

**PRODUCING INCLUSIVE FEMINIST
KNOWLEDGE**

ADVANCES IN GENDER RESEARCH

Series Editors: Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos

Recent Volumes:

- Volume 14: Interactions and Intersections of Gendered Bodies at Work, at Home, and at Play – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal, 2010
- Volume 15: Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global, Transnational and Local Contexts – Edited by Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Marcia Texler Segal and Lin Tan, 2011
- Volume 16: Social Production and Reproduction at the Interface of Public and Private Spheres – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal, Esther Ngan-Ling Chow and Vasilikie Demos, 2012
- Volume 17: Notions of Family: Intersectional Perspectives – Edited by Marla H. Kohlman, Dana B. Krieg and Bette J. Dickerson, 2013
- Volume 18 A: Gendered Perspectives on Conflict and Violence: Part A—Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2013
- Volume 18 B: Gendered Perspectives on Conflict and Violence: Part B – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2014
- Volume 19: Gender Transformation in the Academy – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2014
- Volume 20: At the Center: Feminism, Social Science and Knowledge – Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 2015
- Volume 21: Gender and Race Matter: Global Perspectives on Being a Woman – Edited by Shaminder Takhar, 2016
- Volume 22: Gender and Food: From Production to Consumption and After – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2016
- Volume 23: Discourses of Gender and sexual inequality: The Legacy of Sanra L. Bem – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2016
- Volume 24: Gender Panic, Gender Policy – Edited By Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal
- Volume 25: Marginalized Mothers, Mothering from the Margins – Edited by: Tiffany L. Taylor and Katrina R. Bloch
- Volume 26: Gender and the Media: Women's Places – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos
- Volume 27: Gender and Practice: Insights from the Field – Edited by Vasilikie Demos, Marcia Texler Segal, and Kristy Kelly
- Volume 28: Gender and Practice: Knowledge, Policy, Organizations – Edited by Vasilikie Demos, Marcia Texler Segal, and Kristy Kelly
- Volume 29: Advances in Women's Empowerment: Critical Insight from Asia, Africa and Latin America – Edited by Araceli Ortega Diaz and Marta Barbara Ochman
- Volume 30: Gender and Generations: Continuity and Change – Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Miriam Adelman
Universidade do Paraná
Brazil

Chika Shinohara
Momoyama Gakuin University
(St Andrew's University), Japan

Franca Bimbi
University of Padua
Italy

Shaminder Takhar
London South Bank University
UK

Max Greenberg
Boston University
USA

Tiffany Taylor
Kent State University
USA

Marla Kohlman
Kenyon College
USA

This page intentionally left blank

ADVANCES IN GENDER RESEARCH VOLUME 31

**PRODUCING INCLUSIVE
FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE:
POSITIONALITIES AND
DISCOURSES IN THE
GLOBAL SOUTH**

EDITED BY

AKOSUA ADOMAKO AMPOFO

University of Ghana, Ghana

AND

JOSEPHINE BEOKU-BETTS

Florida Atlantic University, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

Copyright © 2021 Emerald Publishing Limited

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80071-171-6 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-170-9 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-172-3 (Epub)

ISSN: 1529-2126 (Series)



ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

<i>About the Contributors</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Series Editors' Preface</i>	xv
<i>Editor Preface</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi

Introduction: Positioning Feminist Voices in the Global South <i>Josephine Beoku-Betts and Akosua Adomako Ampofo</i>	1
--	---

PART 1 PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINISMS AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Chapter 1 Knowledge Hierarchies and Feminist Dilemmas: Contexts, Assemblages, Voices, and Silences <i>Bandana Purkayastha</i>	23
Chapter 2 African Feminist and Gender Scholarship: Contemporary Standpoints and Sites of Activism <i>Josephine Beoku-Betts</i>	43
Chapter 3 Dalit and Autonomous Feminisms in India <i>Manisha Desai</i>	65
Chapter 4 What Does Feminism Mean to You? Are You a Feminist? Brazilian Activists' Definitions and Praxis of Emancipatory Intersectional Feminism <i>Solange Simões</i>	79
Chapter 5 Recent Changes in Indigenous Feminist Agenda in Latin America <i>Marlise Matos and Avelin Buniacá Kambiwa</i>	103

PART 2
YOUNG FEMINISTS AND DIGITAL APPROACHES
TO SCHOLARSHIP AND ACTIVISM

- Chapter 6** *Beh Tou Cheh? (What's It to You?): Feminist Challenges in Iranian Social Media*
Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi 125
- Chapter 7** *Digital Activism Ghanaian Feminist Style*
Akosua K. Darkwah 147
- Chapter 8** *Are We There Yet? Contemporary Struggles for Gender Justice and the Legacy of Caribbean Feminisms*
Sue Ann Barratt 167

PART 3
FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN
APPLIED CONTEXTS

- Chapter 9** *"I Can Weep But Not Wail": Contemporary Young African Masculinities*
Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Akosua-Asamoabea Ampofo 185
- Chapter 10** *Working Toward Global Feminist Knowledges and Practices*
Marcia Texler Segal 211
- Chapter 11** *Exploring the Quagmire of Violence Against Women: Feminist Scholarship and Activism in Southern Africa*
Mary Johnson Osirim 229
- Index* 249

