THE JOURNEY TO GENDER EQUALITY

Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Edited by **Uzma Rashid**

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To Zaibunnisa

"This publication led by the University for Peace in collaboration with Global Women Leaders, Voices for Change and Inclusion constitutes an important and innovative contribution to the Generation Equality Initiative. The promotion of gender inclusion and the empowerment of women and girls has been a priority for Costa Rica. We are committed to promoting that women and girls, in their diversity, can exercise leadership as agents of change in their communities with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement."

H.E. Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

"An outstanding contribution by the University for Peace and GWL, Voices for Change and Inclusion to incorporate new and emerging voices that can generate the change needed to achieve gender equality in different countries around the world."

Ms. Susana Malcorra, Dean, IE School of Global and Public Affairs; Former Chief of Staff to UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

"An excellent contribution that provides a global overview of gender inequalities and seeks new answers."

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Contents

About the Editor

Uzma Rashid currently serves as Associate Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, and Academic Coordinator for the Gender and Peacebuilding program at the University for Peace, Costa Rica. Prior to joining UPeace, she worked as Chair at the Department of Sociology, and Associate Dean for Research of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan. Rashid has done her PhD as a Fulbright scholar from the interdisciplinary Language, Literacy, and Culture program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA, where her research explored the gendered religious identities of American Muslim women. She has extensive teaching, training, and research experience in a variety of contexts. Her academic work and research interests have consistently been interdisciplinary in nature, with the aim of working towards equity and justice by furthering an understanding of power relations in the intersections of gender, sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, caste, ability, and class at the multiple levels on which they operate. She is also a certified trainer for conducting empowerment self-defense trainings with a holistic view of tackling violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence.

About the Contributors

Sodfa Daaji is a 28 year old Tunisian-Italian women's rights advocate passionate about feminist jurisprudence, movement building and knowledge production. She is the Founder and Executive Director of the African Legal Think Tank on Women's Rights, a continental institute aiming at addressing modern forms of violence against women while informing the general public on the legal framework and mechanisms in place. She is currently the campaign coordinator of Nala Feminist Collective. Among her previous professional experiences, she has consulted for the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, and she has coordinated and managed the African Young Women Beijing+25 Mobilization and Manifesto for the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy, culminating in a groundbreaking document amplifying the demand of African Young Women to Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalitions leadership. Sodfa has served as the co-chairperson of the Afrika Youth Movement, the largest pan-African youth movement, in the youth advisory council of UNGEI, United Nations Girls Education Initiative and in the coordinating collective of Africans Rising. For her work, Sodfa was recognized among the 100 most influential in Gender Policy by Apolitical.

Syeda Re'em Hussain is an early career International Relations scholar and Program Director at Afresist, a nonprofit policy organization whose mission is to develop alternative leadership models and promote public policies based on the principles of Pan-Africanism. She holds a PhD in International Relations and is currently Adjunct Faculty at the United States International University-Africa. She is passionate about cultivating safe spaces for learning, reflection and empowerment. Her research interests include postcolonial theory, decoloniality, spatial theory, public space, resistance, Pan-Africanism and transnational activism. Re'em has served on the National Council of the Kenya Girl Guides Association, and is currently a Board Member at the African Legal Think Tank on Women's Rights. She has additionally consulted for OXFAM and the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy where she co-authored youth reports as well as conducted youth trainings.

Rahel Weldeab Sebhatu is a postcolonial feminist, Pan-Africanist, political scientist. She is a PhD candidate in Global Politics at Malmö University's Department of Global Political Studies. She received her masters at Lund University's Graduate School in Global Studies, major: Political Science, and her bachelor's degree on Arts in Public Administration (Minor: Political Science). She is the Research Director at Afresist, which is a nonprofit policy organization whose mission is to develop alternative leadership models and promote public policies based on the principles of Pan-Africanism. Her research interests include postcolonial theory, decoloniality, Pan-Africanism, critical development theory, globalization studies, postcolonial feminism, gender, migration, feminist security studies, negotiation theory, diplomacy, knowledge production, [youth participation in] peacebuilding, transnational activism, digital humanities, and resistance.

