarettes, and

tattoos–in the name of a nation whose citizens are to lead healthy, reproductive lives. The government's rhetoric of *ahlak* (morality) effectively divides the citizenry into respectable and unrespectable subjects. Indeed, the AKP government's biggest success has been to craft moral conservatism for the sake of its neoliberal policies.[12] It builds its neoconservatism as a national quality, allowing the ruling party to position itself as simply expressing what the people want. Thus the AKP government's speeches turn to abortion, cesarean or other reproductive policies because these are very real matters for its neoliberal governmentality which is linked to its nationalist, Islamist and patriarchal moral regime of truth.

Resistance to the AKP's Attempt to Ban Abortion

In resistance to the government anti-abortion policy and rhetoric, women were organized through the campaigns called "my body, my decision",[13] "abortion is a right, the decision is up to women"[14] and "abortion cannot be banned".[15] They used social networks such as Facebook and Twitter with pro-choice and pro-abortion slogans. Demonstrations against the draft law were held in almost all parts of Turkey.

Bianet started an online campaign, called "my body, my decision", against the government's attempt to ban abortion.[16] In this campaign, pictures of messages were written on people's bodies or on papers declaring women's and men's opposition to the government's attempt. Some 1000 people posted their photos on the campaign's website. While women supporters wrote messages such as "my body my decision" and "this is my issue", male supporters wrote slogans such as "women's body, women's decision", "this is women's issue" and "my darling's body, my darling's decision". Through all these means, the campaign against the government's attempt expanded abroad. For instance, on June 19, 2012, feminist organizations in France came together in Paris to protest the AKP government's anti-abortion policies. The slogan "my body, my decision" was dominant in this protest too.

Another campaign in which almost 44 feminist groups and women's organizations from different parts of Turkey participated under a single platform was called "Abortion is a right, and the decision is up to women". The campaign's main slogan was "We don't allow them to discuss our abortion right". For this campaign, videos and brochures were presented and women's stories about their experience of abortion were collected and published under the name of "womb stories". Around the same campaign, demonstrations were

organized in different parts of the country. On June 8, 2012 a simultaneous sit-down strike took place in 22 cities; on June 28, 2012 a demonstration with the slogan "Stop policing abortion, pregnancy and virginity" was held in Istanbul, and on September 8, 2012, against the previously mentioned statements of Ankara's metropolitan mayor of the AKP and the minister of health, a demonstration which was also held in Istanbul was marked by the slogan "Do not punish raped women, punish rapists".

Also signed by more than 55,000 individuals, 372 women's organizations, 308 other NGOs and 220 NGOs from other countries (Kaos 2012), the petition entitled "Abortion cannot be banned" became very effective in promoting women's counter statements against the government. In this document, both information about abortion rights and some important messages were included, such as "The responsibility for birth control does not rest solely with women", "Motherhood is not destiny" and "Do we need our husbands' permission?"

Against the sudden anti-abortion attack by the AKP, organizations within the women's movement, predominantly feminists, had no opportunity to analyze in its entire complexity the governing mentality behind the AKP's anti-abortion policies, and, instead of coming up with a comprehensive political discourse, they mostly reacted with the intention to take back the "right to abortion", which they deemed as a right taken away from women.[17] In this context, pro-choice discourse in Turkey re-emerged and became dominant as a reaction to the government's pro-life and pro-family discourses. Despite the fact that there has been unification among different women and women's groups with various political approaches around the pro-choice discourse, diverse views and debates on the topic also exist.

Although the dominant discourse among women's groups was the pro-choice one, the growth of the movement against the anti-abortion politics of the AKP consisted of heterogeneous groups of women ranging from conservatives to radical feminists. For instance, although Muslim activists in the women's movement criticized the pro-choice discourse in some aspects, they also gave their support, reacting against the attempt to ban abortion.

Concerns were also raised by different sectors of society, such as women academics, health associations, leftist groups and pro-feminist men. For instance, some academicians from Ankara University's Department of Women's Studies organized a petition campaign with the title "Don't remain unresponsive to the abortion debate", which gathered more than

4500 signatures on its first day (*Bianet* 2012a). Some pro-feminist men, who came together under the name of Rahatsız Erkekler (Annoyed Men), also organized a demonstration in Istanbul on June 11, 2012, stating, “We won’t discuss the right to abortion; we oppose to speak in the name of women” (Agos 2012a).[18]

The women’s movement, with the support of various sections of society, forced the AKP to take a step backward and to withdraw the draft law for banning abortion. However, while the movement was successful in terms of legal rights, in de facto application, access to abortion is still limited.

Beyond the Dichotomy of Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Discourses

The slogans mentioned above indicate that the dominant discourse in the women’s movement is based on a pro-choice perspective. Within this framework, the two main arguments are that abortion is a right, and that women have a say and decision-making right concerning their own bodies. These arguments have been expressed through the slogans “abortion is a right, the decision is up to women”, “our body, our decision” and “my body, my decision”. Different perspectives based on the criticism of such pro-choice discourse will be explained below.

Debates and criticisms regarding the pro-choice perspective within the women’s movement have centered on three areas.[19] The first two have mostly focused on the discourse or concept of “right”. The first approach, widely expressed in the magazine *Amargi,* criticizes the pro-choice perspective, viewing it as liberal, and rejects the phrase “right to abortion”, instead suggesting defending the right to have an abortion in healthy and safe conditions. In a second approach, the writings at the Socialist Feminist Collective website have insisted on defending the pro-choice discourse on the condition that it sheds its liberal emphasis and advocates the protection of the discourse expressed through “abortion is a right” and “my body belongs to me”, albeit in a different sense. The third approach comes from religious women Muslim writers and activists who support women’s rights, with a critical perspective on both the anti-abortion policies of the AKP and the feminist pro-choice stance.

Aksu Bora, one of the prominent advocates of the first approach, primarily discusses the feminist groups’ statement “We will not let abortion be discussed”. For her, this statement addresses not only the AKP elites

but also women who have a different view concerning the practice of abortion, inviting the latter to keep silent too. The desire to react to the AKP government has caused several organized groups within the women's movement to disregard the views and feelings of different women, and rendered their own perspective on abortion single and uniform. Thus, Bora concludes, pro-choice groups have adopted the defensive statement of "abortion is a right" against the AKP's statement of "abortion is murder", instead of proposing alternative policies that would address the diverse approaches of women (Bora 2012a).

The women's movement in Turkey has mostly stayed within the boundaries of liberal discourse[20] and could not overcome the problems of pre-choice approach. An analysis of the statements of the women's movement (i.e. "our bodies our choices", "my body my choice", "the mind, the body and the choice belong to women" and "we, the women, decide when and under what conditions we would have a child") reveals a reference to the atomist, autonomous, abstract, and disembodied individual of liberalism. Just as in the liberal doctrine, within this context, too, choice is perceived as free choice made rationally and independently by an individual who is the proprietor of her-his own person or capacities. Disregarding social, political and economic conditions as influential over our choices, this perspective conceives the individual neither as a moral whole nor as part of larger social whole but as the owner of herself-himself. Individuals are assumed as masculine, possessive, and a-historical or transcendental agent. (Newman 1996 in Smyth 2002: 338).

Moving these criticisms toward the liberal approach to the context of abortion debates, Smyth states that

> the emphasis on privacy prevents any consideration of the socio-political forces which produce both involuntary pregnancies and calls for abortion access, and constrain the "choices" of different women in different contexts. This construction of abortion as an issue of private choice trivializes abortion decisions, as well as endorsing the very mind/body dualism which feminism has consistently contested. (Cornell 1995:in Smyth 2002: 336)

The category of "woman" in feminist discourse is treated in isolation from its social context and differences, just like the "individual" in liberal discourse. This is one of the basic criticisms of post-structuralist and post-modern feminists toward second-wave feminism. Parallel to this, the bodies of women are issued in isolation from the social context within

which power is exercised over them. However, as Foucault ([1976] 1990) states, the body is the site where regimes of discourse and power inscribe themselves. Butler even goes further and questions whether the body has any materiality beyond its social context and beyond the process of social construction that it goes through (Butler 1989, 1990, 1993). Departing from all these arguments, the approach in favor of pro-choice theory treat not only women but also their bodies independently from any forms of power relations and regulatory intervention. For such an approach, women are individuals who possess their bodies beyond any power relations, and they treat them as individuals (as a unified category) who can make the best rational choice over their bodies.

Responding to the AKP's attempt to amend the law through slogans such as "our body is ours" and "don't touch my body" suggests that it is the first time that women's bodies having been touched or interfered with. It does not refer to all the other forms of intervention targeting the bodies of women for health or demographic reasons. This leads to an individualistic and disembodied counter discourse of prochoice theory:

While I felt the legal, economic, sexual and gender-based restrictions on my body every instant, this discourse had the false impression that our bodies were being touched for the first time. Thus, I could not help thinking the campaign's emphasis on the body was the product of a pure-reason which is almost "bodiless", namely far from being conscious about the body. (Ayhan 2012)

The proposal of the pro-choice discourse that abortion should be legally secured as a right or a choice is problematic to the extent that it disregards the complexity of the relationship between power and the body, and the different types of relationship that women have with their bodies. Another drawback in relation to this is that it fails to adequately focus on problems that emerge in extralegal practices in accordance with neoliberal and neoconservative doctrines.[21] Hence this approach does not oblige the state to ensure access to abortion services (Petchesky 1986 in Smyth 2002: 336). Mor Çatı's research also shows that although abortion is still a legal right, many hospitals do not provide access to an abortion service. The AKP's conservative morality is closely associated with the neoliberal transformation of the health system. Viewed from a point critical of neoliberal policies, instead of claiming abortion as a right, having/doing abortion in safe and healthy circumstances should be claimed together with equal access to unpaid reproductive health services.

The second approach expressed in the website of the Socialist Feminist Collective tried to deepen its earlier pro-choice position by taking into account the neoliberal context of the debate in Turkey. It highlighted the health transformation politics of the AKP, claiming that the state should provide a healthy and safe abortion service. In an article, the writers refuse the liberal perspective because they consider the body to be private property, and they use the notion of choice in line with the "atomized-arbitrary" notion of the individual, while defending the argument that "the abortion decision is up to women". The writers emphasize that abortion is not a simple choice but a societal right that should be claimed on the basis of women's health and bodily integrity:

> As opposed to an understanding based on abstract individualist conception of right, we should develop our own understanding of the right to self-determination and self-control over our own bodies from a positive point of view, which is based on the notion of concrete individual self fulfilling its concrete needs within a specific social context. (Toksöz and Barın 2012)

In another article, the meaning attributed to the slogans "Abortion is a right" and "Our body is ours" is explained as follows:

> by reiterating that abortion is a right, we disclose the demand for an affordable/free, accessible, and healthy practice to be decided on the declaration of women instead of falling behind an existing right … We highlight the fact that the right to abortion also has a positive side in that it enables sexuality to be differentiated from fertility … Abortion is not a good experience for women, just like every experience involving intervention to the body. It cannot be explained through arbitrariness or choice. Nevertheless, constructing an argument based on how difficult the decision of abortion for women is, and the psychological impacts it has, would again be reductionist. It would be moralist and essentialist. The right to abortion is a legal regulation addressing numerous reasons such as forced birth, unwanted pregnancy, financial burden of raising a kid, or the burden of childcare imposed on women. Of course, like every legal regulation, it has male-dominant repercussions. While struggling to take the right to abortion under our initiative, we also struggled for the background behind our labor and sexuality. The slogan "our body is ours" actually expresses all these. (Baytok 2012)

As this example shows, despite all the complex analyses, such statements end up backing the phrases "Our bodies are ours" and "Abortion is a

right". Most of the writers representing this second approach emphasize the so-called "poor women" as a distinct category other than white, middle-class, secular women only in the context in which the negative outcomes (e.g. illegal practices of abortion leading to the death of women) of the abortion ban are discussed. On the other hand, it cannot be stated that differences such as ethnic and religious ones are considered in terms of the decision-making process for abortion and the consequences of an abortion ban.

As explained above, the liberal choice approach is essentially in accord with the abstract category of woman that marks the radical feminist discourse. Thus, this approach forces us to ask whose decision and body we are talking about. The practice reveals that even though the movement took support from many circles, it can be said that the support came mostly from women who have a secular, white, middle class profile. Having used slogans such as "our bodies our choices", do we think of a homogenous category of women, as if we were all the same, having the same bodily experiences? How do different categories of women perceive abortion? A striking example could be the research carried out by Smith (2005) on native women in Chicago, which revealed that women's perceptions of abortion are too diverse and complex to be viewed through pro-life/pro-choice dichotomy.

The third approach consisting of the views of Muslim women writers in Turkey has brought about significant criticisms of the pro-choice discourse dominating the women's movement. Such criticisms seem to be positioned beyond the pro-choice/pro-life dilemma as it is observed in Smith's (2005) research on native women in Chicago. Kubilay, who analyzed all the columns by Muslim women columnists during a month (May 26–June 25, 2012) (Kubilay 2014: 390) following the birth of the abortion debate, also points out that those women have developed a different stance by adopting a critical perspective toward both pro-choice and pro-life groups.

In Turkey, where most of the population is Muslim, it is worth analyzing these writers' criticisms against the discourse around "My body is mine" in accordance with the belief in "the entrusted body".[22] Despite their shared criticisms of the attitude of the government, the way in which they sense and interpret the body is different from that of feminists (Kubilay 2014: 409). At work here is the distinction between the Islamic perception of "the entrusted body", in which the body belongs to God not to the self, and the secular perception of "the body possessed by the individual",

which appeared in the slogan “My body is mine”. This distinction constitutes the main point of opposition between these two groups.

Writers with an Islamist viewpoint have criticized the feminist language used in the demonstrations against the government’s attempt to ban abortion on the basis of these opposing perspectives. For them, one of the important problem of protests was that they were not local enough in their language and perception (Kubilay 2014: 409). According to this perspective, relying on “stereotypical ideological reflexes” (Aktaş, Cihan 2012 in Kubilay 2014: 409) and some clichéd pro-choice slogans, feminists ignore conservative women in their actions:

> Unfortunately I do not approve the fact that my feminist friends acted through really cliché slogans. They want to do feminist politics and flak the government. Ok, but they use such a language that it is impossible to succeed with it in Turkey. How many women joined that demonstration? Conservative women have issues with abortion and birth control, too.[23]

However, the criticism by Muslim women writers of anti-abortion policies is not limited to the experiences of Muslim women. Regarding the attempt to ban abortion on religious grounds, these writers have also stressed that not everyone is Muslim and not everyone has the same Islamic ideals. They have pointed out that there are differences between sects concerning the issue and opened it up to debate. Thus, unlike other women’s organizations, some Muslim women writers have criticized the AKP’s policies not only because they are masculine but also because they are the products of an authoritarian regime imposing a certain religious interpretation on the whole population, including non-Muslims and non-believers. While rejecting the ban as a method, they have stated that the real issue is how to prevent unwanted pregnancy. The government should concentrate on the services that support women who don’t want to be pregnant and on increasing their access to contraceptives. Instead, in recent years, the family planning unit was closed down and women’s access to such services was prevented. All these factors are in fact more important and leading causes of abortion among women. (Agos, 2012)

Some Muslim women writers have expressed their disapproval of “men making the decision in the name of women in issues concerning women” (Kubilay 2014: 403, 414) with reference to gender inequality too. Another criticism voiced by this group is that, with the abortion ban, the lives of women who would have to resort to illegal practices would

be at risk (Kubilay 2014: 407). Some Muslim women writers who have suggested adopting a perspective that transcends pro-choice arguments have also asserted that despite the AKP's effort to legitimize the abortion ban on religious-moral grounds, its motivation is to do with economic and political factors, and that it is an extension of the process of conservative men's integration with capitalism (Kubilay 2014: 401–403, 414) As stated above, although similar criticisms were expressed by some women's organizations advocating the pro-choice perspective, this mutual view is not pivotal enough in their discourse to provide grounds for an alliance with Muslim women. Even their reaction to comments about the Uludere Massacre (Kubilay 2014: 398–9) have failed to provide the inclusion of those Muslim women writers in the alliance formed between women from the Kurdish women's movement and other women's movement in the West. This mainly results from the fact that Muslim women writers have moved beyond the pro-choice/pro-life dilemma by stating that, owing to their religious beliefs, they are personally against abortion. For instance, Meryem İlayda Atlas has shared this distinct stance by stressing that she is against both abortion and the state dictating to women what (and what not) to do in her article titled "I'm both against the ban and the abortion" (Atlas 2012). That an alliance has not been formed shows that it is the pro-choice perspective, rather than a discourse of rights taking into account women's subjective views of abortion, that dominates the movement.

Conclusion

Diverse identities and experiences of women force us to think beyond existing debates based on a dichotomy between pro-life and pro-choice. Anti-abortion policies of the AKP, which are based on the notion of biopolitics (*vitalpolitik*), are directly related to its overall neoliberal and neoconservative economic and cultural strategies. It is quite difficult to analyze the AKP's anti-abortion policies outside this complicated context. It can be argued that its anti-abortion policies specifically and its population policies in general are not prohibitory but are regulatory by nature. The AKP has managed not only to relate abortion policies to the economic and political interests of the country but also to reinforce them through the globalizing discourse of rights. As stated above, the discourse of rights is one of the neoconservative discursive strategies of neoliberal regimes (Smyth 2002). The link between the discourse of rights and the interests of the national community is framed in a nationalist-Islamist approach. Thus the AKP,

as in the case of abortion politics in Ireland, combines an atomistic assertion of fetal ("individual") rights with a communitarian holism, justifying the former in terms of the latter. This dual discourse addressing popular sensitivities surrounded by Islam and nationalism makes it rather difficult to treat abortion as a simple medical operation and to express it as a right. Therefore, as Smyth states, the power of this position depends explicitly on the connection that the AKP succeeded in establishing between the nationhood project and an anti-abortion morality (Smyth 1998 in Smyth 2002: 339).

Seen as the factors behind the success of anti-abortion policies, these strategies have succeeded in marginalizing the feminists' discourse of women's individual rights. The AKP has even criminalized women advocates of pro-choice discourse because they contradict social sentiments and moral codes that are dominant in Turkish society. As opposed to the AKP's neoconservative anti-abortion/pro-life discourse interpolating women as "moral" and "collective", women's organizations have addressed women as "rational" individuals on the basis of their rights/interests/choices. In the face of such a communitarian approach, the social legitimacy problem of the individualist pro-choice stance reinforced by the women's movement becomes prominent, especially when the experiences of women who do not perceive themselves as atomistic individuals are considered.

Consequently there is a need to deconstruct the politics of life or the vital politics of the AKP from perspective other than that of pro-choice. To illustrate, for Bora, more legitimate than the claim of abortion as a right is the argument that the provision of this health service under safe conditions and without payment is a right (Bora 2012a). That abortion is not viewed as a desired experience by women in general due to various and differing reasons is a crucial problem. Indeed, abortion is the last resort for most women. Not all women have the same kind of relationship with their body, and some of them (e.g. Muslim women writers and activists) do not view their body as their own. Therefore what matters for women's right to live is that contraceptive methods should be made available on the basis of gender equality, and abortion should be offered as a service in healthy conditions, rather than defining it as a right. Following this, the development of a discourse prioritizing all kinds of choices for women damages the claim that the proposed policy is open to all choices of women (including their being against abortion).

Does the decision to give or not give birth concern women only? Under more democratic and egalitarian conditions, is it impossible for the wom-

en's movement, which invites men to assume responsibility for childcare, to ask for this decision to be made in consideration of all the relevant subjects? In the light of all these questions, how the women's movement and feminist theory can develop an alternative communitarian feminist perspective which does not disregard women's rights is a significant issue of debate. Another critical question is which category of a woman's body we are referring to in the phrase "My body is mine". How can we form our discourse if we want to take into account the differences among women? Many women's organizations' faulty generalization of the worldviews of white middle-class secular women also brings the risk of confinement within liberal discourse. Consequently, it is essential that, as opposed to the AKP's neoliberal discourse, which intervenes in lifestyles in the name of introducing regulations, we should construct a language that considers differences between women in respect of the changing social contexts in which they exist. To this end, what may be more fundamental for us as feminists is the necessity of moving away from liberal masculine language, reclaiming the vital politics of neoliberal regimes and reconstituting it on the basis of an alternative perspective. Here it is essential also to depart from analyzing neoliberal regimes in terms of what Foucault calls repressive power instead of biopower. While the former is forcing us to get involved with negative and reactionist politics against the existing neoliberal regimes, the latter led us to see the complicated nature of such regimes and to act on the basis of alternative programs and positive-constructive political arguments. In other words, counter-hegemonic discourses would perform better at building an alternative political line as long as they are sensitive to the economic, political and cultural dimensions of neoliberal social projects.

Notes

1. As a result of the Turkish parliamentary elections of June 7, 2015, the AKP, having the majority in parliament since 2002, couldn't singlehandedly form a new government. The government is in the process of being formed as we finalize this article.
2. For the history of expansion of the general approach to the issue of regulating population from the European and North American states to others (including the Ottoman Empire), particularly toward the end of the nineteenth century, see Miller (2007).

3. The introduction of the regulations in this issue dates back to a rescript in 1838. This was important for systematizing anti-abortion policies (Kubilay 2014: 394). In addition, amendments were made to the Penal Code in 1859 and hence abortion was criminalized.
4. In this law, “procuring miscarriage” was written under the section entitled “Crimes against person”. With the comprehensive Penal Code amendments in 1936, articles which were prohibiting abortion and threatening prison sentences changed and began to be conceptualized as “Crimes against integrity and health of race” (Kuyucu and Öngel 2014)
5. The Penal Code was also amended and the title of “Crimes against the integrity and health of race” was changed to “Crimes of procuring miscarriage” (Kuyucu and Öngel 2014).
6. Although a strong religious affiliation of AKP politics is new, it has many commonalities with the previous neoliberal regime of the Anavatan Partisi (ANAP [Motherland Party]) and its leader, Özal (Yarar 2009).
7. According to Flew, Brown’s arguments are based on her analysis of US neoliberalism, which is traditionally different from the German political economy, which respects the Gesselshacft politics. Following Foucault, Flew states that US neoliberalism is more radical than German ordoliberalism in the relationship between market and society. For Flew, while “the German vitalpolitik was concerned with the balance between the ‘cold’ mechanisms of competition and the ‘warm’ moral and cultural values that contributed to social cohesion, and various mechanisms were devised so that the individual is not alienated from their work environment, family, community or the natural environment, by a state that sought to ‘maintain itself above the different competing groups and enterprises’ and act as a guarantor of cooperation among the competing interests” (Flew 2012: 58). However, US neoliberalism does not seek to soften the impact of the market. Instead, it aims to expand the economic rationality based on the market throughout the social body.
8. As developed by them, “the concept of reproductive governance refers to the mechanisms through which different historical configurations of actors—such as state, religious, and international

financial institutions, NGOs, and social movements—use legislative controls, economic inducements, moral injunctions, direct coercion, and ethical incitements to produce, monitor, and control reproductive behaviors and population practices" (Morgan and Roberts 2012: 241).

9. The Family Ministry has even sought to label unmarried people who live on their own as "self-absorbed drains on national resources".
10. According to Petchesky (1984), the politics of family, sexuality and reproduction were the primary vehicle through which right-wing politicians sought to achieve state power in the late 1970s and the 1980s in the USA. For her, among other reproductive issues, abortion was symbolically and centrally the focus of a resurgent conservatism in their battle against feminist politics. They played an important role in legitimizing the transition from the liberal to the neoconservative state. For her, in economic crises, anti-feminist, racist, anti-communist, anti-welfare and other stock conservative values become essential means of legitimating the policies which deepen the crisis. She further argues that due to the economic crisis, social justice and the equality of women turn into politics which cannot be achieved by the existing economic strategies.
11. It is known that in the same period, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation called 37 public hospitals in Istanbul and asked whether they accept those who ask for an abortion. The results were: 3 public hospitals practice abortion on demand; among these, only one will carry out an abortion up to 10 weeks while the other two will only do so up to 8 weeks; 12 public hospitals never carry out abortions; 17 public hospitals do it only in compulsory situations (e.g. the death of the fetus) but only with the confirmation of the Medical Committee; information could not be collected for several reasons from 5 of the public hospitals (Mor Çatı 2015).
12. The interconnected nature of the AKP's political, economic and moral-cultural project became apparent during the Gezi protests of May–June 2013. These started with objections to plans to replace a park in the heart of Istanbul with a shopping mall. However, as the police crackdown intensified, the demonstrations grew, attracting opponents of not only neoliberal restructuring but also of the ethnosectarian violence and the sexual-moral conservatism of the government. The protesters made the connection between the various

forms of AKP authoritarianism. Erdoğan disparaged the Gezi protesters in moral terms as "a handful of drunken plunderers". He did so not necessarily because AKP voters wanted a new shopping mall to be erected at Taksim Square but in order to cast the masses on the streets as dangerous to the moral uprightness that the AKP government believes it represents.

13. The website of the campaign, benimkararim.org, is currently inactive. However, its Facebook page is still live. See https://www.facebook.com/benimkararim.
14. See http://www.kurtajhaktir.org/; https://www.facebook.com/kurtajhaktirkararkadinlarin; and https://twitter.com/kararkadinlarin.
15. See http://www.kurtajyasaklanamaz.com/, http://saynoabortionban.com/.
16. *Bianet* is an online newspaper. See http://www.bianet.org/.
17. This has to do with the fact that, under AKP rule, practices leading to gender inequality are on the rise, and the women's movement is generally confined to the realm of reactive politics. Thus the women's movement has tended to restrict itself by mostly reacting to the agenda set by the AKP, instead of developing alternative politics.
18. The group was established at the beginning of 2012 against sexism, heterosexism and patriarchal violence in order to foster a perspective that would enable men to realize their masculinity and power (Agos 2012).
19. A fourth position, not analyzed here, is that developed by profeminist men.
20. The main principles of this approach can also be traced in the statement of the leader of Turkey's Liberal Democrat Party against the draft law banning abortion with the title "The individualism principle of liberalism and abortion". See http://www.ldp.org/liberalizmin-bireycilik-ilkesi-ve-kurtaj/.
21. With respect to Erdoğan's proclamations on gender and sexuality-related issues, some critiques argued that it is a style of governance that aims to disguise economic liberalization program's muleffects (such as economic crises, increasing unemployment rates, increasing poverty, etc.), corruption scandals and other manifestations of growing dissent in the country (for the debate on this issue, see Bora 2012; Yarar 2012). However, for many others, the AKP's biopolitics are related to the party's pursuit of conservative transformation, or

the AKP's neoliberal strategy, which is sensitive to the needs of global capitalism. However, we argue that the AKP's neoliberal and neoconservative approaches are intimately related to each other and that one is necessary to understand the other.

22. According to this belief, "including her/his body, everything in the universe is entrusted to her/him [the human being] for a given period" (Şişman 2006 in Kubilay 2014: 408), the body is the bearer of the soul is insufflated by the god (Esendemir 2001 in Kubilay 2014: 408).
23. Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, during an interview conducted by Özlem Çelik from the newspaper *Akşam* reporting on an interview in another newspaper, *Agos*, June 6, 2012. See http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/1595/tuksal-kurtaj-cinayettir-lafi-beni-rahatsiz-etti, accessed 8 January 2016.

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CHAPTER 8

Dialogue: Transgendered Bodies as Subjects of Feminism: A Conversation and Analysis about the Inclusion of Trans Persons and Politics in the Nicaraguan Feminist Movement

Silke Heumann,
Ana V. Portocarrero, Camilo Antillón Najlis,
María Teresa Blandón, Geni Gómez, Athiany Larios,
Ana Quirós Víquez and Juana Urbina

Introduction

Some 25 years after Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999 [1990]), the question of women as the "subject" of feminism continues to be a hotly debated issue in and between

The original version of this book was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_17

S. Heumann (✉) • C.A. Najlis • M.T. Blandón • G. Gómez • A. Larios
A.Q. Víquez • J. Urbina
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

A.V. Portocarrero
UCA-Nicaragua, Managua, Nicaragua

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_8

different feminist movements around the world. At the same time, the proliferation of new subjects that claim a space within feminism has heightened and complicated debates about the “true” feminist subject and the “true nature” of feminist politics.

This dialogue aims to open up space for conversations about redefining feminism in ways that are more sensitive to diversity and intersecting forms of power. It deals specifically with the debate around the inclusion of trans persons in the feminist movement, analyzing the ideas and experiences of Nicaraguan cisgender and transgender feminists expressed in a dialogue developed in Managua, Nicaragua, in 2015. The idea of having this dialogue began with our conversations as scholars and activists engaged with the feminist and LGBT movements in Nicaragua and interested in understanding power relations and practices of exclusion in groups and social movements with emancipatory goals. Silke Heumann is a feminist scholar, interested in the intersections of gender, sexuality and social justice, from a queer feminist perspective. She lived in Nicaragua for over a decade, and was engaged with the Nicaraguan feminist movement since the early 1990s. She is currently working at the ISS in the Netherlands. Ana Victoria Portocarrero and Camilo Antillón, both Nicaraguan scholars, are currently working on issues of gender and sexuality, and are feminist and LGBT activists (co-founders of Operación Queer, a space for queer activism in Managua).

The inclusion of trans persons in the Latin American feminist movement has created heated discussions in recent decades. Strong voices have emerged either defending the need to open up spaces for the diversity of bodies and gender identities interested in feminism, or strongly opposing their participation in feminist spaces. Interestingly, in the case of the Nicaraguan feminist movement, although the two types of opinion exist, there are feminist organizations working with trans women within feminism, and an important number of trans persons participate in feminist demonstrations and activities in general. For this reason we are particularly interested in understanding the Nicaraguan case in order to identify ideas and experiences that can help us to inform the Latin-American discussion regarding trans issues and feminism.

Considering the importance of experience and the fact that we are discussing a social movement, we did not want to have a purely theoretical discussion on this sensitive topic. Instead we had an open dialogue where we could understand each other’s ideas and experiences, and acknowledge the strong emotions that the topic evokes. Some of the questions that moved us were: What makes us—often unwittingly—reproduce very similar oppressions and exclusions that we otherwise are aware of and often consciously struggle against? And, as feminists, how can we move toward more inclusive forms of struggle and politics?

Background

Debates around inclusion and exclusion in the feminist movement seem to reappear periodically, with different subjects moving center stage and with similar arguments being rehearsed. The debate around trans and feminism reminds us of many earlier debates: the "sex wars" of the 1980s, the debates around lesbians and women of color in the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s; and even nineteenth-century debates in feminism around sexuality and the feminist "anti-vice" campaigns (Alcoff 1988; hooks 1984; Thompson 2002; Snitow et al. 1983; Vance 1993).

In Latin America, these debates can be traced through the history of Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentros (EFLAC). Emerging in 1981, they have become a well-known and well-documented space of regional debate and articulation of the Latin American feminist movement (Alvarez et al. 2002). In its early history it was characterized by its strong relationship with, and at the same time marginalization within, the political left (Sternbach et al. 1992; Heumann 2014). The lesbian feminist meetings (ELFLAC) originated in 1987 from a split from EFLAC, also as a result of the marginalization and lack of recognition that lesbian feminists felt within the feminist movement (Mogrovejo 2010; Riquelme 2004). Since 2000, regular and increasingly intense debates have emerged in both spaces around the inclusion of trans persons in the feminist movement. The EFLAC decided to include trans women (male to female transgenders [MtF]) in 2005, but the discussion about the inclusion of trans men (female to male transgenders [FtM]) in 2014 only led to the creation of a commission that would look into the issue (Programa Feminista La Corriente 2014; XIII Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe 2014). Also the Eighth Latin American and Caribbean Lesbian Feminist Encounter in Guatemala in 2010 was the location of a heated debate about the issue of the participation of lesbian trans feminists in the meeting. Here the inclusion of trans women was out of the question, while the inclusion of trans men was discussed, but ultimately rejected, leading to a split among the participants and the emergence of a new space that materialized through the First LesBiTransInterFeminist Encounter in November 2012 in Paraguay (Ramírez Mateus and Castellanos Leal 2013).

Also within Nicaragua, debates around trans inclusion have gained centrality in feminist spaces (Blandón et al. 2011). Examples of this are the monthly discussion meetings organized by the feminist collective Aula Propia, and a series of feminist dialogues that took place at the Central American University in 2013 called Diálogos Diversos. Many feminist

organizations have started to work with the LGBT population, sometimes out of conviction and sometimes also because these populations have become a priority within development cooperation, as part of a sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda. This work has emerged amidst a multiplicity of discourses. On the one hand, discourses that acknowledge and convey a genuine interest in the diversity of women's bodies and experiences, and their complex symbolic constructions. On the other hand, discourses permeated by personal fears, religious conservatism and pressures from the development cooperation and from the State (Blandón et al. 2011). This development has led to debates within the feminist movement about the extent to which there is a shared (or rather divided) identity and political agenda. These were the debates that inspired us to organize our own dialogue and conversation on this topic.

We consider that it is pertinent to open up a space in which academics and activists would engage in a dialogue that helps us to identify and understand the different positionings regarding this topic, the logics behind our practices and thinking, the fears we experience, and the opportunities we see in relation to the inclusion of trans people as subjects of feminism. Our hope is to promote through this open discussion the generation of more inclusive spaces within the feminist movement.

We would like to explain the use of "trans" and "queer". In Latin America the term "queer" is not used much and "trans" has become an umbrella term to refer to different non-normative gender identities, most commonly cross dressers and transsexuals, and also increasingly identities that come close to what in the Anglo-Saxon world would be considered "queer" identities, with an explicit politics of challenging gender binaries (Valentine 2007). When talking about the relationship between trans or queer politics and feminist politics, it is important not to see these as discrete categories. As Richardson, McLaughlin and Case (2006) have pointed out, opposing feminist and queer theory overemphasizes the differences and overshadows the many convergences there are, as well as the fact that many "queer" ideas were born out of different feminist currents. Reproducing and reifying the "oppositions"—between the cultural and the material (or the materiality and the fluidity of the body), gender and sexuality, and structural analysis (patriarchy, capitalism) vs. discursive construction—is therefore not useful for our goal (Butler 1997). In this spirit, we try to identify how these notions are (re)constructed in this debate among feminists of different kinds, and move beyond the oppositional and mutually exclusive frameworks to understand their interconnections and convergences.

Methodology

This dialogue is inspired by the debates that we have encountered in these different spaces and deals with some of the points of discussion we identified, such as the question of identity; the relationship between gender and other forms of oppression, in particular sexuality and class; and the role of the body and identity in (trans or queer) feminist politics (Butler 1997; 1999 [1990]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Ferree and Roth 1998; Halberstam 1998).

Based on the conversations that started between the three of us, we organized a dialogue with cisgender and transgender feminist activists in Nicaragua:

- María Teresa Blandón, Ana Quirós and Geni Gómez, longstanding feminist leaders in the country at the head of feminist organizations La Corriente, Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoria en Salud (CISAS [Center of Information and Advisory Services in Health]) and Grupo Venancia, all characterized by their openness toward issues of gender and sexual diversity, and sexuality more generally within feminism.
- Athiany Larios and Juana Urbina, trans feminist activists who have been participating in both the trans and the feminist movements.

It is important to mention that this was a dialogue between cisgender and transgender feminists who have already been working together, and it does not include the views of those who are totally opposed to this alliance. This was a conscious decision because we wanted to move beyond the extreme views that are already well rehearsed to understand the tensions and dilemmas experienced by those who, in principle, are open to transcending essentialized views of gender, sexuality and feminism.

The dialogue took place on February 4, 2015, at the Central American University in Managua and two persons participated via Skype. Though we had a discussion guide based on the points of interest that we had identified in other spaces, the dialogue developed freely. The conversation was recorded and transcribed. Each participant received a transcript of their own interventions for consent, allowing them space to add, clarify, delete or correct what they had said. Then the transcript was coded in Atlas.ti in order to identify the main themes and discussion threads, which are the ones presented below. Based on these, the original

conversation was reorganized and edited, but it remains as close as possible to the actual debate. A draft of the edited version was sent again to all participants for approval and comments. After the feedback was integrated, it was translated into English.

The conversation is structured along the main themes we identified: (1) the relationship between bodies, social position and subjectivity, and how that positions trans women within feminism; (2) the debate around trans women's gender performance and to what extent they (are seen to) share, or rather challenge, feminist politics; (3) the question of inclusion in feminist spaces; and (4) the multiple points of convergence that were identified by both cisgender and transgender feminists.

This is followed by an analysis that emerged out of these multiple engagements throughout the process of preparing, participating in and reflecting on the dialogue.

The Dialogue

Bodies, Social Position and Subject Formation: Experiences of Oppression, Resistance or Privilege

Athiany: When the issue of sexual and reproductive rights emerged, they were set in the context of reproductivity and the inequality faced by women who were born as women. When we trans women want to incorporate ourselves into feminism, we find it a bit distant: "If you've still got something in your crotch that isn't a vagina then I can't consider you to be a woman." I haven't had any problems within feminism in terms of involving myself as an equal with women who were born as women, regardless of my corporeality. But it's not the same for some of my *compañeras* [peers] who still experience the genital issue as an obstacle. And the same applies to our upbringing, not just the genital issue. We were raised as men. We have that indelible tattoo of *machismo* that was etched into us. What's more, if a guy puts his hand on my buttock and I don't like him, I'll hit him right away! It's not the same for a woman born and raised as a woman, who was taught not to respond and remain impassive. That education as a *macho* that they marked us with has been one of the main arguments in this respect: "You can't be women because you don't keep quiet, you're always mixed up in violence, you're always aggressive." That's an analysis that has to be considered because although we don't look and express ourselves as men, the aspect of aggressive or violent behavior is not so easy to erase.

Silke: This is an important point because it's often mentioned as an obstacle to including trans women in feminism. I think several things can be said in this respect. Being raised as a man does not imply that one doesn't have problems with gender constructions, or doesn't experience gender based discrimination for not conforming to the rules of 'being a man'.

Athiany: We agree on one aspect: there are essentialisms in the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. We erroneously reproduce those *machista* teachings because even women themselves do that. Feminism has taught me to be a woman without stressing the stereotypes very much [...] I look like a typical, ordinary woman, and what I get the most is harassment, just like other women who were born as women. That's what feminism has taught me: that we trans women experience the same violence. It's just the same, exactly the same as for women who were born as women. But the thing is, and I'll stress it again, that I was taught to defend myself. So I defend myself and I don't have any problems going around in the streets, even in the middle of the night. Women who were born as women weren't taught that. In addition, if I cut my hair, dress in loose-fitting clothes considered to correspond to the male gender, then I can access work and I can insert myself into the labor market and be recognized as a man.