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Akosua Adomako Ampofo is a Professor of African and Gender Studies at the Institute of African Studies, and the President of the African Studies Association of Africa. Her research interests include African knowledge systems, identity politics; gender relations; masculinities; and popular culture. In 2010, she was awarded the Feminist Activism Award by Sociologists for Women and Society. She is a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Akosua-Asamoabea Ampofo received her bachelor's degree from Bryn Mawr College where she majored in Film. At Bryn Mawr College, she also worked for the Office of Communications, taking videos and pictures to highlight school pride. In 2018, she was awarded a prize for her short documentary, *Living Legends*, at the Trico-Film Festival. She currently works as an independent researcher and film maker and with an advertising agency in Accra, Ghana.

Sue Ann Barratt is a Lecturer at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. She is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, holding a BA in Media and Communication Studies with Political Science, MA Communication Studies, and PhD in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies. Her research areas are interpersonal interaction, human communication conflict, social media use and its implications, gender and ethnic identities, mental health and gender-based violence, and Carnival and cultural studies. She is dedicated to gender awareness and sensitivity training through face-to-face sessions and mass media outreach.

Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi is Associate Professor for the Study of Modern Iran in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo, Norway. Her research focuses on discourses of sexuality, government morality, and women's activism in the contemporary Middle East, with a particular focus on Iran.

Josephine Beoku-Betts is Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Sociology at Florida Atlantic University. Her research focuses on women's political activism in Post-War Sierra Leone and African women in academic scientific careers. She is President of Sociologists for Women in Society and former Co-President for Research Committee 32 of the International Sociological Association. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Sierra Leone (2018–2019). She is the recipient of several awards, including the Florida Commission on the Status of Women: Florida Achievement Award.

Akosua K. Darkwah is Associate Professor of Sociology and Head, Department of Sociology at the University of Ghana. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on the ways in which global economic policies and practices reconfigure women's work. As part of the Migrating out of Poverty Research Consortium she explores the gendered ways in which households are reconfigured as a result of migration. Her work has been published in *Ghana Studies*, *Women's Studies International Forum* and the *International Development Planning Review*.

Manisha Desai is Head of Sociology Department and Professor of Sociology and Asian and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut. Her areas of research and teaching include, transnational feminisms, gender and globalization, and contemporary Indian society. She's the author of two books and editor/co-editor of three others and recipient of national awards for her research, teaching, and mentoring.

Avelin Buniacá Kambiwá is a Brazilian indigenous woman of the Kambiwá ethnic group and a Sociologist and Speaker on the themes of indigenous and women's rights. She is the Founder of the Minas Gerais Committee to support indigenous causes.

Marlise Matos is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology (UFMG) and a Master's degree in Psychoanalytical Theory from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and received her PhD in Sociology from the University Institute of Research from Rio de Janeiro. She directs NEPEM, the Center for Studies and Research on Women (UFMG). Her main research and publication interests include gender and politics, feminist critical theory, identity politics, gender and public policy, sexual and reproductive rights, women, democracy, and citizenship. She is the Co-president elected of RC 32 "Gender and Society" from International Sociological Association (2020–2021), Member of Sociologists for Women in Society Organization as Latin America Coordinator on SWS Global Feminist Partnership, and Research member from WIEGO – Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. She held a Fulbright Chair of Brazilian Studies at UMass-Amherst during 2019 Fall Term. In Brazil, she was twice a member of Civil Society Advisory Board from UN Women in Brazil, and is Coordinator of the Thematic Area "Gender, Democracy and Public Polies" from Brazilian Political Science Association.

Mary Johnson Osirim is Provost and Professor of Sociology at Bryn Mawr College, USA. Her research focuses on women and entrepreneurship in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, African gender studies, and African immigrants in the United States. She is the author of *Enterprising Women in Urban Zimbabwe: Gender, Microbusiness and Globalization* and Co-editor of *Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities, Old and New* and many articles. She received the Distinguished Feminist Lecturer Award from SWS in 2017.

Bandana Purkayastha is Professor of Sociology and Asian American Studies, University of Connecticut, USA. She has over 75 publications on migration, transnationalism, violence and peace, and human rights. She has received many local, national, and international honors and awards, including the Jessie Bernard award from American Sociological Association.

Solange Simões is a Professor of Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies at Eastern Michigan University. She has a PhD in Sociology from the London School of Economics and was a Professor of Sociology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Her areas of research and publications include gender and globalization, political participation, and public policy; racial identity; class structure; environmental values and attitudes; and cross-national survey methodology.