Jacinta Astles works for an international organization, previously in its Media and Communications Division, and currently on projects that promote the human rights of migrant communities from a gender perspective through global educational initiatives. She has served as Technical Adviser of the Working Groups of the Regional Conference on Migration, seeking to promote safe, orderly and humane migration management through an intergovernmental platform consisting of eleven countries from North and Central America. Jacinta Astles has experience implementing educational initiatives in Australia, Japan, and Costa Rica, including projects for Indigenous and refugee populations. As a certified Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD) instructor since 2019, Jacinta Astles has taught participants from approximately ten di-

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Vrushali Kadam works as a Research Associate at Church's Auxiliary for Social Action's (CASA) exclusive Gender Desk in Mumbai, India. She has formerly worked as a Program Associate with CASA (2019-2020) and as a Political Analyst for the Maharashtra State Assembly Elections (2019). She has received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the prestigious St. Xavier's College, Mumbai and a Master's degree in the same subject from the University of Mumbai. She is currently undertaking a Master's degree in Development Studies from Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi. Her current area of research concerns gender justice within CASA's 15 Core Programme areas as well as within the organization, due to be completed and published at the end of this year. She has represented CASA nationally and internationally, including at the UN CSW65, Generation Equality Forum (Mexico), Youth Feminist Unconference and will be also be participating at the Generation Equality Forum (Paris). She is also an independent youth activist and human rights/feminist advocate, and enjoys reading and cinema.

Joycia Thorat, PhD, is the Gender Focal Point at Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), India and a staff since 2001. She is currently the Chair of Act Alliance (Geneva) Gender Justice Community of Practice - Asia Pacific Region and member of the Global Reference Group. She was formerly the Act Alliance Chair of Capacity Development Initiative (2010) and Chair Advisory Group on Advocacy (2012 -2015). She was awarded a Doctoral Degree in Psychology-Criminology and Criminal Justice (interdisciplinary) on the topic "Gender differences, leadership style and contribution to social justice: A study of global ecumenical leaders". She is actively engaged at the grassroots for the rights of Dalits, tribals, women, sexual minorities, the Roma and other marginal and vulnerable groups. She has presented papers, published articles, conducted workshops on gender in the context of climate change, peace building, youth leadership, humanitarian standards etc. She has represented CASA in many national and international conferences, including at the UN CSW & UNFCCC.

Louis Monroy Santander is an Associate Professor in International relations at Ponctificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia. He is also an associate researcher at BSocial Col - Innovación Social para el Desarrollo – in Colombia and project assistant for Asfar CIC in Sarajevo. Dr. Monroy Santander has a PhD in International Development from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. His research focuses on the possible links between state reconstruction practices and grassroot initiatives for reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dr. Monroy Santander specializes in the fields of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and transitional justice, focusing specifically on approaches to reconciliation in post-conflict societies and their relation with processes of state-building. He has done extensive research in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Colombia, countries in which he has collaborated with various organizations in reconciliation-oriented projects.

Fereschta Sahrai is a Doctoral Candidate and facilitator at the University for Peace in Ciudad Colón, Costa Rica, researching and teaching peace and conflict studies. In her doctoral dissertation, she researches top-down and bottom-up approaches to peace in Afghanistan. She is chairing the Galtung-Institute for Peace Theory and Peace Practice in Grenzach-Whylen, Germany and has been teaching and coordinating the module "Inclusive education" at the School

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Melissa Joy Deehring is an attorney (California) and Clinical Assistant Professor of Law at Qatar University. She was the founding director/creator of the Externship Program at QU Law and since 2011, has taught legal skills, advocacy and ethics courses to more than 1,000 Qatari law students. Melissa is an active advocate for the global women, peace and security agenda, a consultant for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and an 'Education for Justice Champion'. Her research and advocacy efforts have focused on how culture affects local legal professions, encouraging more Qatari women to pursue legal, judicial and diplomatic careers and spreading awareness of women, peace and security in Asia. She has presented conference papers and taught seminars to advance SDGs 5, 16 & 'Women, Peace & Security' in Qatar, the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Indonesia, Japan, and China. Personally, Melissa is an admitted degree candidate pursuing her MLA in International Affairs, with a specialization in International Security, at Harvard Extension School, Harvard University. She is also the Director of Events for the Harvard Extension Student International Relations Club. Melissa is relocating to Bethesda, Maryland in late 2021 with her family.

