

**GLOBAL CURRENTS IN GENDER  
AND FEMINISMS: CANADIAN AND  
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

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# GLOBAL CURRENTS IN GENDER AND FEMINISMS: CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY

**GLENDA TIBE BONIFACIO**

*University of Lethbridge, Canada*



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**Glenda Tibe Bonifacio** is associate professor in women and gender studies at the University of Lethbridge, Canada. She completed her PhD in political science at the University of Wollongong, Australia, and Masters in Asian Studies at the University of the Philippines. Glenda is a research affiliate of the Prentice Institute for Global Population and Economy. Her works include a monograph on *Pinay on the Prairies: Filipino Women and Transnational Identities* (UBC Press 2013); editor of *Gender and Rural Migration: Realities, Conflict and Change* (Routledge 2014) and *Feminism and Migration: Cross-Cultural Engagements* (Springer 2012); co-editor of *Canadian Perspectives on Immigration in Small Cities* (Springer 2017), *Migrant Domestic Workers and Family Life: International Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015), and *Gender, Religion and Migration: Pathways of Integration* (Lexington Books 2010).

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**Barbara A. Morningstar** has a doctorate in education. She has a wealth of experience working as a patient liaison in the area of mental health, and currently works as a spiritual care professional at the McGill University Health Centre. She has over 20 years of experience in community development and has been actively involved in projects related to diversity, feminism, spirituality, women's learning and advocacy. In 2009, she received the Diversity Scholarship from Argosy University for her contribution to the recognition and development of women leaders in local communities. In 2013, she completed her doctoral studies with a specialization in community and pastoral counselling.

**Ebba Olofsson** has a PhD in cultural anthropology from Uppsala University, Sweden. She is teaching anthropology and research writing at Champlain Regional College in Saint-Lambert, and she is an affiliate assistant professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University, Montreal. She also taught courses in 'Inuit Peoples' at the First Peoples Studies Program at Concordia University and 'Indigenous Women of the North' at the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada at McGill University in Montreal. Her research interests relate to issues about identity, health, gender, kinship, subsistence and colonialism, among the Indigenous peoples in Scandinavia and Canada.

**Sigal Oppenheim-Shachar** completed her PhD in gender studies at Bar Ilan University, Israel, in 2012. She is a lecturer and researcher at the Gender Studies Program; the Sociology and Anthropology Department, and the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University, and at Levinsky College of Education. Her work on the topic of adolescent girl's intersectionality and

occupational efficacy, has been published (*Hagar Studies in Culture, Policy and Identities*, 2014; *Woman's Studies International Forum*, 2016), and at Israeli academic journals. Her other interests include feminist pedagogy (gender and education) and pedagogy of intervention processes with some population groups. She initiated the 'Daphna Center' in 2010 — a professional development and training centre established by the Bar-Ilan University Gender Studies Program, and managed the programme up to the end of 2014.

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**Ada L. Sinacore** is an associate professor in the Counselling Psychology Program at McGill University and the Chair of Women's Studies at the McGill Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies. She has over 20 years of experience working in the United States, Canada and other countries, and is internationally recognized for her expertise and extensive presentations and publications in social justice, career development, migration and immigration, gender equity, pedagogy and feminist psychology. She is actively involved in research, scholarship and programme development addressing social justice concerns at the individual, institutional and policy levels and has particular expertise on workplace abuse and violence. She is the co-editor of a book regarding the teaching of social justice within a multicultural and feminist perspective and is highly sought after for her consultation and programme evaluation skills. In 2010, she received the Oliva Espin Award for Social Justice Concerns in Feminist Psychology: Immigration and Gender, from the Association for Women in Psychology. As well, she is a Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association. For a list of her publications, awards, and achievements please go to her website at [www.mcgill.ca/socialjustice](http://www.mcgill.ca/socialjustice).