Marcia Texler Segal is Professor of Sociology and Dean for Research Emerita, Indiana University Southeast, USA. She is Series Co-editor of *Advances in Gender Research and Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class: Readings for a Changing Landscape* and Past President of North Central Sociological Association. Her professional experience includes assignments in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Akosua Adomako Ampofo</i>	University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
<i>Akosua-Asamoabea Ampofo</i>	Independent Researcher, Accra, Ghana
<i>Sue Ann Barratt</i>	University of the West Indies, Jamaica
<i>Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi</i>	University of Oslo, Norway
<i>Josephine Beoku-Betts</i>	Florida Atlantic University, USA
<i>Akosua K. Darkwah</i>	University of Ghana, Ghana
<i>Manisha Desai</i>	University of Connecticut, USA
<i>Avelin Buniacá Kambiwá</i>	Minas Gerais Committee, Brazil
<i>Marlise Matos</i>	Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil
<i>Mary Johnson Osirim</i>	Bryn Mawr College, USA
<i>Bandana Purkayastha</i>	University of Connecticut, USA
<i>Solange Simões</i>	Eastern Michigan University, USA
<i>Marcia Texler Segal</i>	Indiana University Southeast, USA

This page intentionally left blank

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal

As editors of the Advances in Gender Research series we are pleased to include *Producing Inclusive Feminist Knowledge: Positionalities and Discourses in the Global South*, edited by Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Josephine Beoku-Betts in the series. The idea for this volume grew out of the desire to develop a genuine global feminist scholarship that acknowledges power imbalances, does not oversimplify, recolonize or stereotype, and that incorporates counterdiscourses as well as dominant ones. Discussion for a volume like this one began at the 2016 International Sociological Association (ISA) Forum held in Vienna and continued through the years to the ISA World Congress of Sociology held in Toronto in 2018 and beyond. While a series co-editor (Segal) is one of the contributors and the guest editors are well-known to us, there are new voices here and colleagues we know offer new data and themes. The volume demonstrates the progress in the development of feminist knowledge that has been made since our 2001 volume, (Demos & Segal) *An International Feminist Challenge to Theory*, and how much more there is to accomplish.

Adomako Ampofo and Beoku-Betts have developed a volume based on rigorous scholarly examination and energized by activist commitment and in the process have presented a liberated feminism. Contributing authors identify problems in much existing work beginning with that of terminology and the dual concepts of polar South versus polar North. They use these terms, though they point to issues these concepts raise including the fact that their geographical meaning does not entirely coincide with actual power imbalances. Associated with this issue is the power imbalance represented by feminists of the global North theorizing about global South realities noting that key issues such as the importance of land distribution and use and the role of the state may be missed because they are largely absent from Northern paradigms. They also warn about simplifying the legacy of colonialism and focusing on such practices as Sati, thereby digressing, as well as engaging in voyeuristic attention to the bodies of African women.

Contributing authors use and argue for a variety of methodologies – both qualitative and quantitative – in producing feminist knowledge. These include surveys and interviews and critical content analysis as well historical structural analysis and critical review of literature. The importance of cyber analysis and the examination of social media messages is highlighted.

REFERENCE

Demos, V., & Segal, M. T. (Eds.). (2001). *An international feminist challenge to theory*. Amsterdam: JAI.

This page intentionally left blank

EDITOR PREFACE

Josephine Beoku-Betts and Akosua Adomako Ampofo

This book is in many ways a culmination of the intersection of our personal and professional journeys as Black, African feminist scholars – one of us located in the global South and the other in the global North. Our conversations began in 1994, when we first met at a training workshop on Qualitative Research Methods at the University of Georgia, where Josephine was on the faculty in Sociology and Women’s studies. At the time, Akosua was a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Ghana, and a Ph.D. student in Sociology at Vanderbilt University. Although our professional journeys were dissimilar in some ways (location and trajectory), we found shared points of connection through conversations about our personal and political journeys with feminist scholarship, our relationships with students and the curricular, and our experiences in the academy. Over the years these discussions developed into writing projects, co-authored publications, and co-leadership professional roles.

More specifically, this volume emerged out of two conferences of the International Sociological Association (ISA) held in 2016 (Vienna) and 2018 (Toronto), and has also been shaped by multiple shared opportunities for additional scholarship and reflection since then, including many other feminist gatherings. Around 2004, Margaret Abraham and Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, then co-presidents of the ISA’s Research Committee on Women, Gender and Society (RC32)¹ and both feminist colleagues with whom we had worked closely within Sociologists for Women and Society (SWS), encouraged us to join RC32. They subsequently also encouraged us to run as co-presidents of RC32, which we did successfully in 2012, beginning our term in 2014. One of the most important reasons why we responded to this call to leadership was to further highlight the work of feminist scholars from the global South. Our goal as co-presidents of RC32 was to increase the presence and participation of women and men from Africa specifically, and the global South² more generally.³