Juana: In relation to violence, Athiany said, "I walk in the streets and I feel I'm empowered and that I can react." But not all women have the same kind of reaction. I believe that we do have the right to consider ourselves to be vulnerable, because I'm quite sure that despite having built ourselves a discourse of empowerment, of going out into the streets and reacting, when we're facing a situation of violence it puts us in a vulnerable position. I think that many of us also keep quiet and don't react. I've been in the street and had things said to me that are very destructive, and I try to cling on to that discourse that I can react, but very often those words cut deep and they hurt us. We hold onto those words of empowerment to demonstrate that we can react and can shut the aggressor up, but of course we feel vulnerable. I think that we have the right to feel like that because we aren't made of iron, because we really feel things, and *machista* violence is so screwed up that it puts us in a position where we're really torn to pieces, like a jigsaw puzzle.

Silke: I really liked what Juana was saying, when you said that you sometimes feel vulnerable when you're being pestered in the street and it's not true that you're "macho", and it doesn't matter and it doesn't get to you. I believe we sometimes think about what it means to be a woman and what

it means to be a man in a very stereotypical way, and that if you grow up as a man it means that your experience is reduced to one of privileges. And I think we shouldn't confuse the point that while, structurally speaking, masculinity is valued more and that men have more power than women, on a personal level, men don't experience the gender system exclusively in terms of privileges, particularly if they don't conform to the gender norms. So someone born with a male body but who is female-identified probably had a childhood that was not very privileged at all and has a day-to-day experience that is also not very privileged. On the other hand, women who conform to the gender norms can experience quite a lot of privilege within the gender system. At the same time, if the "problem" with trans women was that they were raised with male privilege, that would mean that it shouldn't be an issue to accept trans men—people who were born with a female body and became male—into the feminist movement because they have been socialized as women. But that's also a point of controversy in the movement. So it seems to me that there is something more to this.

María Teresa: Apart from having a great deal of empathy with Juana's experience and even with her decision, temporary or not, to pause and protect herself against aggression, in my understanding, Juana is going back to a refuge that we as biological women unfortunately don't have the possibility of returning to.[1] I hear young women saying, "It's like a war going out into the streets" because the level of harassment is enormous. I also hear gay men who are effeminate saying, "Getting on the bus is always a problem for me; being in public spaces where men are present is always a problem." I can understand that life sometimes becomes a permanent defensive attitude that wears any human being down. In addition, transgenderism is an issue that involves not only gender but also class. Trans women from the upper classes certainly aren't going to face the levels of aggression and violence that poor trans women face. I also believe it's important to recognize to what extent expressions of sexist, *machista*, homophobic and transphobic aggression harm us. Feminism has built up its historical account based on documenting the damage that patriarchy and other systems of oppression have done to women. Not doing so, in my opinion, amounts to relativizing it or evading it, and such a stance means it isn't possible to build claim-making platforms that enable society to become aware of and address the damage these systems of discrimination inflict on these bodies, the bodies of both trans and non-trans women, black bodies, lesbian bodies, indigenous bodies, all bodies that have been subordinated to these systems.

Gender Performance, Stereotypes and the Political Agenda of Feminism: Stereotypical Femininity as a Challenge for Trans Participation

Ana Q: There is a majority sector within feminism and women's organizations that still views transgenderism with a very high degree of transphobia due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the processes, but also because many trans women prioritize outer appearances, taking them to extremes. What they're seeking to do is to attract attention to their appearance and in some cases imitate women's "feminine" aspects. In that respect they clash with what we've been proposing from a feminist perspective in relation to appearance, to the prejudices, and the expectation that we women have to apply makeup, wear high heels and dress like princesses all the time. We can add to this what Athiany was talking about having been brought up within *machista* ways of thinking and carrying that aspect of machos who react according to macho patterns even though their appearance is something else. Other areas in which women in the movement and certain trans groups clash are issues such as beauty contests or commercial sex work, both of which have been rejected by feminist organizations to a large extent. So there's a motive there for a systematic clash. And we also encounter that conflict when it comes to defining our demands. You'd be hard pressed to find a feminist organization that's going to demand the issue of commercial sex work very much. It hasn't been one of the discussions but it's not something we fight for.

Athiany: We know the system sells us a feminine stereotype of high heels, makeup and all that, and of the submissive woman. So what is it that trans women do? In order to be recognized as a woman and accepted by the system, trans women are going to stress those feminine stereotypes. The Miss Universe stereotypes that proliferate in many events, like Miss Gay or Miss Trans, are adjusted to what the system is telling me defines the most beautiful kind of woman: 90-60-90, a lot of makeup, lovely dresses, boobs and a butt. So that's what we trans women have to be. Ah, but the "misses" [referring to cisgender women] have also earned themselves work, whether as models or in some other way, and also autonomy. But as trans women still lack that biological part in the crotch, they're left with the other part of being women that's removed from showbiz opportunities: being someone who's going to look for a man to value her as a woman and to do what she's asked to, to be the submissive one, the cook, the good domestic servant, the good cleaner. Those stereotypes

have left a deep mark, and it's difficult to change them. I used to be like that, but I've learned within feminism that being a woman doesn't mean stressing all of those stereotypes that the *machista* system prescribes.

Juana: I'd like to talk about the connection between the issue of transgenderism and feminism, or the link between trans women and the feminist movement, but also the link there is been between trans women and feminists. The vast majority of us trans women are coming from a world of total marginalization, and we aren't therefore willing to give up that ideal of femininity that we've been given. The culture teaches us how we are supposed to be women. It doesn't matter so much to a trans woman that other women don't recognize her as a woman; it's all the same to her. But she is profoundly interested in men recognizing her as a woman. Why? Because most of us have the idea that if we're women, then we have to desire men and we have to comply with the requirement of looking like and constructing ourselves as a woman so that, first and foremost, men recognize us as such. Evidently there is a rupture between trans women and feminism in this regard because feminism interrogates us and brings us to ask ourselves what defines us as women. Is it really the outward appearance? Is it that having boobs, having a vagina defines me as a woman? How do we as women really think? In my case, feminism made me question myself about that. What does it mean for me to be a woman? Because I don't think in the same way as Athiany or as Ana, so it isn't true that we're women because we all think in the same way.

Silke: I feel that gender oppression is expressed not only in terms of disadvantage and stereotypes in relation to what is feminine but also in terms of the freedom—or the lack of freedom—that women have in expressing their masculinity. And that's something that happens at the level of society in general, but also within feminism. What is it that oppresses us? If we as feminists are questioning the stereotypes of being female, we have to avoid putting forward another normative way of being a woman within feminism because this can be equally oppressive. According to some positions within feminism, we can't be very feminine because then we're accused of being "traditional", but we can't be very masculine either because then we're accused of seeking male privilege and of no longer qualifying as women. There's an oppressive discourse in this as well.

María Teresa: I'd say that for all of us women who feel uncomfortable with gender binarisms, not fitting in with the norms is a latent tension. Transgenderism goes far beyond aesthetically transgressing bodies. One of the most important tensions we feminists have with many trans women is

that the transgression has remained at the level of aesthetic expression and has not gone further in terms of questioning gender binarisms and essentialisms, and particularly the power hierarchy that is constructed based on those binarisms. I'm talking about a lack of political dialogue in feminist terms. I don't have any problem with recognizing the gender identity assumed by Athiany or Juana, but I'm going to argue with them, just as I might do with any other woman or man, with respect to political positions regarding the exercise of power. The issue of beauty contests has been an Achilles' heel for feminism because it has implications that reach beyond the catwalk. It might be entertaining because at the end of the day we have the right to those kinds of parodies, right? If heterosexuals do it and earn millions of dollars, why can't other groups that have been on the margins do it? However, I'm sure it wouldn't occur to any feminist organization in its right mind to organize a "Miss" competition because there's a whole underlying debate about the objectification and commercialization of women's bodies. That's a point we haven't debated. In fact, it is in relation to the political positions with respect to gender that I believe we have the most important challenge.

Camilo: Several people have talked about how there's a tendency among many trans people to identify with the most traditional, patriarchal ideals in relation to these topics. I think that's problematic to the extent that it reproduces relationship patterns that feminism has been trying to question. But at the same time I also agree that there's been a need for a more profound discussion about this because I believe that in those forms of identification there is potential for questioning, destabilizing and problematizing those traditional ideals. I don't think we've necessarily explored this or examined it as deeply as we could have. So I think there's also great potential there that could be explored in greater depth, but that involves looking for ways of coming together, which isn't always easy or hasn't always been sought from one side or another.

Ana V: For me, what's fascinating about male and female transgenderism is that they are bodies that in themselves demonstrate gender plasticity. We're all trans in a certain way; we're all performing a gender, assuming certain characteristics associated with that gender and others not. We're on a kind of scale. But I think that in spite of the fact that many female trans people take on traditional feminine characteristics, they do so in a body in which those characteristics are not supposed to be represented. In other words, it is a transgression in the sense that it displays the plasticity and superficiality of gender. I think we could also see it in this other way,

and for me in that sense, trans beauty contests, for example, don't bother me as much as those involving cisgender women. It's true there's an exacerbation of traditional femininity, but in bodies that weren't born to show that, so I feel there's potential for discussion and for a political proposal there as well.

Inclusion in Spaces, Preservation of Spaces: Bodies, Identities and Feminist Space(s)

Geni: For me, the debate that has taken place and generates confusion is the issue of the inclusion of trans women in particular spaces. On a theoretical level we're much clearer about it, although there is currently nothing clear about what it is that defines a woman. But then on a more practical level, when it's about opening up or closing down participation in certain spaces, I think there's a lot of confusion. There's an element of rejection or fear, and a desire to preserve certain conditions for participation, because it was hard—and still is—to keep spaces for participation, in which we women—even though we are not equal amongst ourselves either—can participate with greater freedom.

Ana Q: To add a little more spice to this soup, one issue is that if we haven't had a broad enough coming together and we haven't had sufficient collective reflection among female transgenderism and feminism, then if we add male transgenderism, meaning people who were born as women but have a male identity, "we're clear that we don't have anything clear", as Geni puts it. The issue with male transgenderism is that if women are invisible, if lesbians are even more invisible than women who fall into the category of heteronormativity, then trans men are the most invisible of the invisible. We have a very limited recognition of the group as a group, or of the people individually or the problems involved. How can we help them have more space? We don't propose it, not even very much in trans organizations from what I've seen, and in some cases they've been told, "You're either a lesbian or you become a lesbian, or you don't belong here!" The role of international cooperation is another factor, particularly based on definitions that the AIDS lobbyists have been pushing in recent years that the risk groups are MSMs, trans women and sex workers. This leaves women out and has led to competition over funds between women and trans organizations.

I think that as Geni put it so well, it shouldn't be so difficult for feminists to understand the demands of trans women. Very often it's not that

it's difficult to understand; the point is how difficult it is to accept them in the space. It's more a question of spaces than sharing points of reflection or, better, banners of struggle. And the other thing is clearly the issue of the "feministometer", and thinking that any women's space, any feminist space, because it has to do with women, should be open to any trans. In this sense, we feminists are a bit jealous: feminist spaces are for feminists and not just for anyone—we're not "mujeristas" in that sense.

Juana: I feel there's been an absence of the trans issue within the feminist movement itself. Debating it hasn't been a priority and it's been us, trans women, who have questioned the gender binarism. We've said it isn't true that there's an essence of maleness or of femaleness. Is it an issue still pending to be addressed within the movement itself? Yes it is. Has it been talked about? Yes it has, but only in broad brush strokes because it isn't a priority for many movement members. And it is so obvious. For example, how many feminists and how many women's organizations participate in the June 28 march? Just a few. Hardly any. And how many trans women are really involved in the struggle to debate the idea that women's rights are also a priority for us? I've been in many activities and I've been told, for example, that many trans women and many biological women say, "but there are trans women that aren't going to the march for abortion rights". And the trans women say, "The thing is that the issue of abortion doesn't concern me because I'm never going to have an abortion." But, of course, it concerns me! How could it not matter to us? If it's a human rights issue and a matter of demanding respect for women's lives and bodies, how am I not going to take up a political position?

Ana V: In relation to what Juana said, that it hasn't been debated in depth, I wonder why is it that we don't address it more? Isn't it that we also feel anxiety about questioning what it means to be a woman, or which women are the ones who should be in that feminist space? On the one hand there is the feministometer, which deals with the question of to what extent we are committed to the feminist political struggle. But on the other, there's the identity of being a woman. Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I think in the same way as you; not even all of us feminists think the same about a whole load of issues. So sometimes I've thought that what happens with the issue of trans women is that it makes us question what it means to be a woman, and then who should be in that feminist space and who shouldn't. And what happens with women who want to take on certain male characteristics? Trans men, who have lived and were raised as women and whose bodies have been oppressed; who

identify with me in that experience of oppression but decide to express themselves in a more masculine way—should they be here or not? At the end of the day, are they or are they not similar to me in terms of certain life experiences? Do they or do they not have the same political agenda? I feel that deep down it amounts to questioning our own identification as women, which we still don't know how to resolve, and so rather than talking about it, better we leave it for some other moment. And that's what I feel: that it has to do with the issue of female identity, that is related to feminist identity.

Geni: Behind that fear, or that lack of debate, there's a certain anxiety, like vertigo. We were very comfortable with the idea that sex is something natural, a given that is not questioned, and that what was socially constructed is gender. And we started to question that and took on the idea that the body is also a social construction. On the theoretical level that isn't so difficult; what is hard is transferring that to everyday matters, to relationships, to what it implies in the movement. In other words, we've built a feminist discourse and movement around creating that identity based on the recognition that we are all women. And then we've included the discourse of diversity, but that's also a very superficial discourse. And now we're talking about intersectionality, but we also haven't really managed to account for and integrate into the debate, into the reflections, into the feminist agenda all the questioning in that diversity of oppressions that we women experience in relation to other axes of oppression. So logically, in this sea of confusion, we also find it hard to include another axis: transsexuality. This shouldn't be an excuse, but rather I believe it should make us think and work more on how we can—and if we really want to—build possibilities of living in greater freedom for all people regardless of bodies, regardless of desire and regardless of other positions and situations in which we live. There isn't such a problem in terms of incorporating claims into the agenda. The problem is rather who participates in which spaces. I believe that behind this there's also that fear that comes from how hard it is to preserve those spaces of debate and organization that have been constructed based on that idea of being feminist women. I think that behind that fear of opening up the space to the participation of trans women is the fear that the space will then open up to men's participation, and so far the experience in that respect has not been very positive.

María Teresa: I believe that the concern we have in the debate with trans women is different from the concern in the debate we have with

pro-equality men. There's a position that says, "Machismo damages men", and that deliberately omits the damage machismo and *machista* men cause to women. This is a focus that is at least suspiciously silent in one indisputable dimension, which is what feminism has put forward since its beginnings. If machismo was a force that above all damages men, men wouldn't have needed feminist discourse to change because they would have felt as hurt and damaged as us. There is a part of machismo that has benefited men. A more honest approach is to say that most men are not willing to dismantle the privileges they are given by the sexist culture. And if the privileges weren't more important than the suffering, they themselves would have changed many centuries ago and feminism wouldn't have any reason to exist. And that is where I connect that tension we feminists have had in relation to men who have subscribed this discourse on equality. Because you'll come across men that take on the discourse but then want to compete with feminists in bad faith, want to disqualify feminist discourses and, in addition, weaken the movement as a political actor. Evidently we feminists are alert to that and will be evaluating to what extent it's a political position that adds to a legitimate movement, or rather an opportunistic stance. But that could also happen to us with other bodies, couldn't it—regarding the debate about whether it is just about gender aesthetic or really a political position that questions the gender binarisms? A lot more debating has to be done in that respect.

Ana V: I want to take up what María Teresa's been saying, because what you were saying left me with the idea that it isn't as important which body was positioning itself as feminist so much as the agenda or political posture it has, particularly in relation to trans women. With men I think that's a more sensitive debate. In other words, we're all exposed in some way—trans men, trans women and women—in this dominant sex-gender system. We face a system of oppression that affects men differently, and in that sense I think we share similarities that allow a greater opening up to certain feminist spaces for trans women than for men. But María Teresa was saying that it's important to what extent this political stance is taken on. So I think that's where Geni's debate comes in: to what extent is feminist politics or the feminist agenda so agreed upon even among women—cisgender women, biological women? So she said that there's still the issue of intersectionality, which is a big discussion. I feel that there's an issue of criteria of inclusion that has to do with a political position and a political agenda in relation to bodies and gender, but also to other aspects that are the ones that have led to problems among women.

Ana Q: In that same sense we've talked with certain trans people, trying to understand their reaction to feminism, because many trans women openly state and insist that they are non-feminist women. And they say they're not feminists because they don't want to fight with the government,[2] because they identify with the question of beauty understood from an absolutely traditional perspective. And in this sense it's also not as if trans women are falling over themselves in a rush to approach feminist organizations for anything save very particular things. Like many women, they have a prejudiced attitude toward feminism and that makes the debate very complicated. So I think that evading the debate is, let's say, reciprocal. It's not as though trans women are dying to debate with feminists, or as though many feminists are dying to debate with trans women. A handful of us have been concerning ourselves with that debate over why we should be more open. I agree with Geni that there's a resistance on our part to continue because we've been struggling with enough things in general, so why enter into conflict among ourselves over a debate on what it is to be a woman? It's like our legs have turned to jelly, the basis of our proposals is becoming a bit weak. Weakened in the sense of "What on earth am I going to believe, then?"

Points of Convergence: Dialogue, Coalition Politics and Common Agendas

Geni: I agree with what has been expressed in the sense that we can identify issues of conflict. It has been clearly pointed out that feminine trans people are looking to reinforce and take on feminine stereotypes in an extreme, superfluous way, while we feminists are fighting against those stereotypes. There are also the issues of whether or not trans women renounce those privileges and this particular construction of identity as they were born as men; and the fact that the women's movement, the feminist movement, has been constructed based on its collective identity of being women. Those would be the issues in conflict. But at the same time there are other issues that do allow a coming together and could be commonly identified, such as feminism demanding sexual freedom, demanding the rights over our bodies, and critically addressing that opposed and binary construction of identities. Those issues provide an area in which we would be able to find a convergence.

Camilo: For me, one really interesting thing that has emerged in different ways from the dialogue we've had is how we understand or conceive of feminist politics, of doing politics from feminism. I think that something that adds relevance to this relationship between feminism and

transgenderism is seeing feminist politics as a politics of alliance around a shared interest, which in my opinion would be questioning the patriarchal gender order. And of course, I think that shared interest comes from different experiences in that relationship with patriarchy. Some of us who share this interest have experienced specific forms of patriarcal oppression—for example, because they were born as women or because they were identified as men at the moment of birth but later identified as women. Other people experience the patriarchy from a position of privilege as people who were born as men and identify, and are identified, as men. So I think that this shared interest does not erase and should not make us forget the very particular experiences through which each person relates to that patriarchal order. But then, in my opinion, feminist politics implies that possibility of creating alliances around that shared objective based on these positions and these particular experiences. At the same time, it seems to me that there are moments in which it is perhaps valuable, important, strategic to meet up, come together or work in relation to these very particular forms of oppression that some people share and others don't. For example, there are moments in which it can be strategic for trans women to have spaces for dialogue among trans women to talk about very specific experiences they share. And the same goes for trans men, or women born as women, or men who are pro-equality. In other words, there are also moments in which it is strategic to meet or come together or work in relation to these identities, which, while they may be constructed, have real effects on our life experience and on the way in which we experience, in which we live in this patriarchal society. So I find that valuable and strategic, and at the same time I believe that we shouldn't forget the value of that alliance we can build with people with other experiences.

María Teresa: Trans women and feminists do have a common point of convergence, but we still haven't really realized it. It is a paradigmatic point of convergence without which neither of these agendas is going to be able to develop in greater depth. There is no way our agendas can develop, multiply, have an impact on the awareness of society in everyday practices if we don't engage in an in-depth questioning of gender essentialisms. That is a point of convergence. If we got involved with men for equality, and with gays, we'd be talking about the same thing, but limiting the reflection on this issue. In the case of Nicaragua this difficulty to have dialogues is influenced by the existence of a feminist movement with a liberal tradition, with a commitment to change the state. We've invested very little in processes of reflection and construction of emancipatory ventures that imply changes in our own ways of being in life and of relating to each other.

The first reflection cycles that our feminist organization, La Corriente, held with trans women started in 2010. The debates we had there were really enlightening and we feminists learned a lot. We found common ground in how trans women and non-trans women relate to men in terms of sexuality, love, domestic work and sex work. These are very important discussions, not only for trans women but also for bio women, because we also have thousands of women around us who are conflicted within these narrow limits. So we're talking about possibilities of convergence between these two movements with different trajectories. For me, it's crucial to debate, but in political terms, because building alliances requires delving more profoundly into these languages of the body.

There are a good number of Nicaraguan feminists of my generation who have been open to dialogue. There are rural feminist organizations that are increasingly open to the inclusion of these transgendered bodies. There are collectives that are incorporating not only trans people but also lesbians and gays into their work teams and their training actions. However, the issue of how to expand the agenda and of how to make it more expressive of different bodies could only have been introduced at a moment of great challenges and more understanding of the debate on intersectionality. We are passing from the woman as a homogeneous subject to a plural subject, which requires a lot of debate. I believe that some alliances have been more pragmatic. They have been established in the framework of the possibility of obtaining money, and these are the ones that have the least impact. Alliances that aren't mediated by such pragmatic interests are slower but more significant, more educational, more pedagogical and more politically transgressing. In that sense, if trans women or some lesbian groups don't want to confront the government because they think there's a possibility that a law could be approved that guarantees gender diversity, they have the right to try that, in the same way that at some point we as feminists tried it, with rather negative results. That shouldn't be an obstacle to building paradigmatic alliances based on these points of convergence that go beyond a certain political context.

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

In Nicaragua there is openness in the feminist movement to including transgender issues into the feminist political agenda, at least to the extent that they are deemed compatible with cisgender feminists' own conceptions of feminism. At the same time there is an ambivalence and hesitance around the inclusion of actual trans bodies into feminist spaces.

The different stances regarding trans inclusion in Nicaraguan feminism can be seen as corresponding to different conceptions about the link between body, social position and subject formation. Those who assume a more direct and immutable link between these three dimensions tend to believe that having male or female bodies will invariably lead to distinct sets of experiences that enable or disable the possibilities of developing a feminist consciousness. This view prescribes a particular relationship between sex and gender as a basis for the constitution of a legitimate feminist subject (Butler 1999 [1990]). The relationship between femaleness, femininity and feminism prescribed here is based on a "biological foundationalism" (Nicholson 1994)—that is, the idea that gender identity is ultimately based on the biological and material reality of the sexed body, because it is in response to this body that sociocultural forces shape a gendered subjectivity and inscribe it in patriarchal relationships of domination and submission, and that, in turn, it is in response to this experience of oppression that a feminist consciousness can emerge.

As Nicholson (1994) has argued, defining the political subject of feminism based on this biological foundationalism has been useful to challenge the naturalization of patriarchal oppression by focusing on the sociocultural processes that construct gender on the basis of biological sex, instead of portraying this form of oppression as biologically determined. In addition, by placing a sexed body as the material foundation of the sociocultural processes that construct femininity in opposition and in subordination to masculinity, these conceptions have contributed to the constitution of women as a politically unified category, based on their common experiences of patriarchal oppression, despite their differences and the other forms of oppression that particular groups of women might face. However, these conceptions have also very problematic effects.

The foundationalist perspective assumes that bodies can be classified in the binary, unambiguous and permanent categories of male and female, and ignores the commonalities, continuities and transits between these categories (Fausto-Sterling 2000). A feminist politics predicated on this view will find it very difficult to deal with bodies that defy binary conceptions of sex or that seem ambiguous from that binary perspective, such as intersex bodies, or with bodies that cannot be permanently classified in one category or the other, like trans bodies. On the one hand, this foundationalist perspective was reflected in our dialogue in the idea that trans women invariably experienced a socialization of male privilege, that they have the possibility to resort to male privilege at any time, and

that this represented a latent relation of complicity with patriarchy. On the other hand, the discussion around the similarities and differences between transgender and cisgender women in their processes of socialization, their experience of male violence and discrimination, and their possibilities of confronting that violence reflected a different stance that highlighted the way in which trans bodies—and subjectivities—challenge the assumed stability between the body and subjectivity.

Second, by obscuring the diverse experiences and power imbalances among different groups of women, "biological foundationalism" ends up privileging and universalizing the views of a particular set of women regarding what patriarchal oppression is and how it should be countered. In Latin America, as in other regions of the world, there are very important differences among women in terms of class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, and any emancipatory politics need to take those differences into consideration instead of obscuring them. Hence when cisgender feminists state that the inclusion of transgender women is predicated upon their acceptance of the political agenda of feminism, it seems to rest on the assumption that there is a unified agenda and that their views represent the "true" and legitimate feminist principles. This was reflected in the debate on the gender performance of transgender women.

For some feminists, the gender performance of many trans women was seen as a reproduction of female stereotypes that played an important role in women's oppression and that, therefore, should be rejected. Transgender performance is seen as something they do by choice, and to display an exaggerated femininity is regarded as merely an aesthetic goal oriented by the male gaze. This is perceived as "anti-feminist" since it is considered alien and even contrary to the "true" feminist political concerns. For other feminists, transgender performance has a totally different meaning and motivation. Many trans women experience it as a search for belonging and recognition as women in a heteronormative society, even when they are aware of and reflexive about it. Several participants also pointed out how both cisgender and transgender women reproduce normative gender stereotypes in their search for acceptance in a heteronormative society.

Related to this, some authors have also pointed out how essentialist views of gender within feminism have been connected to very particular views around sexuality as well, which conceive sexuality as a male domain, and as primarily an instrument of male domination, and highlight women's sexual objectification and victimization. In the debate, this view was reflected in the importance that the topic of male (sexual) violence took

and the concerns that were voiced by feminists around trans women's sexualized and hyperfeminine aesthetics and gender performance, as well as their activism for sex workers' rights.

Sex-positive and queer feminists have questioned this idea that sexuality can be solely or accurately understood through a framework of gender inequality, and have called for an intersectional approach that acknowledges gender and sexuality as distinct modes of oppression that interact with each other as well as with other domains of power—such as class and race (Rubin 1999 [1984]; Richardson et al. 2006). In addition they have called for a more positive understanding of sexuality that highlights pleasure and goes beyond a view of men as victimizers and women as victims (Cornwall et al. 2008; Vance 1993).

The apprehension expressed toward the aesthetics of trans feminists and to their inclusion in feminist spaces also clearly has class dimensions. Trans women are among the most marginalized groups in Nicaraguan society, with low levels of education and a very marginal economic position. As Lois McNay (2004) has argued, femininity is a particularly difficult place to inhabit for those women who lack the economic and social capital—such as educational achievement, occupational success or social prestige—that could grant them some degree of social respectability. One of the only forms of capital they have available is their body and appearance, and they often need to invest heavily in them. However, compared with the unattainable middle-class feminine ideal, their own performance of femininity is often deemed inappropriate or exaggerated. For these women "the feminist critique of conventional femininity undermines one of the few ways open to them to achieve any kind of social recognition, as fleeting and unstable as it might be" (McNay 2004: 187).

Sex work is another complex issue in which gender, sexuality and class intersect. There is not a unified political stance within Nicaraguan feminism in relation to this topic and only recently has it started to be discussed in some feminist spaces. Including trans women's interests in a feminist agenda would mean having to adress largely postponed issues, also for cis-gender women, such as sex workers' rights. The crux in this regard is, how do we come to define the feminist agenda, who defines it, and how open are we to redefining it in order to include other topics that are relevant to transgender people as well as cisgendered women who have historically been excluded from the movement.

The changing priorities and often conditionalities of international development cooperation add another strain to the possibility of different

groups approaching each other because they often find themselves competing for funding. In addition, the active attempt of the government to divide the feminist and LGBT movement has made it more difficult to cooperate.

Despite some differences and points of tension, the dialogue reveals many points of convergence between cisgender and transgender feminists, and possibilities of cross-fertilization that can enrich both trans and feminist politics, and enhance our understanding of intersectionality. Some of these points of convergence were a common interest in questioning gender essentialisms and deepening the discussion about sexual freedom.

Essentialist understandings of gender and sexuality are often reproduced within both feminist and transgender movements. Abandoning essentialist notions is crucial to understanding the ways in which patriarchal and heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality affect us all in different yet interrelated ways (Butler 1999 [1990]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Fausto-Sterling 2000; Halberstam 1998; Rubin 1999 [1984]). At the same time it is important to acknowledge and actively engage with the fact that gender and sexual identities are often experienced in ways that *feel* natural and are deeply engrained in people's experience of self. It is also relevant to keep in mind that being non-gender normative (or being a woman, for that matter) does not mean that one necessarily wants to challenge the hegemonic gender order. There is also a strong desire for recognition and belonging. At the same time, in the case of trans women, even the expression of traditional feminine stereotypes can be interpreted as a political challenge to the hegemonic gender order because these expressions are enacted in bodies that, according to the heteronormative order, are not supposed to look feminine, thereby exposing the plasticity of gender. This complexity can be best understood through a notion of intersectionality as proposed by Ferree (2009), which goes beyond the idea of a structural location in which subjects are positioned in a hierarchical order, and takes into account how social positions, identities and subjectivities are constituted by already existing and intersecting discourses on gender, sexuality, race, class and other markers of inequality.

A meaningful inclusion of trans politics and trans persons into a feminist agenda and movements means adopting a perspective that allows us to engage critically, yet empathically, with our taken-for-granted assumptions around gender, sexuality and other social categories that shape our bodies, identities, subjectivities and agendas in complex ways, and are connected to the structures of inequality that pervade our everyday lives.

Notes

1. For several years, Juana has had a feminine self-presentation and recently she has started to present herself in a more masculine way. Now she has short hair, she has started to grow a beard and she wears jeans and t-shirts, although she still refers to herself as a woman.
2. An important subtext to this debate is the political context in Nicaragua in which the Sandinsita government has been antagonizing the feminist movement while simultaneously trying to co-opt the LGBT movement (Heumann 2014; Kampwirth 2014).

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PART II

Points of View on Gender Politics, Rights and Bodies in Resistance

CHAPTER 9

The Development Industry and the Co-optation of Body Politics

Wendy Harcourt

Introduction

A growing literature on feminists' engagement in body politics in the development process charts narratives that call for reproductive rights, sexuality and embodiment to be acknowledged in the development agenda in debates around women's agency, gender equality, health, population and environment.[1] These studies show how body politics has brought issues of domestic violence, rape as a weapon of war; denial of sexual and reproductive rights; sexual oppression of women, children, homosexuals and transgender people; racism and agism into development policy and projects.[2] They chart feminists' engagements in the UN and feminist advocacy through campaigns for rights, legitimacy, legality and freedom over their bodies. These texts analyze feminist engagements in development by making visible the embedded power relations within development processes, making what is private public (personal is political); in other words, charting "development with a body" (Jolly and Cornwall 2008).

This chapter reflects on that analysis, exploring whether there has been co-optation of feminism by the development processes in a process of

W. Harcourt (✉)
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_9

dilution and misinterpretation of feminist demands around body politics. Following Patrick Coy's concern that co-optation "may have a diluting, demobilizing, depoliticizing and disempowering effect on the movement, its organizations, and on its leadership and key activities" (Coy 2013: 280), I reflect on my own concern as a feminist working in development institutions. I suggest that even neoliberal spaces in development can be used for constructive purposes and propose that from the privilege of the middle, it is important to make visible the work of feminist activists and feminist movements in institutional settings.

The growing literature on co-optation shows that these concerns have been on the minds of feminist researchers.[3] My contribution to it reflects on a recent meeting in South Asia where I interrogated the co-optation of feminist understandings of body politics in development practices and programs. By sharing this narrative, I aim to contribute to ideas about how to work with and against co-optation as part of feminist discursive and material practices that can embrace what Nancy Fraser calls the "strange shadowy version of itself", with an "uncanny double that it can neither simply embrace nor wholly disavow" (Fraser 2013a).

Self-Reflection as a Methodology of Analysis

In writing about my engagement as a feminist working in gender and development policy and advocacy, I am contributing to an emerging literature of self-reflection among feminists working in these fields.[4] I write from the position of a white Australian-born and educated cisgender woman feminist living in Europe since 1986 who has played a role, alongside many others, in body politics practices. I am, quite openly, passionately involved in the story I am telling. Such "insider-outsider" literature aims critically to analyze developmentalism by addressing our own personal experiences and the institutions where we work in dialogue with others. The literature situates the "we" who engages in gender and development. It analyzes knowledge practices as political questions that engage with the epistemic and ontological assumptions behind feminism in development practices. Such analysis calls attention to the compromises and ambiguities of feminists working inside development and their struggles, and the frustrating and depoliticizing ways that hegemonic male privilege shapes gender in their work (de Jong 2009; Fraser 2013b; Ferguson 2015; De Jong and Kimm 2015).

What Is Body Politics?

In my analysis of feminism in gender and development practices, I have written about body politics, focusing on the multiple processes where transnational feminist struggles around gender equality, human rights and public health have been mainstreamed into global and national development agendas via gender, population and women's health programs (Harcourt 2005; 2009). As referred to above, the narrative that feminists have brought into development discourse sets out how women's experiences of bodily oppression, violation, exploitation and commodification have long catalyzed their political engagement. Via a number of discursive practices, the narratives have aimed to recenter embodied experiences in development processes and policy-making without essentializing women (and also, though more muted, raising the issue of men and other genders). This sort of work brings in feminist questions about tradition and modernity, the struggle for women's autonomy and rights, and acknowledging the legacies of gender bias, racism, homophobia, fundamentalism and militarism (Baksh and Harcourt 2015).

My specific focus in body politics has been on sexual health and reproductive rights, with the goal of making visible diverse gendered embodied experiences, working within and outside of mainstream development processes. In bringing body politics into development, the narrative has tried to displace the definition of women as tied to their biological abilities to give birth and their socialized roles as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and grandmothers, and focused on how social and economic inequities were played out in reproductive rights and health programs. These discourses challenge maternity as the only female experience of embodiment, and raise the visibility of multiple forms of sexual violence and GBV. Body politics, in recent years, has also put on the agenda the right to pleasure, calling[5] attention to heteronormativity and erotic justice. Issues of masculine experiences of body politics and the inclusion of men and boys in gender discourse have been more contested, though acknowledged, and similarly, transgender has been threaded through the narrative (Connell 2012).

Previous work on population and reproduction, sexual violence and GBV, sexuality and development has contrasted "the lived bodily experiences of the violated women and the comfortable lives of women leading gender and development debates" (Harcourt 2009: 12). It has complemented that by looking at how "knowledge on bodies is irreducibly

interwoven with other discourses, social, colonial, ethical and economic" (Shildrick and Price 1998: 3). With others in this literature, I have assumed that if we analyze how gendered bodies are constructed in different discourses, we can then challenge norms and oppressive practices, and understand how to exercise different forms of power that can transform and change oppressive conditions (Cornwall and Jolly 2009; Harcourt 2009; Jolly et al 2013).

Other authors have explored global body politics around the series of UN conferences held in the 1990s that opened up public health policy to include sexual and reproductive rights and the issue of violence against women. Rosalind Petchesky (2002) gives an insider's analysis of women's participation in UN conferences, transnational networking and advocacy to promote sexual and reproductive rights and health. Her accounts of major UN conferences on population, women, social development and rights are linked to her critique of World Bank, World Health Organization and national-level health reforms in the period, and they describe economic, political and ideological forces confronting women's health movements. She reviews the problem of NGO-ization and donor dependency for gender and development advocates. Peggy Antrobus (2004) presents another inside account of how southern-based transnational women's movements entered into national and UN discourse in order to advocate for more awareness in development policy about feminist issues of gender and sexuality, social justice and human rights, political economy and power. She documents the challenges and successes regarding the difficulties of building up from grassroots women's every day lives to the global policy arenas where transnational feminists operate. The writings of Andrea Cornwall (Cornwall 2007; Cornwall and Jolly 2009; Pereira 2014) critique the co-optation of feminist issues around the body, sexuality, health and rights in development. They argue that feminist agendas on the body and sexuality have been "pushed out of the frame" of international development programs on gender (Cornwall et al. 2008: 4). Their work interrogates the relationship between knowledge production and power relations in feminist engagements with gender and development around sexuality, rights and health within "empowerment" discourses. Cornwall raises candidly the issue of co-optation: gender in development has been

> blunted not only by the lack of specificity in its use, but also by the process of its domestication by development agencies … Transplanted from domains of feminist discourse and practice onto other, altogether different

> and in many ways inherently hostile institutional terrains, it would seem that "gender" has retained little of the radical promise that was once vested in its promotion … in the hands of the development mainstream, women's empowerment becomes a double-edged sword. Not only does it shift the spotlight away from structural issues of social and economic justice and onto the self-improving individual. It dislocates the "gender agenda" from precisely the concern with the relational dimensions of power that animated it in the first place. (Cornwall 2007: 69)[6]

In this exploration of whether doing gender as a feminist project in development has been co-opted, I am also in conversation with the issues raised by Lucy Ferguson in her article on the "messy business" of working as a gender expert in international institutions. She questions the feminist academic concerns that feminist agendas "evaporated" as gender has been "mainstreamed" into institutional and political circumstances in a process that simply served as a legitimation of neoliberal capitalism. She asks, reflecting on her own struggles as a gender expert in development institutions, whether in some contexts "feminist strategies have turned from a model of resistance to an instrument of power" (Ferguson 2015: 381).

It is the tensions between feminists' awareness of co-optation and "the domestication" and taming of their political passions as they try to engage meaningfully in development processes that I explore in this chapter.

Building an Ethnoscape of Encounters

In order to explore these tensions, I construct what Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1996) terms the "ethnoscape of encounters" in development. He defines ethnoscape as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree" (1996: 33). Appadurai suggests that encounters between the minority and majority worlds (developed and developing world, first and third world) are not only material but also imagined, "based on images, memories of previous visits and stories" (1990). In creating ethnoscapes, I situate myself in development processes as a feminist engaged in various layers of political processes and as an academic encountering "the objects of inquiry" in workshops, UN spaces and teaching arenas. In line with feminist methodologies (Harding

1991), I state my own position while being open to the uncertainty of what I know about myself and others. In looking candidly at co-optation, I question my complicity in the contradictions at the heart of body politics around my position of privilege and also unknowingness of the "other" (Rose 1997). In acknowledging and trying to come to terms with this inability to know the other in relation to difference of class, gender, age and race, I see the process of reflexivity and a building of ethnoscapes as an ethical and political practice that enables me to engage critically with development practices as a problem space for feminist strategies.[7]

In order to explore in more detail body politics in development and to discuss my concern with co-optation, I now turn to a recent encounter in South Asia. I have chosen not to make explicit the country or exact place due to ethical concerns of privacy of the individuals involved. In addition, these encounters I see as multiple, taking place over the years. I am interested in feminist development imaginaries that are being pursued in the encounters of feminist professionals "doing gender", in this case in relation to body politics. I aim to look at how these imaginaries are constructing an ethnoscape, connecting other visits, stories and texts, which can serve to obscure the tensions and fail to engage with the other lives (and bodies) that they are seeking to reach.