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**Jocelyn Thorpe** is an associate professor in women's and gender studies, and history at the University of Manitoba. Her research examines the history and legacies of colonialism in Canada, focusing particularly on how ideas about gender, race, nation and nature shape human relationships with one another and with the non-human world. She is the author of *Temagami's Tangled Wild: Race, Gender, and the Making of Canadian Nature* (UBC Press 2012) and co-editor, with Stephanie Rutherford and



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**Michelle Walks** is a queer feminist medical anthropologist and a queer femme Momma. She is a sessional instructor of Anthropology, Sociology, and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies who mainly teaches at Douglas College and the University of British Columbia (Okanagan campus). She completed a postdoctoral fellowship through the University of Ottawa (Nursing), which had her working on an interdisciplinary community-based CIHR-funded project called 'Transmasculine Individuals' Experiences with Pregnancy, Birthing, and Feeding their Newborns: A Qualitative Study'. She guest edited a special issue of *Anthropologica* focused on Queer Anthropology (May 2014), and co-edited the anthology, *An Anthropology of Mothering* (Demeter Press, 2011). She has also written and co-written a variety of chapters and articles on the anthropology of mothering, queer anthropology, and queer/transmasculine reproduction and infant feeding.

**Lauren Wallace** is a medical anthropologist whose current research addresses issues of family planning in Ghana. She is a PhD candidate in anthropology and a Vanier Scholar at McMaster University. Her PhD research examines gender, changing family size, contraceptive use and marriage in northern Ghana. She has also conducted research on women's nutrition in Cambodia and medical ethics in global health. She has published in *Global Health Perspectives*, *Education for Health*, the *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*.

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My blessings are yours.

Glenda Tibe Bonifacio  
*Editor*

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# Introduction

*Glenda Tibe Bonifacio*

## Abstract

This chapter provides the introduction of the book and argues why gender and feminism matter in theory and praxis in the 21st century. It includes the conceptual interrogation of the meaning of gender and feminism and its practice in western and non-western contexts; global currents in feminist struggles; thematic organization of the book; and the future under ‘feminist eyes’. The thread of shared struggles among diverse groups of women based on selected themes — movements, spaces and rights; inclusion, equity and policies; reproductive labour, work and economy; health, culture and violence; and sports and bodies — situates Canada as a western society with avowed egalitarian ideals favouring gender equality and social justice, but with its own issues and concerns like women in other countries facing their own challenges.

*Keywords:* Cross-cultural; Canada; gender; feminist struggles; global; intersectionality

We live in an increasingly connected world, where issues and events in one place often get transmitted in other areas faster than they used to. Modern communication technologies such as the Internet and its social media applications have somehow facilitated the ease of information sharing, albeit some may not be as credible as other sources. One of the most widely shared information, concerns and discourses across various platforms in the 21st century pertains to gender inequalities, particularly about women’s

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rights — the ‘unfinished revolution’ (Worden, 2012) — and transgender rights in both western and non-western societies.

In the age of cyber technology, the status of women around the world tends to claim more friction in popular discourse and inspire movements for change in different scales — local, national and international. The mistreatment of women and girls or gays and lesbians based on cultural practices and religious dogma, for example, has encouraged many individuals and groups to question social regimes, if not, defend existing social orders. Fundamentalism and traditionalist views are not exclusive domains in so-called ‘developing countries’ (usually in reference to the level of economic development) but also find strong adherents in highly modernized countries with the rise of ultra-right political parties and conservative groups. It is quite perceived that the status of women in economically rich countries is relatively a non-issue, and that they do not face the same struggles as women in economically poor countries. Apparently not. Hence, the interconnectedness of women and feminist struggles for equality and social justice need further scholarly attention at this juncture in human history.

This book collection presents a kind of cross-issue dialogue between Canada and other selected countries. Its approach is based on the idea of ‘shared but different’ notions of gender and feminism, and shows the seeming interconnections of women’s lives and realities. Canada is positioned as a western society with egalitarian ideals favouring gender equality and social justice frameworks, but has its own issues and concerns that connect with women in other regions in the world. The centrality of gender and need for feminist praxis remain significant in our societies today, wherever we are located.

There is no special reason why Canada is selected as the western compass to relate gender and feminism in other countries, except my origin as a Filipino now living in Canada fuses multiple positionalities and subjectivities that seemingly questions privilege and marginality as simultaneous shared realities of women around the world. One may live in the West yet experience the same intersecting discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity and other markers of difference like those living in Asia, for example. What is special about living in the West? What do we give up by leaving our own countries? In-between transnational spaces, of here and there, are the subtle and direct connections with struggles of women and girls or marginalized groups around the world. After all, following Virginia Wolf (2012 [1938]), ‘as a woman, I have no country’.