During the 2016 ISA Forum held in Vienna and the 2018 World Congress of Sociology held in Toronto, we organized two sessions to discuss feminist epistemology issues in the global South, which eventually went through a long and exhausting labor to give birth to this book. The 2016 session, entitled “Knowledge Production: Feminist Perspectives in the 21st Century,” included Akosua K. Darkwah, Bandana Purkayastha, and Marcia Texler Segal, all of whom have chapters in this volume, as well as presentations by Margaret Abraham and Evangelia Tastsoglou, and Consuelo Corradi and Maria Carmela Agodi. The 2018 session, entitled “Producing Inclusive Feminist Knowledge: Voices from the Global South,” included Manisha Desai, Sue Ann Barratt, Solange Simões, Marlise Matos, and Josephine Beoku-Betts, all of whom have chapters in this

volume. Akosua was the discussant for both sessions, as well as a speaker for the Closing Plenary Session of the 2016 Forum, where her presentation was titled, “Black Lives Matter and the Status of the Africana World.”⁴ At that same Forum, Rhoda Reddock, herself a former president of the RC32, was our selected invited speaker for a common session, where she spoke on “Sociology, Feminisms and the Global South: Back to the Future.”⁵

In 2016, Josephine was invited as a keynote speaker to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA)⁶ at the University of Ghana, where she spoke on the topic “Ghanaian Women Scientists: Innovators and Knowledge Producers for the Nation State.” In 2017, she was an invited panelist at a session organized by the ISA and Criminologists without Borders on “Women’s Empowerment, Sustainable Development, and Strategies to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls: Sociological Contributions” at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women NGO Forum in New York. As part of our goal to bring Southern feminist voices to global feminist dialogues in the academy, we initiated the idea for a workshop on publishing in peer reviewed feminist journals at the 2018 ISA Congress in Toronto. The workshop was organized by the editor of *Gender & Society*, Jo Reger, with participation from the editors of *Current Sociology* and the *Canadian Women’s Studies Journal*, and was well received by RC32 members, including several from the global South.

As we reflected on the issues raised by the speakers and session participants in these various sessions and workshops, an important common thread that resonated with us quite forcefully was the politics of knowledge production, especially feminist knowledge in the global South. The following section explains our social location as co-editors of this anthology.

I (Josephine) approach this book and my chapter from a social location as a global South Black feminist immigrant scholar activist based in the United States but with strong and ongoing connections to my West African roots, particularly Sierra Leone. I work from the vantage point of transnational feminist, critical African feminist, and Black feminist epistemologies. All three lenses are interdisciplinary and intersect contextually and they have singularly or on multiple levels informed my scholarship, pedagogy, activism, and engagement in feminist dialogues in both global North and South spaces. In keeping with this commitment, I have taught, developed curricula, and conducted training and Study Abroad in my field in the United States as well as in Sierra Leone and Ghana. I train my students to appreciate that they are meaningful sources of knowledge and must nurture their ability to question and reinterpret conventional knowledge about power structures and social relations, beginning in the classroom. My research is in the field of African feminist studies, and my current work focuses on post-conflict Sierra Leone and women’s mobilizations for rights of full citizenship. I’m interested in how women’s organizations have leveraged political transformations in the state to support capacity building and policy reforms to promote gender equality and women’s rights. I also conduct research on African women in science, examining how women scientists in Africa position themselves in relation to the politics and practice of scientific knowledge production.

While I (Akosua) consider feminist scholarship to be inherently disruptive of hegemonies, I appreciate that not everyone feels the need to bring their scholarship directly into non-academic spaces, something that I seek to do consciously and critically. I consider myself an activist scholar addressing questions of identity and power within families, institutions, political and religious spaces, and the knowledge industry; I aim to bring these conversations into “public spaces” such as pre-university schools and churches, onto radio, TV and other electronic media, and through public lectures for a “lay audience.” I am passionate about knowledge production in and on Global Africa by people of African descent. Decolonizing the academy/curriculum has almost become a catch phrase today; however, guided by my intellectual ancestors and seniors, my commitment to changing inaccurate and damaging narratives about Black and African women through gendered sociological enquiries and coverage of historical accounts by African women was established early in my DNA. I am currently involved in a project with Kate Skinner⁷ conducting filmed oral history interviews with Ghanaian gender activists and “political women” of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to create a publicly accessible archive of gender activism in postcolonial Ghana. In my work on black masculinities, I explore the shifting nature of identities among young men in Africa and the diaspora and how this may be associated with (possibilities for) transformations in gender relations.

NOTES

1. 2006–2010.
2. We discuss the politics of naming later in this Introduction.
3. While we cannot claim that the numbers of African members increased significantly during our tenure, we did see a slight increase.
4. The theme for the Forum was “The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World.”
5. The Common Sessions present distinguished speakers from the ISA’s Research Committees, Working Groups, and Thematic Groups who reflect on the Forum’s common theme.
6. Akosua served as the foundation Director of CEGENSA from 2005 to 2010.
7. University of Birmingham and with funding from the British Academy.