Another Hotel Room, Another City, Another Training Course

An enduring memory of this course, held in late 2014, is of each morning sitting at the top of the hotel high above the busy road eating toast and eggs, looking across at the water, the rubbish and the slums. Around me were young, well-dressed consultants, of different nationalities and genders, eating as they scanned their iPads, mobile phones and laptops, or held early meetings to discuss evaluations or plan projects. Such a setting demarcated me as participating in one small piece of a flourishing feminist streak in the development industry. Shortly before 9:00 a.m., a car picked us up to go the training center. Though within easy walking distance along side streets, the pollution at that time of year made breathing difficult. My bodily awareness of and physical discomfort from the pollution set out my otherness in a landscape where many thousands had to walk, whatever the pollution level. Once in the training center, we didn't leave until the end of the day, having our tea breaks and lunches in the canteen. The name of our workshop was printed on a paper slip that fitted into a slat next to

the wooden door, easily removable for the workshop that followed. Inside the room there was all that was required: white boards, power points and moveable wooden desks. I recall, as in almost all such training courses, that the "air con" was a source of contention—it was too cold, but too hot if turned off, and if the windows were open it was too noisy. As one of the local trainers commented, she could not survive without air con in her car, in her house in the training room. So we stayed cocooned in our cooled meeting space throughout the two weeks. Our days back and forth from the hotel to the training centre were only interrupted by a fieldtrip to view a successful project, another evening to listen to NGOs discuss their work, a visit to a university, tea with an embassy staff member and an afternoon off for shopping and sightseeing. As we were ferried back and forth in traffic that went slower than the many people walking along the unpaved streets, we spoke about the day's work and planned how to run the next, or we exchanged views about where to buy gifts for family back home. We chatted about other projects and gossiped about people with whom we had worked. All of the trainers had been to the country before, and we commented on the changes since we had last been—particularly one person who had been there nearly 20 years before. We reminisced about the greener, more authentic past. We expressed surprise and then resignation about the endless shopping streets with the bright lights, the fast fusion food, the terrible traffic, the pollution and the anonymity of it all. We all spoke English, and all of us, most of the time, lived in Europe. We were in a bubble of "aidland" (Mosse 2011), though as progressive feminists we tried to make sense of what we could interpret, conscious of our otherness, while recognizing the familiarity of the modern landscape (the traffic, food etc.) The sense of loss of some imagined authentic past was also part of our otherness as we reflected, uncomfortably, on the damage to the culture by modernizing development processes, of which we were a part. There was a sense that Western cultures from which we came could be diverse and contradictory, whereas "other" cultures should carry something unique, "pure" and recognizable. Our conversations about such tensions connected us back to other visits to other places, creating our sense of being part of the wider international community of development experts who were "doing" gender in difficult landscapes of "otherness" that we could, with support, maneuver, while at the same time regretting change.

There are other aspects of this ethnoscape which can be described as "development tourism": the curiosity to visit the other, to taste the local

food, see the sites, and visit the homes and witness the lifestyles of people met elsewhere, as well as earn money. All of these desires are part of a deeply problematic ethnoscape of power and privilege that are rarely looked at critically by the professionals who are part of these routines (Stirrat 2008).

Such anonymous details of an ethnoscape of development training programs are familiar to those engaged in today's streamlined development industry that "efficiently" produces such activities in modern anonymous cities—it is part of the landscape that development has delivered. Our concerns and actions, and even our emotions about our role, fit well into the literature on the ethnography of development that describes how aid policy is carried out, looking at the social life of the projects and organizations, and the interactions of the different actors (Mosse 2004). We could have been development professionals anywhere in modern South Asia, staying in a comfortable hotel room delivering a course in a well-appointed professional centre. We, like other "experts", move from place to place as bids for projects are made, the funds agreed, the training planned, the evaluation sheets completed, the costs monitored, and the knowledge given, and we feel discomfort about our role in the development machinery.

There seems nothing noteworthy in my description of the norms of modern development practice, but in considering co-optation of feminist practice it becomes relevant to ask: What difference did it make that we were delivering feminist knowledge on gender, generation and sexuality in a development setting? Did our personal engagement enable us to deliver this knowledge differently in the development ethnoscape? What were the histories that led us to be "delivering" such knowledge in a package that brought us together with people from five different countries to do body mapping, debate body politics and discuss how to do sex education in South Asian schools?

To look at these questions we need to continue to fill in the ethnoscape further.

Patterned Dances, Connections and Histories

The opportunity for the training to happen was constructed out of multilayered histories of connections created by feminist networks and solidarity movements. The invitation to set up the course emerged from several desires and needs. On a personal level there was the desire on the part of the Europeans to come back to the locality and to revisit past places,

friends and sights. Two of the trainers had lived for some years in rural areas in the country. One spoke one of the local languages fluently and had maintained close connections with a village. Their professional and personal-political histories were intertwined with the country as solidarity workers, progressive feminists in the north and south working in the 1980s campaigns to end "population control", and to address violations and exclusions of women working together with fledging women's organizations and newly established NGOs taking up gender and poverty issues. I had also visited in the late 1990s and 2000s to talk about sexual health and reproductive rights as part of public health campaigns. This landscape was part of the training team's formative knowledge, learning about "the other" in body politics and our solidarity work as feminists. As one of those "others", the local trainer had met us in extended visits to Europe, and an implicit part of the invitation was for us, as friends, to visit the local institution as peers in a training exercise. This would, it was suggested in emails before the funding application was made, enable us to engage in current debates and discussion about body politics in South Asia and to explore further research possibilities.

This crisscrossing of connections across Europe and South Asia, and across time, enabled by social media, is typical of the stretched progressive professional feminist friendships that make up body politics in development. People meet first in political campaigns, universities or movement venues and then adapt the engagement, desire and connection into professional encounters. This type of networking is described by Alison Woodward (2012) as the "velvet triangle" of informal governance among gender activists in the European Union (EU) context as their "demands are taken on board thanks to a patterned dance of needy bureaucrats, dedicated activists and eager academics who are active at national and international levels and frequently linked to each other through informal as well as formal processes" (Woodward 2012: 145).

Such "patterned dances" are required in order to have access to resources made available by the development industry. Indeed, on this course there were many patterned dances around the resources, set by European rules and regulations. Rules could be bent to meet South Asian participants' expectations (in terms of transport, food, comfort, living expenses). The whole exercise was set up with a "shadow" intent not explicitly set out in the proposal. The official project aim was to deliver and exchange up-to-date knowledge about sexuality and gender and to build a network of feminists—already engaged in development practices—wanting to work

professionally in this area. Not stated was the aim to continue a sense of connection and belonging of different generations, bringing together the teachers and former students of a development institution to meet again, consolidate friendships and support each other in their different jobs (in NGOs, community-based organizations, governments and research institutions). In this sense it blended feminist desires of connection and networking into a sense of belonging to a community of feminists working in transnational development processes. It reconfirmed past friendships and ties to the European institution, creating possibilities for future connections, and, as a certificate course, a further professional line to add to one's CV for both the trainers and the participants. The enjoyment of the event, the renewing of friendships and connections, the feminist intent of networking and supporting people's work in delivering gender and sex education—all of that sat uncomfortably with the concerns of co-optation into the development industry, and with the differences of privilege not only in terms of race and geography but also in terms of access to certain forms of "sellable" knowledge, and social and economic resources, among the trainers and the participants.

Performativity in Development Encounters

Reflecting on my own responses in this ethnoscape, there are many discomforts and contradictions with ideals, desires and needs to be "acting in solidarity" and yet not really "knowing" culturally and politically how "to be". There is the performance of "being the gender expert" in a public context where I find a "strange shadowy version" of feminism haunting me. These experiences and feelings are evoked from many other meetings I attended in South Asia in the 2000s. At this particular meeting, I was unexpectedly invited to speak about body politics at a university. Having packed for a course, I felt I did not have anything appropriate to wear. I rushed to a shop to pick out a beautifully embroidered dress in bright greens and pinks. I was aware that it would be difficult to wear such a garment in a European university setting—the elaborate embroidery would have been unsuitable for what is assumed to be the white Western professorial role. I wanted to wear it at the lecture as part of the performance in order to use it as a way to discuss embodied otherness. I was aware of any cultural awkwardness and I checked with the local organizer about its appropriateness. The issue of what clothes to wear, how to behave and how to look as feminists, as foreigners, and how to use clothes to position

ourselves in places other than our own, particularly when there are many knowledgeable people in the room, is difficult. “The personal is political” is also place-based knowledge, and we rely on being given clues by those who invite us, whether we are others from Europe in South Asia or others from South Asia in Europe. The wearing of certain clothes to signal modernity, awareness of local culture, respect, education, age and gender is a highly conscious feminist act. I see this feminist knowing of how to appear and behave strategically as part of body politics—one that is discussed by many cross-cultural feminist connections as we strategically bring friends into public events. In contrast with my dress choice, at another public occasion during the course, a well-known businesswoman was impeccably attired in Western clothes, eye-catching jewellery, and a chic handbag and shoes. Her appearance and story of why she was a feminist, linked to family and professional fortunes, was clearly encouraged by the local organizer to assure the audience that feminism is part of the discourse of the political and business elite. Something similar could be said about why I was asked to speak by the organizer in my role as part of the academic elite, and why I chose to dress in another style in order to query that assumption and to open up the issue of what clothes represent in different places and contexts.

In analyzing this ethnoscape in relation to body and appearance, the question of co-optation of feminism extends to how we perform at such public events. What does a dress say about feminism in those performances of development? The different attires were signalling various messages of “what it is to be feminist” to an elite audience that understood that doing gender was about such events—to influence students to think differently about body politics (sexuality and gender) or to demonstrate that business elites can also be feminists, and challenge male economic and social privilege. We were both part of the elite NGO and business world that make up the aidland community, with the economic resources to buy the clothes, and to speak of a liberal notion of feminist choice and desire as part of our own personal “empowerment”. As Cornwall and others have theorized, such a notion of empowerment does not unsettle the economic privilege, which allows such choices to be made.

The issue of funding was also not on the agenda of the course, but it was very much part of the event, along with the orchestration of decisions about who to invite to events, how to appear and what to do to show that everything was a success. Engagement with funders was key to the success of the course in order to promote the local host institution, reassure

it that donor money was well spent and create possibilities for further events. These "polite" visits to embassies and government departments are not minor asides; the host country institute, in order to survive in the development industry, needs to build its political positioning in a heavily competitive arena for funds, money and prestige. Everyone on the course was aware of that, entering into discussions about how to make those slightly awkward meetings work.

The question here is how much this behavior differs from any other business dealing—the use of personal connections and inside knowledge, and people working out how far to stretch the rules according to who (and what) you know "in the scene". Such political savvy is part of movement knowledge as well, even if the rules are normally less bureaucratic. The velvet triangle literature (Woodward 2012) looks at this informal governance network as strategic and highly successful ways to access resources. I return below to this question of co-optation as part of a particular neoliberal moment where feminism and neoliberalism have merged.[8]

Limitations and Disconnects

There has been close scrutiny of transnational friendships, developmental tourism and claims of solidarity in the post-colonial feminist literature—bringing out the continuity with colonial-style maternalism, the capture of knowledge and unacknowledged power relationships.[9] In particular, the need for a sense of belonging among progressive feminists within development practices is something I have noted, and felt, in other development encounters. Mixed with this sense of belonging to a community, there is a deep sense of unease with the layers of privilege of class, caste, age, marriageability, sexual identity and emotional pain that informs body politics that can be discussed on the course but not outside the room, or back home. The difficulty of describing and narrating experiences in English, building on text exercises and visuals often from somewhere else, that are not translated and maybe untranslatable, underlines power differentials. It also, quite simply, creates frustrations about what can be taken away from a development training course.

Feminist practice in body politics is about challenging the givens and making visible what is invisible, but it is also about collective practice. The difficulty of translating what is personally learnt and observed during development training into other political realities is a common observation. How participants who learn and speak away from "reality" reproduce

their new knowledge outside? Capturing multiple levels of analysis that make up body politics, transporting it into training courses and then taking it out again is a fraught process.

Neoliberal Constructions of Feminist Praxis

One could cynically interpret the whole exercise as "how to make a living out of being a transnational (jetset?) feminist", or how to dilute radical ideas of feminism so that they are palatable enough for development training and policy practice. Sara De Jong (2016) outlines the considerable literature that discusses how gender and development practices are undermining feminist practices in the mainstreaming gender into development via development projects that require gender "experts" to simply "tick the boxes", reducing gender complexities into simple, static and one-dimensional studies. These practices ignore decades of feminist academic research, all couched in simple messages that are apolitical and ahistorical representations of gender.[10] The institutional co-optation of the feminist agenda into an increasingly neoliberal corporate model of development is reflected in the ethnoscape of the training course where boxes were indeed ticked: up-to-date methods were applied: gender experts funded to deliver knowledge to participants; participants were trained to take those skills back home; and success measured in the completion of the training (and numbers trained) rather than if there were transformational change happened.

In their study of transnational feminist movements, Linda Carty and Chandra Talpade Mohanty describe neoliberalism as "an ideology, and a political and economic practice" (Carty and Mohanty 2015: 84). They argue that the neoliberal state is "pernicious for women's organizing because it is so adept at appropriating the discursive elements of those struggles and undermining the actual attempts to forge a politics of change" and argue for greater "awareness of the multiple negative roles of neoliberalism" as part of a counter vigilance by feminists (2015: 85). Nancy Naples depicts the neoliberalism of the 1990s and 2000s as a systematic effort to dismantle progressive social and economic policies in a process of subjugation, co-optation and delegitimation (Naples 2013: 133).

Taking up this viewpoint, we could understand the training as co-optation. Different feminist knowledge around bodies, reproductive rights, and health and sexuality is molded into a portable package paid for by donors that delivers agreed gender sexual and reproductive rights

and health goals that are, in the moment of delivery, redesigned to fit the expectations of the participants.

This apolitical process becomes a "de-contextualized and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact" (Mukhopadhyay 2004: 95). The training, built on toolkits, mapping exercises and checklists, is part of a technical expertise that can be adapted and brought easily into development as it professionalizes, and at the same time depoliticizes, the original feminist intent. Feminists are kept busy in projects and advocacy work, proving their professionalism as they engage in bureaucratic practices, delivering "how to do gender equality", in processes that wash out more nuanced and politically difficult issues around sexuality and difference. The ethnoscape of a South Asian course can be read as such an apolitical professionalized project that pulls feminist concerns into the neoliberal project of delivering a skill set that can efficiently achieve measurable goals of 'n' professionals now trained to educate other recipients about gender and sex education.

However, as De Jong (2016) points out, we have to push harder against this reading of how feminists operate in development processes as part of a "counter vigilance" that recognizes the possibilities of discursive strategies to effect cultural and political change. In my first work on body politics, ten years ago, I analyzed how the global women's movement post-Cairo became a part of the apparatus that

> created the truth, theory and values around women, environment, population and development in the social institutions and practices, managing and defining women as an object of development discourse … women were tied into an array of procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics that continued the oppression of women through micro strategies that captured the female body as an individual and social subject of development discourse or—what Foucault labeled bio-power. (Harcourt 2005: 38)

De Jong also sees feminist engagement in the development process as a form of biopolitics that creates new selves and subjectivities, or "new managers capable of taming the negative productivity of difference through the application of techniques". (Prügl 2011: 84, quoted in De Jong 2016). In this Foucaultian understanding of power, feminism is not outside of development processes but part and parcel of them—the political is part of the technical aspect of doing development as feminists. As Prügl states, "From a Foucaultian perspective, the question of whether an engagement

with the mainstream co-opts feminist struggles loses its meaning. There is no pure feminist knowledge outside governmentality untouched by the workings of power" (Prügl 2011: 85, quoted in De Jong 2016).

In opening up these processes to scrutiny it is important to recognize how power is operating at different levels. Feminists need to be vigilant not by denying the feminist process of engagement in development but by recognizing in what way engaging in development feminist strategies of body politics are able to be reached. It is important to consider how to work the change from within, fully aware of the power dynamics and their role and responsibilities.

Given the considerable literature referred to above about how development is part of neoliberal ideology, political and economic practice, it is interesting to consider how feminists working in development bring about discursive change as they engage in "patterned dances". The ethnoscape is about feminist engagement, which is fraught with tensions, power and messiness. By being open and honest about the messiness, we can see where neoliberal framings are undermining feminist goals and needs, As Prügl points out that there are no pure spaces for feminism. Feminist choices to engage in development processes are political choices, including developing different technical elements, calling on personal connections, and working out how to perform, where to strategize, and with whom and in what setting. By looking at what happens at discursive, organizational and individual levels you can see the negotiations and the possibilities. A "strange shadowy version" of feminism that "cannot be fully embraced or disavowed", as quoted above (Fraser 2013a), moves alongside the official development speak. What the ethnoscape shows is that the training course was a feminist space that could allow feminists of different generations and regions to support and work with one another with a sense of collective wellbeing, within institutions and organizational structures, even with disconnects and discomforts. The deliberate aim to set up feminist encounters through the course enabled the use of resources to pay for feminists of different geographical positions and generations to meet and strategize, and meant that they were not simply "passive victims of neoliberal seductions" (Fraser 2013b).

On the other hand, the training did belong to a particular discourse on sexual health and reproductive rights in development, one that came out of a post-Cairo debate and could not easily take up questions regarding the neoliberal subject. In a move to what Spivak calls a "productive acknowledgement of complicity" (Spivak 2000), it is not enough to say that all

modern feminist practice takes part within the neoliberal project; there is also the responsibility of feminists working in development processes to look critically at the impact of our neoliberal positioning and how it muddies feminist intent and outcome.

The Privilege of the Middle in the Feminist Praxis of Development

So given that there are no pure spaces for feminism, what is the feminist potential of such training, and what are my own responsibilities as a feminist in my awareness of complicity? What actions should I take?

To begin to answer that question I should like to reflect on what Carty and Mohanty call the privilege of the middle, which resonates with my current role as a feminist working in an academic institution (from which the participants on the course had graduated). This is a current debate that engages not only feminist consultants but also feminist teachers of development studies.[11]

As Sarah Ahmed comments,

> Since all institutions are complicit with the neoliberal project in many ways, those who straddle academic lives and employ feminist praxis within communities outside of the hallowed halls, often are positioned to act as intermediaries betwixt and between, breaking the age binaries of formal and informal education/knowledge production, and have a great burden in repositioning and reconciling these multiple spaces. (Ahmed quoted in Carty and Mohanty 2015: 88)

Carty and Mohanty (building on Harding 1991 and others) speak of "situational feminism" and ask that those in the middle—feminist activists, teachers and practitioners—be aware of our privileged "middle" position. As we undertake different work, build diverse alliances and undertake struggles, we need to be cognizant of our own positions and uncertainties while we teach/train/advocate/write/connect with others in collective transnational feminist engagements in the development industry. As the description of the ethnoscape suggests, "all struggles are long, with imperfect and incomplete victories which are conditional and that this is what living means" (Carty and Mohanty 2015: 96). Nevertheless, such admissions are not reasons for not changing or challenging the privileges; it is important to do more than reflect.

What my analysis of this ethnoscape illustrates is that feminist praxis is embedded within geographies of power relations, in neoliberal practices that we cannot step outside of, but we can reflect and refocus when see these disconnects. And in my case as a feminist teacher and activist, it challenges me to think carefully about the "privilege of the middle". Body politics, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, has been a key narrative that feminists have brought into development discourses. It has highlighted how the experiences of bodily oppression, violation, exploitation and commodification are integral to power relations in development. Academics, advocates and activists engage in the patterned dance of Woodward. As a result, even if it feels somewhat accidental, many (including me) have made careers out of it. Does this "domestication" mean a betrayal of some "other" way of "doing feminism"? Aren't feminist struggles about changing hierarchical power structures, a strategy that implies some form of engagement with that power?

Body politics has led to legal, political and social change around once taboo issues, such as violence against women, and in the process, feminists have become teachers, high-level bureaucrats and politicians, who have supported and made those changes possible. There is, unsurprisingly, clear evidence now of an "old girls" network, both formal and informal, around body politics that is running parallel, and no doubt interlinking with, the more evident "old boys" network. The difficult question is whether such co-optation simply makes us complicit in neoliberalism, as Fraser says, "supplying the justification for new forms of inequality and exploitation … in a dangerous liaison with neoliberal efforts to build a free-market society" (2013b).

Or does it mean that those with the privilege of the middle need to look more carefully at what collective actions are needed to help to understand a situation inflected by neoliberalism, but fluid and changeable. There is no "outside" of neoliberalism to which we can retreat. Given the disorganized, globalizing messy form of neoliberalism today, there are many spaces for feminists to speak up, and to rethink how to conceptualize our relation to co-optation and strategies. We need to resist it while not being coy about the personalized benefits that co-optation offers.

The awkwardness of the course in its air con bubble remains. It was not an event that directly challenges neoliberal ideology, political and economic practices, though it negotiates at the edge. I see it as reflecting the realities of feminists in the development world who "tread the line between pessimism and hope between failures and corruptions of the development industry and the promise that it can really reach the people it aims to"

(McKinnon 2011: 2). There are alternative feminist ways to act in solidarity that challenge neoliberal ideology, political and economic practices, even from within, that are part of movements and campaigns that have no need of training by gender or other experts. Body politics around abortion rights, the fight against violence against women, rights for transgender, and queer politics are challenging and changing neoliberalism. From the privilege of the middle, I consider it is important to make the connections in my writing, teaching and engagement in activism between what is happening in neoliberal development processes and the alternatives in order to question and unmake the hegemonic worldview of neoliberal capitalism, via "new narratives, new ways of thinking and doing" (Escobar 2012: 2). As we create these new narratives in classrooms, in the streets, in social media, we can move beyond seeing co-optation as a transplanting of feminist discourse into "other terrains". Feminists are in those terrains, shaping and making policy, teaching and researching, and engaging in development practice (in many places, face to face, on and off line). We need to be sure that we are clear in our positionings and strategies, by revealing our personal doubts and fears, as well as by recognizing our potential collective successes.

Notes

1. See, for example, Petchesky (2002), Antrobus 2004, Cornwall and Jolly (2008), Harcourt (2009), Lind (2010), Truong and Harcourt (2014) and Jolly, Cornwall and Hawkins (2013).
2. See, for example, Hartmann (1995), Lind (2010), Wieringa and Sivori (2012) and Baksh and Harcourt (2015).
3. See, for example, Fraser and Naples (2004), Miller (2004), Naples (2013), Ferguson (2014) and Roberts (2015).
4. See, for example, Harcourt (2005, 2009), De Jong (2009), Eyben (2012), Eyben and Turquet (2014) and Sandler (2015).
5. See, for example, Hartmann (1995), Miller (2004), Cornwall and Jolly (2008) and True (2012).
6. These concerns, raised by academics such as Cornwall, are echoed in the thousands of webpages, blogs and social media posts of transnational feminist movements concerned with women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (*Development*, 2009: 124).
7. The Swiss International Relations Collective, L.H.M. Ling, Marysia Zalewski and Wendy Harcourt discuss these issues methodologically in dialogue (SWIRCO et al. 2015).

8. As discussed in Kothari (2005), Fraser (2013a) and Ferguson (2015).
9. See, for example, Mohanty (1988), Grewal and Kaplan (2000), Spivak (2000) and De Jong (2016).
10. See Ferguson's comment about the 2012 World Bank Report on Gender Equality (Ferguson 2015: 386).
11. See, for example, Sara Ahmed's blog at https://feministkilljoys.com/.

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CHAPTER 10

An Intergenerational Trialogue on Global Body Politics

Sara Vida Coumans, Wendy Harcourt, and Loes Keysers

Introduction

For over a year, the three of us have met and emailed to discuss how we see global body politics from our different generational starting points. We began our conversation by reading a book chapter by Alexandra Garita, "Moving toward Sexual and Reproductive Justice: A Transnational and Multi-Generational Feminist Remix" (2015), and the draft introduction to this volume, which was circulated in the summer of 2014.

The conversation that has ensued explores our different generational positioning in global body politics as we engaged in transnational development processes and debates around SRHR. We write as feminist movement activists and sometimes advocates engaged in local and transnational processes linked to the global development agenda, as well as scholars

S.V. Coumans
London, UK

W. Harcourt (✉)
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

L. Keysers
The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_10

reflecting on those encounters. We situate ourselves as activist researchers critical of development processes, rather than as lobbyists trying to "mainstream" our ideas into development policy. This chapter is an exercise in feminist epistemology and ontology—analysis by doing—adapting feminist methodological tools of self-awareness and reflexivity to the process of academic knowledge production.

We conducted the conversation by first each contributing our individual pieces, and then via email added in our thoughts in a three-way conversation. We have interspersed these with side conversations in the three sections which we have called "Locating the dialogue", "Exploring the SRHR citadel" and "Geo politics and the SRHR movement".

Locating the Dialogue About Global Body Politics
Loes Keysers

Where and how to start the dialogue between the three of us—between me as an "old hand", a feminist reproductive rights activist from the 1970s onward, and two dear friends and colleagues from the next two generations? To locate this dialogue in the context of a book called *Bodies in Resistance*, I reflected first on the notes for the Introduction to the volume. I am interested in how "rethinking, reclaiming and repositioning bodies" take up Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and the constitutive "nature" of discourses, and the central role of power in the reproduction of inequality in social relations. This implies for our intergenerational dialogue that we have to make explicit and reflect on the very terms we use to explain and "locate" ourselves in historically changing discourses. For me, body politics is not just about the physical body itself, or the female body, or color, or age, but about understanding and enacting how my body is the locus as well as the means and the end in local and global power struggles for sexual and reproductive justice. Understanding and dealing with "bodies" implies engaging in biopower politics, in terms not only of abstract theoretical discourses but also of concrete and enabling conditions for all matters of sex, life and death. I agree with the argument in the Introduction that individuals in social movements resist being assigned by others their embodied position and subjectivity, and that they by self-defining change the parameters of when and how to act within and vis-à-vis social movements and the state. Therefore in our dialogue on body politics I should like to address how "Moving toward Sexual and Reproductive Justice" was done by transnational feminist women's

movements, often against the state and other powerful actors (Keysers and Richter 1994; Hartmann 1995; Petchesky 2003), and how this has changed over time. I think it is important also to keep our analysis open to the deeper problem of politics of exclusion within these movements, in relation to gender, age and race, in the approach, strategies and tactics around sexual and reproductive health and rights in the UN agenda of the 1990s (Keysers 1997) and now, two decades later. I am interested in reflecting on how feminist movements unwittingly carry their own oppression: by forging "one" truth, and privileging certain identities, oppressions and rights over others.

> *Aside Wendy*: We also have to be aware of what kinds of oppression and identity the three of us carry, what truths we are forging, and can we question our sense of privilege—in terms of geography, class, race and education?

To think this through, let me begin with unpacking the title of this chapter on "Intergenerational Trialogue on Global Body Politics". What does body politics mean for each of us? For me, as a Dutch woman, the meaning is rooted in my engagement in leftist radical feminist activism in the early 1970s as "Dolle Mina" (Crazy Mina) campaigning for equal rights for women by critiquing and creatively upsetting the main/male order of everyday life (see also Jan Reynders' contribution to this volume [Chap. 12]). My politics sprang from the notion that "the personal is political", where even the most intimate and bodily experiences are social, more than only individual, and need to be explained and dealt with as outcomes of unequal power relations which define who I am, what I should/can/cannot do while living in and with my (female) body. In our feminist reinterpretation of Marxist theories about struggles for social and economic justice, we developed a so-called feminist approach to productive and reproductive labor in which the female body with its procreative capacity is the material base determining gendered un/equal social relations. Body politics then meant claiming rights that included choice, self-determination and also enabling conditions. In our theory and in our movement practice we made a distinction between procreation or reproduction on the one hand and sexuality on the other, though we saw them as inherently linked.

Importantly, body politics for me was, and still is, also about empowering self-knowledge. I recall reading and working with *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the book written by the Boston Women's Health Collective (BWHC 1975), as a key text when we as women were reclaiming our own

body from the "controlling hands and minds" of the men in our lives—the husbands, partners, medical and religious authorities, and the state. This is captured in the famous chant (quoted by UK feminist Kate Young 1981) "not the church, not the state, women do decide their fate". Through the growing international women's health movement in the North, as well as in the South, women's self-help groups came together to share and co-create knowledge in order to gain insights into ourselves, including our own body processes, opening up to new views and practices, and therefore slowly but proudly reclaiming our (female) body on our own terms. This included consciously trespassing the patriarchal moral boundaries set for "proper" womanhood by, for example, sexual experimentation or sharing non-medical safe abortion techniques.

Body politics expressed in the Western women's liberation movement of that period meant that we fought for women's self-determination by freeing procreation from control by men and medical, state and religious authorities, and, importantly, this focused on women's right to refuse or postpone procreation and to terminate unwanted pregnancies. We sought to reclaim and celebrate the female fertile body as well as the sexual body and to see both as linked. These demands, which we coined "reproductive rights" in the 1980s, had been integral to the Western women's movement of the 1970s. Reproductive rights were not singled out as stand-alone issues. While the principle of reproductive rights and bodily self-determination was considered universal and globally valid, as indicated in the vision statement of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), which we founded in 1984, it was recognized that the realities on the ground differed. As is well documented by the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (Petchesky and Judd 1998), in various corners of the world, reproductive body rights or entitlements were experienced by diverse categories of women differently: white middle class, poor colored, indigenous or migrant women. Therefore the scope to assert rights and even celebrate the female body varied, and certainly the female body as the material base had to be seen in context.

In that light, body politics in the name of "family planning" deserves further scrutiny in order to uncover contradictions. I "came of age" in the sixties in the Netherlands and the availability of "the pill" was experienced as an individual "sexual liberation", meaning that women could be free to experience their sexuality without fear of unwanted pregnancy. However, in the late 1970s during my work in rural Bangladesh, I came to know about the other, ugly side of fertility control. I saw there how in

the Malthusian approach to development, poor non-white "third world" women were accused of being "breeders of poverty". I witnessed how they were exposed to abusive mass fertility control interventions in the name of family planning, which were presented as "women's development" programs. To sort out these contradictory complexities of the politics about and with women's bodies, I completed my MA Development Studies at the ISS in 1981, with a thesis entitled *Does Family Planning Liberate Women*. The thesis contrasted my Dutch experience with a case study of Bangladesh's structurally abusive population control. Meanwhile I took part in the setting up of the Women & Development studies specialization at the ISS. All this marked the beginning of my academic activism on body politics in teaching and action-research in critical development studies at the ISS, which provided another platform to work and dialogue with the next generations of feminists.

Another context for feminist body politics was questioning the medical approach to female bodies with its emphasis on women's fertility. Learning from knowledge traditions outside western modern medical-gynaecological formal expertise, we saw and redefined the female body as a powerhouse of internal energies, in dynamic relation with external energies. So we also engaged in "alternative" healing practices that focused on the creation and production of life. Our "body politics" included ecofeminism; mother goddess worship; and the women's self-help health movement. Body politics not only included individual rights but also referred to collective social rights, to enabling conditions and concerns about livelihoods. In these theories and practices we saw the body as not fixed but changing over lifecycles, and also influenced by social and environmental conditions, which we envisaged as a holistic ecological body politics.

For our intergenerational dialogue it is important to see how this particular form of radical body politics is situated in the 1970s and 1980s in Western European, US and Australian feminist theory and practice, where we began to see how the fertile and sexual female body is both fixed and constructed, and in flux. Control over women's sexuality was seen as originating from patriarchal control over women's fertility. Repression of reproductive self-determination was seen as rooted in the rejection of women's self-definition of their sexuality but came into public discourse in the population control vs. reproductive rights debates in the "war" over abortion, portrayed by extreme conservatives/rightist fundamentalists as abject immoral practice. The struggle for reproductive rights and enabling conditions was seen as linked but distinct from sexual rights, and

implied the right to both comprehensive health and well-being, and to self-determination. The objectives, politics, strategies and tactics, as well as the composition, of the reproductive rights movement and the sexual rights movement differed, and in the early 1990s, cooperation or inclusion could not be taken for granted.

Today's common reference to the acronym SRHR, all in one breath, came about with the 1994 and 1995 UN conferences in Cairo (the International Conference on Population and Development) and Beijing (the Fourth World Conference on Women), and it seems a perfect expression of the inextricable link between the three domains of body politics: reproduction, sexuality and health. However, my generation of activists might say that as a result of the mainstreaming of SRHR it has lost its radical edge by collapsing and depoliticizing the diverse demands for reproductive self-determination and sexual diversity, and holistic health and well-being for all, irrespective of gender, class or ethnicity. It is noteworthy that only since the 2000s has "age" been added, and adolescents and youth have been included in the category of reproductive and sexual rights and health "for all".

> *Aside Sara*: While reading Loes' experiences, I recognized the importance of acknowledging how struggles for sexual and reproductive rights are all connected over time. Unfortunately, in my engagement with the SRHR movement so far, I have experienced a tendency to create segmentation between generations with limited space for sharing of experiences. I would love to have more space to learn and talk through united struggles and how these are connected through history.

Another point for our dialogue is the different strategies and methods of feminist body politics in local and/or global arenas. Though it appears only as a subtext in Alexandra Garita's chapter, I see important links and also contradictions between local and global feminist women's health and reproductive rights movements, which are bottom-up as well as top-down oriented. In the 1990s, for example in the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, it was important to address the bodily lived realities on the ground and to bring those grassroots narratives and experiences into the global discourse to show how global body politics are related to local conditions, and thus to challenge the dominance of the patriarchal Malthusian population-control paradigm. Transnational feminism has aimed to do this through horizontal grassroots solidarity

work, networking and sharing, as well as advocacy and lobby work with powerful policy-makers, in both the Global North and the Global South (Sen et al. 1994). In this context I should like to point to the difference between the role of activists and of advocates, which was seen as strategically of crucial importance. Rather than "just mainstreaming", activists were not only struggling (sic!) for fundamental changes within the system but actually radically questioning the very system, and trying to transform the foundations and structure of what we then called the "patriarchal imperialist/capitalist/neoliberal global system" itself. In that light, activists would not accept funding from the powerful agents of the establishment because "donor" money would "taint" and "co-opt" them. Often such feminist body activism was equated with being (too) "unruly" and anti-establishment, and therefore even jeopardizing carefully negotiated gains achieved by feminist lobbyists, who focused on mainstreaming and did not want "to rock the boat". Activists in pursuit of fundamental change purposefully worked bottom up and at the margins, fearful of co-optation. Now, in hindsight, the question arises whether this perceived dichotomy between activists and advocates in the women's movements' politics (Fraser 1989, 1997; Keysers 1994, 1999, 2000) was actually more a matter of difference in tactics and strategic choice rather than the fundamental ideological and practical contradictions as I saw them in the 1980s and 1990s. I am curious whether such principles and tensions that informed our feminist global body-politics activism during those decades are still evident now?

> Aside Wendy: I have learnt a lot from Loes about the early struggles around global body politics that were informed by a basic mistrust of the systems and hence fear of co-optation, and noted differences between activists and lobbyists. I belong to the generation that ventured into the UN behind the earlier trailblazers, and we were as cynical and wary as the earlier generation but, at least in the early 1990s, we benefited from the opening up of the UN to these debates and, maybe naïvely, we saw engaging as an important tactic to bring about change at the global level. But it did not preclude or negate our engagement at the local level. I saw it is as mix—or as "glocalities".
>
> Aside Sara: The reference made by Loes to the fear of co-optation and purposefully working at the margins in the 1980s and 1990s made me realize that this is not something I have discussed with fellow activists. The word "co-optation" has been used, but within a very different context, which has more to do with the "segmentation" within the feminist movement. In my engagement with the word "co-optation", it was understood

as young activists who were participating in the SRHR movement but not on their own terms; rather, on the terms of older (feminist) generations.

I joined the sexual and reproductive rights movement when I was 16 years old (2005). Generally speaking, I would fall into a category of being "young" at that point, but what does that mean?

Being young moves beyond a chronological age definition and homogenizes an already mostly arbitrary social construct (Nandigiri 2012: 114). The idea that age itself is a social construct is relatively new and gained more attention in the 1990s (Coumans 2013; Laz 1998). Social age is rooted in feminist and queer theories that recognize that even "biological facts of life", such as chronological age, are socially constructed (Coumans 2013; Clark-Kazak 2009: 1310). Beyond a constantly shifting age limit there's no agreed universal concept of whom we define as youth (Nandigiri 2012: 114).

I was, and still am, grateful for the opportunities I had in those early days of my activism journey—they have shaped who I am today. That being said, looking back years later I also think that many of those moments were rather tokenistic and excluded me from conversations within decision-making processes. While I did not fully speak the SRHR "jargon" and was still learning about the necessary nuances, I was a symbol illustrating that there was interest and commitment from a younger generation.

Years later, many experiences richer, I spoke the SRHR "language" and knew more about which nuances were required. This opened doors into decision-making processes and the possibility to be seen as an equal partner in conversations. While this door opened, the door of being seen as a young person closed. References have been made to me and others in a similar position that we were not "real" young people from the "community", that instead we were just co-opted by the system. These responses illustrate a tendency to see young people as those who do not have the capacity to participate as equal partners, and conversely that those with the capacity to participate as equal partners will no longer be seen as "real" young people. While Loes refers to a fear of being co-opted, I think that understanding the system can be part of the strategy. However, I find it problematic that there seems to be a connection between the line of co-optation and the line of being categorized as a young person.

Loes: My last point of reflection on the title is the notion of "intergenerational", which I see as referring to dialogues between generations of feminists on questions about changes in movement practices around global body politics reflecting on older and current-day organizing. For me, "generation" has a double meaning: it may refer to the belonging to a particular period or wave of body politics activism, or to the bodily and

social age of the activists themselves, yet for both we need to be aware of the questions of power-sharing or dominance in decision-making, and including, excluding or prioritizing certain people or issues. I am interested in understanding, for example, whether the body and self-determination is still key to today's feminist struggle. Do the conversations above about the content and the strategies of the women's health and reproductive rights movements of the 1970s, and those early UN conferences in Rio, Cairo and Beijing in the 1990s, raise points which are still valid today, as Garita in her review questions? How do we take into account the different and specific needs and rights of people in the different gender- and generation-based categories, such as young, elderly, fe/male and trans* in today's global body politics? Where is the debate about abortion and about safe motherhood? What do the new questions raised by the intersectionality of sexual needs and practices mean for feminists working on sexual health and reproductive rights? Besides these substantive questions there are also questions of strategy, tactics and approaches. Hence, as Garita asks, how do we understand the interactions between generations within movements and shifts and changes in leadership?