But perhaps there is something special in Canada in 2017 as it emerges as the leader of multilateralism (Campion-Smith, 2017) with the shift in international relations after the US elections. The renewed liberal policy focus affecting women’s lives in Canada and elsewhere by the Trudeau government, especially its support to development programmes empowering women and

girls through education and reproductive health, has plausibly made its mark as the most gender-fair country in North America. The United States under Trump's Republican administration, on the other hand, reversed many progressive works of the previous Obama's Democratic administration (Lipton & Lee, 2017; Trotta, 2017). In June 2017, Canada announced the first Feminist International Assistance Policy making it the leader in promoting gender equality in advancing sustainable development goals (Government of Canada, 2017).

This new official feminist stance in Canada, arguably, justifies the significance of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991) of this book coming from Canada on gender and feminism and in other countries. Original works from Canada and case countries are spread throughout the selected themes on movements, spaces and rights; inclusion, equity and policies; reproductive labour, work and economy; health, culture and violence; and sports and bodies. These themes are broad enough to cover various dimensions on the intersections of gender and feminism, but do not discount the importance of other themes like the environment not included in this set. I can only do so much within the limits of available scholarship at the time of working on this book collection.

As a way of providing context for this book, the following sections comprise this chapter: conceptual interrogation of the meaning of gender and feminism and its practice in western and non-western contexts; global currents in feminist struggles; thematic cases and structure; and the future under 'feminist eyes' (cf. Mohanty, 1984). I purposely designed the book as a representation of ongoing concerns and discourses of gender and feminism between Canada and other countries, allowing each chapters to explore these two concepts, and in the process connect them all to the notion of intersectionality, or the idea that varied identities and factors contribute to the production of social realities (Crenshaw, 2012; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). An intersectional perspective of and between concepts is, arguably, a better way to look at the complexities of life and our world.

As a threshold concept in women and gender studies, intersectionality, according to Launius and Hassel, is:

a theoretical framework that posits that multiple social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status) intersect at the *micro* level of individual experience to reflect multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the *macro*, socio-structural level (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism, compulsory heterosexuality, *heteronormativity*, ableism). (2015, pp. 114–115)

Experience is unique and particular to certain situations and realities, and this is a complex layering of factors that a critical lens like intersectionality provide us more sense of understanding *situated knowledge* (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991), a feminist epistemological consideration that ‘every insight about the world carries traces of the time, place and subject that produced it’ (Brenna, 2005, p. 30). In a way, it is an alternative philosophical posturing of the significance of marginal voices in the production of knowledge. When we consider all voices and vantage points in the realities of individuals, groups and even nations in our midst, and the bases in which their realities are explained give us an interconnected dimension of human existence.

I bring further dimension of intersectionality not only from the micro to macro levels among individuals and groups but also among nations or countries. Canada is a country located in North America with a diverse population and a globalized economy. The situated knowledge of indigenous women, immigrant women, women with disability, for example, in Canada maybe similar or different from those in other places. These particularly situated groups in many countries may share similar structural forms of violence that produce gendered inequalities, but are experienced differently. As well, some countries may have unique impact to other countries based on histories of colonialism and trajectories of economic globalization nowadays that contribute to the creation of situated knowledge of diverse groups. This book, however, does not look for the impact of Canadian state policies to other countries, but endeavours to situate the different realities of gendered lives in Canada and those in selected case countries, and claim that gender and feminism still matter.

## **Constructs: Gender and Feminism**

Gender and feminism are perhaps two of the most defining concepts in human interactions since its inception, challenging social norms and transforming institutions and relationships. It is generally accepted that gender is a social construction (Lorber & Farrell, 1991; Ore, 2014), and how it is constructed differently (Zinn & Dill, 1996) in societies is grounded in particular histories and cultures. Gender as the organizing principle (Belkhir & Charlemaine, 2007) in society attached roles, values, attributes and functions of hierarchies or domination primarily based on sexual difference between men and women. As a consequence, women and men are positioned differently with corresponding differential access to power, resources and privileges in organizations and institutions (Akhter, 2014; Hultin & Szulkin, 2003), producing inequalities in social relations and practices.