This page intentionally left blank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the chapters in this collection were birthed out of panels of the Research Committee on Women, Gender and Society (RC32) of the International Sociology Association at a Forum (Vienna, 2016) or Congress (Toronto 2018) during our tenure as Co-Presidents. We are extremely grateful for the support of the entire Research Committee, and would like to express our thanks, especially, to former and current Presidents Margaret Abraham, Esther Chow, Evie Tastsoglou, and Melanie Heath for their work on behalf of RC32, and especially for the support and encouragement they extended to the two of us during our term as Co-Presidents. Our work over the years has been strengthened and refined by many other collaborations, and we would like to express our gratitude in particular to Sociologists for Women and Society (SWS), and the Women's Caucus of the African Studies Association for their homes of intellectual sisterhood and friendship. We are grateful for our students over the years – they questioned us, encouraged us, and thus contributed to, as well as validated our work. We also wish to acknowledge our institutions where we found homes in which to nurture our intellectual work – the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, and the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Florida Atlantic university. To the authors whose works are represented here and who either participated in an RC32 panel at an ISA Congress or Forum, or who graciously submitted a paper at our invitation, we say a very big “thank you.” Finally, we thank the series editors of this volume, Marcia Segal and Vicky Demos for entrusting this very pleasurable task to us, for their patience as Covid-19 threw us off-kilter, and for traveling the journey of this volume with us.

– Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Josephine Beoku-Betts

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION: POSITIONING FEMINIST VOICES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Josephine Beoku-Betts and Akosua Adomako Ampofo

Scholarship in the field of feminist theory and praxis has significantly expanded over the past two decades as the complex and interlocking conditions that produce oppression, opportunity, and privilege (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality, disability, and age) have generated new questions, issues, and interpretations of women's lives. There are concerns about the nature of knowledge itself, such as the pathways of formation and the hegemonies of dominant forms and voices that continue to determine global politics and marginalize the diverse voices and perspectives of subaltern communities in the global South (e.g., women, the poor, young people, and LGBTQI). It is now clearly understood that feminist theorizing that complicates analysis of contextual, historical, geo-economic, political, and cultural processes shaping women's differentiated lives is necessary to generate new interdisciplinary feminist theories and praxis. For example, studies by feminist scholars in the global South and its diaspora have rejected hegemonic Western feminism, effectively criticizing homogenized conceptions of gender in feminist theory and putting more emphasis on the impact that global economic processes such as colonialism and neoliberal capitalism have on the oppression of women and marginalized communities in the global South (e.g., [Alexander & Mohanty, 1997](#), [Grewal & Kaplan, 1994](#); [Mohanty, 1997](#); [Steady, 1981, 2004](#)). These studies and others have challenged feminist theory to explore the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, but to also more broadly interrogate the particularities of other structures of power that impact women's lived experiences in the global South, such as patriarchal nationalisms, religion, and local structures of legal-judicial oppression ([Desai, 2015](#); [Mama, 2009](#); [Moghadam, 2015](#); [Mohanty, 2003](#)). As a result, it is now commonplace for feminist scholarship and pedagogy in the global North to take a global, transnational, and intersectional approach. Such developments have enhanced intellectual exchanges among scholars and activists regionally and transnationally.

Producing Inclusive Feminist Knowledge: Positionalities and Discourses in the Global South
Advances in Gender Research, Volume 31, 1–19
Copyright © 2021 by Emerald Publishing Limited
All rights of reproduction in any form reserved
ISSN: 1529-2126/doi:[10.1108/S1529-212620210000031001](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1529-212620210000031001)

This book examines new and ongoing feminist dialogues addressing feminist knowledge production in the global South and ways in which feminist scholars and activists from these regions may break with dominant epistemologies to frame their own sites of feminist theory and praxis. Issues and concerns explored by contributing authors in their varying contexts are reflective of alternative intellectual traditions which in the present moment are informing and reconfiguring dominant epistemologies and methodologies in fundamental ways, not only in the so-called “post colonies” but also in countries of former colonial powers, perspectives influence each other and alliances are formed. This introductory chapter and the book as a whole aim to show ways in which feminist scholarship and praxis in the global South offer possibilities for new insights that reflect multiple and shifting conditions in their societies and regions and how these changes are shaping understandings and interpretations of global and transnational feminist agendas. This chapter will address these issues by first exploring the politics of feminist knowledge production and some of the issues and contestations raised by feminist scholars in the global South and its diaspora regarding knowledge production and its pathways of formation, as well as its implications for women’s lives in the global South. The next section discusses ways in which global South feminists and those in the diaspora are shaping their own positionalities and identities by framing new sites of feminist theory and praxis. The penultimate section addresses the methodological approaches that the authors in this volume bring to their chapters, and the final section presents the thematic organization of the book’s chapters.

THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In our quest for liberating feminist scholarship and generating new conceptual, theoretical, and empirical discourses based on critical understandings and interpretations of women’s lives and structures of gender relations in and from global South contexts, it is important to understand the methodological approaches (which will be further discussed in the section on methodology), including the concepts and terms used by contributing authors in this book. This provides the context for our self-reflexivity and positions us in what [Naples \(2002\)](#) describes as “our political orientation, disciplinary assumptions, and cross-cultural sensibility” (p. 5).