Exploring the SRHR Citadel *Sara Vida Coumans*

Following on from Loes' section, where she positions herself within a specific history, I should like to enter into this conversation by reflecting on Garita's chapter, and to position myself and my own political engagement. As mentioned earlier, I entered the sexual and reproductive rights movement at the age of 16, mostly as an act of curiosity and with a deeper desire to learn. While my embodiment is "Dutch", I spent the majority of my childhood in the Philippines, a specific history that has shaped who I am today. Since 2005 I have had the privilege to be part of different processes within the SRHR movement on a global level. The experience has been enriching and eye-opening. I have made some of my best friends along the way but also not always felt welcome. This position has led me to view and experience things in a certain way.

I think that the following metaphor could best explain how I have experienced the integration between movements. If the sexual and reproductive rights movement were a city, then those living in the city have been focused on solidifying the city walls and carefully selecting those who were coming in. It is not that those in the city don't want to work with those outside the city; they are very much aware of the need for more col-

laboration. However, the threat of achievements being watered down by conservative movements is just around the corner and not only motivates those living in the citadel to strengthen the walls of the citadel but also amplifies the suspicion about those just outside the wall. Beyond-the-wall debates are still being shaped by patriarchal heteronormative discourses with a strong resistance to terminologies around sexual rights.

Garita refers to the need for more integration between movements, yet, reading between the lines, I still feel the naming and shaming that has thrown a shadow over my experience as sexual and reproductive rights advocate. One of the very clear examples from the chapter is the framing of the HIV movement as the source of trouble (Garita 2015: 273). From my own experience I have seen discussions with the SRHR movement being framed in a very binary manner: it is either good or bad. To me, fluidity and understanding broader connections are essential. While the definition of "movement" would imply some fluidity, the reality of how movements are referred to and those within a movement seem to be rather static. There is a need to unpack what we understand as movements and see how they are shaped by a range of agendas. Instead of framing the HIV movement as a source of trouble, we need to challenge dominant discourses shaping donor financing. As mentioned by Garita, in the 1990s, "HIV and AIDS were often dominated by epidemiological-focused arguments that did not consider power asymmetries and gender relations as structural drivers of the epidemic" (Garita 2015: 274). Following these epidemiological-focused arguments, we have seen a rise in efforts focused on the connection between HIV infection and sexuality education from a risk-based approach. This needs to be problematized. This would imply a narrow understanding of the term "sexuality"—being related to the dangers of sexual relations rather than to pleasure, positive values and practices.

As so well explained by Garita, my metaphorical city is overshadowed by unnecessary suspicious, negative stereotypes and competition, which place especially young advocates like myself in a position where it is difficult to enter the city, and once inside it is even more challenging to participate fully in discussions which are set in certain frames and are not expected to be questioned. Ironically, this process reinforces itself as we get more comfortable in the city and learn to speak the language.

> *Aside Loes*: I should like to ask Sara further about the "unnecessary suspicious, negative stereotypes and competition". Are you concerned about the "dominant discourses shaping donor financing", which impact all

feminist movement politics, or are there other elements which make you feel overshadowed?

Aside Sara: The "suspicious atmosphere" that leads to a feeling of being overshadowed is not only for young people. It is simply not an atmosphere that is conducive to trust, and I do feel that certain power hierarchies might make it even more challenging for young people in such an atmosphere.

Aside Wendy: I agree. There are questions of how to be included in processes that have evolved over time with knowledge that is gained from being part of the processes. I have always been lucky to work with mentors who have guided me in, though those big UN New York-based events were always uneasy, and I relied on the people I knew around me to tell me what was happening behind the scenes. Like Sara, I felt and saw the inclusions and exclusions.

Sara: Loes uses unhesitatingly the term "feminist". For me I have found hesitations in the SRHR citadel. Whether it is a small or large gathering, all meetings will start with participants standing in a circle for a round of introductions. While one might have the impression that this exercise is strictly practical, the "ritual" is much more than it seems: it is a process of framing and positioning yourself in relation to the others. Those moments always leave me with questions and doubts. After the third or fourth person, there is usually someone who says, "I am a feminist, belong to this organization and come from this country", after which we continue with the flow of the circle and move to the next person. As we move through the circle, others follow and more questions come to my mind. Can I say I am a feminist? How do others in the circle identify with the term "feminist"? Would we define it in the same way, and what if we have very different understandings? What if others think that the way I experience it is actually not what they claim to be "real" feminism? And then, with all those questions in my mind, I suddenly realize everyone is looking at me and that it is my turn. Yes, I identify as a feminist, but I realize that those eight letters do not actually capture my identity nor my position; it would require more words to explain that and it would be my personal interpretation. As the attention moves away from me, I realize that I did not claim the word "feminist" and I feel as though I have not only betrayed myself in some way but also betrayed the wider movement.

While many of us feel extremely comfortable with the word "feminist", there is hardly any recognition that we can all identify very differently with the term. In Garita's chapter the term is used under the assumption that we all identify with a common definition. While I believe that there is

some common ground as to what we understand by the term "feminist", I also think that every person develops their own personal and unique understanding and that this should be recognized. This diversity is something that should be celebrated and shared.

While this struggle of positioning within the SRHR citadel is something I feel within intergenerational spaces, the atmosphere and mutual understanding within smaller circles of feminist friends has changed over recent years. In 2014, a blog post by Vanessa Brocato contributed to a wider conversation about care within the movement:

> Reclaiming care, and centering it in our movements, is feminist. Care is one of those quaint lady things systematically devalued by societies around the world. Just as our bodies—women's bodies, queer bodies, bodies of color, maybe all bodies in our increasingly virtualized world—are systematically both devalued and objectified. So too, then, caring for these bodies and then also our whole selves becomes an act of resistance. (Brocato 2014)

This post was shared on social media many times within my generation and opened up conversations about how we feel about our position within the movement. The recognition of shared experiences within positioning ourselves in the struggle toward sexual and reproductive justice contributes to a space where we care for each other. I appreciate how Garita carefully explains the power dynamics and tensions between generations within the movement. I should like to add another dimension to this: the power of education in the process of creating these dynamics. In an environment where (unnecessary) suspicions and competition rule beneath the loving faces, especially as a young advocate, I often feel I have to pick my words carefully before I participate in discussions. I have been in a privileged position to complete a university degree, but I have also participated within the SRHR movement while I had yet to complete high school, and had never come across the word "heteronormativity", for example. Yet the language that dominates the movement is used so easily, which can make it difficult to ask for clarification. Looking back, I probably asked most of my questions of peers and those who had become my friends along the way. While many of us are fully aware of the hierarchies that society creates and sustains through education, I feel that the movement also creates these hierarchies by making it very challenging for those without university degrees to fully participate in the discussions that shape the movement.

Aside Loes: It is interesting to note why and when the term "heteronormativity" was coined and entered the discourse on sexuality and SRHR. I remember that in the 1970s and 1980s we spoke about patriarchy as the system setting the restrictive norms for women's sexuality (procreation-centered), and we saw that lesbians and homosexuals, as people identified around their same-sex preferences and practices, were relegated to the margins of the patriarchal system because they were assumed not to reproduce. Non-heterosexual practices were exceptions to the patriarchal norms and morality, which I, in my "liberal" feminist approach, could accept as variations in the spectrum of sexuality, and even publicly supported and experimented with in the 1980s and early 1990s as a kind of anti-patriarchal political statement. With the naming of sexual diversity and related power hierarchies in the concept of heteronormativity, the anti-patriarchal stance and the related narrow focus on women as procreators changed, and so did the setting and the conditions for body politics within the SRHR citadel.

Aside Wendy: I recall in the 2000s when heteronormativity become common usage. I had quickly to catch up on what it meant when I came back into global body politics debates in 2002, at a large international feminist meeting. At the same time I also remember having to ask Susie Jolly, who was then at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, to explain to me what LGBTQI stood for (Jolly, 2006; Cornwall and Jolly 2008). This makes me think of how much language excludes as much as it includes.

Sara: From 2012 till 2014 I was heavily engaged in the process of the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+20) review. It has probably been one of the most complex, yet rewarding, processes I have been involved in so far. While the process was frustrating and often got bogged down by bureaucracies, the feeling of working toward a common goal within the youth sexual and reproductive rights movement has never been this strong from my perspective. As co-chair of the Bali Global Youth Forum, part of the ICPD+20 review, it was unique to be part of a process where civil society was provided with so much space in shaping the structure of the meeting. It came back to us, though, with a very tough and political struggle between the host government, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and those of us in the steering committee on the last day of the conference. Even though the outcome was not what we had hoped, I am convinced it was a positive process and young people did send out a firm message that can be built upon in the future.

Aside Loes: What is interesting for me here is the underlying question about what was so "progressive" or what the host government did not want to hear/to be publicly talked about—namely, young people as active sexual beings and rights-holders. This clash about young (adolescent, not married) people's rights, as I discussed in a 1999 Newsletter of Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (Keysers 1999) has been ongoing since Cairo+5, not only within policy making institutions, but also is not yet fully resolved within older feminist SRHR activist circles, i am afraid.

Aside Wendy: It is important to note the different clashes and the actors who moved in and out of these hotly contested conference settings, as brought out by Garita's discussion and also now both of your different recollections. As Editor of the journal *Development* since 1988, I was engaged in the corridors, so to speak, when I undertook research (donor paid but in those days much less rigid and academically free), resulting in books and journal issues on different aspects of the Cairo debates. One of my first journal issues which I edited in 1990—paid for by UNFPA—was "Young Women and Life Choices" (*Development* 1990). It was all about young women being able to choose sexual partners, have access to abortion (carefully worded) and reject being forced into marriage. It did not include LGBT issues, as such, but sexual enjoyment for girls was discussed. The next issue in 1991 critiqued population control, a topic proposed by Nafis Sadik, who was Head of UNFPA and President of the conference in Cairo. It is interesting to map out how key figures changed the discourse tactically as they moved through the citadel (*Development* 1991).

Sara: Garita discusses the process of the ICPD+20 quite extensively, and if she had written the piece at a later date she most probably would have deepened her analysis with the experiences at the session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) in April 2014. I have never seen so many civil society participants at a United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting. The SRHR movement was present and ready to buckle up for long nights. While oral statements on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) rights by both governments and CSO participants created a revolutionary atmosphere in the plenary room, the hallways were filled with tension and questions—because the negotiations were happening behind closed doors. As the week progressed, negotiations moved toward the issues at stake and we waited till the early morning to get a better sense of what was happening, which we never really did. On the last evening, the ambassadors and "real" negotiators were called in from the UN permanent missions and negotiations happened in all kinds of small rooms. It was 6:30 a.m. when the chair closed the session. We will never really know, let alone understand, what happened

that evening. There was a major discrepancy between the outcomes of the thematic and regional meetings. We ended up with a text that more or less captured elements of the ICPD+20 review, but with language which was closer to the reality of 1994 than that of 2014.

What struck me most about Garita's observations is the call for the need to mind the people and communities whom we work for. This observation has so many meanings attached to it that it can barely stand without further explanation. Yes, I fully agree that we need to be cautious of the discrepancies between what is defined in carefully negotiated resolutions at the international level vs. the reality, but who are the people? Who are the communities? We need to be careful not to make such generalizations. In this context also, Loes' reference to the principle of the reproductive rights movement's horizontal networking and "solidarity groundwork" in the 1970s and 1980s comes to mind, and in reality this may have been ideologically correct but wishful thinking, masking the rift between global and local body politics.

> *Aside Loes*: Your remarks make me reflect on how we are situating ourselves with the terms we use. For example, is what I see as the 1970s and 1980s understanding and practice of body politics typically white or Western, or typical of that historical period? Also, in the context of this conversation, I would like to raise the discussion about a "post-feminist" era with its so-called new sexual contract that works across the domains of popular culture, the state, education, employment, sexuality and reproduction; which constructs the West as a site of gender equality, and refers to Western girls and women as subjects of neoliberal success. How can we release our feminist imaginaries to go beyond the crisis of political citizenship for Western feminism in general and for liberal feminism in particular, and move beyond the constraints for feminist politics premised on the superiority of the West's gender order? For example, what does racial profile mean in the context that Sara raised above? Is it a stereotypical and hierarchical profiling in what is referred to as a North–South hierarchy? For me, this raises also the strategic question about how we can keep on reimagining our future in inclusive as well as "biodegradable" organizations.

Geopolitics and the SRHR Movement: Connecting North and South? *Wendy Harcourt*

Sara and Loes raise some important issues about moving beyond binaries and dualities in the feminist movement. They point to different concerns according to their histories and engagements in transnational feminism.

Let me start by responding to the question about Western gender order raised by Sara and commented on by Loes.

As someone positioned between them, generationally speaking, I had a different set of preoccupations. To the question of what is Western feminism around body political and what is historical, proposed by Loes, I have my own (partial) answer. I am a white Australian (of Jewish Celtic descent) and have lived in Europe for over half my life, engaging in global body politics since the beginning of the 1990s. The citadel of SRHR that Sara describes opened at the point where I entered the international arena, joining feminists in the series of UN conferences of the early 1990s. I was privileged as an educated, white Australian woman moving to Europe to find myself in a paid job working with an INGO that allowed me to move easily in a global arena where my Australian socialist feminist assumptions and activism, as well as theory, were being taken seriously at the global level. I straddle different geographic experiences. As an Australian, with an acknowledgement of my white colonial heritage, I could converse with feminists from the Asia Pacific region where multiracial and indigenous Australia existed alongside white colonial Australia. I also could be part of the European scene working with Women in Development Europe. On the Asia Pacific side, I was part of the radical push for a recognition of violence of women's bodies and the earth by development—a raw eco-feminism tempered with socialism. And with Europeans I learnt a more sophisticated critique of population policies or of adopting a Malthusian label for population-control politics. Both positions I found became tamed as more feminists were drawn into advocacy processes around the UN, learning the language of SRHR and becoming unmoored from radical roots (Harcourt and Escobar 2005). So I would reply to Loes' question by suggesting that there is a historical moment of "our body ourselves" which came out of Western thinking and resonated with others. However, I "missed" that intense moment. My generation were not into self-help women's body groups because, in a sense, sexual choice and the possibility of my enjoying my female body were already out there as a political issue, and my feminist politics were, in addition to body politics, also about bringing feminist experience into "other arenas" (environment, indigenous politics) (Harcourt 2001, 2015).

The concept of youth was also around when I was in my 20s but was strongly defied and denied as young women saw themselves as an integral part of the movement's leadership. They challenged older women to share the space, especially with the move away from "women centered"

politics and as new issues around sexuality emerged—including HIV and AIDS. The battles around abortion and contraception were my mother's, not my battles in Australia. My struggle was how to deal with HIV and AIDS and how that put a stop to many of the sexual "freedoms" that were experienced by people older than me. However, in all of my engagements with different movements I never, like Sara, felt the need to be silent about being a feminist, though there were tensions about what kind of feminist. This was the hey day of identity politics and we had to demarcate ourselves as different types of feminist—liberal, socialist, Marxist, eco-, radical, cultural—the list went on. Perhaps this made it easier to distinguish our differences while appreciating, and holding onto, the term "feminist".

> *Aside Sara*: Just to clarify, I did not feel the need to be silent about being a feminist as such; rather, I felt that within the movement there are so many different definitions/ideas about what feminism is, which makes me feel less comfortable sometimes to share it as a word standing alone without further explanation.
>
> *Aside Loes*: You are right to question the idea of one politically correct truth of "feminism", and to question the politics of inclusion and belonging (and thus also of exclusion and rejection) that have gone on in the SRHR movements around what it is to be "feminist".

Wendy: Once in the SRHR Citadel, I felt the divisions between North and South very keenly. As I worked closely with women from all over the world, I recognized that race, class and education were key to my being accepted among women from the Global South. I also saw how the assumption was that women in Europe and white women in Australia did not need support within development discussions and were mostly engaged, increasingly, as expert consultants, bureaucrats or in large, wealthy NGOs or other women's concerns. This was a difficult position for me because people would assume that I was part of that Global North elite, and, indeed, during the early 1990s when I engaged as Sara describes in those basement negotiations, I did know many of the "movers and shakers". I recall vividly one research SRHR project where I asked very distinguished and important women from Brazil, Ghana and Pakistan to be the "southern component" of the Swiss-funded project post-Cairo, where I was the North component together with two Swiss women. The coordinator treated these women from the Global South (who are now very highly placed in the Cairo +20 process) in such a patronizing, racially

stereotypical manner that they pulled out of the project after she visited their "field sites" demanding that they account for every Swiss franc spent. When I met them in subsequent meetings we could laugh about it, but it made me very aware that our attempt to divide the team into South and North ignored the other differentials of age, knowledge and experience in a form of crude developmentalism, of which the Swiss coordinator fell foul.

> *Aside Sara*: I recognize this difficulty. Such dualities of North/South could also lead to certain hierarchies in deciding who is vulnerable, who is the subject of our debate.
>
> *Aside Loes*: I feel a little uncomfortable. I think we need to distinguish clearly between the SRHR movements inspired on the one hand by fundamental critique and activism, and on the other by the hegemonic, overly colonial donor-driven or -funded SRHR programs and actions. Or am I outdated? What about academic work on feminist body politics, and the need for critical analysis and self-reflection?

Wendy: Well, I would say that we are all producing this SRHR movement process, and there is no pure activist or advocate position, just as there is no "just academic observation" of what is going on. I think we are examples of people who move across those boundaries and negotiate for our knowledge and understanding to be taken up and heard in strategic moments and events. There are some excellent resources produced by "global" networks that work at both the local and the global level as researchers, advocates and activists, such as DAWN and Arrow (Hartmann 2005).[1]

A lot of my work has involved operating across borders of academia and activism, government officials and civil society, and not only in the SRHR context. My frustration has been not so much leadership issues but in how to bring those people just outside the walls, which Sara describes, into debates. Ultimately I feel I have left the citadel myself in order to do so, bringing the knowledge from the inside to the outside. My question would be how to break down those walls. My interest in this is definitely generational aware of cycles of time that see now several generations of men, women and trans* engaged in SRHR. I see people such as Loes, and others I have learnt so much from—Betsy Hartmann, Gita Sen, Rosalind Petchesky, Peggy Antrobus and Sonia Correa, to name a few—retiring from paid jobs. I now have my daughters, with their own views on feminism and sexual choice, as they become actively engaged in politics—a

generation younger than Sara—demanding their rights, and influenced by further crises and other forms of knowledge. Now in my present position as a teacher at the ISS I engage with students from different generations and very diverse geographical contexts. I have become even more interested in how to engage in intergenerational and intercultural dialogues recognizing the different histories and points of view according to age as well as culture.

Global Body Politics: Going Forward

Loes: Reading this through, I should like to highlight two areas that we have not commented on in our conversation. First, where are the men—the male bodies and male feminists? (see Chap. 12). Especially in the early history of body politics in the movements, there are a lot of assumptions and problematized "givens" about men's roles, which I know are still alive and kicking but are nowadays also questioned, notably by the new men's movements and by young-generation feminists. I also noted that we have not spoken about violence (physical, sexual and all forms of GBV), even though that is an important part of global body politics discourses.

Wendy: I agree that we have not focused on GBV, including the violence of development itself. I think the breaking down of barriers to speak about violence, in particular the hidden violence in homes, has been a great success for the SRHR movement. Yet at the same time, GBV has dominated the discussion so that people assume that SRHR is all about problems, and not about agency, celebrating sexuality and changing relations in culturally sensitive ways. Even if the term "population control" is no longer used, often responses are highly technical, medical and highly policed, and they ultimately fall into processes of governmentality that are not about peoples' choices, or about enabling conditions. You are right about men and other genders needing to be acknowledged in these debates—something I see is happening much more now, among younger people.

Sara: Writing down my experiences of "being young" within the SRHR movement was not an easy thing to do. While putting down my thoughts, self-reflections and deepest feelings on paper, I told myself, "Just write it down and then I will see what I can share." A sense of fear about what others within the SRHR citadel would think of what I wrote and whether it would be approved of constrained my confidence in sharing my personal perspectives. Surprisingly, as the year passed by, many of the words

in my first draft remained and are still the words you read here, and they have actually inspired me to share more details as the writing process continued. The trusting and non-judgemental atmosphere in which Wendy, Loes and I had this trialogue was a key factor contributing to my confidence that my experiences are worth sharing. However, equally important were the informal conversations I had with feminist activists from my generation during which I realized that there are many others around me feeling the same way—a feeling of not being valued and recognized in the movement for simply being who we are. For the SRHR movement to become truly sustainable, and a movement where everyone is appreciated and recognized for who they are, something needs to change. A space for true intergenerational dialogue, learning, sharing and most importantly trusting will create a SRHR citadel (without the walls and hierarchy) that I have been dreaming of.

Note

1. See Arrow and DAWN's websites at http://www.arrow.org.my/?p=sexual-and-reproductive-rights-srr and http://www.dawnnet.org/feminist-resources/, accessed 28 June 2015.

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CHAPTER 11

Post-What? Global Advocacy and Its Disconnects: The Cairo Legacy and the Post-2015 Agenda

Rishita Nandagiri

The world has changed drastically since the transnational and international advocacy (primarily at the UN) of the 1990s, and it is now much easier to organise actions across geographies and time. The advent of email and instant messaging, and the vastly improved telecommunications channels, have left behind the days of using up a few thousand reams of paper to fax each other strategies, updates and language recommendations.

As a feminist researcher working on reproductive justice, abortion rights, gender and sexuality, understanding and challenging stigma, "better" aid and development, post-colonialism and feminist organizing, I have been involved in writing and formulating policy and development positions including for the ICPD Beyond 2014 and the post-2015 frameworks. My aim has been to produce advocacy and policy papers on abortion within the framework of reproductive justice, on the intersectionalities between HIV/AIDS and SRHR, and on positioning SRHR and gender equality within the new development frameworks. In an attempt to understand and

R. Nandagiri (✉)
Department of Social Policy, LSE, London, UK

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_11

reflect on "The Cairo Legacy and the Post-2015 Agenda"—or, as I refer to it in confused exasperation and with my tongue firmly in cheek, "the Post-what?"– I have penned three letters of personal reflections addressed to older generations of feminists from the movements I am a part of and that are a part of who I am.[1]

To Everyone Who's Ever Said, "When I Was in Cairo…"

Thank you!

I am so grateful for the decades of organizing, debate, discussion and determination that fueled the writing and creation of the Programme of Action (PoA) at the ICPD, or, as it's commonly/affectionately referred to, the "Cairo Consensus".[2] The PoA broke new ground with the essential paragraph 7.3, which defined reproductive rights for the first time *ever*, not just changing the discourse of health and development but expanding our understanding of human rights by upholding the bodily integrity and autonomy of women and young people. The ICPD's paragraph 8.25 is also a hard-won fight to directly address unsafe abortion as a major health concern that must be addressed. The paragraph's emphasis on access to safe abortion is weakened by the caveat of "where legal", making accessibility dependent on national law and policy. This is only slightly mitigated by the call for access to safe post-abortion care in all circumstances.

Another important aspect of the PoA is the affirmation of the "evolving capacities" of young people within the program, linking it to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and underscoring the necessity and ability of young people to make informed decisions about their bodies and their lives, as well as participate in all decision-making related to them.[3]

Thank you for bravely taking on and ignoring the vocal opposition, including the Holy See and the very specific brand of ridiculous that they and some governments bring to these spaces—it cannot have been easy.[4] Thank you for the spirit of the ICPD PoA, for imbibing it with the sense that SRHR do not work in isolation, and that it is foundational to every other aspect of our lives: our political rights, our economic rights, our labour rights, our right to freedom, our right to health, our right to safety, and to our very autonomies and agencies. Thank you for instilling that intersectionality, that understanding of the importance of context in the ICPD PoA. Thank you, also, for an acronym that continues to confuse most people and refuses to just roll off the tongue!

I was only eight years old when the ICPD PoA came into being. The PoA was something to be achieved by the time I was a fully functional adult. (Of course, neither of those things has come to pass).

I grew up and came into my own within the feminist movement, mentored and guided by those who have walked these paths before me; smoothed it a little for me. I came into my own with an inheritance of mapped agendas: Rio, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing. Often referred to by the cities they were held in, these four conferences collectively shifted the broader discussions on development and rights, creating a vocabulary and language that allowed advocates to articulate a new vision for the world.[5]

The ICPD PoA is one of the legacies of my movements, the compass pointing "due north" in my work. It was handed down to me over cups of tea with a side of stories of lobbying and organizing across cities and continents; barely contained anger over the herstories of rights violations and population-control programmes (Merrick 2002) that form the backdrop of this activism; exasperated eye-rolling over the still-persistent family-planning language (Wilson 2013); and posters and articles from the late 1980s charting the cartographies of women's resistance. I felt that *this* was what my generation of feminists and advocates was tasked with: to remember these lessons learnt, to take forth these legacies, to see them to fruition, to charge onward; onward.

But very quickly I realised that the world has changed dramatically since 1994. As I tried to reconcile this "mission" with the world I witnessed and experienced, I understood that everything is impacted even more by globalization, corporatization, fundamentalisms (religious and other manifestations) and the constant threat of co-optation. My generation came into being in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (our realities and worlds are shaped by being the post-9/11 generation), posing new threats, new challenges and new barriers to navigate, and this is especially evident if you live in *certain* countries and in *certain* parts of the world.

This schism was most obvious to me at the global level. Sitting at the UN, watching these power struggles and negotiations play out, I wish that over all those cups of tea about the PoA, someone had thought to tell me a few simple truths:

1. None of this is actually about SRHR, women's rights or any other development goal. It is in reality about trade agreements, and negotiations with each other about oil or military bases

2. This schism is evident not just in negotiation rooms for commissions at the UN, but also in the approaches and positions we take within "progressive" SRHR spaces, within the women's and feminist movements. I wish someone had told me that our allyship is fragile; that it is fraught with decades of tensions, herstories and backstories; that the realities and privileges that we experience, embody and hold, bump up against each other in most unexpected of ways; that tensions about words and languages and years-old arguments exist and that you *will* trip over them and land flat on your face … a few hundred times; that power struggles and power dynamics aren't just external—they live within and manifest in our movements too.

If I take a step back and look at all this in terms of "global advocacy", the PoA attempted to connect many different issues together and contextualise them, but I increasingly feel that we've lost a lot of that. The PoA, by placing human rights at the center of the discussion on development, connected sustainability the environment, education, poverty and health, calling for a more holistic approach to development interventions.

In the post-2015 discussions, however, I think we find it difficult to connect SRHR to other issues, and we have ended up living in a bubble world of continuing to trumpet SRHR without making much of an effort to nuance our demands. This lack of connecting issues has also to do with how little SRHR is contextualised these days. SRHR has evolved in the last 20 years, and taken on new hues and shades. It has been influenced by new forms of militarization, economic priorities, environmental degradation and technological advances, to name a few. Of course, it is relevant across time and space and will continue to be so forevermore, but it's obvious and known that for any real, "sustainable" impact, SRHR has be cognizant of the realities of the space it functions in—we cannot continue to champion it without also questioning and critiquing just *how* do we do that.

All this post-2015 malarkey has thrown into stark relief how much ground SRHR has lost (given up) over the years: old allies, the solidarity that had been painstakingly built, the gains around language and legislature. This is also evident for me in how difficult it has been to mobilise support for SRHR in the major groups (also because we do very little to support them).[6] I don't mean to sound as though it is some strange Manichean framework of "us and them" that can never be (and is never) overcome, but for all the talk of not working in silos, that is exactly how

we work. We work on specific issues and themes as though our realities are carefully crafted boxes labelled “sustainability”, “economic”, “social”, “cultural” and “political”, and as though they never overlap or connect.

I’m torn about how little global advocacy connects to national and local levels. For all the sleepless nights that I have spent roaming the halls of the UN, I’m not entirely sure of how relevant it really is. Within this post-2015 framework, we talk of the universality of issues: to paraphrase from the Rio document, Agenda 21, “common but differentiated”. The principle of “common but differentiated” recognizes historical differences in the contributions of developed and developing states to global environmental problems, and differences in their respective economic and technical capacity to tackle these problems and contribute to a global solution. It includes two fundamental principles: (1) the common responsibility of states for the protection of the environment, or parts of it, at the national, regional and global levels; and (2) the need to take into account the different circumstances, particularly each state’s contribution to the evolution of a particular problem and its ability to prevent, reduce and control the threat (Centre for International Sustainable Development Law 2002).

This position of “common but differentiated” is true not just for the “development challenges” we all face, but for the responsibilities we shoulder for them. Sometimes this devolves into a “saviour narrative”—to “save” the Global South from itself, to protect “brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1988)—that is still prevalent in these spaces, in the discourse and therefore in the strategies employed. Saviour narratives, no matter how well meaning, are not empowering. *Solidarity* is not “saving”. That is not how solidarity manifests, and there is a desperate need to rethink these ways of working.

The 2015 CPD (for the first time ever) did not adopt a resolution because there was no agreed text.[7] Many people I’ve spoken to—seasoned advocacy specialists—told me that this was better than adopting a bad or weak resolution. Some see it as an omen of things to come in the post-2015 agendas, and indicative of what September will bring, perhaps reflective of how much this space has regressed and shifted for SRHR since Cairo.

Perhaps that’s true—there is a definite sense that spaces for progressive discussion have shrunk and are threatened by increasingly conservative elements and contexts. Civil society engagement has also taken on a very specific shape, where UN spaces such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the CPD and other UN meetings have claimed the legitimacy of “where advocacy happens”. These spaces can be extremely inaccessible for

smaller organizations and collectives, not just because of the strict requirements and costs, but also due to the copious amounts of jargon and dense language used.

The shifts in SRHR language have also been drastic since Cairo, evolving to include more issues and communities. Yet I sometimes wonder if "SRHR" is too artificial a construction to fully capture and reflect the nuance and complexity of all the aspects of sexuality today. For example, the Bali Declaration posits a new understanding of "family" itself, broadening the scope beyond heteronormative or nuclear families to include child- or women-headed households among others.[8] SRHR has also been challenged to rethink constructions of gender and of "woman", pushing them beyond the binary and understanding how they connect to health services, rights and autonomies. Perhaps the conversation right now should not be about the "post-Rio" or "post-Cairo" or "post-Beijing" but should tackle what our *current* Rio, Cairo and Beijing agendas are, irrespective of whether they're post-2015 or not. Perhaps it is time to rethink this entire framework, this entire construction, and to create something new.

In these global advocacy spaces, I find myself doing a tightrope dance of identities, balancing my feminist identity with my other identities—young, Indian, from the Global South—and trying to grapple with all that it brings with it: the positioning, the privileges and the panic. I am sometimes stymied by not knowing how to navigate this, how to be aware of my own privilege in my own context, and the way it plays out on the global stage. I'm aware that I tick a lot of boxes that fit certain agendas: English-speaking, young, brown, female-presenting, "Southern". I struggle with the responsibility of tokenized representation, with my own ambition, my own goals, my own politics and how they collide with each other. Can I co-opt an already token space? Can I break out of a convenient tickbox?

On some days I feel bogged down by this legacy mired in herstories and tied up in decades-old tensions. On some days I feel that the battle lines were drawn years before I stood here, that they will endure years after I have gone and that they will not have moved an inch; that we will remain divided by the pluralities rather than stay united, that our political positions will cause us to fracture rather than hold strong; that the sticking points of our arguments—the scars of population-control programs, family planning, the testing of contraceptives on Global South women, sex work as work, the always looming shadow of our still-recent, still-raw colonial pasts and how that affects our analyses and positioning—will continue to keep us on squarely parallel paths.

I have struggled with this a lot—the "difference": that we are not united for *one goal*, that we disagree too much, that we would never find common ground. I think about this a little bit differently now. Around March 8, 2015, *India's Daughter*, a documentary about Nirbhaya, the December 2012 gang rape victim, was released.[9]

It caused bitter and vociferous debates with the women's and feminist movement in India, calling into question some of the basic tenets of Indian feminist politics, such as the right to a fair trial, including the full process of appeal, and informed consent and freedom of choice. It also brought up crucial questions about freedom of expression in the context of continued censorship, and increased policing of viewpoints and expression, especially under the current conservative government.

Nivedita Menon, a highly respected feminist and academic, aptly marked Women's Day by commenting on the debate. Her statement reflects on the consistent challenging, questioning and disputing around this documentary, showcasing many different viewpoints and approaches, in addition to a healthy debate. She noted, with pride, the

> deeply contested terrain that we call feminism in India, in which no claim goes unchallenged, no issue is undisputed (and some might say, no good deed goes unpunished!), in which over the decades, every stand and every understanding on practically every issue, has been painfully rethought and reformulated in the face of intense questioning from newer claims and voices. (Menon 2015)

For me, that is reflective of a mature space, and I do think it's true for the larger, global spaces, where dissent is possible, where disagreement is encouraged, and where nuance and questioning are the norm. And I think this is where we take Cairo and the other agendas to a place of dissent, a place of questioning and a place of newer claims and voices.

To Everyone Who's Ever Said, "Young Feminists Today Are So Depoliticized"

I[10] keep coming up against the idea that young people today—young feminists, in particular—are depoliticised, that young feminist organizing is lacking a political lens. This puts my back up quite quickly, especially because everyone who tells me that tends to begin by going back to how in the 1970s they were so political and that you don't see anything like that these days.

It may be true that movements no longer see the kind of activism that was present in the 1970s, but that might be because the political lenses today are different, the contexts and challenges are different, and thus the strategies are different. I think there is a deep well of discontent among young people today, and it is evident in the student protests in Amsterdam, London, Santiago, Mexico City and Delhi around education, in the demonstrations for labour rights and better jobs in Nairobi, and, importantly, in who the core base of any political movement is: if you slice it sideways, the core is almost always young people.

In India again, the Shuddh Desi Romance (Pure Indian Romance) protests against right-wing groups' moral policing of Valentine's Day 2015 is one example of young people organizing and actively dissenting.[11] The Hindu Mahasabha, a right-wing group, threatened to marry any couples seen holding hands, claiming that this was "against Indian culture". Shuddh Desi Romance, organizing on Facebook and Twitter, called on people to gather in front of the headquarters of the Hindu Mahasabha wearing elaborate wedding wear, with a traditional *baraat* (a music band), and it even managed to bring a priest along, demanding that they conduct these marriages as promised. The group challenged not just the moral policing and intimidation, but the institution of marriage and the value placed on specific kinds of marriage: heterosexual, same-caste/religion. Given the context of the recriminalization of homosexuality and the reinstating of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, many LGBT couples also participated in the march, asking for the right to marriage.[12] A similar thread of protest can be seen in relation to intercaste and inter-religious marriages. The event was marred by arrests and police violence but it reflected a refusal to accept continued policing of people's lives, desires and agencies.

Shuddh Desi Romance follows a series of similar actions, such as the Kiss of Love[13] protests from 2014 and the Pink Chaddi campaign[14] of an earlier Valentine's Day fracas. Given the rise in moral policing, "love jihad" and the reinstating of Section 377, the pushback against conservative attitudes has seen an upswing.[15] These events rely on a sense of humor and a mocking tone as they challenge and subvert authority. "The sheer liberty of having fun" as they dissent is a newly emerging flavor of organizing. While criticisms around this attitude exist, it is no less depoliticised.

Part of the "viral" nature of these events and their ability to mobilise lies in their mocking tone and cheekiness, but it is abetted by the convenience of the Internet and how quickly and easily it lends itself to a space for sarcasm through memes or mock-ups. The almost real-time documentation

of the protests, the crackdown and the continued protests in detention leant itself to a new kind of support space—one that is not constrained by geography. The rest of the country continued to keep tabs on the protests through continuous updates on social media, which, in turn, saw an immediate response from people across the country (Narayanan, 2015).

The role of the Internet and social media platforms has taken on greater significance over the years and has led to an evolving understanding of the medium and its impact on movement-building. The December 2012 Nirbhaya protests in India, for example, allowed protestors to organize, and they acted as a receptacle and expression of the collective anger and outrage of a country (Islam and Bhusan Das n.d.). They not only sparked vociferous debate and collective action but also allowed people across the country, irrespective of their political alignment or presumed apathy, to display solidarity through a black dot in place of their Facebook and Twitter profile pictures. Similarly, the December 2013 judgment around Section 377 saw the Indian social-mediasphere react immediately, organizing protests nationwide and launching a global campaign: the Global Day of Rage against 377.[16]

The nature of the Internet enables immediate reactions and a conversation to unfold in real time. The ability to easily share and disseminate information has often led to a campaign going viral, exceeding expectations of who a campaign is able to reach. Social media has reached out to young people, often outside of traditional movement spaces, allowing them to (no matter how passively) follow conversations, and keep abreast of campaigns and initiatives around social issues. These efforts and platforms have also expanded what we understand as "mobilizing" by attracting groups and individuals to new spaces and to have new conversations.

In the course of this, a striking feature of "online organizing" has emerged. A number of campaigns and "reactions" to current events have taken on a tone of sarcasm and mockery. The ability to use multiple media also creates a new way of engaging with constituencies. Music videos or repurposed posters, for example, often go viral because of their ability to connect with multiple groups of people through popular culture or a cultural reference point. The use of irreverent animations from films and television series to react to current events are also common, showcasing new ways of reflecting disagreement.

A lot of the people who attended these events or participated in these campaigns are not drawn from the traditional pool of activists but are individuals who may not hold a political lens or position but feel compelled

to register dissent or challenge the status quo in one way or another. Such events are able to reach out to groups of people who are just "fed up" with how things are. These people may not have a political lens and may not have the political nuance of those who have been raised in political movements, but this is a key base to engage with, to tap that "well of discontent". It is clear that older social movements, including the feminist movement, have been unable to do this, leading to dwindling numbers and the constant concern about where all the young feminists have gone—an indicator that our vocabulary needs to shift, and our ways and spaces of engagement too.

It is also important to recognize the Internet as a space for connection. It has allowed a new vocabulary and a new awareness to emerge, especially among previously unreached groups. It has also allowed previously silenced and unheard groups—trans*, disabled and young people, for example—to create safe spaces to connect, to explore, to discuss their issues and strategies, and to organize themselves. In the aftermath of the reinstatement of Section 377, many LGBT persons took to the Internet to connect to each other because they felt that public spaces were no longer safe. The Internet, in some ways, acted as a way to continue to connect to the larger community in a safe(r) environment. To discount its power, no matter how overwhelmingly urban centric, would be short-sighted.

Looking at all this, I believe that the strategies and styles of organizing today are different. New ways of working are still emerging, but we ought to explore these within our spaces and voices now, and question how we integrate this mocking, openly defiant, humorous tone in our work, and how we work with and utilise the Internet in our campaigns. I believe that this a hope-filled moment—that our language of pleasure, of lust and of passion is finding a way to dissent, to resist, to celebrate and to bring in the sheer liberty of having fun.