In regular summer visits to the Philippines in the last seven years mainly for research and training, gender is a tool for mainstreaming policies, practices and activities. There is a GAD (Gender and Development) focal person in almost all offices that attended my lectures and workshops. Philippines is the only Asian country that consistently belongs to the top 10 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index measured in four areas — education, health and survival, economic participation, political empowerment — by the World Economic Forum (WEF). In 2016, Philippines scored 0.786 or ranked 7th out of 144 countries while Canada ranked 35th with 0.729; score of 1 means gender equality and 0 for inequality (WEF, 2016). But there is more to the numbers game. A high rank does not mean gender-equal relations in both policy and practice. For instance, the Philippines is the only country outside of the Vatican that does not grant divorce (Hundley & Santos, 2015). The family gets constitutional protection (Lazo, 2006), civil laws prescribe heterosexual marriage and its sanctified origins become a dictum of marital life (Serrano Cornelio, 2016). Substantive gender equality and enforcement of gender-sensitive policies have yet to be fully realized amidst high economic disparities and socio-political grip of the Catholic Church. The complexities of understanding gender relations and gender equality in different cultural contexts remind us that global measurements are not actual representations of realities.

In the 21st century, gender is not simply about women and men and its deriving identities as gays, lesbians and homosexuals; it has expanded in scope to include transgenders and the intersexed in mainstream discourses (Stein, 2011; Wahlert & Fiester, 2012). According to Rubin (2012), the ‘category of intersex was integral to the historical emergence of the category *gender* as distinct from *sex* in the mid-twentieth-century’ (pp. 883–884). At this time in our history, the knowledge base and full recognition of them as equals in all aspects of human endeavour remain contested even in most advanced liberal-democratic states. It is fair to assume that our social mindsets have been conditioned, for example, by religion and antiquated interpretations of laws that ingrained binaries: man and woman.

Gender is relational (Baron & Kotthoff, 2001; Bleichmar, 2008; Connell, 2012), and if women become much the focus of this book, it is based on their marginal position relative to men. Having gender as a focus does not require a comparative view of men from their position of privilege. Rather, the perspectives of women and non-conforming gender identified individuals become a critique of patriarchal norms and values that benefited men for ages. The relationships between men and women, notions of masculinity and femininity, and assignment of roles based on sexual difference are some indices of the relationality of gender. Considering the gamut of power and privilege of men in society in general, it is sufficient that we continue to cultivate scholarship coming from the disadvantaged position — then we

can see much of the complex web of systems and practices defining the world we live in.

Feminism is a concept that invites varied interpretations and frameworks that to this day there is no universally accepted definition (Thompson, 2001). Rather, we now call it *feminisms* (Bromley, 2012; Humm, 1992). At its core, feminism is about the removal of oppressive social structures and practices that deny the full potential of women, transgender persons and other marginalized groups in society. Feminism is both a theory and praxis that allows for particularistic explanations of gender inequalities and the approach to change them. Because women's concerns are diverse, for example, so does feminism. For the equal participation in the public spheres of work, education, and politics, there is *liberal feminism* with the 'presumption of sameness between men and women' (Beasley, 1999, p. 52); for the fundamental change in social relations where patriarchy is the root of gender inequalities, there is *radical feminism* (Rhodes, 2005); for the class exploitation of women as workers under capitalism, there is *Marxist feminism* (Weeks, 2011); for the oppression of women of colour, there is *multiracial feminism* which views 'race as a basic social division, a structure of power, a focus of political struggle' (Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 71); for the colonial vestiges of domination and representation, there is *postcolonial feminism* (Lewis & Mills, 2003). And, many more labels to theorize about women's oppression and how to achieve gender justice or social change (Bromley, 2012; Gangoli, 2007; Humm, 1992; Mandell & Johnson, 2017; Zack, 2005).

But gender and feminism appear to have its own silos and are not seen as constitutive of one another. Discussion on gender is great; discussion on feminism is great(er?), too. Why these two concepts are then not acted upon together, even those that embrace GAD as state policy like the Philippines? When gender is said to be mainstreamed, does it mean that feminism is recognized as a theory of action to make those gender-equal claims possible? To gain understanding of gender is to bring insight into gender inequalities and finding ways to change them. Ambiguities and contestations seem to be the norm, and that even critical scholars on gender in different countries will shun the use of *feminism* as a western concept (Roces & Edwards, 2010) riddled with hegemonic assumptions about women in society, and a western export of colonialism.