One of the terms we use and which comes up in discourses throughout this book is “global South.” Over the past two decades, the term “Third World” has increasingly been viewed as obsolete, controversial, and misunderstood and has been largely replaced by more commonly used terms such as “global South” and more recently “One Third World versus Two Thirds World.” The term “Third World” originally indicated a positioning of particular countries amidst the geopolitical and ideological divisions between the advanced capitalist economies of Europe and North America (First World) and the centrally planned economies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Second World) during the Cold War. Countries that identified as “Third World,” including the former Yugoslavia, adopted a position of non-alignment, arguing the need for a third, alternative world grouping. Many of these countries shared the historical experiences of slavery, racism, and colonial

domination by Western Capitalist societies, as well as decolonization and unequal development in the global economy. They came to be seen as economically underdeveloped. Some scholars have argued that people living in Third World countries are marginalized as “other” and unequally positioned in relation to their counterparts in First World countries who are depicted as privileged and advanced. This binary representation of the First and Third World, furthermore, overlooks minoritized communities of color who live under similar circumstances in the First World (Mohanty, 2003). The term “postcolonial” is a similarly contested term applied to formerly colonized nations. Some scholars who object to the use of this term “emphasize that it may mask continuing colonial relations that shape the lives of people in these nations” (Naples, 2002, p. 5).

The term “global South” has therefore become the most commonly used term. This designation developed in the 1980s is from the Brandt Commission Report, an independent commission on international development issues. The term emphasizes the unequal economic and political power relations between rich nations (North) and poor nations (South). It cannot be applied in purely geographical terms, as not all countries in the South are poor or formerly colonized countries and some countries in the North are quite poor (e.g., Eastern and Southern Europe) and do not share much in common with prominent Western Capitalist economies.

Another term increasingly used to categorize social minorities and social majorities based on the quality of life of people in the global North and South is “One Third World versus Two Thirds World.” Mohanty (2003) explains that one advantage of this term is that it avoids misleading binary oppositions, whether geographical or ideological, and draws attention to the differences and fluidities in quality of life, power relations, and agency between the advantaged and disadvantaged within and between national boundaries, including native or indigenous communities whose struggles cannot necessarily be explained under the colonial experience (p. 42). Finally, another set of commonly used terms are “Eurocentric” or “West-Centric.” These are ideological terms used in postcolonial critiques of European exceptionalism or the privileging of the West and its knowledge systems over “non-Western” or “global South” societies. Both terms are typically used in postcolonial discourses on decolonization and development.

As co-editors and contributing authors to this book, we are sensitive to the ongoing debates and contestations underlying the use of these terms, and we express our positionalities on the use or non-use of terms used in our respective chapters. All but one of us are from world regions associated with the term “global South,” such as South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East, and we identify accordingly, regardless of where we currently reside. We use the terms “global North and South” or “One Third World and Two Thirds World” or “Southern” or “Eurocentric” or “West-Centric” either on their own or in a variety of formats informed by our geographical or political positionalities or our self-identities as feminist scholars from the global South and global North. For example, Purkayastha (Chapter 1) argues against the use of “global North and South” because such terms are framed as binaries denoting global hierarchies. These hierarchies, she argues, also exist in various forms within

regions, nation states, and localities both in the global North and South and are manifested in disparities between those who are privileged and marginalized. As such, these complexities should be reflected in the use of these terms and in discourses to which they are applied.

CHALLENGING HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES

Feminist scholars in the global South have for a long time criticized the privileging of Western knowledge systems over those of counterparts in the global South (e.g., [Grewal & Kaplan, 2006](#); [Mohanty, 1991](#); [Spivak, 1988](#); [Steady, 2004](#)). Underlying much of this discourse regarding the privileging of Western knowledge systems are notions of racial difference embedded in Eurocentric beliefs about the biological, intellectual, and cultural inferiority of formerly colonized non-White societies. While there is no scientific validity to these beliefs, representations of racial difference based on binary divisions were used by Western scientists, particularly in the nineteenth century, to legitimize Western colonization of non-White societies; these notions are still prevalent today in representations of these societies in popular culture and social media, in racial and cultural biases inherent in measurements used for intelligence testing, and in the discrimination experienced by men and women of color in the global North and global South. Racial protests in the United States in 2020 against police brutality and killings of Black Americans, and the echoing anti-racist mobilizations by Black communities in former colonial metropolises worldwide demanding an end to systemic racism and symbolic icons of racism, are situated in this historical context through which Eurocentric knowledge is produced and articulated. A noted example of scientific racism is the case of Saartjie Bartmaan, a South African woman of Khoi descent whose body was denigrated by display of her genitals and buttocks in numerous exhibition events in Europe during the nineteenth century. The dehumanization and objectification of this woman served as an example of the perceived racial, sexual, and physical inferiority of African races and as a means to normalize the White female body. Under slavery and colonialism, Black women were represented as sexually promiscuous, as beasts of burden, or as asexual, in order to justify their exploitation as productive and reproductive labor and their physical and sexual abuse. Similar oppressive experiences were shared by indigenous women in Latin America, Asia, and North America and are well accounted for in feminist scholarship (e.g., [Smith, 2005](#); [Stoler, 2002](#)).