To Everyone Who Considers Themselves a Part of Feminist Movements

I sometimes want to look at the amazing, wonderful, incredibly intimidating feminists in my life and say, very gently, "Please take me and my work seriously. Please give me space to be here. I want to sit at the table too."

This is difficult to talk about because it feels a little like betrayal: we stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us, have worked before us and continue to pave a path for us. And yet it sometimes feels like an unwelcome space for younger feminists.

There seems to be a general and pervasive opinion of young feminists being "depoliticized", or not having a political lens and constantly needing to prove themselves as "feminist enough". It takes a real toll and is beginning to damage the movement: I have had too many conversations with too many disillusioned (and hurt) young feminists who are walking away from progressive movement spaces because they feel devalued. It's a huge drain, not just because we aren't building and constructing new worlds together but because, however unintended, something is breaking.

There is a legacy to hand down and create together, but the handing down actually *needs* to happen. With that comes the necessity to create space, which sometimes means stepping down and stepping out, which is never easy. How do we create a space where there is sharing, where there is connecting and where there is a continued link? That's a difficult conversation to have given that a lot of older feminists have dedicated their lives (and livelihoods) to this space. How do we ensure that they too are in a safe space, that they too are "taken care of" as younger feminists yearn to be "mentored", have their contributions valued and share their own knowledge?

I struggle with this a lot. What shape does this mentoring take, how does it work and how does power play out in this space? I don't have answers to these or any of the other questions I've shared, but I think these are issues that need to be raised, pondered and addressed.

These aren't just questions I grapple with for the larger movement, but as I begin to step out of youth spaces—to attempt to create space—I have been wondering about how do to this myself. I think back to how I have had multiple people mentor me over time, and how thoughtfully they created a space where learning was mutual, where support was a given. It was a nurturing space where I never felt that I could not ask a question, no matter how silly or how basic. I never felt that there was a thought I could not share because of how it would be received. They created a safe space, acted as a "go to" for that terribly awkward, naïve, achingly idealistic 22-year-old who nervously stepped into these movements, and that is essential to "mentoring". It's something I hope I'm doing now: that I'm contributing to a space for asking a question, to pondering a thought, to posing a counterpoint, to being questioned, to being challenged.

These are my meandering and fumbling attempts to connect multiple threads into a more cohesive tapestry—one that is hard to create because so many threads have been wound through so many hands over decades and decades of feminist organizing and movement-building that many

tapestries have been created and shared over the years. But I am so infinitely grateful for these tapestries, for the many years of work that they are connected to and that they build on. The pictures (plural) that they depict may be contradictory; they may cause dissent and disagreement, debate and, sometimes, a rather serious feminist existentialist crisis, but that this is where their strength lies. They invite you to look, to question, to ponder from different angles, to tug at a thread and see where it leads you—to know that perhaps there is no one single answer, and that perhaps sometimes there is no answer at all, only questions.

Notes

1. "The Cairo Legacy" refers to the ICPD that was held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994. The ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) was indefinitely extended beyond its 20-year mandate, and the women's and feminist movements have been heavily involved in the ICPD Beyond 2014 discussions. The "post-2015 agenda" refers to the high-level discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals, a global framework widely expected to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Many women's and feminist groups have been engaged in the discussions to ensure that women's rights issues are not overlooked or minimized within the new framework.
2. The ICPD is hailed as a ground-breaking conference for its resulting PoA, which shifted development discourse from a population-control focus to respecting and upholding human rights. The shift to placing people at the center of development interventions was seen as a key victory for women's transnational organizing. A consensus document agreed to by 179 governments, the ICPD PoA outlined a 20-year framework to increase access to SRHRs and universal education, and to reduce maternal mortality, among other issues.
3. "Evolving capacities" is a principle introduced within the Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognizing that as children acquire enhanced competencies, there is a diminishing need for protection and a greater capacity to take responsibility for decisions affecting their lives. It also recognizes their capacity to make informed decisions and their right to participate in all processes and spaces impacting their lives.

4. The Vatican, holding a permanent observer position at the UN, was represented by H.E. Archbishop Renato R. Martino during the 1994 conference. The Holy See's statement reflects the divisive positions on abortion and reproductive rights that influenced the final text. Martino, Renato R. (1994, September 7). Statement of the Holy See. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/gov/940908193315.html.
5. The four conferences dealt with specific areas or themes but overlapped with each other not just because of the intersectional approach within each document but also as a result of the intentional connections made between the documents. "Rio" refers to the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, "Vienna" to the 1993 Conference on Human Rights, "Cairo" to the 1994 Conference on Population and Development and "Beijing" to the 1995 Conference on Women.
6. The concept of "major groups" comes from Agenda 21 (part of the Rio Declaration), which enabled civil society to participate in discussions and influence negotiations. The nine major groups are women, children and youth, farmers, indigenous peoples, NGOs, trade unions, local authorities, science and technology, business and industry.
7. The CPD is tasked with monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the ICPD PoA at the national, regional and international levels.
8. The Bali Global Youth Forum Declaration was the outcome of the Global Youth Forum, organized as part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 operational review. The recommendations contained within the declaration were made by young people from across the world. The declaration is available at http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/bali_global_youth_forum_declaration.pdf.
9. In December 2012, a young woman, Nirbhaya" ("fearless"), was brutally gang raped and left for dead in Delhi, India. She succumbed to her injuries after identifying her rapists. The attack and her death saw multiple protests erupt across the country, as well as the passing of a new rape law.
10. This letter contains some research and reflections from a commissioned but as yet unpublished paper written in May 2015, co-written with Vinita Sahasranaman.

11. Organized online via a Facebook event, Shuddh Desi Romance took place in Delhi, India, to protest against moral policing on Valentine's Day 2015.
12. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code criminalizes sexual activities "against the order of nature". It is primarily used against the queer community. It was read down by the Delhi High Court in July 2009 (Naz Judgement) but was reinstated by the Supreme Court of India in December 2013 (Koushal Judgement).
13. The "Kiss of Love" was a series of events organized across India that called on people to oppose moral policing and limitations imposed upon peoples' sexualities and autonomies by staging public "kiss ins". Many protesters across cities in India were arrested.
14. The Pink Chaddi (pink underwear) campaign was organized online in response to a right-wing leader who, in response to the beating and assault of women who had gone to a pub with male friends, called them "loose" and "pub going women". It claimed the identity of "loose, pub going women" and called for people to send the right-wing leader "pink chaddis" as a form of protest on Valentine's Day. He received more than 2000 pieces of underwear. The campaign is remarkable not just for claiming a "reviled" identity—of "loose" and "pub going" women—but for adopting a mocking attitude to respond.
15. "Love jihad", a concept floated and supported by Hindu right-wing groups in India, alleges that young Muslim men "con" young non-Muslim women into marrying them as part of an ongoing effort to convert them to the faith by feigning love. The concept speaks to many of the religious tensions and prejudices in the country.
16. The Global Day of Rage was a series of protests organized across the world in response to the reinstatement of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

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CHAPTER 12

Where Are the Men? Reflections on Manhood, Masculinities and Gender Justice

Jan Reynders

Introduction

Where are the men? This is a valid, sometimes uncomfortable, question, and one that is highly relevant in a book entitled *Bodies in Resistance*. I am an "out" feminist man, a male body-in-resistance to the current inequitable and unjust world order, seeking a humane, just and sustainable alternative. This chapter is a (self-)reflection on masculinities, based on conversations I have had over the last three decades during my work as a gender justice, GBV prevention and SRHR consultant, trainer, lecturer and activist. In my work I engaged with women and men of diverse ages, classes, castes, ethnic identities, gender identities and sexual orientations in different capacities in more than 45 different countries, in different cultural, religious and political settings. Some were my colleagues in a campaign, joint writing or training, or in evaluating the work of civil society organizations. Some were researchers, villagers, community groups, teachers, students, village club members or street kids. Others were participants

J. Reynders (✉)
The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_12

at an international conference,[1] a symposium or a lecture session. Others again were people working in funding agencies, governments or the UN.

Some of these conversations were with people who identify themselves strongly as feminist, while other people I spoke to do not make any reference to feminism, or might only whisper that they are feminists because in the public domain this could cause trouble and undermine their position.[2] Some of these women and men I met only once, but many are now close friends, co-activists and allies for social change. My chapter reflects on these conversations as part of my journey as an embodied feminist toward new manhood, masculinities and gender justice.

Situating Myself

As a man, a professional and a feminist, I subscribe to the feminist adage: the personal is political. I am a hands-on father, gender consultant and activist but also carpenter/handy man, homemaker and cook. In the Netherlands where I live, and wherever I travel, I am conscious of, and uncomfortable with, traditional parental roles and the expected gendered division of tasks. I find gender stereotyping, and sexist advertising and jokes, offensive. I am aware of the assumed and "real" differences between men and women. I meet many bodies in silent resistance—for example, in the construction and agricultural trade fairs I visit in the Netherlands and elsewhere as a carpenter/handy man. At these fairs, attended mostly by men, new techniques are explained by men and the promotional talks and quizzes are done by young women. In contrast, at household/homemaker trade fairs there is a largely female audience, and the very few men are usually unhappily trailing behind their partners. In these spaces it is still mostly men who explain the new techniques and electronic gadgets, and not-so-young women who promote the new foodstuffs and cleaning equipment. Again, in hardware shops, only rarely will you find female technical salespersons, and those few often have to cope with sexist remarks from male customers.

"Are you a feminist?" I have often been asked, particularly in the women-dominated international feminists' spaces such as the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)[3] or the slowly more inclusive Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).[4] I usually respond, "Tell me what is a feminist for you and I can answer your question."

Yes, I am a feminist rather than a "profeminist" man, merely showing solidarity and supporting feminism and women's rights.[5] Feminism demands long-term action toward sustainable changes in many fields in order to guarantee gender justice, and equal rights and opportunities for

everyone (hence women and men). Such transformative changes require overcoming the patriarchal systems, which, whether knowingly, unwittingly or even unwillingly, are perpetuated by most men and many women, and which clearly create and sustain structural mechanisms that determine gender inequalities in life and livelihoods.

I cannot and shall not in any way deny male dominance or masculine hegemony as the prevailing common practice, but my life and work experiences have taught me that power differences between women and men are impacted not only by gender but also by class, caste, age, ethnicity, sexual diversity and sexual identity. A poor slum-dwelling "maidservant" employed in the household of a female director of a women's rights NGO in Bangladesh has more in common with a "scheduled caste" and equally poor male sweeper, cleaning streets, drains and toilets, than with her employer, even though both are women. Solidarity is mostly class and other power-differences' based as well.

Feminism and Gender Justice: Where Are the Men?

If gender equality is about more than women's rights and it includes benefits for men, then where are the men in the struggle for gender justice?[6] It is not that men are absent; rather, to paraphrase what I often hear women say, "Men are everywhere, too dominant, claiming too much space and too many leadership roles, having their own exclusive—all male—old-boys networks and gatherings. Let them be, we need to do our own thing!"

But this is too easy: both women and men are needed to achieve gender justice for all. Even if women are more likely to refer to "being a woman" (and often being a mother) as their primary political and gendered identity, and men refer more to class and cast, or ethnic identity, as their primary political identity (considering their male hegemonic/dominant position as given standard, as "normal"), men too are gendered beings. Both men and women are gendered under the same patriarchal system that prescribes and dictates the position of women and girls as well as men and boys.

Patriarchy affect everyone, but in different ways. Women and girls suffer the brunt of violence and oppression, while men and boys are privileged but also damaged by patriarchy, but they are rarely aware of that. Men and boys also suffer from abuse and violence at home, in the street, at school, at work and in wars and conflicts at the hands of other men, and sometimes of women. For example, in the Netherlands, 40 percent of domestic violence is suffered by men.[7] Boys and men who are conscious of the negative effects of gender-imposed roles and challenges and who

resist patriarchal norms and social dictates often find it tough going. Non-conforming gender behavior and non-heteronormative sexual orientation are not tolerated in many settings and can lead to different forms of violence, exclusion or worse.[8]

I have heard such observations supported by others. My friend and colleague Hope Chigudu in Zimbabwe shared that many boys and men "are 'cornered' by patriarchy, hierarchy and status quo. They are in a trap of masculinity and some don't like it … 'Balanced' men are despised even by their wives … non-macho men are often despised in Africa."[9] During the 2015 International Conference on Masculinities in New York, the outspoken film star Jane Fonda spoke similar words: "Many men are deeply wounded, and the cause of injury is patriarchy!"[10]

Understanding "Men"?

I distinguish four categories of men[11] who occupy different gendered positions that today can be found in most countries around the world:

1. "Happy" dominant men are oblivious of, or deny, their privileged and dominant positions, assuming that their male entitlements and leadership roles are natural ("God-given") and the way it should be. At best they cede some power to women, when this is seen as beneficial to their own societal position and business interests, or when the women's (political) voices and forces become too strong to resist.
2. "Angry" men, often angry fathers (in many cases with judicial child-custody issues), want to reverse the developments in which women gain power and equality, and subsequently get more of the jobs that men used to secure. Many such angry men want to go back to what they consider the way "nature" is meant to be, regain their traditional dominant position, and re-establish the patriarchal gender hierarchy and order.
3. "Confused" boys and men are unsure of their role in life—what is expected from them as a boy or a man? Are boys and men still supposed to take the lead, protect, provide the income? If not, what should they be doing? Can they show their vulnerabilities and weaknesses, and are they still enough "men" when doing so? In reality, many men are not the (single) breadwinner, and hence the normally assumed head of household. Yet many peers, parents, in-laws

and others still expect the same. Confusion all around can trigger a crisis of "masculinities". Many boys are losing interest in school as there are often no jobs for them anyway. Their education levels are dropping in many countries, while simultaneously girls' academic achievements are improving.

4. "Unhappy" boys and men are dissatisfied with the prescribed gender roles, not fitting the stereotypes of how a man should be, yet not easily accepted by other boys and men or, for that matter, by many girls and women when showing a different behaviour. Many such boys and men do not want to be a "bystander" to gender injustices against girls and women, or to violence and rape where perpetrators go scot-free. They would rather be equal than be expected to lead and dominate. These are also often the boys and men realizing that not every space or street is safe for them either, as is often assumed: they experience violence as well, and they don't feel that fighting back "as a man" is the answer. Many such boys and men want to be part of the transformation, the change process: gender justice for everyone; rethinking manhood; sharing income-earning responsibilities and time, household chores, parenting; and sharing roles in political and corporate leadership. Promoting change processes all around. They are bodies in resistance to the injustices and limitations of patriarchy, which they see as related to the domination of the prevailing short-sighted and hence environmentally destructive neoliberal, globalized economic models.

Many male bodies of straight, gay and transgender persons are in resistance, but for different, sometimes contradictory, reasons. Some "traditional" boys and men want to reverse the process of liberation from patriarchal dominance that many women (and some men) have fought for and are finally getting the benefits from,[12] but I happily note that in recent years an increasing number, particularly of young men, want to address patriarchy that hinders gender justice, and equal opportunities and practices, for everyone.

Men Engaging in Gender Justice

These new conversations are also a response to periods, where men were mostly seen as the enemy, in line with the stereotypes of men as dominant and women as victims. I have heard women's rights activists claim that

men are only interested in protecting their privileges, leadership positions and large salaries, and that they are not willing to give up their power positions. Why bother to include these men, they would ask? Common refrains from those years are “Men can never be trusted”, “Men drink and get violent”, “Boys will be boys”, “Penetration is domination” and “A dead man cannot be a rapist”. But in many places women also speak negatively about other women reinforcing unjust gender hierarchies: “A woman needs to be kept in her place, after all the man is the boss”; “She must have provoked him”; “Men are the head of the household, it is his right to be the boss”. Or in case of abuse and rape, I heard women (not only men!) saying: “See what she was wearing!”

Yet at the same time, counsellors in women’s crisis centres and shelters shared that many women who are in a violent “intimate partner” relationship seek help to end the violence but do not want to leave the relationship. Many of them have no other option because of their childcare responsibilities, lack of economic independence, limited education, lack of social accepted autonomy or simply lack of a safe place to go and live as a single woman. However, often it is because they love their partner, but not his violent behavior. Female counsellors are often asked by the violence survivors to invite their husband and counsel him as well. From my conversations over the years, I see a change in women’s rights organizations from not wanting to engage with men at all, to realizing that they may need facilities and skills to also counsel perpetrators and at the same time guarantee the safety of the violence survivor.[13]

Girls club’ programs around the world are training young and adolescent girls to become assertive and empowered, and to learn about their rights.[14] I regret note that these programs are only for girls despite the fact that these girls themselves often speak about the abuse that their brothers suffer and question the exclusion of boys. As one young girl commented, “If we learn about our rights and become assertive, but boys don’t get any such training, who should we marry when we grow older? Boys must get this training too: we all need this if we want to be happy together!”[15]

There is a growing awareness among female and male gender justice activists that boys and men are not just “the problem” but part of the solution. One of the reasons for this is the simple reality that most women do not live in isolation from men, and women too need to change their own stereotyping and step out of their comfort zones away from victimhood or perpetratorhood.[16]

MenCare

Working with boys and men, in close cooperation and in parallel with working with girls and women, opens up new possibilities for gender justice, equal opportunities, sharing of responsibilities and a reduction in GBV. One example is the MenCare global fatherhood campaign, managed by five international organizations.[17] Recent programs focus on boys and men in their preparation for responsible fatherhood, but also involve their female partners, community groups and (religious) leaders. They offer counseling support for men who have used violence, like the MenCare+[18] program implemented in Rwanda, South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia, which have already shown to be successful in their approach and are as such appreciated by girls and women involved as partners and women's rights activists, and by the boys and men themselves.

These campaigns and programs show how bodies in resistance are bringing about change. Boys and men, sharing their frustration and disgust at their father using violence against their mother as normal practice in order to get what he wants, learn that such behavior does not have to be their norm. Men who have used violence themselves, appreciating the opportunity to be heard rather than just condemned, subsequently learn alternatives to handle their anger and frustration, and (when possible) regain the confidence of their intimate partners. They can learn from positive examples and models that they did benefit from owing to the absence of their own fathers. Adolescent boys can reshape their own upbringing and behavior, and challenge the expected dominant and harmful masculine culture.

The first *State of the World Fathers Report*[19] (2015) shows the importance of engaging with boys and men for the sake of everyone: women, children and the men themselves. The report states that almost "80 percent of men will become biological fathers" and that "all men do have some connection to children" whether "as relatives, as teachers, as coaches, or simply as community members … men's participation in the daily care of others has a lasting influence on the lives of children, women, and men, and an enduring impact on the world around them". It goes on to state that public policy on men's participation as caregivers is often missing even though "involved fatherhood helps children thrive … and studies in multiple countries have shown that fathers' interaction is important for the development of empathy and social skills in sons and daughters" (Levtov R., and Gaag N van der et al. 2015).

The report stresses the importance of longer government-supported and government-financed fatherhood leave along with long-term investments for health, child development and gender justice.

Men Organizing for Transformative Change

New groups, networks and movements of men and women and other gender identities, in resistance to the patriarchal structures, norms and values are developing and many are joining the global MenEngage alliance of independent civil society groups and organizations (and some UN organizations). The alliance links local networks or affiliations of groups and individuals that come together for the common purpose of engaging boys and men to promote gender equality and justice around the world. When signing up as member of MenEngage, these groups agree to a number of core principles in line with the ultimate goal for which the alliance is set up: "advancing gender justice, human rights and social justice to achieve a world in which all can enjoy healthy, fulfilling and equitable relationships and their full potential".[20]

Similar to other social change networks and alliances,[21] MenEngage respects the autonomy of the groups linked through the alliance and provides a structure through which they—each with their own organizational styles, substantive priorities and political strategies, related to local and global circumstances—can join together for the common purpose of gender justice. Rather than organizing men against women, or completely separate from women, MenEngage includes many women's rights organisations and works in close cooperation with women and women's groups, working toward the same goal.

MenEngage seeks to "provide a collective voice on the need to engage men and boys in gender equality" as well as "to build and improve the field of practice around engaging men in achieving gender justice, and advocating before policymakers at the local, national, regional and international levels". It provides an organizational structure that acknowledges difference and diversity among its members and at the same time recognizes the usefulness of linking up across such differences for particular common purposes.

The alliance has grown within a few years to a membership of more than 600 diverse civil society organizations, 6 regional and 33 country networks by mid-2015. Member groups and organizations meet and are active locally, as well as regionally. Two global symposia were organized in

order to advance global exchanges among members, non-members interested in working with men and boys, and women's groups and organizations. One in 2009 in Rio de Janeiro[22] brought together about 250 men and 250 women. The second in 2014 in New Delhi involved 1200 men, women and transgender persons participating (about 45 percent women) from 94 countries. MenEngage groups also work in alliance with women's rights groups at UN gatherings, such as the CSW.

In March 2015, during CSW 59 in New York, MenEngage participated in the dialogues analyzing the progress in gender justice and women's rights made since the Beijing 1995 fourth UN World Conference on Women and what action to take towards the future.

An oral statement was made by the MenEngage Alliance during the general discussion of the CSW, confirming the alliance's analysis and its commitment to contribute to sustainable transformative changes:

- No matter who or where we are, patriarchal norms and gender injustices make our relationships less fulfilling, less healthy and less safe. From an early age, they introduce suffering, violence, illness, hate and death to our families and communities. They strip us of our human rights and hinder our ability to live a life with love, dignity, intimacy and mutual respect. They hamper the development of our economies and keep our global society from flourishing. We need to overcome these immense threats to human wellbeing.
- Investments in engaging men and boys should *not detract* from other effective strategies, especially those undertaken by women's organisations. We reject attempts to weaken our alliances or to put complementary approaches in competition with one another. We call on policy makers and donors to dramatically increase the resources available for *all* gender justice work.
- Patriarchal power, expressed through norms of dominant masculinities, is among the major forces that drive structural injustices. We are particularly concerned about the manifestations of militarism and neoliberal globalisation: the proliferation of weapons; economic inequalities; violent manifestations of fundamentalisms; state violence; exclusion of and violence against civil society; human trafficking; and destruction of natural resources. We urgently need to expose the link between patriarchy and the exploitation of people and environment. And to help boys and men change their behaviour from "power over" to "power with".

- The Post-2015 Development Agenda must embrace a human rights approach and transform unequal power relations. We believe that achieving gender justice requires engaging men and boys for the benefit of women and girls, men and boys themselves, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions. For a world that is just, safe and sustainable—for everyone. (17 March 2015)[23]

The statement ends with a quote that came from the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi in 2014[24] and was shared in different sessions and panels during the International Conference on Masculinities[25] in March, as well as at the CSW: "Men should not occupy feminist spaces. They should make the spaces they occupy feminist."

Contestations Around Men Engaging in Gender Justice

How welcoming are women's movements to engaging men? Responses to organizations such as MenEngage have not always been positive. Whereas some, particularly younger feminists, usually welcome the engagement of boys and men to join in action towards gender justice, at times the new movement groups meet with outright distrust. The diversity of contexts and histories of women's rights and gender equality movements, as well as the roles played by UN agencies and international funding institutions, have influenced the nature of these organizations and movements and how their leaders respond to, welcome or distrust "new" actors in the field.

For example, in 1968, the Netherlands saw the birth of an organization called Man Vrouw Maatschappij (MVM [Man, Woman, Society]). This was a feminist action group set up by two women leaders, Joke Smit and Hedy d'Ancona. MVM considered feminism to be an emancipatory movement of women as well as men, referred to as the emancipation of what were considered to be "feminine values". It was inclusive and had many women as well as men as active members and supporters, and the board included both women and men.

With the arrival of another feminist group and movement in the Netherlands called Dolle Mina in the early 1970s, campaigning for the equal rights of women and men, and in particular the opportunities and

rights of women to decide about pregnancy,[26] MVM became more radical and sometimes joined Dolle Mina's campaigns. Over time the views of "radical feminism" entered the MVM movement. Strongly influenced by groups in the USA, patriarchal hierarchies and hence men, or mankind at large, were now seen as inherently/by nature oppressive; in terms of sexuality expressed as "penetration is domination". Men were therefore no longer regarded as allies for emancipation but as "the enemy". As a principle, the board of MVM never wanted a man as the chair, but after 1973 it no longer wanted any men on the board. After that, some of the key pioneers of the movement, who wanted women and men to work together, left, and MVM became a women-only space.

Another more global example is the UN fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, held in Beijing in September 1995, and particularly the formulation of the Platform of Action,[27] which appears to be intended as an exclusive women's space, in which men are seen either as mere obstacles or, at best, as collaborators for women rights. Different from the UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, only one year earlier, which speaks of men as partners, there is no reference whatsoever to men as gendered human beings in their own right, formed, privileged but also damaged by patriarchal rule. This reflects the international development discourse that continues to focus on women rather than gender. Women in Development (WID) changed to Women and Development (WAD) and subsequently to Gender and Development (GAD), but the term gender almost always referred to women, and women's rights only. When, after much lobbying by women's rights activists' groups, the different UN institutions dealing with issues concerning women, women's rights and positions were united and the "UN entity for women's rights and gender equality" was set up in 2001, it came to be known as UN Women. Several highly placed UN Women staff members confided during private discussions that the very name UN Women was misleading because it reinforces the notion of many people, even today, that it works exclusively for women's rights rather than gender justice for everyone. References in the UN to the role and position of boys and men are generally instrumentalist in nature, in view of women's rights and opportunities, or their "protection". The UN Women campaign HeforShe, launched in 2014, is a telling example of this instrumentalist approach to engaging men.[28]

Many of the pioneers in women's activism around the world have invested years of their lives and much of their energy to build their organizations from scratch—with their own unpaid work and other shared contributions—to where they are today, now often funded and assuming a guarantee to be able to continue. The growth of men's groups for gender justice constitutes challenges to their analysis of addressing women's rights issues often in isolation from men, but also to their ability to secure adequate funding in the future, and hence also their own, personal future.

It also appears that some of the pioneers in the (global) women's movements, after many years of being in the world of women's exclusive activism, in lobbying work, addressing politicians, demanding new policies and laws, and chasing financial support, find it difficult to publicly embrace the attention for the role of boys and men as part of the broader analysis of patriarchal domination. In private conversations such leaders shared their agreement to this broader analysis with me and indeed the need to engage boys and men, acknowledging that there are many "male-bodies-in-resistance" as well. Yet in public, particularly in majority-women audiences, they rarely raise and acknowledge these issues and concerns.

A striking example comes from a side event session during CSW 59 in March 2015 in New York called The Global Feminist Journey: Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi, Beijing and Beyond". The audience at this session consisted of 98 percent women. Key and well-known global women leaders, expressly chosen from different generations, shared their personal journeys. In their impressive stories the word "men" did not feature in their analysis or description of activities. If "men" were indeed not part of that journey, the audience simply needed to accept that. However, when the same speakers were asked to share their views on gender issues in the future, again the word "men" did not feature. When I asked after the session why there was no reference to men at all in their "Beyond Beijing + 20 future", to my surprise, one of the speakers, with whom I have closely worked in the past, said that if there had been more men in the audience, she would have mentioned men too. Do the principles of gender justice depend on who is in the audience?

Changes, Critiques and More Questions

India was one of the first countries in which some of the well-established women's rights organizations (both the funded and the non-funded) recognized men as gendered, as well as classed and casted beings. Some

women's groups in India involved men from the start, not instrumentally but realizing that their active role is indispensable for the sake of women as well as for the sake of men themselves, in dealing with different forms of violence, discrimination, healthcare and patriarchy at large. Men in these organizations are part of the common feminist struggle, not just "pro" or supportive.

Srilatha Batliwala, a well-known Indian feminist and scholar associate at AWID, moderated a plenary session during the 2014 New Delhi MenEngage symposium entitled "Dialogue with the Women's Movement" in which she asked the male and female speakers as well as the audience to formulate the questions and issues they would like to talk about with the women's movement, and vice versa.[29]

Later, in the women's space of the AWID website, she commented and reflected on the MenEngage symposium and stated that there had been an "impressive breadth and depth of discussion and debate on reshaping masculinities and the role of men and boys in building a gender just world (Batliwala 2014)". She saw that the greatest achievement of the symposium was the unanimous agreement that "the root-cause of gender injustice was patriarchy, and hence the shared political agenda of all those present was to dismantle it". She found it "remarkable" to hear this view expressed by men's groups and trans activists from across the geo-political spectrum. She appreciated the nuanced understanding of patriarchy as not only about primary oppressive power structure for women and men but also as "the engine that fuels exploitative economic models, environmentally destructive development, and all forms of war, conflict, and violence" (Batliwala 2014).[30]

She came away from the Delhi symposium, which she considered outside a feminist space, "troubled on several counts". For example, that she heard little acknowledgement of the role of women's rights movements and feminist scholars in underlining how "patriarchal masculinities perpetuate gender discrimination and violence, and calling for men to become allies". She pointed out that masculinities were not being addressed in theory and practice for the first time. She was concerned that credit was not being given to "decades-long work of feminists in researching these issues, building solid theory and analytical tools, and trailblazing work on the ground" (Batliwala 2014).

Indeed, many scholars in women's movements around the world have analyzed patriarchy for its perpetuation of discrimination and violence against women. But in most of that analysis it was primarily to show

the subordinate position of women and the maintenance of that position by dominant men, unwilling to give up their patriarchal 'privileges'. Men's own voices on the topic were hardly solicited or covered. Only very rarely did such analysis show how men too are gendered under the same patriarchal system, and that many of their privileges are linked to what many men (often related to their class position),[31] also consider to be heavy burdens imposed on them by that same patriarchal system with no freedom of choice for women, nor for men, but with clearly different consequences.

There is a serious concern that the focus on, and attention to, boys and men, particularly by funders, may undermine work for women's rights, particularly when it comes to available funding for the professional organizations that live on external funding. This hinders the development of trust and cooperation between women's rights organisations and groups of men and women that work on gender justice for everyone. However, preliminary data referred to at the time of the MenEngage Delhi symposium in 2014 have not shown that funding to work with men and boys has been the reason for less money available for exclusive women's rights work.[32] Public funding has declined overall, and for gender work in particular, with global funding now primarily being spent on business interests of the funding countries and on anti-terrorism measures, which in turn curtails funding to small women's rights organizations in countries in conflict or with a weak government.[33] The risk of diverting funds away from women's rights and toward working with men as the latest assumed quick fix by funding agencies is real and needs to be carefully monitored and handled by all concerned. The Delhi Declaration[34] and Call to Action: *Men and Boys for Gender Justice* clearly states that such diversion of the little funding available needs to be prevented.

In terms of funding and the choice of priorities, we have to distinguish between women's rights organizations and gender justice organizations. The younger generation of feminists (female and male) says that gender justice is about girls and boys, about women, men and transgender persons, if sustainable positive results are the ultimate objective. Hence money needs to be spent on all groups.

Batliwala refers to the work done to empower women in South Asia who have always had to work with men and boys, in one way or another. Her own grassroots work—with women living on Bombay's pavement slums, and Dalit and indigenous women in the villages of Karnataka state in South India—identified male allies and worked with men as well as

women. She says that "Our lapse was the failure to document and analyse the lessons from this work, because we didn't see it as a distinct strategic component, but an organic part of our organizing" (Batliwala 2014). Indeed in India some organisations have involved men in their work on empowering women and addressing GBV already for many years but this is not the case in many other countries.

It is important and necessary that men themselves speak out publicly about patriarchy and undertake work with boys and men as part of a strategy to achieve gender justice for everyone, even if this has already been said by feminist scholars before.

Creating Men's Spaces for Gender Justice?

Different from rather exclusive women's spaces such as AWID and the CSW, where men were tolerated but until recent years not really welcomed, the global MenEngage alliance has made it a clear policy and practice to actively invite and engage with women's organizations working for gender justice, and it includes them in its advisory board.[35] But while the dialogue between women's movement groups and newly developing men's groups for gender justice needs to continue and intensify at all levels in order to share analyses and successful practices, there is also the need for men and men's groups, just like women and women's groups, to have their own separate "safe spaces".[36] Women activists will have to accept that.

Another consideration is that space, time and attention are needed for the men in the category of "unhappy" (actively engaging feminist) men to enable them to dialogue and strategize among themselves how to effectively address issues of gender injustice vis-à-vis men in the other three categories—those who are "happy" ignorant, dominant or sexist; or the "angry" spouses and fathers; or the many who are "confused". Ignoring the angry men who wish to reverse the movement toward gender equality and justice will not make them disappear. Neither will the confused men be automatically supportive toward gender justice. And the happy, dominant men will not freely give up their dominant positions. There is a lot of pain, anger, confusion and resistance to change that must be understood as well as challenged. Every change process has a price, even when it is strongly desired, and the simple response that it will become better for everyone will not suffice. What is required is a long and slow process of strategizing, understanding and action.

The Challenges: Together for Transformation, Who Joins, and on Which and Whose Terms?

Gendered roles and behavior are not part our DNA; they are invented, introduced and reinforced by humans, in all their varieties. The roles and pressures on us are forceful, and at any moment we may fall back into default modes of domination or submission for our comfort, or simply our survival. Neither female nor male gender activist leaders are free from their own histories, class positions or upbringing: a permanent challenge. The risk of diva behavior, both female and male, is always around the corner.

Age and claims of experience, whether as men or women leaders, are a serious challenge in the gender movement in terms of the space given to "dissident" voices. Particularly with many young female activists who are more open to working with boys and men for a common goal, it is a challenge for many of the pioneers to allow the young people the space they require and deserve in finding their own and new ways to work, while not ignoring the lessons from and pitfalls of the past. Representation of the organization can easily become a new form of dominance when only the pioneers or leaders claim and accept the invitations to speak.

During the first global MenEngage symposium in 2009 in Rio de Janeiro, one of the speakers warned all of the men in the audience against premature self-congratulation and to understand their own positions well. With the women's movements having brought the worlds' plight of women's rights this far, it is not for the men in the men engagement movements to say, "Thank you for all your efforts, from here we take the lead…" and start dominating the subsequent processes. Modesty, new styles of leadership, sharing and learning are required by all sides if ultimately gender justice and equality are the goal, rather than power games and ego-tripping or merely flipping the power coin from men to women.

Privileges are invisible for those who have them. Undoing privileges requires work, reflection, awareness and, at times, confrontation. If the ultimate goal of all those bodies in resistance is freedom, justice, respect, love and equality, new words, symbols, methods and processes need to be developed. We need new ways to work together toward transformation, without a blueprint giving us the answers.

Gender and gender inequality are not a project that can be fixed with money. The problems of the world's multi-inequalities are very structured and deeply entrenched in our daily lives and hence our responses must also be well structured, but along new lines of thinking and behaving. This

means that the language, methods and approaches to the transformation to justice must carry the ingredients that are required in the new situation. One of the challenges is that men need to define non-dominant masculinity from the position of having been, or still being, the privileged, with partly still traditional masculine behavior. Similar to women, knowing best what they themselves feel and experience, men will have to learn and acknowledge what they feel, experience and do, and how that can be changed.[37]

On the road to gender justice, feminists must abstain from "men-bashing". Women also need to accept new forms of caring and positive masculinity. Similarly, men have to give up gender-based privileges and grow out of essentialist macho straight-jackets. They also need to be unapologetic about their need to heal from the wounds inflicted on them, in order to learn to be fully human and to actively engage in dismantling structural and internalized gender-based inequalities, in promoting and celebrating diversity and thus move forward together—not by "standing on the shoulders of the women's movements" but by standing on their own feet, together with like-minded men, women and other genders.

Notes

1. Such as conferences held by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) (www.awid.org), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (www.wilpf.org), Women in Development Europe Plus (WIDE +) (http://wideplus.org/) and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (www.unwomen.org/en/csw), all websites accessed January 28, 2016.
2. This observation was made by women from Eastern Europe during the EU Conference organized by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (www.EIGE.org) for the launch of the Gender Equality Index, June 25, 2015. Some women from countries in Africa have shared similar experiences with me during the 2015 International G7/20 Parliamentarians' Conference, She Matters, Berlin, April 2015 (www.she-matters.org). all websites accessed January 28, 2016.
3. AWID is an international, feminist membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. It has more than 4,700 members in 163 countries.

4. See www.unwomen.org/en/csw, accessed January 28, 2016.
5. The term "profeminist" is commonly used in the USA by men supporting women's rights and feminism, based on the notion that men cannot be feminist or claim that term because they are not women. See, for example, *Voice Male, the Untold Story of the Profeminist Men's Movement* (Okun 2014).
6. I purposely use the term "gender justice" rather than "gender equality" for the simple reason that not all that is equal is just. With the use of the term "equality" it is also not clear on whose terms such equality would be. Since around 2000, different UN and international agencies and networks started using "gender justice" rather than "gender equality". See, for example, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development's (UNRISD's) commissioned volume *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights* (2002) and the 2014 Delhi Declaration and Call to Action resulting from the second MenEngage Global Symposium, Men and Boys for Gender Justice, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, November 10–13, http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/delhi-declaration-and-call-to-action.html, all websites accessed January 28, 2016.
7. Based on, among others, the study *Huiselijk geweld in Nederland* (Domestic Violence in the Netherlands) commissioned by Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC [the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre]) of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands government (van der Veen and Bogaerts, 2010), available at www.wodc.nl.
8. See, for example, the International Men & Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), created by Instituto Promundo and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), which has so far been undertaken in 12 countries: Norway, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Malawi, Croatia, Bosnia, Mali and India, http://promundoglobal.org/programs/international-men-and-gender-equality-survey-images/. Starting in 2015, IMAGES will also be implemented in the USA, in Poland, in two additional settings in sub-Saharan Africa, in five countries in the Middle East and in Russia, http://promundoglobal.org/.
9. E-mail conversation June 29, 2014.

10. The International Conference on Men and Masculinities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality, March 5–8, 2015, was organized by the American Men's Studies Association (AMSA) with the Centre for the Study of Men and Masculinities of Stony Brook University, New York, and MenEngage, in the days preceding CSW 59, http://www.academia.edu/12185740/International_Conference_on_Masculinities_Engaging_Men_and_Boys_for_Gender_Equality_USA_2015.
11. This (non-exhaustive) categorization is based on my fieldnotes from dialogues, discussions, listening to and observations during many years of work on gender justice with boys and men, as well as girls and women, in very diverse cultural settings around the world.
12. Such men and their organizations are often referred to as "men's rights" groups. I consider this incorrect because their aim is the denial of women's rights, hence they should be referred to as anti-women's rights groups. Human rights covers all humans, hence women's rights, men's rights and LGBTQI rights.
13. The key points of many of these conversations feature in the evaluation- or program-appraisal reports I have written over the years at the request of different organizations. Most of these reports are unpublished, so no public references can be provided.
14. See, for example, the Girls Child Network in Zimbabwe (www.gcnzim.org) or the Girl Power Initiative in Nigeria (www.gpinigeria.org).
15. Based on conversations with members of girls clubs. Several such conversations are recorded in an evaluation report for Oxfam Novib on its "triangle approach": programs in 32 countries undertaken by local civil society organizations linking gender justice, quality education and sexuality/SRHR and HIV prevention. See Reynders (2012).
16. See, for example, studies undertaken under the Partners for Prevention Programme, a program of UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Asia and the Pacific, www.partners4prevention.org; studies undertaken by MenEngage, www.menengage.org; and articles in *Men and Feminism* (Gaag N van der 2014), http://zedbooks.co.uk/paperback/feminism-and-men.
17. Details of the programs can be found at www.men-care.org.