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Katrina Leclerc is a PhD student in conflict studies at Saint-Paul University. She holds a master's in peace and conflict from the University of Manitoba and a bachelor's in human rights and conflict resolution from the University of Winnipeg. Katrina is the Youth, Peace and Secu-

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Inam Ul Haq is Lecturer at the Department of Sociology of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSS&H) at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan since October 2014.He is the student advisor, internship and thesis coordinator of BS & MS Program. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Sociology from the Institute of Social & Cultural Studies of the University of The Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. He holds an MPhil degree from the same institute. He was an Erasmus Fellow (Cultural Exchange) for the year 2016/17 at the Department of Sociology of the University of Bielefeld, Germany. As a part of the fellowship, he studied graduate level courses related to Gender, Education and Inequality. He taught courses related to Liberal Arts, Media & Culture and Postcolonial Studies to international students in Germany. He is a trainer for Qualitative Research, Diversity & Intercultural Competence and Academic Skills Development. His teaching and research centers at the interdisciplinary intersections of gender, language, literacy and culture.

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Shaohua Wang is a cisgender, ethnic minority woman of the Bai community from China with an academic background in Diplomacy and International Relations. As a young professional trained in Gender and Peacebuilding at the University for Peace (UPEACE) established by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Shaohua worked with UNHCR, UNV, and IOM on projects advocating the rights and improving the living condition of women, migrants and people with different abilities in forced displacement. In October 2020, Shaohua was selected as a Youth Representative and contributed to the dialogue "on the needs of and solutions for female and young refugees and migrants" at the G20 Interfaith Forum with KAICIID. She participated in the Generation Equality Forum by UN Women, remotely, in March 2021. With fluency in English, Chinese, Korean, and working proficiency in Spanish, she is skilled in intercultural communications and effective negotiations. Shaohua also served as the Digital Content Creator at Ideas for Peace. Now she is the Project Officer and Young Leader at Earth Charter International, where she facilitates the Earth Charter Youth Network, supports fundraising and crowdfunding campaigns, develops Chinese version of the courses, and engages in communication and graphic design on social media.

Adriana Salcedo is a scholar-practitioner in the field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding with a focus on conflict, gender, identity and migration, currently serving as Assistant Professor and Chair in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University for Peace. She holds a doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR), in Virginia, United States. For this degree, she conducted extensive research on forced migration, conflict and the social integration of refugees in the Colombian-Ecuadorian borderlands and in inner cities in Ecuador. She is deeply committed to achieving positive social change through non-violent means and to strengthening social actors including grass-roots organizations, indigenous communities and minority groups through her research and practice. Adriana has taught courses at the Simón Bolívar Andean University in Quito, Ecuador, at George Mason University in Washington D.C. and at Boston University in conflict analysis, collaborative methodologies for building peace, mediation, gender and migration. She was a visiting professor at the Department of

Peace and Conflict Studies at the University for Peace (Costa Rica) for three consecutive years (2017-2019) before joining UPEACE as a resident faculty member. As a practitioner, Adriana has provided training for the Northern Virginia Mediation Center (as a Certified Instructor/Mediator) and for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as for the Canadian Embassy in the Dominican Republic and the Observatory of Migration in the Caribbean (OBMICA). With more than fifteen years of experience in analyzing and transforming social conflicts, her professional practice has covered the Amazon basin, the Galapagos Islands and the Andean region (Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia), the United States, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. She has conducted research and collaborated with various public, private and civil society institutions across the Americas and the Caribbean.