Southern feminist scholars have also challenged the privileging of Western feminism over other feminisms, viewing this as a replication of colonial hegemony. They express frustration in having to conform to and be excluded from the dictates of shared intellectual space in feminist theoretical works, some of which cannot adequately explain situated differences or complex social arrangements that shape women's experiences and concerns about gender equality in the global South. A consequent result is that much of what is known about women in these

regions is based on essentialized notions of the “Third World Woman” as a monolithic analytical category (Mohanty, 1991).

White middle class feminist scholars in the global North were similarly criticized by feminist scholars of color in the global North (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 1990) for their inattentiveness to the gendered dimensions of race, class, and sexuality issues as well as the ways in which these factors intersect. Feminist scholars in the global South and diaspora (e.g., Mohanty, 1997, 2003; Nayaran, 1997; Spivak, 1988; Steady, 1981, 2004) interrogated these issues further to incorporate other power structures such as colonialism, nationalisms, religion, ethnicity, and globalization, in their analyses of how these processes shaped the experiences of women in colonized and postcolonial societies. Indeed, during the Beijing Women’s Conference in 1995, women of color in the United States formed alliances with their counterparts in the South to draft language for the Platform for Action that incorporated the multiple forms of oppression regularly experienced by women (Basu, 2003, p. 70).

Western feminists were also criticized for ignoring or overlooking culturally and politically distinctive struggles of colonized women to resist, overcome, and transform patriarchal practices in their societies. Gayatri Spivak (1988), in her renowned essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” described as “epistemic violence” the subjugation and disqualification of women’s situated knowledge under colonialism because of race and class oppression, as well as indigenous and colonial state patriarchy which deny women access to education, the law, and a voice of authority to represent themselves. Although Spivak suggested that postcolonial feminist intellectuals could represent the voice of the subaltern, she is aware that it is a difficult and dangerous exercise to presume to speak on behalf of those you are writing about (Riach, 2017).

Chandra Talpady Mohanty’s (1991) “Under Western Eyes” also challenged Western feminist constructs of gender and patriarchy as universal and a-historical as well as the objectification of global South women as a homogenous and unitary category, irrespective of diversities of race, ethnicity, class, and nationality. She deconstructed the objectification of global South women as poor, uneducated, traditional, and powerless in contrast to their White middle-class counterparts. She also exposed the political underpinnings of these analytical categories by showing historical continuities in Western hegemonic control over global economic, political, scientific, and cultural knowledge production and analyzed the exploitative effects of this process on women from the global South.

Uma Nayaran (1997) similarly criticized as inaccurate and politically dangerous Western feminist depictions of global South women as “backward” and “unchanging.” She argued that such representations reinforced contemporary fundamentalist religious and nationalist states in the global South, situating women in traditional contexts as a means to validate the preservation of their cultural traditions. She argued that if meaningful alliances are to be fostered among feminists transnationally and across race, class, ethnicity, and nationality, feminists in the global North must exercise caution in how they represent women

in the global South. Nayaran applied this analysis to Mary Daly's discussion of Sati, as an illustration of how understandings of such practices are misinformed by colonialist notions of cultural traditions that oppress and devalue women. She argued that Daly was indifferent to the complex and unequal race and class relations that are embedded in the institution of colonialism.

DILEMMAS AND CONTESTATIONS IN BRINGING SOUTHERN VOICES TO THE TABLE

Though feminists in the global South have produced and transferred theoretical scholarship prior to and alongside that of Northern counterparts (Tripp, 2006; Weber, 2002), it is generally perceived that the development of feminism and struggle for gender equality was transmitted from the global North to the global South. Tripp (2006) argues, however, that this was a parallel development that often followed different paths, with each learning from and influencing one another.

Many Southern feminist scholars are concerned that they are trapped in "a double bind" when producing feminist knowledge, in the sense that they are not supported by their male colleagues who do not find their work scientifically objective and at the same time are treated by their Northern counterparts as less knowledgeable and short of resources (Gouws, 2012). Such perceptions effectively marginalize the positionality of Southern feminist scholarship from the mainstream in the geopolitics of knowledge production. While this is not necessarily an intentional exclusion or oversight of what alternative insights this work brings to mainstream discourses, it reflects what Milani and Lazar (2017) describe as "a normative erasure that is symptomatic of a broader structural asymmetry in the geopolitics of knowledge across disciplines" (p. 308). Thus, in order for Southern feminist scholars to be professionally competitive and for their works to be published in international peer reviewed journals, they must be well-versed in dominant feminist paradigms in the global North, their research and theorizing should be competitive with that of their global North counterparts, and they should attend conferences and network with colleagues in the global North. The lack of funding for research and travel as well as heavy teaching and administrative workloads in universities in the global South puts a heavy burden and state of dependence on the ability of Southern feminist scholars to maintain that level of competition. Their disadvantage translates into a striking imbalance in production and circulation of feminist knowledge from their regions, which is then viewed as empirical and descriptive or for policy purposes, whereas what is produced and circulated in the global North is then typically viewed as conceptual, methodological, and is perceived to hold authority (Connell, 2015). But, as Steady (2004) draws to our attention, privileging theory building is usually done at the expense of pragmatism and relevance to the lived experiences of those being studied and to the advantage of the researcher's professional career interests. She cites Galtung (1967), who described this process as "scientific colonialism," tracing a