18. For details and country cases, see http://men-care.org/what-we-do/programming/mencareplus.
19. Levtov et al. (2015).
20. Homepage of *MenEngage* at http://MenEngage.org.
21. For further analysis of the dynamics and potential of networks and alliances for social change, beyond research or advocacy, see Imam, Matsvai and Reynders (1998) and Reynders (2011).
22. First Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality, Rio de Janeiro, with call to action, March 30–April 3, 2009, https://menengageasiapacific.wordpress.com/?s=Rio+Call+to+Action.
23. For the full text of the oral statement, see http://menengage.org/menengage-statement-csw-march-17-2015/.
24. See http://menengage.org/setting-expiry-date-gender-inequality-womens-rights-menengage-delhi/ and Delhi statement http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/delhi-declaration-and-call-to-action.html.
25. The International Conference on Men and Masculinities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality, March 5–8, 2015, http://www.academia.edu/12185740/International_Conference_on_Masculinities_Engaging_Men_and_Boys_for_Gender_Equality_USA_2015.
26. One of the best-known campaigns was “Baas in eigen buik”, loosely translated as “boss in one’s own belly”.
27. For the contents and full report of the Beijing PoA 1995, see http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/, accessed January 28, 2016.
28. See www.heforshe.org, accessed January 28, 2016.
29. See http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/video-dialogue-with-the-womenrsquos-movement-video.html, accessed January 28, 2016.
30. Batliwala (2014).
31. Based on my fieldnotes of interview and training session feedback over the years and in many countries.
32. In different plenary and breakout sessions of the Delhi symposium, reference was made to the danger of funding getting channeled to the work with boys and men, and gender justice at large, at the cost of working on exclusive women’s rights. However, no evidence has been found to support this so far. In the plenary session Dialogue

with the Women's Movement, Dean Peacock of the Sonke Gender Justice network in South Africa spoke of big changes taking place with respect to donor funding policies in the field of gender, favoring bigger international agencies, and bypassing smaller organizations and networks working locally or regionally.

33. The recommendations of the the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) (on Money Laundering), also known by its French name, Le Groupe d'action financière (GAFI), are often the cause of blocking fund transfers by banks to smaller women's groups in fragile states, with the idea that such money could be syphoned off by terrorist groups. While the banks fear costly sanctions under the FATF's rules and damage to their image, governments in some of those countries often have no qualms about not registering such small women activists' organizations—bodies in resistance to gender inequality—because they consider their work to be challenging masculine hegemony.
34. Adopted at the second MenEngage Global Symposium: *Men and Boys for Gender Justice*, November 10–13, 2014, New Delhi, http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/delhi-declaration-and-call-to-action.html, accessed January 28, 2016.
35. The MenEngage global alliance has women's rights organizations on its governing board to engage in such dialogues and facilitate accountability to the women's rights movements. Its membership includes many women's rights organizations. Accountability standards and guidelines have been adopted by the alliance. Research is undertaken in collaboration with female feminist researchers, such as the State of the World's Fathers report (Levtov et al. 2015). During the preparation for the global MenEngage Delhi Symposium in 2014 and in the different sessions, such dialogues were held or stimulated. For example, "Dialogue with the Women's Movement", http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/video-dialogue-with-the-womenrsquos-movement-video.html, accessed January 28, 2016. Feminism and Men (Gaag N van der 2014) is another example of such growing dialogues.
36. A telling example is the controversy that arose when the (male) ambassadors to the UN from Iceland and Suriname planned to organize a Barbershop Conference, Changing the Discourse Among Men on Gender Equality, for male ambassadors to the UN as a safe space to discuss their roles in gender-equality promotion.

Some women's rights organizations and activists protested that such a meeting should not take place without women being present because these were men already holding positions of power. Ultimately a compromise was found and some women were invited to speak as well. The two-day conference took place on January 14–15, 2015, at UN headquarters in New York, www.barbershop-conference.org, accessed January 28, 2016.

37. This issue was elaborately discussed during the International Conference on Men and Masculinities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality, March 5–8, 2015.
    Similar arguments are used by different female and male contributors to the Dutch-language *Het F-boek, feminism van nu in woord en beeld* (*The F-book, Today's Feminism in Words and Images*) (Meulenbelth and Romkens 2015).

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CHAPTER 13

Body Politics, Human Rights and Public Policies in Brazil: In Conversation with Jacqueline Pitanguy

Wendy Harcourt and Jacqueline Pitanguy

Introduction

In the following extended interview Jacqueline Pitanguy shares her views on body politics and human rights in public policies in Brazil with the editor of Bodies in Resistance, Wendy Harcourt. Jacqueline Pitanguy has played a key role in Brazilian feminist politics. From 1986 to 1989 she held a cabinet position as President of the National Council for Women's Rights (CNDM), designing and implementing public policies to improve conditions for women in Brazil. The CNDM played a key role in assuring woman's rights in the new Brazilian Constitution and in developing programs in the areas of reproductive health, violence, legislation, labor rights, culture and education, and black and rural women rights. In 1990, she founded Citizenship, Studies, Information and Action (CEPIA), an NGO based in Rio de Janeiro. CEPIA conducts research and does advocacy work mainly on reproductive health, violence against women (VAW) and access to justice.[1]

W. Harcourt
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

J. Pitanguy (✉)
CEPIA, Brazil

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_13

WH: Jacqueline, you have worked for many years for women's human rights and for body politics in Brazil. How do you see changes in this period? How bad is the situation in contemporary Brazil?

JP: Let me illustrate that question with two stories that reveal what we are still struggling against in Brazil.

In 2014, Jandira Magdalena, 27 years old, mother of two children, decided that she wanted to interrupt her third pregnancy. She had plans to work, make some money and give a better life for her children. In agreement with her husband, she decided to have an abortion. While in other countries she would have had the abortion in the public health system or in a private clinic, performed under safe conditions, in Brazil, Jandira's decision was criminal and took her on a trip of horror. She saved the money and paid for clandestine services, which led to her death. Her body disappeared and was found only a month later, burned inside a car. Elizangela, 32 years old and a mother of three, had a similar destiny. She was dumped in front of a hospital, bleeding to death.

Jandira and Elizangela were victims of legislation that violates their right to live their reproductive lives as a choice. They are denied the right, without any kind of coercion, to choose whether and when to have children. They fell victim to laws dating from 1940 that criminalize the interruption of a pregnancy in all circumstances, except in cases of rape and risk of life. In 2012, due to a successful advocacy work by women's rights activists, the Supreme Court recognized the right to interrupt a pregnancy in cases of severe fetus malformation (anencephaly). However, even in such circumstances, there are very few services in the public health system that perform abortions, and these services are constantly menaced by conservative sectors, mainly Christian, that influence the legislative and the executive powers, dictating priorities in public policies and proposing changes in the legislation in place so as to prohibit abortion in all circumstances.

WH: Can you tell us more about abortion issues in Brazil?

JP: Abortion is an intrinsic component of the reproductive rights agenda and, for this reason, should not be discussed as a separate, isolated issue but as an integral part of a woman's sexual and reproductive life. However, this is not the way abortion is understood. But first the facts. Abortion is the fifth biggest cause of maternal mortality in Brazil, whose ratio (60 per 100,000) is unacceptably high for a country that is listed as the seventh-largest economy in the world. In 2015, Brazil will not meet the MDG of reducing this ratio to 30. This failure is happening in a context of steady improvements in health, with a sharp decline in child mortality, where the MDGs have been

achieved ahead of 2015, as well as major progress in life expectancy and a significant decline in infectious disease, among other health indicators.

In spite of the prevalence of abortions performed in the country (close to 1 million per year), in spite of its consequences in terms of morbidity and mortality, and in spite of its cost to the public health system (approximately 60 percent of the gynecological beds of the hospitals are occupied with women requiring post-abortion care), the public debate ignores the health dimension that encompasses the unsafe interruption of a pregnancy, not to mention its human rights dimension.

The criminal face of abortion dominates its representation in the media, with scandalous news of the police closing illegal clinics, arresting people and instituting legal processes. Conservative sectors, led by Christians, preach in temples of various evangelical denominations and in Catholic churches against the sin of interrupting an unborn life. These sectors have increased their representation at the National Congress, where they constitute a strong political force that is very efficient at presenting law projects to ban abortion even in circumstances where it is legal (LawProject5069-2013). In early 2015, a new president of the House of Representatives, one of the most powerful positions in the country and third in the line of succession to the President, was elected. In one of his first press conferences, the new president, evangelical Federal Deputy Eduardo Cunha, stated that law projects to decriminalize abortion would not pass under his congressional leadership. In fact he was even more emphatic, affirming that such laws would pass only over his dead body. In 2016 there has been no progress concerning abortion law.

WH: Can you explain how this type of repressive body politics has emerged in modern Brazil, given its apparent progressive attitude to issues of sexual diversity and women's rights?

JP: There is no linear path toward progress, and rights are historical conquests subject to backlashes, paralysis and advances, Brazil is multiracial, multicultural, multireligious, governed by a secular state and a place where gender equality is inscribed in its laws, yet women's reproductive rights are not fully assured. Women's reproductive rights remain hostages of negotiations and political agreements that respond to the growing influence of religion as a political force. The crucial dimensions of public health and individual rights have been erased from the public debate, so that when women like Jandira and Elizangela seek an abortion, they are thrown into a dark and dangerous world of crime, deprived of their dignity as citizens, and crushed by the absence of arguments based on individual rights and public health in the public discussion of this issue.

WH: Can you share with us more about how human rights and reproductive rights have played out in Brazil?

JP: First, when speaking about human rights, it is important to refer to the historical process in which the enunciation of such rights takes place. Rights only exist if they are inscribed in legislation, treaties and conventions, defining the territory of the formal citizenship, and they are effective only if they can be exercised. Because rights are written with a political pen they are subject to constant reconfiguration.

Over the last 60 years the concept of human rights has been expanded in its reach by the attribute of universality and indivisibility. New dimensions of life such as environment, reproduction, sexuality and domestic violence have also been included in the human rights realm.[2]

These expansions to the human rights narrative have a direct impact on the state's responsibility to recognize and protecting such rights, and to provide the means to exercise them.

The human rights principles related to human reproduction have walked a long path, full of curbs and obstacles, since 1948, when the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights proposed that persons had the right to form a family and that marriage should not be obligatory. In 1968 The International Human Rights Conference organized by the UN in Teheran for the first time raised family planning to the status of a human right and announced that choice was a central component of this right. Indeed, the Proclamation of Teheran states that couples have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.[3]

In the sequence of the UN International Conferences on Population that took place in 1954 in Rome, in 1965 in Belgrade, in 1974 in Bucharest and in 1984 in Mexico, a growing tension between perspectives based on demographic goals to be reached by means of interventionist measures and perspectives rooted in human rights principles, which affirm the value of choice in reproductive life, characterized the scenario of such events. This debate placed on opposite sides neo-Malthusians and developmentalists, who disagreed on the role of the decrease in rates of population growth, seen by neo-Malthusians as a vector for development or, in contrast, as a result of development and reduction of poverty.

This tension between intervention/control, and the still timid presence of the human rights grammar in the debates around population growth, for decades dominated international debates, placing offstage the fact that, independently of the perspective adopted, reproductive decisions

respond to the dynamics of socioeconomic variables, of cultural and religious values and of the position of women in society, among other factors that affect the way individuals experience their sexuality and reproduction.

WH: I know you were very involved in the 1993 Human Rights Conference held in Vienna, and the 1994 ICPD.[4] How do you see the importance of those events?

JP: At the 1993 UN Human Rights Conference that took place in Vienna, women's coalitions played a major role in affirming that women's rights are human rights and that VAW is a human rights violation. The fact that the principles of indivisibility and universality of human rights were stated at this conference was also very important for the future incorporation of the concept of reproductive rights in the 1994 ICPD. As a result of a large and arduous political struggle, the ICPD has changed the axis of the population debates from demographic to human rights, representing a paradigmatic shift in this matter.

The ICPD stands as a landmark of feminist advocacy for reproductive rights. The preliminary version of its Plan of Action was negotiated in numerous preparatory meetings held at UN Headquarters in New York. There were strong clashes between the Vatican, which, in alliance with some Islamic countries as well as with certain Latin American governments, strongly influenced by Opus Dei, were opposed to the consideration of the concepts of reproductive rights and health, not to mention abortion and sexual rights, and the international women's movement, which, in alliance with certain governments and progressive sectors, advocated for their consideration. Confrontations and negotiations marked the conference itself, showing how much the language that came out of the ICPD was political, reflecting a hard process of intense disputes and negotiation, leading to consensus-building resulting from the dynamics of the various actors involved.

Organized in strong national and transnational coalitions, women were a key actor in the preparatory process and at the conference itself, held in Cairo in 1994. There, for the first time, the concepts of reproductive rights and reproductive health were used in a UN document, thanks to the strong advocacy work exercised by the international women's movements. Indeed, women played a central role both in civil society and in the governmental spaces, just as throughout the centuries they were the main victims of population policies which placed them as objects of pro- or anti-natalist goals and not as citizens entitled to the human right of exercising choices in their reproductive lives (Petchesky and Pitanguy 1993: 5).

The ICPD Plan of Action also inaugurated the incorporation of the concept of gender in UN language. Coherent with its historical time, gender was then formulated in a masculine/feminine sense, but it represented a formidable victory of feminists in Cairo.

The definition of a sphere of rights related to sexuality and reproduction is based on classical liberal theories of individual rights and on socialist principles of social justice and equality, as well as on human rights principles. This new conceptual tool brought new arguments to the narrative of the interrelations between personal and social values, and individual and collective rights, and it has opened up new avenues for the perennial tensions between cultural relativism, national sovereignty and the universality of human rights.

The concept of reproductive health and reproductive rights, as it was incorporated in the ICPD Declaration and Plan of Action, finds its roots in the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health. It was proposed because of the unquestionable value of the definition itself that embeds health in the human rights realm and breaks the hold of health by the medical establishment. It also expands the incorporation of the idea of wellbeing. Strategically, this adoption was wise because the WHO definition was already widely accepted and included in many national norms.[5] Throughout the preparatory process and in Cairo itself, feminists struggled to change the title of the document from “Family Planning”, as initially proposed, to “Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health”, as it is named Chap. 7 of the ICPD’s Programme of Action. This change in language was political and reflects the human rights paradigm that the Cairo conference inaugurated in population issues, as well as the understanding that family planning is just one of the components of reproductive health.

WH: To return to your earlier concern about abortion, was this part of the agreements around reproductive rights in Cairo?

JP: Abortion was not explicitly mentioned in the definition of reproductive rights. It fell under the spectrum of health, morbidity and mortality. The ICPD’s Chap. 8 focuses on the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and urges governments to provide abortion in cases were it is legal, and in all cases to provide quality services for the management of complications, for the sake of women’s health and a reduction in maternal mortality.[6]

From the medical point of view, an abortion, when performed in the early stages of pregnancy and under safe conditions, is a simple, non-costly and low-risk intervention. Yet no medical intervention is

more problematic than abortion in some countries, such as Brazil. It stands in a moral spider web, caught by the interrelations of religion, politics, and cultural and patriarchal values and norms. The provision of abortion reflects the status of women in a given society. Scholars such as Rebecca Cook (1993) argue that the neglect of women's reproductive health should be understood as part of a systematic discrimination against women, and that laws are not neutral, harming women, fundamentally. Laws are written with a political pen, and nowadays In Brazil there are a growing number of conservative actors shaping legislation and public policies related to abortion, hand in hand with a patriarchal social identification of women by motherhood.

In the international arean the scenario is not so favourable. The UN discourse on abortion is limited. UN organs have been reluctant to support the right to interrupt a pregnancy. While sexual orientation and sexuality grows as a human rights issue in the UN realm, the right to abortion shrinks, even if, as Miller and Roseman (2013) indicate, they both have, subjacent, the same human rights parameters: respect of privacy, autonomy, health, non-discrimination, security and dignity of the human person. Writing in 2013, Roseman identified only one specialist in the UN system dealing with abortion as an individual right and an element of non-discrimination between men and women, while there were numerous references to the importance of the decriminalization of homosexual behavior and protection of sexual orientation (Miller and Roseman 2013).

There is strong resistance to abortion issues being dealt with at the Human Rights Council where, however, discussions about sexual rights and sexual orientation are gaining terrain. Even CEDAW, which since 1999 has regarded abortion as a health issue, has not advanced in by making a more emphatic defense of the prohibition of abortion as a discrimination against women. On a progressive and welcomed decision taken in 2010, CEDAW supported non-discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity being part of its general recommendation, but it remained silent in relation to the legal discriminatory dimension of abortion.[7]

WH: You spoke earlier about tensions and difficulties in the reproductive rights arena. Can you elaborate on this re. the Cairo Agenda?

JP: What we have see since Cairo 1994 is the predominance of ruptures in the UN arena: reproductive rights separated from reproductive health and sexual rights from sexual health. Most governments accept health as the umbrella for sexuality and reproduction but deny that they should be acknowledged as human rights issues. Indeed, the rights language

is complex and controversial, having a direct impact on states' normative frame when used in treaties and conventions, and carrying a strong "moral" impact when inscribed in declarations and plans of action, even if not creating mandatory legal obligations. Rights mean entitlement and agency, and they are relevant to the power relations that permeate a society and that define first- and second-class citizens, with their territories clearly marked in constitutions and other codes of law as well as in culture and religion. Rights also means public policies and budget allocation.

There are many examples of this rupture between rights and health in relation to sexuality and reproduction. In 2012 the UN Conference on Environment and Development celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a high-level conference held in Rio de Janeiro. The document from Rio+20 does not mention reproductive rights or sexual rights, which were banned by the successful alliance of the Vatican and other conservative governments, and the compliance of other governments, including Brazil, which were urged to reach a consensus in the negotiations.

A similar process occurred in the negotiations of the 47th Session of the Commission on Population of the UN that took place in April 2014 amid the celebrations of Cairo+20. Even if the spectrum of countries defending the rights language expanded, including Brazil, the conservative blocs won, once again. Not only sexual rights but also the uses of families, in the plural, and in accordance with ICPD language, were excluded from the final document.

In such a rights-denying panorama, the inclusion of non-discrimination in basis of sexual orientation in certain UN documents and agencies represents crucial progress, responding to the growing strength and influence of LGBT movements in different national and international arenas.[8]

WH: You have been sharing with us the international context to body politics in Brazil. What about in the regional context of Latin America, which many feminists see as leading the sexuality and rights debate?

JP: Yes, I agree that Latin American feminists have been very prominent in these debates. A major victory of women's rights and LGBT activists occurred at the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Cairo+20, that took place in Montevideo in August 2013 and that resulted in the Montevideo Consensus, a landmark document that reaffirms and advances the ICPD, with recommendations on abortion and sexual rights, and the recognition of the interrelations of racism and gender inequalities in population and development issues (Montevideo Consensus 2013).[9]

However, I would caution that Latin American and Caribbean countries remained isolated from other southern countries at the April 2014 47th Session of the UN Commission on Population, where Arab countries, African countries and other emerging economies, such as Russia, with the support of some Asian countries, strongly opposed the rights language.[10]

In February 2015 a BRICs countries meeting on population and development took place in Brasilia. Again, there was strong resistance, particularly from Russia, to the use of families in the plural because it might give room to the interpretation of the acceptance of same-sex couples as a family unit. And the rights language concerning reproduction and sexuality was also rejected by Russia and China.[11]

WH: How do you see the scenario today with the influence of these "new players" in sexual rights?

JP: The international scenario is today predominantly conservative, with women's rights loosing ground within religious-oriented governments—Islamic and Christian mostly. However, as in all political dynamics, the scenario is not homogeneous or unilaterally conservative. Some advances have been made in relation to the LGBT agenda on sexual orientation, while paralysis and backlashes characterize the recognition of abortion as a human right.

WH: Having set the context on the international stage, how do you see reproductive rights and abortion in relation to the state of Brazil.

JP: The translation of human rights into the political arena of a country is directly related to the balance of power of the different actors and their dynamics in the process of affirming or denying that rights should be inscribed in laws and exercised by those who are entitled to. Issues related to gender relations, cultural values, traditions, religion, economic interests and the authoritarian or democratic character of the political institutions in place interfere in those dynamics, which are also affected by the international context.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the feminist slogan "Sex is political" echoed in the streets of Brazil, displaying the power dimension imbedded in this realm and leading to demands in terms of laws and public policies that would ensure that women could take decisions, free of coercion, in relation to this crucial dimension of their lives that, stated as private, was in fact mediated by patriarchal institutions and gender inequalities. The concept of reproductive rights has its roots in the feminist struggle for access to contraception and he decriminalization of abortion. As you pointed out

in your book *Body Politics in Development* (2009), bodies are sites of both normalization and resistance, since social norms of gender and sexuality are inscribed on the body.

Brazil was no exception, and when the feminist movement emerged in the mid-1970s, access to contraception and abortion were part of its agenda. The country was then ruled by a military dictatorship, which lasted from 1964 to 1985. The coup d'état that took place in Brazil in 1964 had, as a broader reference, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the fear that communism might dominate Latin America. Democratic governments were overthrown in the Southern Cone of the American continent, and right-wing military authoritarian governments dominated Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. A progressive President then governed Brazil, and the claim for social reforms, including land reform, was a growing agenda. The military took hold of the political scenario of the country for 21 years, exercising power with different degrees of coercion and violence in those two decades.

WH: Can you describe the role of feminists in terms of resistance to these dominant hegemonic powers?

JP: The feminist movement gained strength and influence in the 1980s with the democratization of the Brazilian state. Bringing the women's rights agenda into different organizations, such as labor unions, professional associations and universities, feminism has grown as a political movement successful in struggling for democracy and, at the same time, in claiming that women's rights were a central component of democracy. Feminists struggled then, simultaneously, for democracy and for the qualification of democracy, pointing out that the hierarchies established by patriarchal values and laws, and the unequal power relations that placed women as second-class citizens in Brazilian society, were not to be placed as a secondary issue in the political sphere.

The social inequalities and hierarchies that characterized Brazilian society, as well as the military authoritarian ruling of the country, were questioned by the women's movements that placed themselves side by side with all the democratic forces. Poverty and injustice, as well as the state human rights violations, stood in the roots of the emergence of feminism as a political actor in the public scenario of Brazil. The feminist movement expanded the democratic and the human rights agenda, demanding that the concept of democracy include equal rights for women as a central value.

The movement has struggled not to lose its identity of its specific agenda on contraception and abortion which was seen to those opposing

the dictatorship as irrelevant or inappropriate. They were seen as antagonistic towards the Catholic church which under the influence of liberation theology was an ally in the struggle to end the dictatorship. The Church strongly opposed contraception and abortion, though claiming to be in favour of other forms of social justice. Feminists could then establish broad alliances with different sectors, such as labor unions, professional associations and the media, when advocating for the prevention and punishment of domestic violence, equal pay in the labor market, equal access to education, and equal rights and responsibilities in family law. But they were isolated on the sexual and reproductive rights agenda, and even more on abortion. With variations, this isolation still occurs today affecting deeply the success of the advocacy work.

WH: What do you see as the highlights of this feminist campaign for control over sexuality and reproduction?

JP: Feminists in the 1970s brought the demand for control over sexuality and reproduction to the public arena as a radical platform against the interference of the state with women's bodies and the moralism that dominated society, including some democratic, leftist sectors. Under the slogan "*Nosso Corpo nos Pertence*", meaning "Our Body Belongs to us", they launched a campaign in which issues related to the need to defend the secular character of the state, to the affirmation of individual autonomy in decision-making and to the need to include contraception and abortion as a public health issue were highlighted. This happened in a moment of predominance of a pronatal official position that dominated the population discourse in the first years of the dictatorship, when the occupation of the country's vast territory was a priority for the military.

The government had no public policy to provide family planning, and the provision of abortion was banned, even in the two circumstances where it was not criminalized. In this period there was a significant increase in sterilization (also considered a criminal practice) provided by private organizations with no regulation by the state, leading to abuses: many women were sterilized at an early age, and they were mostly poor and black. Plus there was no real information about the procedure, its risks and the difficulty of reversing its effects.

Access to family planning, to be delivered from a comprehensive perspective, and from a health standpoint, was a key agenda point among feminists, who claimed that the state should take responsibility for providing contraception, as well as treatment for infertility, cervical and breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases and so on, besides offering quality prenatal care and safe birth delivery, as well as attention to menopause.

Feminists developed very successful advocacy work, which was anchored on some key principles and a set of demands, such as:

- defense of the separation between state and religion (secularism)
- respect for choice (autonomy)
- the recognition of social inequalities and the need to guarantee access to health to all (reproductive justice)
- the right to have access to the advances in science and medical technology.

They built alliances with some physicians and academics, as well as with officers from the Ministry of Health, and this joint effort resulted in the first governmental program that broke the traditional mother and child paradigm. A woman's body was seen as an entity in itself, independent of the reproductive function. This was a major step, considering that, symbolically, the woman's role as a mother outweighs any other and is central to her social identity, leading to the belief that there is a reproductive career inherent to women's lives.

In 1983 the federal government launched the Programa de Assistência Integral à Saúde Mulher (PAISM [Women's Health Integral Program]), breaking the state silence around reproductive and sexual health, and breaking the cultural values that had led to the consideration of special programs for women only from the perspective of maternal and child health. However, the program did not advance on abortion rights.

WH: What about the economic context in this period?

JP: By the 1980s the economic context of the country had changed. The high levels of gross domestic product (GDP) growth and income concentration that characterized the first decade of the military regime were gone. The idea that the government had to assure strong population growth faded away, and the worst dictatorial period in terms of repression and state violation of human rights gave room to a transition to democracy. Elections for parliament and for state-level governors had been held, and the opposition had increased its representation in the National Congress and had won the executive government of some main states, such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. An Amnesty Law was passed and Brazilians who were in exile returned, reinforcing the social movements that had grown in terms of numbers and diversity. Black movements, environmentalists, movements for the demarcation of indigenous land and the women's movement brought complexity to the civil society agenda.

The women's movement expanded its arch of alliances, seeking to engage other sectors, such as medical and lawyers associations, the media and the newly elected members of the Congress, in order to take the debate of abortion out of the Church vs. feminists arena.

In 1979 and 1982, both electoral years, women's groups addressed the candidates for Congress with a list of demands entitled *Feminist Alert for the Elections*, in which the right of abortion was included. Abortion was then an issue debated publically, with strong opponents but with a space for it to be voiced as an individual right and a public health issue. Two law projects were presented, proposing the decriminalization of abortion during the first 12 weeks.[12]

In 1985 the transition to democracy was formally accomplished with the election of the first civilian president and the call for elections that led, in 1986, to a new congress with the task of writing a new constitution, framing the democratic regime. By then there were state-level organs for women in place in some states, inaugurating the period of public policies for women. Also in 1985 the CNDM, a federal governmental organ, was created as the result of strong advocacy work by women's movements, and it played a major role in assuring women's rights in the new constitution. Owing to well-coordinated and successful advocacy work developed by the CNDM, in articulation with civil society organizations and the parliament, most of the proposals presented by the women's movements were incorporated into the new 1988 federal Constitution.

Having the rights of the citizen as its axis, from which the state responsibilities were defined, this Constitution was a landmark on Brazilian history. Women were assured equality in the labor market, in the family, in education and politics, enlarging, at the same time, social benefits such as maternal leave, rural women's right to land property, the role of the state in impeding family violence, the right of couples to make decisions over reproduction free from coercion, and the state's responsibility for providing the means to make such decisions.[13]

WH: What were some of the issues then in the context of this democratic engagement in body politics?

JP: The general context in which the constitutional work was being developed was also marked by the rise of conservative pro-life movements that arrived in Brazil after a successful campaign in the Philippines, where they succeeded in including protection of the life of the unborn in their Constitution. Internationally articulated and with plenty of financial resources, this movement was very vocal, working closely with the

Catholic Church. The evangelical denominations were still relatively new but were gaining terrain in the country.

I was then the President of the CNDM, which had been working closely with the National Congress and evaluated its relative strength in the balance of power of the congress so as to pass a provision that would decriminalize abortion, to be regulated later. We understood that we would lose. To avoid the victory of groups that pledged the defense of life following conception, we took the position that abortion was not a constitutional matter. At the same time, and in coordination with women's movements, we developed a joint strategy: they would present a proposal to decriminalize abortion that would be the counterpart of the defense of the life of the unborn presented by the conservative religious groups, increasing the chance that our in-between option would be accepted. This was a successful strategy and our constitution does not mention the issue of abortion.[14]

WH: Can you share with us how you saw the success of bringing a feminist agenda to legal and other advocacy work?

JP: When dealing with the feminist agenda it is important to distinguish different fields that encompass different possibilities to develop successful advocacy work for laws and policies. The work on VAW, for instance, has been successful in terms of achieving specific legislation and public policies, involving the security and judiciary sectors. Since 1985, Brazil has had special women's police stations (delegacias da mulher [DEAMs]) to attend to victims of violence, with close to 500 of them around the country. In 2006 successful advocacy work in which women's rights NGOs played a key role led to new legislation, the Maria da Penha Law, creating Special Courts to deal with VAW as well as a number of other policies, such as protective measures for the victim (Maria Da Penha Law 2006).

On the other hand, the reproductive rights field is a dangerous territory, filled with landmines whose danger varies according to which part of the agenda is being advocated. This is intrinsically a body politics field that translates differently into human rights and public policies in accordance with the issues being addressed. Access to contraception, in spite of the Catholic Church's reservation about some methods, is widely accepted and exploited in Brazil. Emergency contraception faces periodic attacks from religious groups but is now included in governmental programs, particularly those that support victims of sexual violence. Abortion, however, was, and is still, seen as deviant conduct, falling in the sinful, cruel world of crime. It has been extremely difficult to draw joint strategies and build alliances with actors that are relevant in this field, such as medical and

lawyers associations, health professionals, social movements of different sorts, politicians, opinion-makers and the government—even the governmental organs that deal specifically with women's rights issues. Feminists, with very few exceptions, are isolated in the struggle for the decriminalization and regulation of access to abortion. This isolation is even more acute today as the political influence of religion, particularly of evangelical fundamentalism, grows in the country.

WH: Can you give some examples of abortion advocacy?

JP: A clear example of the extreme difficulty of advocating for abortion rights is that, in spite of constant advocacy for the implementation of the 1940 Penal Code that allows for the interruption of a pregnancy in case of rape, there are only 68 public hospitals authorized to perform an abortion in these circumstances. And according to recent research on the services for legal abortion, in the period 2013-5 only 37 of these health units did perform an abortion in a country with a high prevalence of sexual violence (ANIZ 2015). According to the *Annual Report of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security*, in 2013 there were approximately 51090 cases of rape in the country, which has a female population of close to 100 million. The only issue that has allowed for a wider debate on abortion out of the moral, religious frame, enlarging the field of allies, is the public health perspective that has involved some physicians and medical associations, some jurists and a few politicians, and has gained space in the media. To achieve visibility and legitimacy for abortion as an individual right to autonomy has always been very difficult in Brazil, for a number of reasons. Patriarchal culture, the predominance of collective over individual rights, the exponential growth of conservative religious forces and the decline of feminism as a political force, among other reasons, are responsible for the current panorama of regression regarding abortion rights in Brazil.

WH: Are you pointing then to cultural concerns as well as economic and legal?

JP: Culture creates meanings that per passes our bodies and respond largely to how we perceive ourselves and our place in the world (Harcourt, 2009). The social constructions of female sexuality, still dominated by the cultural patterns of conjugality and maternity, reinforce the denial of the values of autonomy of the body and of the individual right to make decisions involving sexuality and reproduction, affecting negatively the social perception of the provision of abortion as a reproductive right.

This cultural value of domesticity of the woman is clearly exemplified by studies on the use of time in the household, women being responsible

for double, and in some areas triple, the amount of time dedicated by men to the household. Even if Brazil has one of the largest rates of female participation in the labor force in Latin America (around 48 percent), little or nothing has been done in terms of social reproduction so as to relieve women from the heavy load of childcare, home care and care for the elderly.

Another fact to be considered as an obstacle to the argument of autonomy in reproductive decisions is that the roots of citizenship rights in Brazil are anchored much more on the notion of collective rights than on individual rights, which are wrongly pictured as an elite preoccupation. The Labor Code, dating from the 1930s, stated a number of social rights that were very advanced for the time and have ever since been closely associated with the idea of citizenship. It is still only recently, basically after the 1988 Constitution, that individual rights and identity politics gained legitimacy and relevance.

WH: In conclusion, can you summarize how you see the public policy situation today?

JP: Since the 2000s, public policies for women have gained strength with the creation of a the Special Secretariat for Women's Policies (SPM), which has been implementing national plans and programs in various fields, such as VAW, political participation, education, labor and social benefits, and maternal health programs. Yet there have not been advances in relation to abortion. This remains isolated, like an issue that pollutes and needs to be contained.

On the other hand, as is happening in the international arena, sexual orientation is not such an isolated agenda because it claims that certain civil rights that are largely accepted and already incorporated into laws and policies should be extended to same-sex couples. These couples claim the right to common property, heritage, social benefits, parenthood and motherhood. They also demand the right not to be discriminated against and to be treated as full citizens. The LGBT agenda is not, however, equally accepted or understood. Transvestites' and transsexuals' rights are still unclear and unacceptable for large sectors of the population. However, in spite of the persistence of violence and discrimination, Brazil has advanced in recognizing same-sex unions, in proposing law projects to criminalize homophobia, in accepting in official documents the use of social identity and in inaugurating school programs on respect for diversity. LGBT movements are strong, vocal, organized and diverse. They also face attacks by conservative and religious groups, but they permeate society and combine defensive and proactive actions. They are visible, defiant and strong.

One of the reasons for the paralysis of the abortion issue in Brazil is the difficulty of designing consensual agendas that would lead to successful advocacy, enlarging the field of allies and becoming a positive agenda that would resonate in the hearts and minds of the population in the name of the rights, health and dignity of women. An advocacy process is dynamic and relational, and it requires flexibility to adjust to new contextual circumstances and to field changes that might bring new opportunities or create additional difficulties. An advocacy action is usually developed amid conflicts of visions and interests, leading to consensual agreements, negotiations and struggles that characterize any political action.

In Brazil there have been no agreements or negotiations in relation to abortion. Most of the effort is spent on defensive actions by feminist groups facing a hostile panorama of constant confrontation with powerful religious political forces and other conservative sectors that today constitute a formidable electoral force capable of imposing their agenda on candidates, including at the presidential level. Never have religion and politics been so closely tied as now, at the National Congress.

WH: To return to where we began this interview, what about Jandiras and Elisangelas?

JP: In the loss of space for feminist action owing to a lack of resources, since women's rights do not seem to be a priority for the funders, abortion is one of the less supported issues. The still persistent social inequality of the country also contributes to policy paralysis because most of the women who perform abortions in unsafe conditions are poor. The women and men who are opinion-makers are silent on this, and are even in favor of abortion, but they do not want to be contaminated by the issue. We still have a long way to go. As long as Jandiras' and Elisangelas' deaths are treated by the authorities as the result of criminal behavior, abortion will remain apart from the human rights realm, immersed in moral values and criminal processes.

Notes

1. Wendy Harcourt has known and worked with Jacqueline Pitanguy since 1993 working together on different research projects and in their collaboration at the Society for International Development.
2. Most famously, this includes the recognition at the 1993 UN Human Rights Conference that VAW is a human rights violation. At the Latin Americal regional level the 1994 Inter American

Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women (the Belém do Pará Convention) placed the issue of domestic violence on the human rights agenda. Similarly, reproductive rights were included in the Plan of Action of the ICPD, the Biodiversity Convention of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, plus specific conventions such as CEDAW in 1979, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965.

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article XVI, 1948. United Nations 1948 and Teheran Declaration, article 16.
4. Human rights are clearly a difficult and divisive issue. It is noteworthy that 25 years elapsed between the Teheran and Vienna conferences, and that after 1993 there has been no call for another UN conference on this theme.
5. The ICPD defines reproductive health as a state of complete mental and social wellbeing in all matters relating to the reproductive system, its functions and its processes, implying that people have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how. See ICPD Programme of Action 1994.
6. ICPD Programme of Action 1994, Chap. 8: 8.25. Abortion was a divisive issue between progressive and conservative governments, including the Vatican, which did not want the program to even mention abortion. As a member of the Brazilian delegation, I was part of a small group called by the chair of the conference to negotiate this paragraph. The negotiations were difficult.
7. According to CEDAW (1999), the lack of access to abortion is seen as discrimination in terms of the access of women to health services. In relation to sexual rights, see CEDAW (2010).
8. Beijing Platform for Action, September 1995, Chap. IV, paragraph 96. “The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.”

9. Memorandum of agreement key document for the definition of sexual rights is the *The Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* of 2006.
10. As a member of the Brazilian delegation to this meeting, I was part of the negotiation process of the final document and a witness to the growing power of the geopolitical blocs of Arab and African countries (with the exception of South Africa), plus Russia and some of the former Soviet Union countries, the Vatican and some Asian countries, in blocking the use of a rights-based language in the final document. For this same reason they objected to the use of families, in the plural, even if this complies with Cairo ICPD language.
11. BRICS is the bloc of emerging economies including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
12. In 1983 the parliamentarian Cristina Tavares proposed the first law project on abortion designed in close cooperation with feminists.
13. The CNDM developed a huge national campaign, A Constitution to be Worthwhile has to Recognize Women's Rights, mobilizing women from labor unions, associations, feminist groups and NGOs, and it became a strong voice in lobbying for women's rights, whose demands were reiterated in the 1986 document *Letter of Brazilian Women to the Constitutional Congress.*
14. The constitutional process allowed for the presentation of popular amendments as long as they had a minimum of 150,000 signatures.