Word appropriation based on specific contexts is logical. Words such as 'humanism' (Haney, 2014; Johnson, 1994) or 'womanism' (Floyd-Thomas, 2006) may rid feminism of its baggage and the conundrum of its use by different groups of women. These words may mean the same, and one could be used to reflect on the other without inferring negative representations. If understanding gender and the inequalities in society is fundamentally a product of social constructions of natural sexual difference, then it follows that a feminist process is likely to affect needed change. Why is this

not so? The general state of affairs is the study of gender and its role and impact in systems of social relationships, progress and development, to which gender-sensitive laws and policies are formulated. Feminism is silenced; it finds its use sidelined by other selectively unpolitical terminologies of the day. Gender appears to be a front matter; feminism a subversive idea. While most countries under the purview of the United Nations lean towards a positive regard of gender mainstreaming, feminisms still must gain a wider ground.

## Global Currents in Feminist Struggles

Gender inequality often refers to women ‘disadvantaged relative to similarly situated men’ and occurs in ‘different forms, depending on the economic structure and social organization of a particular society’ (Lorber, 2010, p. 4). Gender inequalities and resulting oppression of marginalized groups or communities around the world are causes of action for change. I prefer to use the phrase *feminist struggles* to underscore the critical process of raising consciousness, strategizing actions, solidarity, and building a movement for change towards social justice. In the 21st century, the patterns of feminist struggles are more inclusive of other issues, what I call integrative models of action — economic, political, environmental, etc. — that may start at the centre of women’s oppression. In other words, feminist struggles deal with interlocking gender issues that finding a resolution for change require concerted intersectional actions. This find truism in *Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the United Nations new global development agenda adopted in 2015 which advocates gender equality as the key to all indicators of human progress (UNESCO, 2016). In this section, five areas of global currents in feminist struggles are highlighted: health and well-being, universal education, economic participation, political empowerment and environmental protection.

Health and well-being are central to feminist struggles around the world. The major thrust is access to information and free or affordable services, particularly related to sexual and reproductive health. ‘Women’s rights are human rights’ (Peters & Wolper, 1995), and this universal phrase includes the right to safe and legal abortion that remain contentious. Women and girls face higher levels of health risks because of discrimination (WHO, 2011), poverty and illiteracy. Control of female bodies in many parts of the world come under state regulation, with punitive outcomes for abortion. Unequal access to basic health services because of class, sexuality and origin is one of the factors that contributes to higher mortality rates. Since the 1960s feminist health activists have raised concerns over the harmful effects

of contraceptive drugs, reproductive control, lack of transparency and impact to women of colour (Nelson, 2015; Prescott, 2017). More importantly, gender-based violence is a 'global health epidemic' (WHO, 2013). But health care funding from international development assistance to poor countries depends on the political pendulum that results in discontinuance of effective community health programmes. In many cases, transnational feminism aligns with issues outside national borders, connecting local resources for global action to improve the status of women and girls (Ferree & Tripp, 2006).

Education connects with everything in feminist struggles worldwide — health, economy, politics, etc. It is the key component that forges action, critical awareness and understanding of gender inequalities. Sadly, more girls are out of school than boys, and face far more barriers to continue higher education (UNESCO, 2016). Education for all is a dream to aspire for by governments, yet not accorded utmost national priority based on budgetary allocations (Brown, 2015). Liberal feminism targets the equal participation of women and girls in education, and this is still the focus of many organizations, both national and supranational (Arnot & Weiler, 1993). The Global Partnership for Education (GPE, 2015) identifies leading women advocates, young and mature, for girls' education around the world. When a girl child is educated, the investment transcends beyond the personal to ultimately see its benefits in the community.

Economic participation draws much debate as to what is included in women's work. Feminist struggles point to the unpaid and paid work borne by women, and these remain largely undervalued compared to men. The structuring of economies and equivalent measurements of productivity place that of women at lower scales, if not invisible (Waring, 1999). As half of the world labour force yet having only 10% of income and owning 1% of property, women's economic value is intrinsically connected with patriarchal norms and discrimination (Rutherford, 2011; Singh, 2013). Economic globalization brings unequal distribution and access to resources; the exploitation of human capital many of which borne by female bodies incites varied forms of transnational feminist activism (Hawkesworth, 2006; Rai & Waylen, 2014). The feminization of labour (Lee, 2010) also contributes to the feminization of poverty, and racialized immigrant women in Canada form part of the global picture (Wallis & Kwok, 2008).