parallel between colonialists who extracted African labor and resources for profit and researchers who extract data from countries in the global South which they then process into publications that are reimported as received knowledge in these countries. “What happens to us when we cannot find ourselves, our historical and present-day realities, or our ideas in research on Africa? What happens to us when what we do find is distorted by the perspectives and the positionalities of others?” are questions African feminist scholar Amina Mama alerts us to ask (Mama, 2017, p. 2). Unless we address these imbalances by redefining and reconceptualizing the received concepts, theories, and methodologies we use in more inclusive ways that reflect the specificities of our historical, economic, political, and social contexts, feminist knowledge production in the global South will continue to be marginalized. In Africa, for example, although there are differences among the feminist intellectual community, there is a shared approach to feminism as a combined theoretical and practical project critically reflecting our historical contexts and viewing “feminist theory as most relevant when it is rooted in activism” (Mama, 2017, p. 4).

Grewal and Kaplan’s (1994) groundbreaking *Scattered Hegemonies* contributes to understandings of how we problematize the challenges of producing feminist work across cultural divides and the possibilities of incorporating post-modern theory into feminist theory, so as to avoid the homogenizing and universalized westernized conceptions of gender which underlie much of feminist theory. Locating feminist practices from a transnational and comparative lens contextualizes the varied and historically specific effects of the relationship of women and gender to hegemonic structures such as globalization, patriarchal nationalisms, and legal-judicial oppression. Grewal and Kaplan (1994) argue that such an approach is imperative if analysis of women in the global South is to move beyond the relativistic thinking of mainstream feminism. African feminist scholars, however,

caution against over dependency on theoretical approaches that are fragmented and not integrated into wider political struggles and public debates that unify and create space for dialogue on historical, political, and economic realities underpinning women and gender issues in the contemporary African experience. (Nzomo, 1998, p. 13).

They also argue that postmodernist and Marxist paradigms are imported knowledge that, although useful in terms of class analysis, tend to overlook gender, producing biased and borrowed knowledge which masks existing gender subordination (Adomako Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, & Osirim, 2008).

FEMINIST DISCOURSES IN GLOBAL SOUTH CONTEXTS

Over the past 30 years, Southern feminists have made significant progress in dismantling dominant approaches in feminist knowledge production in local and transnational contexts, through what Amina Mama (2011) describes as

“a politics of critical engagement with activism using scholarly resources” (p. 11). Although much of Southern feminist discourse is still largely informed by West-centric epistemologies, including Marxism, post-structuralism, and post-modernism, it has become more nuanced as its voice develops autonomy in its conceptual and methodological tools of analysis and in its prioritization of critical agenda issues. For example, while the loss of land rights to promote commercial farming was central to the colonial project, with adverse implications for the colonized and structure of gender relations, even in the contemporary period this topic is virtually absent in feminist and gender theories in the global North (Connell, 2015). Similarly, while “the state” is considered a critical issue in feminist analysis of women and gender relations in the global South, it remains of marginal interest in feminist theories in the global North (Connell, 2014). In this section, we will highlight some ways in which Southern feminist scholars are shifting feminist discourses and agendas in local, regional, and transnational contexts and the possibilities for producing more inclusive knowledge that will balance production and circulation of feminist knowledge and praxis in more transformative ways.

Citizenship Rights: Questions of citizenship have historically been important markers of women’s status and gender equality in most countries, as masculinist constructions of politics and citizenship have excluded, marginalized, or made ambiguous interpretations and practices of women’s rights as full citizens. In liberal democracies, women have been denied full citizenship by their construction as dependents or as mothers who need protection, and by their perceived unsuitability to bear arms and guard the state under warfare conditions (Pettman, 2006). Even where women are granted full citizenship rights, it has not led to equal participation or representation. Many have argued that the underlying division between public and private has prevented women from enjoying the privileges of citizenship; in most Southern contexts, this dichotomy does not necessarily reflect the historical and cultural realities of those societies (e.g., Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005). Also, in the contemporary period of transnationalism, questions regarding the rights of citizens go beyond the realms of the nation state due to high rates of mobility across borders, including many women and children traveling as migrants, immigrants, or refugees. In this regard, discourses about citizenship take into account discrimination and oppressive practices against marginalized communities based on the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality and other forms of inequality, and extend to consider “‘universal rights’ regardless of national citizenship” (Grewal, 2005, p. 11).

In South Asia, Amrita Chhachhi and Sunila Abeysekera (2015) are part of a political project that explores the possibility of a denationalized/regional identity to broaden understandings of South Asian regional transnational feminisms beyond relations between the global North and South. As a result of legacies of the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 into two nation states, along with further divisions of Pakistan into Bangladesh and a civil war in Sri Lanka, the promise of full citizenship was denied to many due to their religion, ethnicity, language, and indigenous locations together with the deep structures of nationalism and external geopolitical dynamics in the region. Chhachhi and Abeysekera (2015)