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CHAPTER 14

Some Thoughts on New Epistemologies in Latin American Feminisms

Virginia Vargas

Introduction: Insurgent Disputes Today

> Feminists affirm that our body is transformed and produced by the social relations in which we are immersed. In capitalist-neoliberal, colonial, patriarchal, hetero-normative and racist societies, where relations of domination and exploitation prevail, our bodies are affected by relations that show the footprints of exploitation, subordination, repression and discrimination … The body-carrier of rights-of women, has become a "disputed terrain". That's what we are referring to when we affirm that "the body is a political category", in which feminist discourse is embodied … in the struggles for defending democracy and amplification of rights, we feminists have give our contribution from our understanding of the body as a political category; but not always from a critical intercultural and intersectional perspective: This is the challenge we are facing today, from which we want to reflect on and open a dialogue about in this 13th Latin American and the Caribbean Feminist Encounter. (13th EFLAC 2014)[1]

Latin American movements/feminisms are in a period of intense change. Their context is being transformed, and is marked by multiple crises of a paradigmatic nature. This has resulted in considerable uncertainty.

V. Vargas (✉)
Lima, Peru

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_14

The movements have also changed their composition. The new actors are both visible and active, expressing enormous diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, culture, sexuality, country and region. A multiple feminist subject is emerging through "broad, heterogeneous, polycentric, multifaceted and polyphonous field of discourse and action" (Alvarez 1998).[2] Various feminist agendas are sustained by anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, decolonial, anti-racist values, these being oriented to the defense of the environment, the rejection of predatory productivist logic, and the rejection of a normalized model of sexual life or of bodily functioning. The richness of this historical moment lies in the construction of such agendas while affirming diversity.[3]

I write as a feminist activist who has been engaged in Latin American and global feminism for many years. My starting point for this chapter is the debates around the 13th Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encounter, which I helped to organize at the end of 2014. Here I consider the different feminist voices contributing to the new epistemologies and diversity expressed in that encounter. I will first give a general background to some of the new trends in Latin American feminism. I will then look at the three approaches that contribute to the new epistemologies emerging among Latin American feminisms today: travelling theories, the body as a political category and indigenous feminism.

Background

There are various feminist voices making the new trends among Latin American feminisms public. Some of these emerge from broader political-theoretical debates about the theory of coloniality—of power, knowledge and being—developed by Aníbal Quijano. These are now part of a powerful, critical, theoretical and epistemological tendency in Latin America. The decolonial framework implies the radical modification of contemporary colonial patterns of power. One of its central accomplishments has been to provide an alternative reading of the history of colonization. Decoloniality has brought in a racial dimension to the understanding of past and present colonial socioeconomic and political processes in the construction of the state, a dimension often missing in the analysis and politics of states, in academia and in social movements.

Many Latin American feminists have enriched decolonial discourse. Maria Lugones, an Argentinean feminist, states that the construction of race ran parallel to that of gender, bringing about the "modern-colonial gender system". This, through its different impacts on white women and "women of

colour", co-constitutes race and gender and, therefore, creates a significant intersectionality (Lugones 2008).[4] By way of confirmation, Breny Mendoza,[5] a Honduran feminist, argues that placing race, by itself, to explain coloniality makes it a totalizing concept that blurs gender and becomes an obstacle to intersectional analyses of race, gender, class and sexuality.

Such thinking amounts to a reconstruction of Latin American feminist theory (Mendoza 2010). It is feeding a feminism that reclaims and makes visible the multiple "other" knowledges coming from (new) social movements, including from the Latin American middle classes that identify with, or are part of, the movements and struggles.

First Approach: Diversity, Situated Knowledges and Political Militancy

Recovering diversity, and its value and complexity, is only possible when the power structures generated by global capitalism and coloniality are made visible (Medina Martin 2013). Capitalist power structures are more evident today because "in the last decades body realities and every day realities, articulated in decolonial and feminist proposals" have made the marks of inequality considerably more visible. "[T]he sexualized, racialized, colonized and transborder bodies, allow us to trace the trends and expectations of global coloniality."

This is why, according to Gilberto Valdez, in recent times the struggles for the recognition of difference have acquired a militant political dimension and epistemological visibility" (Valdez 2009). These struggles are political because they actively confront the multiple structures of domination by patriarchy, racism and coloniality, economic exploitation, destruction of the ecosystem, ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, misogyny and androcentrism. Likewise, their epistemological emphasis exposes dimensions of reality that have been denied, made folkloric or invisiblized by the hegemonic culture, and that are now striving for recognition. In this process of political militancy, other perspectives and cosmologies not anchored in Western cosmology are made visible. They come from "the borders" of geopolitical location and from positions of marginalization, making it evident that "it is at the peripheries of power that we are learning to live with alternative regimes of knowledge, subaltern political praxis and counter-hegemonic life experiences" (Hoetmer 2009).

So, feminist political militancy can be seen in terms such as the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges", the "crisis of traditional subjectivity" and "the decolonization of subjectivity".

This situated knowledge emerges from the multiple power relations in women's lives that determine differences among women. Such knowledge comes out of spaces where there exist power relations and exclusions in terms of race/ethnicity, class, age, sex/gender and abilities:

> when you are in the margins, when your personal history fixes the place from which you speak, when racism or economic exploitation has left a mark on your identity, you cannot leave history out and speak "from nowhere"… such a neutral place that assumes the idea of an un-identification does not exist, it is always a place of power." (Hernández 2003)

Situated thinking is changing feminist ways of understanding Latin American reality. It involves recognizing multiple cultures and cosmologies of great diversity, historically marked by inequality, with enormous inequities in wealth, in the context of a savage capitalism that moves forward via processes of accumulation and the dispossession of land, bodies and territories.

Second Approach: Situated Knowledges and Traveling Theories

These situated knowledges are not static configurations or already given; they are in fluid and complex interaction. This dynamism has allowed experiences-theories-imaginaries-and proposals for change to travel/flow to diverse "territories", through exchanges, disputes and syntheses with other movements. While doing so, as Claudia Lima Costa (2006) suggests, they develop other forms and become more complex, being produced in encounters and misunderstandings with other positions on race, class, sexual dissidence, nationality, language, ethnicity, tradition and cosmology. This traffic of theories refers precisely to a practice that, while set within "power relations and asymmetries amongst languages, regions and peoples" (Femenías 2007), manages impact on original models, giving them new meaning. These concepts converge with on-dominating knowledges, their certainties are destabilized and contestation is acknowledged. These theories refers precisely to a practice that, while set within "power relations and asymmetries amongst languages, regions and peoples" (Femenías 2007), manages to change original meanings. These concepts converge with non-dominating knowledges, so that dominant meanings are destabilized and contestation can be acknowledged.

Two theoretical and political possibilities emerge from this traveling of concepts. On the one hand, diversity can be approached from a monocultural perspective that classifies and interprets diverse phenomena and conceptualizations from one matrix or knowledge-pattern—the West—including traditional gender–sexual relations and heteronormatively. On the other hand, it is possible to take on board "other" knowledges, experiences and decisions, producing new cosmologies, new ways of positioning and analyzing reality.

Third Approach: The Body as a Political Category and Its Potential for Feminist Struggles for Diversity

> As feminists, we are aware that our bodies express cultural and social meanings, we experience women's bodies as key places in which many political and moral battles take place. It is in relation to women's bodies that the community, the state, the family, and fundamentalist forces (of the state and others), religion, and the market, define themselves. These forces and institutions transform women's bodies into expressions of power relations, through extensive forms of patriarchal control. Women's bodies as such are placed in the centre of authoritarian or democratic proposals. (Introduction to the *Feminist Dialogues*, 2005)[6]

The *body* as a political subject, bearer of rights, within a diverse reality of exclusion in the Latin American region, is a concept that has "traveled", interacting with other ideas and cosmologies. In this context the "idea" of a political body has mobilized public opinion[7] and connected meanings to "translate" new, creative, diverse forms of bodies. The body as a concept becomes broader in content and scope, and multiple positions, spaces of struggle and transgression emerge. For example, the "body as territory" (as a contribution of indigenous women's movements' struggle against extractivism) insists on harmony between women's bodies and the cosmos/nature. The "racialized body" comes from anti-racist campaigns by Afro Latin-Caribbean feminists. The "sexual body " has led to a resignification of gender by transsexual/intersex bodies. This goes together with a resignification of public space by the appropriation of the streets as a place where identities are built and where embodied political struggle happens. These disruptions create a sexual-political cartography of resistance, together with a redefinition of the words that have denigrated their bodies

(e.g. butch, fag and dyke). These are forms of resistance around the body understood as "connected multiplicities and singularities, taking a variety of strategies of re-appropriation and struggle". For Almudena Cabezas (2013), this is a movement toward a broader field, inclusive of "struggles for food sovereignty, for non-pathologization and against transsexual discrimination, going from femicide to the traditional, but still relevant, demand of the right to get an abortion" (Cabezas 2013).

The Body as a Territory of Power

On the one hand, the body acquires voice and political vindication as it becomes "a physical space and a real base on which to denounce misogyny, dictatorship abuses, gender violence and feminicides" (Segato 2014). On the other hand, this same body is dramatically exposed to capitalist exploitation, racism, feminicide, destruction and death. Today the body is a recipient of what Segato calls the "pedagogy of cruelty".

The Pedagogy of Cruelty

Segato's analysis of current forms of violence on women's bodies, based on the killings of women in Ciudad Juarez, resonates throughout Latin America.[8] Juarez is an emblematic place for economic globalization and neoliberalism "with its insatiable thirst for profit". For Segato there is a direct relationship "between capital and death, between unregulated accumulation and concentration of wealth and the sacrifice of poor, brown, mestizo women, devoured by the cracks in which are articulated the monetary and the symbolic economy and the control of resources and the power of death" (Segato 2010).

In this contemporary reality, violence against women's bodies displays previously unseen and cruel expression. If, historically, the body has been permanently impacted by fundamentalist and religious attack, by formal, internal and external wars (in which women's bodies are used and denigrated), and has been considered booty by all sides,[9] today violence has another sense:

> The violence that breaks out against the feminine manifests itself in unprecedented ways, of corporal destruction … of trafficking and commercialization of whatever these bodies can offer, until the final limit. The predatory occupation of the feminine or feminized bodies is practiced as never before, in

> this apocalyptic stage of humanity it dispossesses, leaving only remains?" (Segato 2010)

It is a different type of feminicide. Segato calls it "femigenocide" to account for a type of violence that is not situated within interpersonal relations. It is public and anonymous. It is expressive of a violence that is shown to society, and by the use of physical and sexual violence it becomes a visible message of terrifying power. It is an example and a paralyzing threat directed toward all attempts at disobedience.

In these informal wars, women's bodies are the canvas on which the marks of the pedagogy of cruelty are expressed, where power gravitates as a strategy for reproducing the system (Segato 2010).

The Body in Its Intercultural Itinerary

> A territory is much more than a piece of land: It is a space for cultural, symbolic and historical life. To understand the body as a territory, as a living system, complex and integral, constituted by multiple relations amongst all living beings and nature, water, earth, mountains, this requires us to think of our bodies individually and collectively as part of a community and as a constitutive part of territories. Eco-feminism, communitarian feminism, indigenous feminisms and afro-descendent feminism, lesbo- and trans-feminism, invite us to question the current anthropocentric and androcentric vision of our society that has placed white/individual/rational/heterosexual man at the epicentre of the universe, at the centre of power, whose end is to dominate nature in the same way women are dominated. It is an invitation to revalue our relation with nature, with our ancestry, with our social community. (Political Manifesto, 13th EFLAC)

A new conceptualization of the body-territory encompasses all bodies in their diversity and the contexts from where they come: indigenous bodies, afro-latinos, mestizos, whites, special needs, affirmation and sexual dissidents.

For example, Guatemalan urban feminists from the feminist collective The Impertinents have defined "territory-body-earth" beyond the corporeal and physical: as a combination of feelings, perceptions and transmissions. For them, in a misogynist, racist, exploitative context, territories are perceived as spaces to be intervened, violated and appropriated; and to defend the territory-body-earth means to build safe spaces where it is possible to feel at peace and with the freedom to choose (Castillo and Larios

2015). For indigenous feminists, the body is perceived as an ecological unit in which life develops, in which everyday life is organized and which survives thanks to the communal goods of nature, such as water, land and air. From their perspective, the body is an individual and collective territory. They see bodies as spaces of material, cultural, historic and symbolic life (including those bodies that have been deterritorialized by migration or technology); these are indivisible struggles.

Trajectories of the Body Within Latin American Indigenous Feminisms

There are several new horizons in indigenous feminisms. The first and most visible affirmation of women's bodies as political subjects, within indigenous movements, came from the Zapatista women's movement in Chiapas, Mexico. In 1993 it established the Revolutionary Law of Women.[10] The law defines them as subjects of political, economic, health and educational rights. Three of these rights are focused on decisions about their bodies: the right to decide about their maternity, the right to choose their partner, and the right to live a life without violence and rape. Rocić Rosas and Martha Ríos (2010) suggest that the Zapatista awakening is one of an indigenous feminine consciousness that challenges and acknowledges tensions between tradition and modernity. This revolutionary law is perceived as a new expression of women's rights: one that combines gender and ethnic identities.

The revolutionary law challenges urban nonindigenous feminisms that failed to recognize the original and particular process of indigenous women in Chiapas. Francesca Gargallo states that "they reclaim specific rights to be respected in a body that they define and defend as different from the hegemonic one, not only masculine but those of white women and heterosexuals" (Gargallo 2011).

Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Artesanas, Indígenas, Nativas y Asalariadas del Perú

In the first 15 years of the twenty-first century, the rights of the body have been incorporated into several declarations and indigenous summits of the Andean region and Central America. In 2010, the Coordinacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (CLOC [Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations]) Assembly; the Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Artesanas, Indígenas, Nativas y Asalariadas del Perú (FEMUCARINAP [National Women's Federation

of Female Peasants, Craftswomen/Artists, Indigenous, Native and Waged Women of Peru]); and many other organizations reclaimed, in their final declarations, the rights of the body. These came with other declarations, such as the defence of territories, food sovereignty, the rejection of violence, and sexual and reproductive rights. In Bolivia, women from intercultural communities presented a legal proposal to the parliament concerning sexual and reproductive rights, embedded in their own realities and incorporating recognition of their ancestral knowledge. Some urban feminists have now incorporated the concept of body-territory in the defense of the right to territory where struggles around the body and extractivism are taking place.

The idea of "*despatriarcalización del cuerpo*" (ending patriarchal control of the body) has become a fundamental dimension in the processes of decolonization. This is the case for (urban) feminist groups such as Mujeres Creando (Women Creating) in Bolivia, which uphold the slogan "There is no decolonization without depatriarcalization".[11] Mujeres Creando affirms that "the de-patriarcalization of the body-territory and land-territory is meaningless without the decolonization of the peoples (pueblos)".[12] This slogan has spread among indigenous and feminists movements in the region.

Another powerful reflection on body-territory are from indigenous women of "communitarian feminism", among them Julieta Paredes and Lorena Cabnal. They look at "our territory-body-land" to stress the relationship between women's bodies and the cosmos. Historically, "bodies experience violence emanating from patriarchy, at the same time, territory (land) has been abused by neoliberal economic development models and this is the reason we defend the earth territory as a space to guarantee life". Lorena Cabnal goes further with the affirmation that

> We refuse to talk about harmony with mother Earth if there is not harmony between women and men. We state that defending ancestral territory-earth against the 31 licences for mining exploration and exploitation without defending women's bodies that are experiencing sexual violence, it's a cosmic and political incoherence. (Cabnal 2013)

Conclusion: Creating a New Episteme

Body politics emerges both as an intersection and as a convergence of ideas, histories, concepts and embodied lives. Today the notion of body politics has broadened, creating an episteme, to which different move-

ments and feminisms add their own experience and meaning in a complex process of interculturality. The political and symbolic content of the body politics is about both exclusions and privileges. It makes visible power imbalances and highlights the need to deconstruct, decolonize and depatriarcalize them.

Body politics generates dissident political practices, ruptures traditional hegemonic behaviors, produces transgressive imaginaries and theories, broadens conceptualizations and produces other knowledges that are absent from traditional left struggles for transformation. By affirming, dearticulating and deconstructing the matrix of power that seeks to subjugate differences and erase them, a political and theoretical kaleidoscope has been opened up in Latin American feminisms that holds vast possibilities for the democratization of everyday life.

Notes

1. This quotation comes from the political manifesto of the 13th EFLAC, held in Lima in November 2014. The encounter offered as a horizon of analysis the *Political Manifesto for the Liberation of our Bodies*, incorporating three axes of reflection and action: critical interculturality and intersectionality; sustainability of life; and territory-body-territory. The manifesto attempts to make visible some of the new critical perspectives and epistemologies, developed in recent years in the region, that have shown significant dimensions or paradigms of analysis that enrich and destabilize hegemonic Latin American feminist positions.
2. For more background, see my 1999 piece in Spanish at http://www.alainet.org/es/active/561#sthash.RV0oZ098.dpuf, accessed January 30, 2016.
3. It is true that this region has a history of struggle and social movements, particularly, but not exclusively, racial/ethnic, but these have accelerated and intensified in the last 20 years. The Zapatista uprising of 1994 is without doubt a landmark here. Another one, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is the rise of the World Social Forum, first taking place in Brazil. Others have been indigenous movements in the Andean Region, Central America and the Southern Cone. In a similar manner Afro-Latino-Caribbean and transsexual movements have made perspectives of change much richer. These processes have been accompanied by institutional

changes, such as those that have taken place in Bolivia (with the first indigenous-campesino president in Latin America) and Ecuador, with the recognition of a "plurinational state". The same is true of a larger group of progressive governments. However, despite such interesting characteristics, none of them has come out of the neoliberal framework and very few have shown more sensitivity toward women's rights.

4. For Lugones, those working on colonialism understand gender in a broader sense than does Quijano, thinking of it not only as the control of sex, its resources and products. She says that work has been simultaneously racialized and gendered, in this way recognizing the articulation between sex, work and the coloniality of power. Likewise, Lugones argues that patriarchal gender relations were a violent colonial imposition, which contributed to the destruction of cultures and cosmovisions, and to the imposition of colonial ones. Despite this, and the intimate relation that Lugones establishes between the fiction of race and the fiction of gender, both are constitutive of coloniality. Her argument that patriarchy is a colonial introduction is not clear to me. From my perspective, this statement conceals the fact that, in different shapes and with different meanings, unequal power relations between women and men have existed in different cultures, not only in the West. Bolivian theorist Silvia Rivera argues that it is easier to be *Indio* than to be a woman, given that machismo is internalized within popular organizations, in the neighborhood assemblies, unions and indigenous organizations.
5. The "Epistemology of the South", proposed by Boaventura de Souza Santos, has been inspired by Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa and black American feminists, just to mention two of the best known.
6. The *Feminist Dialogues* were organized by a group of individual feminists, movements and institutions from different continents (Articulación Feminista Marcosur, Latin América; Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era (DAWN), Asia/Pacific; Network for Communication and Development (FEMNET) Africa; INFORM, Sri Lanka; ISIS International; a national network of autonomous women's groups, India; and an International Coalition of Women for Economic Justice. These dialogues took place during the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India; Porto

Alegre, Brazil; Nairobi, Kenya; and Belem du Para, Brazil. They focused on body politics, radical democracy, neoliberal globalization and fundamentalisms. The interest in open dialogues in the region has continued in several ways. The Articulación Feminista Marcosur has organized subsequent dialogues between indigenous women and Latin American feminists on the diverse meanings of "buen vivir". In Peru the Global Democracy and Transformation Program has organized intercultural dialogues among diverse women, including feminists, indigenous people, Afro-Peruvians, lesbians and trans people. See http://socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/casestudies/WSF%20case%20study_0.pdf

7. In 2008, in response to a major campaign by feminist movements that won significant sympathy from the general population, the Uruguayan parliament approved a comprehensive and progressive abortion law. President Tabaré Vázquez used his powers to veto it—for "ethical" reasons. This took place at a time when a woman had been convicted for having performed an abortion, provoking a wave of solidarity and political activity. A blog was created with the phrase "I have had an abortion or have accompanied someone having one." This action confronted society's "collective disciplining" and produced a radical politicization in both society and state. The campaign reached its peak with the submission of 6000 signatures by "self-accused women" (another 3000 were added in the following days) to the vice-president of the republic. In only four weeks some 9000 signatures were collected, leading to a parliamentary debate about reproductive health policies. At that time, the correlation of forces was changed, turning the campaign, as its title suggests from "a right without a relevant subject, to a political democratic subject". Other pioneering strategies included the launching of the Interamerican Convention of Sexual and Reproductive Rights campaign by feminist movements.
8. The killings of women in Ciudad Juárez started in the early 1990s. Even though the recorded numbers vary, all data are alarming: 247 murders in 2010 and 130 in 2011. In 25 years, 1488 assassinations were registered, of which 60 percent happened between 2008 and 2015. Some 77 percent of the murders remain unpunished. In 2009 the Interamerican Human Rights Court held the Mexican state responsible for this as a result of its negligence and lack of

response. The victims were mainly young or adolescent, low-income workers, either migrants or from the city. The majority were tortured, mutilated and then murdered. In Guatemala, recent numbers show that 691 women were murdered in 2011 and 694 in 2014. In many cases the pattern is the same: rape, genital mutilation, murder with malice, and then their bodies are dismembered and spread on the roadside.

9. Dramatic evidence of the many ways in which women's bodies are violated, bombarded, destroyed by forces in conflict can be found in the report by the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation in Peru of 2003. The subjective and symbolic impact on bodies, until this day, can be seen in the film by Claudia Llosa, *La Teta Asustada* (The Milk of Sorrow). The commission publicized another shocking reality: of the estimated 70,000 victims of the armed conflict, almost 80 percent were Quechua speakers or from Quechua-speaking origins.
10. The ten points of the Revolutionary Women's Law are: *First*: Women, regardless of race, creed, color or political affiliation, have the right to participate in the revolution in the place and rank that their capacity and will determine. *Second*: Women have the right to work and receive a fair wage. *Third*: Women have the right to decide the number of children they want to have and take care of. *Fourth*: Women have the right to participate in community affairs and have a position if elected freely and democratically. *Fifth*: Women and their children have the right to health and food. *Sixth*: Women have the right to education. *Seventh*: Women have the right to choose their partners and should not be obliged to get married against their will. *Eighth*: No women will be beaten or mistreated physically by family members or others. The following crimes, rape or attempted rape, will be severely punished. *Ninth*: Women will be eligible for positions concerning the direction of the organization and will be granted military ranks within the revolutionary forces. *Tenth*: Women have all rights and obligations identified by revolutionary rules and laws.
11. The government echoes this and has created, according to its own understanding, the De-patriarchalization Unit under the Vice-Minister of Decolonization—an achievement no doubt, and a political-conceptual challenge. Given that, from the official perspective, patriarchy in a subordinated role is associated with coloniality. To the feminists of Women Creating Community,

colonialism and patriarchy are two simultaneous and parallel systems of hierarchical production and subordination.

12. Taken from a statement by the Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas de Santa María Xalapán circulating in 2008.

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CHAPTER 15

The Subject of Porn Research: Inquiring Bodies and Lines of Resistance

Karen Gabriel

Introduction

The current status of research into pornography is marked by several rather contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, the volume of research and writing on porn has been steadily increasing, and gaining a degree of academic acceptability within the Western academy—particularly since Linda Williams' volume on porn, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (1989). In Eric Schaefer's words, "she made it safe" for scholars to engage with porn "and not face the wrath of steaming administrators, snickering students, and their apoplectic parents" (2005: 8). That is, "within the field of film and media studies adult film and video is now an accepted, and legitimate, area of scholarly inquiry" (2005: 10). On the other hand, work on porn continues to be stigmatized, as Georgina Voss (2012) notes:

> I was subjected to constant questioning about the social and academic value of the research from my peers and therefore needed to constantly justify and validate the research. I also experienced trivialization of my work

K. Gabriel (✉)
ISS, The Hague, The Netherlands

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_15

> (Troiden 1987), including being asked whether I would be able to give academic presentations on my research "with a straight face". (p. 404)

The researcher into pornography therefore occupies a rather unusual subject position. They are clearly engaging with a field that is, for various reasons, increasingly becoming the subject of academic attention. It is also one that, because of its implications, is on the cutting edge of social science research. Yet academic and social conservatism together tend to promote a rather negative view of the field, with reactions ranging from suspicion and disdain, at the least, to open hostility and its explicit rejection as a valid field of study.[1] The stigma in the case of a female researcher may proceed from the more individualized attribute of being female, as much as it does from the structural issues of cultural attitudes around sex, assumptions about the academy and so on. There is the transfer of mainstream attitudes toward commercial and transactional sex workers to the researcher, who then experience this stigma in their professional lives and possibly in their personal lives as well (Hammond 2014: 336).

These issues have been raised by scholars before in different ways (Troiden 1987; Vance 1991; Kirkham and Skeggs 1996; Attwood 2002; Attwood and Hunter 2009). The "stigma contagion" theory, a version of guilt by association, which was first proposed by Kirby and Corzine (1981) with regard to researching "deviants", noted how "Researchers who step over the line separating the respectable from the stigmatized often find their motives questioned and themselves labeled as members of the group under study" (p. 4). This still holds true for research into porn. The study of pornography continues to be marked as "deviant" and thus stigmatized, as if investigation of the phenomenon is tantamount to the practice of it. This happens despite the fact that porn itself is a multibillion dollar business sector that is widely and routinely patronized; is being touted as recession-proof as Francis Koenig's 2005 pornocapitalism initiative demonstrated (Sloan 2007) and as invulnerable to financial crises (Rajendran 2015); and is now becoming "normalized" as a mainstream phenomenon (Weinberg et al. 2010). Consequently, the researcher and the research into pornography are both stigmatized due to the object of the research. The general imputation of sleaziness, immorality—even debauchery and criminality—attributed to the field is extended to the research and the researcher.

In this chapter I do not intend to reiterate those observations but, rather, I aim to examine the implications of the contradiction between the increasing academic visibility and the ostensible acceptance of "porn

studies" on the one hand, and the continued social and professional stigmatization of the field, its research and its researchers on the other. I will argue that the contradiction is a consequence of the intersection of multiple lines of resistance. There is resistance from the established and institutionalized academic frameworks to the pursuit of such research and pedagogy. There is resistance from the researcher's social (friends, family) and professional circles (colleagues, peers, research associates) to the researcher's work. Conversely, there is resistance from current and prospective researchers in the field to the prejudice toward and stigmatization of their work. Lastly, there is resistance from the field itself to being explored and analyzed. I locate these arguments within the larger context of the politics of sexuality. I elaborate on the body of the porn researcher as a site on which these multiple resistances are played out, that ultimately strongly influence the methods and outcomes of the researcher and the research field.

The Politics of Pleasure

A common attitude toward the pornography researcher is the suspicion that the research is not really research in the first place. It is frequently regarded as little more than a cover up to indulge in the presumed pleasures of porn. Alternatively, the research is tolerated provided that it does not focus on the pleasurable aspects of the subject (Jensen 1998), or focuses on specific variants that lie outside normative understandings of pleasure (e.g. child porn). Attwood and Hunter note how porn studies can usually only be accommodated institutionally either as a part of the discipline of film studies or "by foregrounding the political as Linda Williams did by combining the study of porn as genre with discussion [*sic*] of feminist arguments about porn" (2009: 550). That is, the study of porn is usually considered legitimate only in the following circumstances.

1. It is domesticated (as it were) within the terms of the already existing and accepted discipline of film studies, framed as a specific form of visual representation, and subjected to the analytical tools and methods of that discipline. This usually means studying the phenomenon for what it can contribute to the discipline rather than elaborating its structures, codes and rules toward understanding it for itself.
2. It is considered to be an object of critical import in feminist debates about desire and sexuality, in which it features predominantly as an

> object of critique. It is used to validate or substantiate arguments located in and articulated through frameworks external to it—moral, legal, political or programmatic. Here too, it is less about studying pornography and more about using specific understandings in order to bolster and/or establish other arguments and positions.

In either instance the field of porn studies must sanitize the element of pleasure (except insofar as it is acknowledged to be titillating, provocative, intended to excite etc.). Some of the suspicion arises from the association of the object of research with (illicit) pleasure. So, for instance, both readers and "participants might assume that because the researcher is studying sexuality s/he must be sexually interested or available" (Hammond 2014: 336). In other words, the entire milieu is potentially sexualized and sexually charged.

This particular dynamic is not evident with research into other forms of pleasure and leisure. For instance, research into reading; music; the visual, performative and plastic arts; sports; gambling; drug use; film; tourism; cooking is less likely to become stigmatized due to the object of research. Indeed, research into pleasure per se, as a social, psychological or philosophical phenomenon, is usually regarded respectfully, as genuine and worthy research, with a host of luminaries from Freud to Zizek to validate it. Even research into other kinds of sex work (as a form of pleasure/leisure, even if only for the contracting party) does not carry the kind of stigma that research into porn does: the sex-work researcher rarely has to focus on the kinds of pleasure and its performances in the way that the porn researcher is required to do. Arguably, the fundamental point of divergence for research into porn, from all other kinds of research into forms of pleasure, is that, in every other activity, including sex work, the generation of pleasure is secondary to the purposive performance of the activity itself, in accordance with the objectives, rules, codes and paradigms governing that activity. In other words, for the activity to be recognized as itself, it must be performed in prescribed ways that in turn address prescribed systems of receiving it on the part of the user/consumer. For example, gambling requires adherence to a set of rules of performance, whether with dice or cards, that decide the outcome of the activity—the winning or losing on the part of the user/consumer/performer—with the pleasure in gambling arising as an effect of the performance and as a function of the outcome of it. In contrast, pornographic activity is concerned expressly and solely with generating and inciting (sexual) pleasure. It requires the simulation of

pleasure, and of being pleased—the visibilization of pleasure—in ways not required by other forms of sex work. Without going into the problematics of pleasure, it is possible to argue that pleasure is not only the objective of the activity but is the only criterion for deciding its rules, codes and paradigms of performance. As such, research into porn—like all research into commercialized forms of sex work—has to engage with the question of its pleasures and with the equally important question about for whom they are generated.

Another important distinction between porn and other fields of pleasure or leisure is that porn is a product, composed of representations of sexual activity. Pleasure for the user/consumer is generated through the use/consumption of the pornographic product—the representations of sexual activity. This is different from other kinds of pleasures/leisure, such as gambling, tourism, drug use, cooking and sports, because unlike representational pleasures, which are all also products, these are participatory pleasures, requiring the active participation of the pleasure-seeking subject in the activity in order to realize their pleasure.[2] Usually the porn user/consumer does not need to—indeed, cannot—participate in the pornography they use/consume (except to the extent of "reading" the product), but is (supposed to be) pleasured instead by the very act of "reading" the product, which in turn seeks only to excite them.[3] This is what also differentiates it from other kinds of representations. As noted above, the objective of other kinds of representations (e.g. in literature, music, painting and film) is first and foremost to remain meaningfully communicative (of whatever is the subject of the representation) by adhering to the media-specific and generic rules, techniques and codes that govern that process of making meaning. *What* they communicate is a function of *how* they communicate. Consequently, pleasure for the user/consumer of these other kinds of representations can lie in either the *what* or the *how*, or in both. Thus attention to the formal, methodological aspects of the product can produce pleasure in the user/consumer, for its own sake—the pleasure of the aesthetics of the product. Pornographic representations, in contrast, appear for the most part to be relatively unconcerned about the aesthetic niceties of technique and generic rules, except insofar as these are made to serve the larger—the sole—objective, which is to sexually excite the user/consumer. In other words, porn, unlike gambling, for instance, is structured "toward" the viewer.

Research into porn stigmatizes the researcher because in the very act of "reading" the product—a requirement for researching it—the researcher

is addressed by the object as a seeker-of-pleasure, and hence becomes positioned as a user/consumer. In other words, no distinction is made or conceded between user/consumer and researcher. It is unlike research into sports or sex work, where the consumption/user-for-pleasure can be distinguished from research into it by virtue of the user/consumer and the researcher occupying different subject-positions in relation to the object of research. Research into porn requires the researcher to adopt the position of the user/consumer. This, it is perceived, renders the researcher inherently susceptible to indulgence in its pleasures. An additional factor here is the pervasive, though not always accurate, assumption that porn is usually used/consumed in isolation. Inasmuch as most research is also carried out in isolation, it is assumed that therefore research into porn cannot be easily distinguished from its use/consumption. Put differently, porn is mostly understood as representation-for-sexual-pleasure, and research into it as research into representation-for-sexual-pleasure.[4] Therefore, notwithstanding the "actual" reason for undertaking research, the porn researcher is invariably assumed to be undertaking the research as a cover for indulging in its pleasures. While the same may well be said of the researcher into art, for instance, moral disapprobation is attached invariably to porn. As such, the research is perceived to be pervaded by the pleasure that it purportedly seeks to examine and analyze. Research into porn is therefore regarded—implicitly, if not explicitly—as morally questionable, academically unsound and tainted by the pleasure supposedly inherent in its object. Porn research being inherently multidisciplinary can also become a hurdle, often facing resistance from institutionalized departments to hosting such work (Troiden 1987: 245). Since it is not marked as specific to one discipline, it becomes easier for any department to disown it, on institutional-disciplinary grounds as much as on moral ones. This line of resistance to the research emerges not only in the researcher's institution but in their familial, social and collegial circles, and it determines the directions and findings of the research too, as I discuss below.

The Politics of Positions

As I noted earlier, research into porn inevitably has to engage with the question of representation-for-sexual-pleasure, even if it is also focused on material questions of production, distribution, consumption/use and effect/consequence. But regardless of what aspect of porn is studied and examined, here a second line of resistance is the perception of

and reception to the analysis itself. Over the years, since the 1980s in particular, when home video and video recorders made access to porn easy and confidential, and then again with the growth of the Internet (Coopersmith 1999), there has been steady growth in the use/consumption of porn, and a concurrent diversification and expansion in its production systems. All of this has led to porn becoming more and more visible—often referred to as the "mainstreaming of porn" (e.g. Dines 2010: 37ff; Boyle 2010: 1; Attwood 2009)—but also to an already large and still rapidly growing discourse on and about it. This discourse in turn is not only multi- and transdisciplinary in the origins and orientations of its participant elements; it is also now polarized into pro-porn and anti-porn lobbies. To put it briefly, the pro-porn lobby argue that pornographic representations must be protected by legal and cultural provisions for "freedom-of-expression"; and, from the feminist standpoints of consent/freedom of choice and the articulation and visibilization of female desire and sexuality. The anti-porn lobby emphasize the links between porn and obscenity, as violating putative community moral standards; and from a feminist standpoint, they critique the objectification of women in porn; the harm it causes women in its production; and putative links between the consumption of porn and the perpetration of sexual violence.[5]

These positions have not only become entrenched in almost all discussions of pornography but also become ways to dismiss work on porn. Owing to this polarization, any analysis of porn—whether of the question of representation-for-sexual-pleasure or of questions of production and distribution—is itself invariably received as always-already biased. It is seen as coming from either a pro-porn or an anti-porn position, and therefore always-already suspect. This constitutes the second line of resistance that the researcher into porn has to deal with—in this case, rather ironically, from others working in the same field. This is perhaps particularly true of feminist debates about porn, which have tended to be strident, and acrimonious to the point of intolerance.

This is perhaps due to the undeniable evidence of VAW in porn production, and in its use and effects. It is also arguably the case that porn as a genre has opened up opportunities for women to give open, unrestrained expression to their own desires and sexualities. Both positions turn on questions that are fundamental to the feminist project itself. These are questions of ownership of and control over the performers' bodies in general, and over women's bodies and sexualities in particular, given the gender imbalances,[6]

on the one hand, and the power of porn to articulate women's desires and sexualities, to queer desire and sexual imaginations and repertoires, as well as the dangers in subjecting this to censorship and/or repression, on the other. As such, they are both positions that lay implicit—and sometimes explicit—claim to the label political identity "feminist" itself. For instance, Wendy McElroy notes how "Andrea Dworkin accuses [pro-porn feminists] of running a 'sex protection racket' and maintains that no one who defends pornography can be a feminist." (McElroy, n.d.) The response to such a position has been similarly polemical, and the label "anti-sex" was devised to dismiss quite legitimate concerns about the violence that is part of all sex trades. This has inevitably rendered any study of porn a (pre) loaded matter, and perceived as already shaped by one or the other position. The battlelines here have come to constitute a third line of resistance for the porn researcher—indeed, one through which the researcher finds themselves willy-nilly bracketed and boxed, regardless of their own take on these positions. Indeed, even the language in which porn is studied and analyzed appears predetermined and prejudiced, inevitably compromising any receptivity to the substance of the research, in and of itself.

Resistant Objects of (the Mapping of) Desire

From another angle, the researcher into porn—especially when that research is not confined to examining just the representational but engages with material questions of production, distribution, consumption/use and effect/consequence—has to face and deal with strong resistance from the objects of their research, viz. the personnel, processes and performances (of every kind) of the porn business. The resistance has several causes. First, the legal, social and cultural stigma attached to the business has effected the large-scale use of pseudonyms and other anonymizing methods, among both producers and users/consumers. Any study of porn that examines production or use/consumption in particular threatens this need for anonymity, notwithstanding any assurances to maintain confidentiality that the researcher might give. The porn researcher is thus also subjected to suspicion from the objects of the research, who often view them as a hostile presence, likely to cause more harm than good to the profession through their research. Second, a fair amount of porn production takes place illegally, coercively and often with deep links into other forms of extralegal activities, ranging from trafficking, kidnapping, drugs and media piracy to confinement, torture, rape, child abuse, and perhaps even maiming and murder (Jeffreys 2009; Dines et al. 1998; Dines 2010).[7]

The porn researcher has to negotiate the statutory obligation to report discernibly criminal activity while at the same time winning the confidence and trust of their respondents. As such, the porn researcher is not only confronted with non-cooperation from their research subjects but is also personally, even physically, endangered, always in potentially risky situations, in exploring and analyzing these shadowy systems of production and distribution and thereby threatening to expose them. This can happen either through the researcher drawing attention to the seamier side of production and distribution, or by acquiring and making available information that otherwise remains inaccessible and invisible, or both.

In this sense, this line of resistance entails for the porn researcher the ethical dilemma of having to, on the one hand, maintain the confidentiality of the respondents, while on the other, report criminal information to the appropriate authorities in observance of statutory requirements as a subject of the state.[8] This, perhaps more than the other lines of resistance, can affect not only the researcher's work but its findings too, to the extent that the researcher may not be in a position to access vital information, or, even if they does, to report it in their findings—for ethical reasons as much as for reasons of personal safety. This resistance is qualitatively and substantially different from the other kinds noted earlier, in several ways. First, it concerns only porn research that actually seeks to explore the world of porn beyond the textual (Gabriel 2011). Second, it speaks to, informs and molds the researcher's options and choices in the methods and methodologies of research as well as in the arguments they eventually draft, more directly and immediately than institutional or social resistances to their work, which the researcher may still find ways of negotiating. Third, it is in this line of resistance that the researcher is most likely to be stigmatized by the research, insofar as the work will carry them into close and extended physical and social proximity to the sites and subjects of their research.