Political empowerment of women continues to make significant inroads. The right to vote has far reaching benefits in creating gender-fair laws and policies, with differing levels of enjoyment of rights and freedoms. A considerable high voting turnout among women does not, however, indicate a 'women's vote' (Adams, 2014; Hess, 2016). Or, the election of high-profile women does not translate to progressive stance on gender issues. Formal politics and its institutions such as elections and governance remain a male-dominated sphere (Bjarnegård, 2015), whereas informal politics such as

community organizing attracts more women (Lister, 2003). In the 21st century, women's voices are gaining momentum with local, national and transnational solidarity on common issues such as war, violence and changing oppressive laws and practices to be more inclusive and just to women. As it happens, political empowerment is a precondition for achieving social justice amidst all forms of gender inequalities worldwide.

The environment is perhaps the most cause of concern in the 21st century with the call that 'climate change affects everyone' (Fossvik, 2016). The Women's Environmental Network (WEN) whose stated aims are based on feminist principles hosted its first forum at the London School of Economics in 2017 (Lawrence, 2017). For a long time, however, women around the world have shown persistent action to protect the environment. Indigenous communities and local groups, many led by women like Vandana Shiva (Rogers, 2010; Shiva, 2005), are at the forefronts of resistance against environmental destruction from capitalist development: preservation not profit. Ecofeminism connects with ecology and the oppression of women in society where patriarchal domination resonates in the control of the environment (Lee, 2010). But world leaders are still not united in the global consensus proposal, for example, the *Earth Charter* drafted since the 1990s, for a sustainable environment (Wagner, 2008). Even more concerning is the trend towards securing national economic interests at the expense of the environment, as if the air we breathe can be controlled to linger in defined spaces. We see inter-generational bonds in promoting environmental justice from various groups, especially those directly facing peril because of corporate and state neglect or inaction — for example, rising tide levels, oil spills, disrupted food supply, and natural disasters. Climate change has adverse gendered impacts that foster further vulnerability to women's access to livelihood and everyone's survival.

These global currents in feminist struggles demonstrate that *feminism is for everybody* (hooks, 2000), and that working for a better world to live in today and in the future mandates that, according to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015), 'we should all be feminists'.

## Thematic Cases and Structure

This book collection presents 19 diverse original works from interdisciplinary scholars on the selected themes of movement, spaces and rights (Part One); inclusion, equity and policies (Part Two); reproductive labour, work and economy (Part Three); health, culture and violence (Part Four); and sports and bodies (Part Five). These contributions use an intersectional lens to reflect on the state of affairs in gender studies and feminism in Canada and in other parts of the world. A global synthesis is presented for

each of the five themes, providing observations to general trends and prospects for change.

Movements, spaces and rights outline the negotiations for equality in contested spaces — from the institutional to the local and global relations. Fusing theory and activism, this theme captures the creative ways of resisting dominance and forging ways to make a difference individually and collectively. Inclusion, equity and policies present the intersections between structures and lived realities. Gendered inequalities are reproduced by policies and legislation, and changing these frameworks could foster better gender-equal relations. Reproductive labour, work and economy demonstrate women's paid and unpaid labour and how their work is largely unrecognized, compensated when unemployed and protected by endemic sexism. Economic globalization and neoliberal affronts on social welfare pose further challenges to a diverse and gendered labour force. Health, culture and violence provide intersecting dimensions of gendered lives, and that the meanings attached to choices are intricately connected to power and access to resources. Sports and bodies reflect on the significance of bodies in representations of masculinity and femininity, and how identities are constructed and experienced relative to them.