Research Subject/Researcher as Subject

The researcher into porn is thus, willy-nilly, almost viscerally related to the object of their research, not only because of the proximity to the object of research noted above (specifically in porn research that extends beyond textual analyses) but also because (regardless of whether the research is textual or extratextual) the researcher is seen to be perpetually tainted—or struggling not to be tainted—by the pleasures of engaging with pornographic discourse. We have already noted how the researcher

occupies the same subject-position in relation to porn as its user/consumer, which is why the researcher is easily suspected of undertaking this research simply as a cover for using/consuming porn. But even if the researcher is not suspected of duplicity in this sense, the *body* of the researcher may still be suspected of responding to the provocations of pornography, as Robert Jensen concedes in *Pornography: The Production and Consumption of Inequality* (1998). A central and insightful argument made by Linda Williams (1989) is that the entire project of hardcore porn is to render visible female sexual pleasure, which otherwise is understood to be invisible and unverifiable. As such,

> Hard core desires assurance that it is witnessing not the voluntary performance of feminine pleasure, but its involuntary confession. The woman's ability to fake the orgasm that the man can never fake (at least according to certain standards of evidence) seems to be at the root of all the genre's attempts to solicit what it can never be sure of: the out-of-control confession of pleasure, a hard-core "frenzy of the visible". (p. 50)

The understanding of sexual desire and pleasure reflected here—that they are involuntarily triggered, and beyond the control of the pleasured subject—is noted by Williams as endorsed by the porn industry with specific reference to women, hence the hardcore project to elicit evidence of sexual pleasure specifically from women.[9] Michel Foucault makes a similar point in "Sexuality and Solitude" (1985) with regard to "western civilization's", specifically Christianity's, understanding of male sexuality as essentially residing in and represented by control (or the lack of it) over penile response: "the main question is not … the problem of penetration: it is the problem of erection" (p. 370)—that is, the problem lies in "the relationship between one's will and involuntary assertions" (p. 371).

The point here is that sexuality, sexual desire and bodily responses to pleasuring, whether of the male or female body, are conceived of as—imagined to be—in the realm of the involuntary, always potentially beyond control. This dominant imagination of the body—as treacherous, anarchic, disobedient, susceptible to excitement, prone to excess, viscerally reactive and so on—is neither new nor particularly accurate (but perhaps not inaccurate either, in unexpected ways, as I will discuss shortly). But it does constitute a dominant, even hegemonic, perception of sexuality and desire, as Foucault points out, and does color the pornographic imagination, as both Robert Jenson and Linda Williams, among others, observe. As such,

the porn researcher too is drawn into this field of understandings, which by extension then colors the way in which the porn researcher is perceived. That is, regardless of any protestations to the contrary, the body of the researcher tacitly comes to be perceived as willy-nilly susceptible to the allurements of porn—as somehow separate from the researcher, in its purported pleasures in the research, or pleasured by the research—and thus becomes an involuntary determinant of, and therefore an illegitimate participant in, the research. Here it must be pointed out that there is an unexpected element of truth in these understandings: the porn researcher may just as easily be "turned off" as "turned on" by the object of research. If the porn in question proves not to their liking, alarm, disgust or revulsion are just as strong possible "visceral reactions" of the body to pornographic representations. Ironically, though, such responses too can be attributed to being prejudiced and anti-porn (or pro-porn, as the case may be) to begin with. Then, whether the porn researcher is "turned on" or "turned off" by the object of their attentions is apparently determined by whether they are pro- or anti-porn in the first place.

What is becoming clear now—what needs to be, but is seldom, acknowledged—is that the porn researcher's reaction, such as it may be, visceral or otherwise, "turned off" or "turned on", is necessarily, inevitably, a factor in their analysis and estimation of both the texts and the contexts of porn. It is certainly possible that the porn researcher, as impressionable a subject as anybody else, can react viscerally to porn, whether in excitement or in revulsion. It is certainly also possible that certain moral/political positions on porn can indeed condition the researcher's response to it, so that they either celebrate or denounce porn in the terms spelt out by the respective celebratory or denunciative discourse. But there is no way to verify such putative causal relations. In the absence of such verifiability, it is not possible to definitively and demonstrably argue that the porn researcher's work is either a case of their body illegitimately participating in the research, or their moral or ideological predispositions inevitably determining their response, and therefore their work. These implicit and explicit arguments for dismissing work on porn—both from within and beyond the field of porn studies—ultimately have no more than polemical value and result in the real danger of rendering all work on porn suspect. The porn researcher stands to be almost inevitably compromised by the research, regardless of the nature of their reaction to its objects. The real loss in all this is that, despite the increasing academic visibility of work on porn, the contradictions and contestations rife in the field[10] continue

to render it controversial, fueling the sensationalism to which the field is prone in the first place.

The Resistant Researcher

The fact remains, though, that the only way to begin to negotiate these multiple lines of resistance is through the very act of undertaking research into porn. In doing so, the porn researcher is thus constituted already as a resisting subject—resisting, on the one hand, the institutionalized resistance to such research within the academic world, and, on the other, the resistance to being known (being the object of knowledge) from the closed world of porn production, distribution and consumption/use. Once in, though, the researcher into porn has to also resist the easy categorizations and appellations that await them from their peers working in the same field. Or, at least, the researcher must strive to prevent those characterizations from determining either their own approach or their work. In order to do so, the porn researcher must first recognize and acknowledge the ways in which they and their work are likely to be stigmatized, and then continuously strive to separate (and keep separate) their responses to this process of stigmatization from their examination of the objects of her research. This entails the ability to identify and acknowledge the moral/political position that they are approaching porn from, on the one hand, and their own responses to porn itself, on the other, and to be able to separate the two, to the extent that is possible.

Conclusion

The study of porn invariably generates deep, "visceral" reactions, both in the researcher and in the worlds negotiated them (as a researcher). It is research that requires intensive, extensive and extended exposure to, and engagement with, sexual bodies, or simulacra thereof, engaged in the boundless, endless pursuit of pleasure, or simulacra thereof. It is research that persistently addresses them as a sexual(ized) body, as well as a subject engaging critically and analytically with sexual(ized) bodies. The specific dynamics of that address, its reception, and the consequent response and analysis may of course vary, and to varying degrees, depending on the gender, sex and sexual orientation (male/female/trans, straight/gay/lesbian/queer etc.) of the researcher, as much as on the representations in the objects of their research. While there are many other fields of academic

research that similarly engage with bodies and subjectivities intimately—for instance, medicine, psychiatry or gender studies—the peculiarity of porn studies' engagement with bodies and subjectivities is not that the engagement is with *representations* of bodies and subjectivities, and not the actual ones, since we may find this in other film genres, such as horror, as well. It is in the fact that there is a strong documentary orientation and effect of the "this-is-actually-happening-moment" that this engagement is real and it is supposed to be pleasurable. These representations carry a profoundly focused conception of the body, as more or less a site for the pursuit of sexual pleasure. They address the user/consumer with a single message: that of the endless availability of the possibility of pleasure. The researcher into the field of porn too is addressed as such, even as they strive to examine this phenomenon that addresses them thus, and to decode the address itself. In doing so, the researcher must of necessity also engage with the extratextual elements of porn, in the multiple domains noted above, as well as with the multiple lines of resistance inscribed in those domains, as well as playing out on themselves. The act of undertaking porn research, then, is itself an act of insurrection against these lines of resistance. To what extent the porn researcher will sustain that insurrection, and will refuse to succumb to one or the other line of resistance to their work, is ultimately decided by the extent of their willingness to relentlessly trace the play of those lines, and refuse to succumb to them. This chapter is, in fact, a small step in this direction, for me as a researcher into the field of pornography.

Notes

1. "Despite the establishment of 'porn studies', sex media continue to be regarded as unpleasant or ridiculous or, most frequently, boringly obvious in their meaning and pernicious effects. Researchers report leg-pulling, awkwardness, suspicion, derision, hostility and even harassment" (Attwood and Hunter, 2009: 549).
2. The issue of pleasure is a very intricate one, and it needs to be treated separately and elaborately. Suffice it to say here that the complexity of the issue deepens and intensifies in specific relation to the asserted pleasures of performing pornographic scenarios. Illustratively, some porn performers have commented on their need for drugs and alcohol to sustain them while they do porn, saying that it helps to combat the fatigue, the pain or the experience itself. Others have spoken of their

pleasure in porn performances, including BDSM sex. In fact it is common to hear pornographers in particular assert that performers enjoy what they do and that they as producers and makers of porn, tend to hire or use only performers who actually enjoy what they do, since the enjoyment of the performer is palpable (and vice versa), steps up the erotic charge, and translates into more views and so greater profits. There are of course the increasingly popular genres such as "facial abuse" and "gagging", which aim to discomfit, hurt and degrade women performers, who sometimes cry. Yet almost all these scenes end with the woman performer claiming that she enjoyed it. See http://clayrabeau.blogspot.se/2010/12/hard-city-indeed.html, accessed January 29, 2016. The issue of "performed" versus "experienced" pleasure remains and is the topic of a different paper altogether. See, for example, Porn: When the Camera Stops | Nightline | ABC News, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZTKLFvDglE, accessed January 29, 2016; "Hot Girls Wanted", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oekvYUl6XSU; and The Dark Side of Porn: Porn Shutdown, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7am_sRIVhs accessed January 29, 2016 and kink.com.

3. Even in interactive porn, which requires the participation of the user/consumer to the extent of directing the performance, the pleasure lies not in physically interacting with the porn performer (i.e. in the user becoming a performer) but elsewhere—perhaps in the "control" of the performer, perhaps in "reading" the apparent "effects" of directing the performer in certain ways and so forth. In any event, even if the pornographic product is redefined to thus accommodate the (sometimes extreme) whims of the user/consumer, it remains separate from them. See, for instance Hughes (2000).
4. It is notoriously difficult to define porn, either as product or as process. See Michael Rea (2001) for a rigorous critique of existing definitions, followed by a valiant attempt to undertake such a definition, as well as Jorn Sonderholm's (2008) critique of Rea's definition. Here I have used a broad, generic, even popular understanding that simply yokes together the two most incontestable aspects of porn: (1) that it consists of representation(s); and (2) that it is used for (eliciting, inciting, producing) sexual pleasure.
5. More comprehensive accounts of these debates can be found in Attwood (2011), and more specifically in Ferguson (1995) and Cothran (2002).

6. There are serious issues around the ways in which the bodies of men and transgenders are controlled whether in the instances of "straight", "gay" or BDSM porn performances, especially in light of the situation in Eastern European "gay porn". For instance, Skoch (2010) writes that "Higgins also likes to recruit men who have typically never done porn or had sex with men before and market their inexperience as an asset, not a drawback. To this day, he enjoys filming the first-timers, especially if they really like it. He zooms in on their faces clenched in pain. It makes it real, Higgins says" (Skoch 2010). However, the porn business is undoubtedly tougher on women and on their bodies (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZTKLFvDglE, accessed January 29, 2016). In "The Dark Side of Porn: Porn Shutdown", Dr Sharon Mitchel (ex-porn star [sadomasochism] and now a health provider) of Aim Healthcare Foundation, which she set up in 1998 after leaving the porn industry and studying to be a doctor, after a fan battered and raped her, notes how double-anal penetration carries the risk of anal tears and anal prolapse: "the physical conditions of what people are putting their bodies through are moving very very far from what sexuality as we know it … There has been an exponential kink factor growing. Things are getting more and more demeaning toward women, degrading. It's very, very violent", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7am_sRIVhs, accessed January 29, 2016.
7. Even this simple statement of fact can be construed as already adopting an anti-porn position, so deep-rooted are these understandings of work on pornography now.
8. This is apart from other ethical issues that may arise, such as those around compensation for time given, or having to possibly ignore investigating some aspects of suspected criminality, in order to gain more information about the main focus of the research, viz. porn.
9. Here I will merely register, without elaboration or analysis, the issue of pain per se in the context of sexual pleasure, or the complexities of pleasure in pain or pain in pleasure.
10. Of course, such debate would otherwise be a sign of a healthy, evolving and rich academic discourse. However, in the current instance it tends to get mired in rehashings of the same limited terms, and it is not a productive controversy.

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CHAPTER 16

An American's View of Trans* Emergence in Africa and Feminist Responses

Chloe Schwenke

Introduction

Transgender is now one of the more contested issues in feminist theory and practice. In this chapter I argue along with Deyi that "Transgender feminists are not agents of patriarchy or a mockery to feminism." Instead they need to be seen as "a celebration of the central principles that feminists have long sought to have recognized … that self-determination is a principle worth fighting for, that we as feminists in all body forms have become a social movement that can create spaces that enable those that are differently gendered to express their true selves" (Deyi 2012). As Van der Merwe poignantly states, "I am that transgender woman featured in so many Ph.D dissertations, HIV research, and documentation of violent experiences [but] I have a face, I have a name, and I have an identity." In this chapter I also argue along with Van der Merwe that "We transgender women must be seen in our racial, class, and other diversities. Ultimately, it is we who are the relevant stakeholders in our struggle for equality and rights" (Van der Merwe and Leigh 2013).

C. Schwenke (✉)
McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University
Olney, MD, USA

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W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_16

Situating the Chapter: Cross-Border Trans* Realities

My Ugandan philosopher friend and former academic colleague Byaruhanga Rukooko once forwarded an email chain to me that had disturbed him. It featured a photograph of a very wretched looking trans* Ugandan maid, cowering in the corner of a room in a posture that exposed her male genitalia to the world.[1] The caption on the photograph read:

> People watch out!!!!! This maid was arrested after working at his master's house for 2 years .... Before you hire a maid, make sure you check her whole body properly to make sure that she will not harm your daughters or your wife. Or you call police to check her for you.

The photograph had attracted a wide viewership of Ugandans, including many academics, but the email chain included not a single comment. My many connections with Uganda and its culture extends back to 1982, yet I was confounded that this provocative message had failed to elicit any response from Ugandan readers. The callous sensationalism surrounding this media disclosure was itself not remarkable. Having worked closely with trans* persons in Uganda, and in other Global South contexts, I am not surprised by such a salacious exposure. Uganda is not the only country where there has been media humiliation of a trans* person. The incident suggests that the plight of Uganda's trans* population is dire, let alone considering the disturbing implications of attitudes toward female domestic staff in Uganda, and the concept of "masters" and their entitlement to "inspect" maids' bodies.

There are, however, more positive examples of trans* realities in sub-Saharan Africa. The 4th regional Changing Faces, Changing Places conference was held near Naivasha, Kenya, on May 29–31, 2013. This locally organized and managed event brought together more than 200 LGBTI activists from across the continent, along with international human rights activists. At least 30 of the African activists self-identified as trans* or intersex, and they represented a variety of African civil society organizations and movements. At the third conference, held in 2011, there had been fewer than five openly trans* Africans present, and they represented very few civil society groups. Even if just one example, the conference suggests a rapid increase in vocal, organized and indigenous trans* people in Africa. The participants at the fourth conference showed clear solidarity

and agency, and as an American transsexual feminist with deep roots in Africa, I found this to be heartening.[2]

Who am I to be so "heartened"? My own engagement with Africa began in 1979, and it included almost 15 years living and working on the continent in Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, and taking trips to 23 other sub-Saharan countries. My perceptions of Africa on which I base my observations below remain those of an outsider, even if well traveled and well informed. I have been present, and witnessed the hopes, challenges and opportunities of Africans working for gender equality and sexual diversity, as an employee, employer, teacher, friend, co-worker and consumer, as well as through my activism for global human rights solidarity.

Presuming to comment on bodies in resistance in Africa is complex and, given the sensitivities, I recognize both the limitations and the strengths from the vantage point of an outsider. With as much humility as I can, I try to understand issues that are undoubtedly difficult for an outsider like me to comment on. I also reflect on how differently my experiences of Africa were when male-embodied, and now as a woman. Acknowledging my position as a transsexual American feminist who has lived and worked in Africa, I reflect on the global feminist dialogue and the role of trans* women in African feminism. I am motivated by my genuine desire to build mutually respectful bonds of solidarity with Africans who share my same interests and concerns.

New Debates in Global Feminist Dialogues

The global feminist dialogue is also an uneasy space, and the confluence with an emerging global trans* feminist dialogue remains underexplored. More than two decades ago, leading feminist scholars such as Chandra Mohanty and Maria Lugones wrestled with the dynamics of how a constructive global feminist community might be fostered and sustained. Mohanty argued for an "imagined community" and "horizontal comradeship" that would transcend any boundaries of color, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, class or other attributes (Mohanty 1991). Earlier still, Maria Lugones advocated for "a loving perception of other women" that would be built upon owning our own respective cultural and historical contexts, making an effort to understand how women view each other across such contexts within an explicit awareness that complexity is inherent in any such relationships (Lugones 1987). This process came to be framed as "transversalism" and offered an alternative to insisting on the prerequisite

consensus on universalism—a helpful direction given that the universalism project is commonly criticized as being too closely tied to its origins in European and Western thought. Reflecting on universalism or transnationalism, I align with Hilary Charlesworth:

> The term "feminism" has little meaning if it does not extend beyond purely local concerns, but the use of feminist theories on a global level requires attention to the way that these theories can privilege some women's experiences over others. (Charlesworth 2000)

In the face of an unsettled but necessary global dialogue among feminists, this chapter extends the dialogue, both of discord and harmony, by considering the emergence of a new demographic—African trans* feminists. I offer an outsider's view on the changing relationship between African trans* activists and African feminists in comparison to similar relationships and frameworks in the Global North. While reliable data sources are hard to find in Africa, as the above reflections on the conference suggest, there is anecdotal evidence that new and effective leaders are emerging among MtF trans* Africans, and that a new social movement is gaining ground. A confluence of feminism and trans* activism in sub-Saharan Africa is taking form and gaining voice, even if it is too early to say whether this tenuous alliance will be sustained.

African Feminism Observed

Feminists in sub-Saharan Africa are growing in strength, even given the resilience of the patriarchal social order and the divisions among African feminists. From my observations, while there have been some changes in legislation regarding gender equality, and progressively more women enter positions of social, economic and political influence, patriarchy remains robust in the traditional cultures, values and practices across the continent. I have also seen how feminists on the continent struggle to reconcile their allegiance with traditions that on the one hand provide them with valued identity but on the other do not conform to universal ideas of human dignity and agency.[3]

Feminists in Africa share many of the concerns of feminists worldwide, yet I would argue that there are also distinctive elements of African feminism. African feminists seek to identify and integrate gender equality into traditional values. Their struggle is for the recognition of women's equal,

if different, value and worth, and for women's human dignity to be recognized on an equal basis as that of men in their societies. In such a context, their struggle can be seen as different from that of feminists living in the Global North. Living in such conservative societies, African feminists who speak out against traditional values are perceived as radicals even if their aspirations appear to be modest in comparison to feminist demands in the Global North. From my observations, one of the most intractable challenges for African feminists in achieving gender equality is for African men to recognize the intersectionality of all genders in striving toward societal wellbeing. I would suggest that it is only when African men accept that the wellbeing of their grandmothers, mothers, aunts, wives, sisters, daughters, cousins, nieces, and female friends and associates are integral to their society's progress will African feminist or "gender equality" movements flourish.

Popular and Intellectual African Feminism

In my experience of living and working in African society, I can identify two prevailing forms of African feminism: intellectual and popular. African intellectual feminists were educated abroad, returned to live and work in diverse African urban environments, and advocate for a transnational understanding of feminism. They are outspoken in their condemnation of polygamy, female circumcision and forced or early marriages. In speaking out they are often accused of being co-opted by northern feminism.

The question of female sexuality, and its control and suppression, is a central preoccupation for African intellectual feminists. They also recognize the experiences of African lesbians. They are outspoken against the violence and other forms of persecution directed against African lesbians by African states, or condoned by a culture of impunity toward the perpetrators. Intellectual feminist groups publicly decry the rigidity of heteronormative values espoused by religious, government and cultural leaders, and traditional African male sexual dominance over female bodies. GBV is also a significant priority of African intellectual feminists owing to the severity and scale of psychological and physical suffering that women endure as a consequence of violations, particularly in conflict-affected African countries. African intellectual feminists also question traditional values that undercut the basic human right of bodily integrity and ownership of one's body.

Popular feminism can be seen as the opposite of African intellectual feminism (Sachikonye 2013). This form of feminism is framed in the

cultural values, practices and diverse life experiences of the vast majority of African women. It identifies the importance of women within traditional African society encompassing child-rearing, subsistence agriculture and other domestic duties. This traditional image of African women is juxtaposed with the historical "in the trenches" role played by many African women in the liberation movements against colonialism, and the injustices experienced by such women as they have been systematically excluded from formal nation-building and governance roles since that time.[4]

Popular feminists consider their culture vital to their identity, and they focus on finding practical empowerment solutions rooted in the lived experience of African women. In the face of the rapid changes affecting African development, governance and security, and the increasing influence of globalization, popular feminism according to my outsider's perspective the slow impact of feminism in Africa seems insufficient to ensure a diversity of feminine and masculine roles that would be required for gender equality. Popular African feminism does share a transnational feminist perspective when it argues that African men and women could have mutually beneficial, transformative and progressive relationships in the private and public spheres if these relationships were non-patriarchal and egalitarian. Nevertheless, there is little attempt to push for African men to redistribute privilege and power. African feminists appear to have few, if any, expectations that men will engage with them in the societal quest for equality and respect, regardless of how their bodies are gendered.

Trans* Activism in Africa

Where do trans* African women fit in? Their focus on bodily integrity offers significant room for potentially overlapping concerns and shared opportunities for resistance. Yet with the gender-equality challenges and the limited extent to which African men have adopted gender-equality goals, neither African intellectual nor popular feminism have given much attention to contemplating gender identity or trans* Africans. There are exceptions. Trans* women in South Africa have demonstrated remarkable leadership by taking up their own feminist activism aimed not at generating a separate version of African feminism, but instead by seeking to encourage all African feminists to be more inclusive, supportive and aware of those who are trans*.[5] Their stand is a courageous one given the deep diversity of views about trans* issues held by Africans of differing social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, identities and experiences.

While it is problematic to assign a date to the birth of trans* activism in sub-Saharan Africa, the African Strategy Workshop for trans* activists held on December 19, 2008, in Cape Town, South Africa, could be considered a starting point. Sponsored by an international LGBTI NGO, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and the South African trans* activism NGO, Gender DynamiX, the workshop offered a first chance for trans* activists from nine eastern and southern African countries to share their realities and explore common goals and concerns.[6] They considered priorities for the future of trans* activism on the continent (education, healthcare, medical assistance for transitioning, safety and security—especially against arbitrary arrests), and they identified leaders to help pursue those goals (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 2008). With this meeting, the foundations of a pan-African trans* movement were in place.

South Africa has its own distinct history of the trans* movement, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Thamar Klein's excellent paper, "Intersex and transgender activism in South Africa", provides such a review (Klein 2009). She draws attention to the intersectionality of diverse groups and individuals who are grouped together as trans*. These include persons of diverse life experiences from different socioeconomic classes, religions, ethnicities, races, educational levels, ages and geographical locations across the country. This was complicated still further by the conflation of gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression and race during the Apartheid era, resulting in wide variations in gender identity.

South Africa's Constitution is globally recognized as the first to grant formal recognition and protection to trans* persons. The historical roots of such provisions extend back to 1963, when the Birth and Deaths Registration Act allowed trans* persons to apply to have their sex status changed in the birth register after sex-reassignment surgery. No other African country has such formal protection or legal awareness of trans* realities. For years the country has also offered medical support and options to trans* persons seeking to transition that are unmatched anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa, even if not without challenges in terms of how and to whom these services are provided. Despite the history of trans* awareness and medical support infrastructure unique on the continent, the trans* movement in South Africa struggles to cohere across its many factions and identities.

Elsewhere on the continent, the struggle of trans* persons is more elemental. As in South Africa, trans* persons suffer high levels of violence,

exclusion, humiliation, poverty, denial of public services (especially health-care, education and housing) and abuses of every kind. Trans* Africans have to settle on identities within the LGBTI movement while trying not to lose their distinctive trans* needs and priorities. Many parts of the movement have expanded to include sex workers, especially because sex work can often be the only economic livelihood choice for trans* women. This inclusion can cloud a distinctive trans* identity as a movement and it raises uncomfortable questions about the commercial exploitation of feminine or feminized bodies.[7] The general public and governments also consistently conflate and subsume gender identity under "gay", linking trans* problems closely to rising homophobia and violence on the continent. Homophobic trends have led to highly repressive anti-gay legislation in countries such as Nigeria, Mali, Gambia and Uganda, and to unfettered homophobic mob violence within many African societies. Trans* Africans have been swept up in this violence regardless of their sexual orientation. There is a low level of understanding of the trans* phenomenon among the African public, and even among those in the medical or counseling professions. Journalists (both African and international) fall prey to the same confusion. This was evident in the trial of Stephen Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga in Malawi in 2009–2010, where a trans* woman (Tiwonge) and her fiancé (Stephen) were consistently labeled by the media as a "gay couple". The conviction and subsequent pardoning of these individuals was trumpeted by London's *Guardian* newspaper as "Malawi Frees Jailed Gay Couple" (Fallon 2010), suggesting that being trans* is a barely visible status in Africa.

Trans* Africans are fighting back, as the 2013 Changing Faces Changing Spaces conference suggests. The challenge of finding sufficient commonality of identity—as well as achieving understanding and respect within the larger LGBTI community—can hinder meaningful solidarity and effective resistance within the emerging trans* movement on the continent.

Reflections on North–South Differences in Relation to Trans* Movements

From my own experiences as a transsexual woman living in both the Global South and the Global North, I would argue that feminist interest in "bodies in resistance", or civic organizing around alternative and innovative ways of living one's sexuality, or honoring non-conforming gender identities need to acknowledge the differences between feminism and the trans* movements, and within the trans* movement in different

geographical contexts. There are heated linguistic and conceptual debates about the meaning of gender identity, gender transitions, gendered bodies, and about where "gender" is rooted. I conclude my chapter with the following reflections that I hope will contribute to framing such future conversations, research and actions.

Transsexuals: In the North there is a growing population of transsexuals—persons who receive medical and surgical interventions for their bodies that enable them to transition across the gender divide, to inhabit a body that more closely aligns with their own sense of gender identity and expression. Transsexuals in Africa are relatively rare outside of South Africa—the costs for such interventions are prohibitive, and access to appropriately trained surgeons, endocrinologists and all the other infrastructure of medically supervised gender transition are extremely hard to access. So while feminists in the North debate about the inclusion or exclusion of transsexual women through such filters as "womyn born womyn", the feminist debate about trans* concerns—to the extent that it occurs at all in most developing countries—is less about exclusion/inclusion based on gender identity and more about the subjugation and survival of gender-non-conforming persons.[8]

Priority of trans issues to African feminists*: Those sub-Saharan African feminists who are not trans* (i.e. they are cisgender), with the possible exception of some in South Africa, largely do not place any emphasis on the trans* phenomenon or simply conflate it with issues of sexual orientation under the label of "sexual minorities". The advocacy of African feminists for the human rights and democratic participation of women, and for overall gender equality norms, is extraordinarily demanding, and there's scant interest in debating what "woman" means in the context of the trans* phenomenon. The plight and advocacy of trans* African women may attract some sympathy and solidarity, yet little else. Many individual trans* African women do, however, identify as feminists, and they are beginning to speak out and bring a trans* perspective to African feminism.

Sexuality as an issue: How do African trans* women see sexuality? And how do African feminists see trans* women in the context of sexuality? Sexuality embraces many dimensions, from human rights and health protection, emotions and pleasure, to perspectives about feelings, embodiment and spirituality. An indigenous African trans* voice on this wider perspective of sexuality is in its earliest stages of articulation. It is important to reach out to African trans* women to hear from them directly about sexuality.

Gender expression: Prominently debated within feminist circles in the North but not often addressed by sub-Saharan African feminists, transsexuals and trans* women see their emergence as a new and liberating social movement. Their compulsion to adopt body shapes and forms of feminine expression begins and often remains deeply personal and individualistic, even when such feminine manifestations have historically been associated with the oppression or subjugation of women. Some feminists in the North react sharply to such celebrations of stereotypical feminine expression, while others, such as Rahila Gupta, are more patient:

> As I have argued before … any newly politicized group, fighting for its rights, tends to be strident in its demands until a more universal recognition of its rights allows it to acknowledge the contradictions and paradoxes of its political position. (Gupta 2013)

Defining gender: Feminist opinion in the North weighs heavily in the direction of perceiving gender as predominantly a social construct imposed by the culture rather than something that is innate or strictly biological, or that is a matter of self-perception.[9] This is relevant to African patriarchy, where strong cultural values impose role-consciousness related to birth sex and gender assignment, and in which much of its justification depends on the presumption of the biological inferiority of women's bodies and minds. Some trans* women in Africa yearn for a biological gender transition through surgeries, hormones and electrolysis/laser facial hair removal, yet the more common domain of trans* expression can be viewed outside the assertion of individual rights and instead as a form of radical resistance to their respective communitarian cultures. Such assertions of gender non-conformity require remarkable courage and determination. Rejecting culturally imposed gender role models based on sex assigned at birth, and instead choosing to adopt traditional female roles that align with their own personal sense of gender identity, is a daunting human endeavor. The boldness of making such decisions in traditional African societies is important to stress because individualism rarely justifies a confrontation with prevailing community cultural values and practices (e.g. assigned traditional gender roles). Such a choice is arguably far greater than the decision of a trans* person in the North to transition, given the high value placed on individualism and agency in the North.[10] The bodily experience of trans* identity is not constrained to the physical act of transitioning genders, however. Body awareness includes consciousness,

and in this context one common (and, some would argue, transnational) thread among trans* persons from the North or from Africa is the description of an experiential "intrinsic" gender identity perhaps best expressed by trans* activist Julia Serano:

> Cissexual academics eagerly cite aspects of gender-variant lives that support their claims that gender is primarily constructed, while ignoring those aspects that undermine their cases. For example, many academics have focused on the transsexual transition process to argue that gender does not arise "naturally," but that it is learned, practiced, and performed. However, these same academics tend to overlook (or dismiss outright) the fact that most transsexuals experience a lifelong self-knowing that they should be the other sex. This self-knowing exists despite the overwhelming social pressure for a person to identify and behave as a member of their assigned sex, which strongly suggests that there are indeed natural and intrinsic gender inclinations that can precede and/or supersede social conditioning and gender norms. (Serano 2007)

Sexual politics: The political battle between the sexes is experienced differently by feminists and trans* persons in the North and in Africa. For example, a considerable amount of energetic advocacy among trans* persons in the North occurs under the banner of genderqueer politics, which holds that the rigid imposition of gender identities within society is the main problem and that the binary system adversely affects trans* persons through legal and procedural constraints that often deny a fundamental aspect of human agency—that is, self-definition of gender. Africa trans* women in contrast are more likely to give priority to resistance in the political space to be legally accepted as women and protected from transphobic violence. Safety and security always take precedence in any struggle for human rights, and only when this is satisfied will trans* Africans be in a position to stand shoulder to shoulder with their cisgender and trans* sisters, and their male allies, transnationally in the larger political and cultural fight for gender equality.

Gender binary: Many feminists from the North rely on a gender binary to see the oppression of one sex (women) by another (men) as the central issue. Sub-Saharan Africa trans* women (at least outside of South Africa) have little traction with rejection of the binary for the alternative genderqueer identity, even if a great many of them (trans* men or trans* women) live largely androgynously. African trans* women are aware of the repression and violence faced by African women, yet many remain

committed to binary versions of gender identity in their own struggles for authenticity.

Feminist rejection: A small and often older subset of feminists in the North rejects trans* women entirely, and transsexual women specifically, often in highly pejorative and inflammatory terms. Well-known feminist pioneers, such as Germaine Greer, have described trans* women disparagingly:

> Nowadays we are all likely to meet people who think they are women, have women's names, and feminine clothes and lots of eyeshadow, who seem to us to be some kind of ghastly parody, though it isn't polite to say so. We pretend that all the people passing for female really are. Other delusions may be challenged, but not a man's delusion that he is female. (Greer 2009)

Others, such as Australian feminist Sheila Jeffreys, argue that any authentic "woman" identity depends on being born in a female body and experiencing the reality—and damage—that living in a patriarchal society entails. Trans* people, however, experience astounding levels of damage from the patriarchy (and from attitudes of such feminists as Jeffreys). Still, not all trans* women in the North would disagree with Jeffreys in all aspects, although they would reject her demeaning characterization of trans* women as traitors to the feminist cause. For example, trans* women might agree with Jeffreys when she argues that those who feel they are trans* ought to attack the gendered system as it exists, but Jeffreys distances herself irredeemably from trans* women when she adopts a condescending tone to describe transsexuals as those who "make some kind of 'journey' by mutilating their bodies and taking dangerous drugs for the rest of their lives in order to supposedly represent the opposite sex" (Jeffreys 2011). Her assumption that the decisions transsexuals have made in conjunction with their transitions from one gender embodiment to the other are exclusively intellectual and political, and that their goal is to "represent" the other sex, speak of a profound ignorance and a telling lack of empathy. Transsexual women who transition after their childhood years always carry with them the burden of a lost girlhood, and the important (if not always positive) influence that having been a girl would have provided in shaping, if not defining, them as a "woman". Such persons, and I write as one of them, recognize that transitioning to a female body that aligns with a female consciousness and intrinsic sense of gendered identity does not equate to having always occupied that wholeness, but we take enormous

comfort that the trade-off is to gain a stronger sense of being healthy and human, even if not exactly being "women". Perhaps being a "transsexual woman" must constitute its own distinct gender identity, but if so it should not be seen as somehow a lesser, or faux, form of womanhood. Similarly, womanhood should not be considered as a threshold condition, nor should one's status as a transsexual woman be viewed as static or devoid of growth toward increasing wholeness. Experience and identity as a "woman", balanced against "transsexual woman", is also not a static ratio but in my own experience is subject to progressive, if never fully complete, embodiment towards "woman".

Societal acceptance: The trend in the North towards an understanding and the acceptance of trans* persons is making progress, even if slowly. The fact that I am an "out" transsexual human rights activist (perhaps akin to what the pioneer trans* author and activist Leslie Feinberg calls a "transgender warrior") and the fact that I was appointed to a senior political office in President Obama's administration are neither contradictions nor unintentional (Feinberg 1996). While in no respect an easy journey, I have enjoyed a level of acceptance and respect that would be unimaginable for African trans* persons. It is impossible to gauge what degree of this progress in the North has been attributable to (or has been frustrated by) the influence of feminists of the North. Neither is it possible to draw any conclusions about how feminists in Africa might change the prevailing transphobia on that continent. A lot of societal change needs to occur before the International Bill of Gender Rights that began to take shape in 1993 actually reflects global consciousness (Roberts 1996). In the interim, the debates and controversy about nature and nurture, gender and sexuality, bodies and identity, and trans* authenticity and resistance will rage on, as summarized by Anne Fausto-Sterling:

> our debates about the body's biology are always simultaneously moral, ethical, and political debates about social and political equality and the possibilities for change. Nothing less is at stake. (Fausto-Sterling 2000)

This chapter is the start of a more extended conversation linked to research advocacy and activism founded on human rights principles and the importance of respecting the human dignity of all persons. As more feminists, trans* and cisgender persons, and other stakeholders, are motivated to participate in discussions, it can only be hoped that greater clarity, understanding, solidarity and diversity will emerge.

Notes

1. "Trans*" is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender-identity spectrum, which embraces significant diversity. "Trans" (without the asterisk) is applied to transgender men and women, while the asterisk makes special note in an effort to include all non-cis gender identities, including transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, and trans man and trans woman.
2. Transsexuals are persons who strongly identify with the opposite sex and who may seek to live as members of that sex, especially by undergoing surgery and hormone therapy to obtain the necessary physical appearance (as by changing the external sex organs).
3. The general situation of African women is well known and well documented. In many parts of the continent, women remain subordinate to men and are perceived as the property of husbands or fathers. Arranged marriages at very young ages are common, as is GBV, and there are vast inequalities in asset control and in access to quality healthcare, inheritance rights, entitlement to land ownership and use, employment, education and personal opportunities for improving their wellbeing. Female genital cutting remains at high levels in many parts of Africa, and women's participation in democratic decision-making is constrained. Traditional daily routines that to an outsider appear to diminish the value of women and girls remain pervasive, such as male members of families eating first at family meals served by female family members; and economic control and decision-making being dominated by men, including income generated through the labor of women and girls. These conditions, I also have recognized, are changing as educated Africans in urban centers are more aware of gender equality. From my observations, old values and practices persist and, in particular, I am concerned about the lack of sustained effort by African men to act upon principles of gender equality.
4. In 2005 I attended a gathering of South Sudanese state officials and stakeholders in Juba to consider the way forward in building state governance institutions after 20 years of fierce conflict, involving many South Sudanese women in combat and supporting roles. Of the 303 persons present, only three were women, and their

inclusion had been an afterthought because "the donor" was coming (I represented a United States Agency for International Development-funded project).

5. See http://transfeminists.org/ and http://www.iranti-org.co.za/.
6. The countries represented by activists included Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
7. Ironically, the major demand for the services of trans* sex workers comes from men, who despite such transactional sex will still feel inclined to join with society to vilify and condemn trans* persons.
8. "Womyn" is a term used by some feminists to indicate that they are spiritually, socially and physically not in relation to men, and that they have unique experiences from men in their societies. The fact that "wo" in women comes from Greek and Latin meaning "lesser" is also an obvious concern.
9. Many feminists in the North also take issue with transsexuals specifically because of their surgeries and medical transition, given the view of these feminists that gender is not a biological construct.
10. The issue of individualism is a major topic in Africa. It is practically a cultural taboo, in much the same way as diverse sexual expression is. Perhaps Africa's aversion to individualism is almost as powerful a force as is patriarchy, and arguably they are very much intertwined. The comparison with North America is illuminating. North America still has a largely male-dominated culture, but still individualism is highly valued. This situation may go some way toward explaining why diverse sexual expression is more tolerated (if not by constitutional law, at least on a day-to-day level) in North America. In Africa, the combination of a patriarchy + a non-individualistic culture = double jeopardy, affecting people of all colors, creeds, orientations and identities on the continent.

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Erratum to: Bodies in Resistance

Wendy Harcourt

Erratum to:

Chapter 8 in: W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,

DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_8

The title for Chapter 8 has been updated as below:

Transgendered Bodies as Subjects of Feminism. A Conversation and Analysis about the Inclusion of Trans Persons and Politics in the Nicaraguan Feminist Movement: In dialogue with María Teresa Blandón, Geni Gómez, Athiany Larios.

Silke Heumann, Ana V. Portocarrero and Camilo Antillón Najlis

The Author name in TOC has been updated as below:

Betül Yarar

The updated original online version for this chapter can be found at DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_8

© The Author(s) 2017
W. Harcourt (ed.), *Bodies in Resistance*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-47780-4_17

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