In *Part I*, three chapters demonstrate the diverse engagements for empowerment, creative activism, local–global intersections, and theorizing about marginality in institutional religion as sample cases under the theme of movements, spaces and right. *Chapter 1* by Sonja Boon and Beth Pentney reflect on yarn-bombing as craftivism to reveal feminist spaces of learning and doing that give emphasis on collaboration, non-violence and critical self-reflection among undergraduate students working with a community project in Canada. Knitting is not only a form of craft but could also be an ‘overtly political activity’ depending on its intentions. Following [Baumgardner and Richards \(2000\)](#), the authors weave a discourse that knitting is in itself a form of resistance. *Chapter 2* by Marlise Matos and Solange Simões looks at the emergence of intersectional activist feminism in Brazil since the 1970s. The evolution and transformation of gender and feminism in this part of Latin America resulted in a unique application of the so-called feminist ‘wave’ developments to counter social and political currents in different decades: fighting the military regime in the 1970s, transition to democracy in the 1980s, democratization in the 1990s, and the ongoing process of institutionalization and policymaking. *Chapter 3* by Christine Gervais and Amanda Watson examines the experiences of the women religious in Canada that includes their unique accounts of marginalization within a renewed patriarchal commitment to gendered hierarchies in the Roman Catholic Church. Their discussion of the seeming regression of gender equality of a global religious institution in the 21st century provides implications for local women. Using critical feminism that seeks to ‘decentre and decolonize existing

hierarchies of power', this chapter situates the experiences of the women religious at the intersection of colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism.

In *Part Two*, four chapters deal with inclusion, equity and policies in international contexts. *Chapter 4* by Jill Allison examines the intersections of birthright, citizenship and gender in Nepal, and who are included or excluded in its construction of cultural and national identity based on caste, religion and ethnicity. While the country seeks political change in drafting a constitution it is embroiled in a complicated discourse shaped by particulars in history that make certain women's reproductive labour part of its national construct and exclude others. Feminists challenge the private–public dichotomy as women are 'co-opted as part of state projects' that are simultaneously viewed as 'asset and threat' in the fluidity of regional borders or social boundaries. *Chapter 5* by Ebba Olofsson focuses on gender inequality in Swedish legislation of Sámi reindeer herding amidst changing conditions, one of which is the employment of Sámi women that contributes to the continuation and transformation of subsistence practices. Also using the public–private split and the feminist interventions on understanding women's role in indigenous communities, this chapter examines the changes between gender and kinship structures under colonization and modernity together with women's Sámi identity. *Chapter 6* by Aylin Akpınar outlines the importance of woman-friendly policies in Turkey especially for low-income Turkish divorcees. Seeking a divorce is an escape from abusive marriages, but their new status as divorcees make them more vulnerable in a society that constructs it as 'shame' and where women form part of the family, not as individuals, in Turkish law. This is further exacerbated by an Islamic patriarchal imagery of women as 'guardians of morality'; divorcees are socially unacceptable with less access to resources and protection. Akpınar argues that the woman-friendly policies are needed to give these groups of women the capabilities to live in dignity. *Chapter 7* by Panteá Farvid advocates for primary prevention strategies in education and media literacy to address gender inequality in New Zealand. She posits the view that for feminist policies to gain hold, the sexist gender system and problematic versions of dominant masculinity should be the focus of policy interventions especially in introducing gender equality education throughout the school years.

In *Part Three*, five chapters revolve around the theme of reproductive labour, work and the economy. *Chapter 8* by Lisa Pasolli explores child care and feminism in Canada, starting from the 1980s to the present. She outlines the changes in child care advocacy with the disappearance of women in neoliberal discourse, and makes the case for intersectional feminism to allow women more choices, opportunities and rights. *Chapter 9* by Catherine Bryan draws from a multi-sited research to reveal the intersections of reproductive labour with the service economy involving Filipino migrant workers in Manitoba, Canada. She discusses feminist political

economy and social reproduction under globalization with critical insights into labour processes and migration trajectories. *Chapter 10* by Ada L. Sinacore and Barbara A. Morningstar analyses sexual harassment in the Canadian workplace through a feminist social constructionist framework. It includes the effect of systemic variables that silence abuse among female workers and leave perpetrators often unsanctioned. A review of policies related to sexual harassment as well as the analysis of organizational responses on reported cases suggest that the workplace environment perpetuates sexism. *Chapter 11* by Asanda Benya demonstrates the continued representation of masculinity of mining work in South Africa resulting in practices that hinder women's inclusion despite legislative changes in the 1990s. Gender still matters as hegemonic masculinity becomes normalized in mine culture and women's fate are sealed with less key stakeholder positions, design of protective equipment and violence underground. *Chapter 12* by Michelle Walks examines the link between femininity and pregnancy among trans and genderqueer individuals in British Columbia, Canada. Walks approaches this chapter using Butler's *performativity* and Halberstam's *female masculinity* and *queer art* as failure among masculine-identified persons experiencing pregnancy.

In *Part Four*, four chapters reflect on the theme of health, culture and violence. *Chapter 13* by Lauren Wallace looks at the reasons why Kassena women in Ghana do not use contraceptives. Their concerns of contraceptive side effects are grounded in practicality that impact family planning. Feminist perspectives on reproduction situate fertility in broader context, but public health practice still 'adopt a narrow lens'. *Chapter 14* by Miki Suzuki Him problematizes fertility decline without women's empowerment in Turkey. It closely reveals the role of men in having smaller families as wage-earners that still indicate men's control over women's bodies. This chapter argues that promoting family planning without women's reproductive rights results in patriarchal control and regulation. Hence, enabling women to assert and control their reproductive capacity could lead to gender equity in relationships. *Chapter 15* by Premalatha Karupiah and Parthiban S. Gopal explores intimate partner violence among poor Malaysian Indian women in Penang. The intersections of gender, violence and poverty reflect embedded patriarchal values in family relationships, particularly hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. *Chapter 16* by Sigal Oppenheim-Shachar presents a unique study of becoming a 'real man' through a pick-up company and feminism in Israel. It presents the hegemonic masculinity and aggressive seduction techniques employed in course workshops to enhance male dominance in intimate relationships. However, when a modified version is introduced to explore other models of masculinity consistent with feminist perspectives, it failed to attract participants.



It concludes with a positive tone that this modified version facilitated a new 'recognition and sense of worthiness' among male participants.

In *Part Five*, three chapters present the intersections of gender and feminism in sports and construction of female bodies. *Chapter 17* by Carly Adams and Jason Laurendeau provides a feminist poststructuralist discussion on the gains of women in Canadian sports yet continues to be invisible. Using different historical moments with women's narratives, it considers Gordon's 'writing a history of the present' to recognize the 'ghostly (dis)appearances' of women in selected sports. *Chapter 18* by Ornit Ramati Dvir and Orly Benjamin deals with physical education (PE) and teachers' discourse about girl bodies. It exposes the negotiations of PE teachers in the positive or negative views about body shapes and forms of body disciplines among girl students in Israel. *Chapter 19* by Jocelyn Thorpe is a personal account of the meaning of basketball throughout her life as inspired by the writings of Audre Lorde. Basketball becomes a metaphor of the game of life, of the changes we go through to live the process and its effects. It reflects the importance of personal narrative in feminist theory building, especially when the theory itself is about 'creating a different kind of world'.

These thematic cases provide certain depth into the discourse of gender and feminism, with many chapters having overlapping themes that reveal multiple dimensions of issues and concerns affecting gender inequalities and change towards social justice. What these indicate, however, is that gender and feminism are inherently intersectional (La Barbera, 2012; Ngan-ling Chow, Segal, & Tan, 2011; Orr, Braithwaite, & Lichtenstein, 2012). A comprehensive understanding of social inequalities requires gender to be seen in relation with other factors, identities and other aspects creating such realities in given contexts. In postmodern scholarship, feminist claims to truth are subject for consideration and validity.

## Future under Feminist Eyes

Currents suggest flows and actions towards a certain direction. In different parts of the world, these currents in gender and feminism are visible and oftentimes lack media and scholarly attention. This book offers a timely resource about gender and feminism in western and non-western contexts. It seeks continuity of understanding the intersectionality of gender and feminist struggles for empowerment. While the backlash continues, this book situates the ways in which feminism is still relevant today and is a necessary engagement for everybody.

Mohanty (1984) examines the hegemonic representation of 'Third world women under western eyes' that denies solidarity among women based on

their differences. Following on this approach with a shift, I use ‘feminist eyes’ to advance a vision of action of the future for all groups of women in whatever language of discourse and however culture-specific this maybe. Individually or collectively, our embodied gendered lives connect us to particular courses of feminist action and direct us to find best options to change or avert oppressive situations. There is no need to push for one voice, one model and one dream for all women; rather, we give recognition to the many ways in which the particularly situated knowledge of gender issues meet feminist action. In doing so, we create simultaneous currents of feminist activism around the world — whether we like it or not.

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