Monyvann Nhean is an M.A. student from Cambodia and a recipient of the Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship (2020-2021) funded by The Nippon Foundation (Japan). She is currently pursuing a Dual Master's Degrees in Gender and Peacebuilding from the University for Peace in Costa Rica and in Transdisciplinary Social Development (MTSDev) from Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. She holds a Bachelor of Computer Science and Engineering from the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Nhean has worked in Cambodia for almost 10 years with an expertise in gender and development, as a humanitarian practitioner, in disaster management, event and campaign management, training, and child protection. She has held the position of senior project officer and program coordinator at international organizations where she focused on workplace policy implementations and reinforcement of action plans for community development. She also worked closely with management in factories to strengthen the sexual harassment prevention mechanisms, policy, and worker well-being strategies. Nhean is passionate about working towards empowering women to realize their goals. Mainly, she wants to support women to embrace their full potential and to make informed choices and decisions, and to continue to research gender and development in Cambodia.

Preface

Achieving a comprehensive view of the situation of women at the global level is a complex task. The United Nations has made great efforts over the decades; from the creation of UN Women to formulating guidelines and setting standards for countries to improve the lives of women the world over. With this book, *The Journey to Gender Equality: Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, the University for Peace – established by the United Nations in 1980, seeks to share a current global overview of the situation of women in various regions and societies of the world.

The progress and challenges that are being presented through the cases in this book reflect the work that has been done following the invaluable contributions of organizations worldwide to mobilize the international community for forming consensus over key guiding principles with the goals of gender equality. One of these key milestones was the The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. From it emerged a platform and a call to states and the international community to address the obstacles to gender equality. This was expressed in 12 specific areas aimed at overcoming the barriers and promoting the conditions for women's empowerment, in order to mitigate and remove the massive inequalities generated over centuries of human history. These areas include economic and social aspects; education and training; issues of violence; health, including reproductive health; the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and political representation at all levels; full respect for all of women's human rights; special care for girls; and women within the areas of environment and the media. Many of the goals set 25 years ago required great efforts on the part of the different actors to achieve the objectives set out therein.

Another significant moment was Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000 concerning women, peace and security. It highlighted the needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations and related processes, such as repatriation, reintegration and reconstruction. In addition, through this resolution, the Security Council called for and stressed the need for women to participate effectively in peace negotiations, to ensure stability and to make progress in post-conflict situations. The Security Council stressed the need to prevent violence against women in armed conflicts. Armed conflicts in various regions show that rape and abuse of women continue to be a weapon of war. International efforts in this area have so far failed to achieve the objectives of Security Council Resolution 1325 in most of the world's current conflicts.

Considering the need to constantly reflect on what specifically needs to be done in relation to the goals that have been outlined for gender equality, it is important to recognize the role that The Generation Equality Initiative (GEI) is playing in promoting an open global debate on the Beijing goals of a quarter of a century ago and give a new impetus to achieve gender equality and equity among men, women, and LGBTQI+ communities worldwide. The GEI highlights the obstacles, recognizes the difficulties, and emphasizes the importance of women's leadership, and how by being uplifted in all areas of life, they can make essential contributions to building a better world, with more equity, greater progress, greater harmony and peace.

The University for Peace is honored to be a partner in this ongoing effort. This book, *The Journey to Gender Equality: Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, coordinated by its Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and edited by Dr. Uzma Rashid, to whom I express my appreciation for this effort, highlights – through multiple original chapters – the current situation of women in various regions of the world. With a

transversal view of the situation of women, they highlight the growing need – even more so now in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic – for equality, non-discrimination, security, equal rights and access, with a particular focus on women and girls. It provides an overview of two regions: Pan-Africa and Latin America, and delves into various national cases, including those of Afghanistan, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Pakistan, and Qatar.

The University for Peace is grateful to the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and Global Women Leaders – Voices for Change and Inclusion (GWLvoices) for supporting the publication of this book. It is also grateful for the contribution of all the authors who are scholars and practitioners from different parts of the world that made this publication possible. My congratulations to the Gender and Peacebuilding Programme at the University for Peace, and to its Department of Peace and Conflict Studies.

This book, *The Journey to Gender Equality: Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* will be a contribution to the reflections that will take place at the Generation Equality Forum meeting in Paris and will be a resource to enrich more work in the future, with hopes that the understanding gained from this can help in the journey towards gender equality, for a better post-pandemic world.

Francisco Rojas Aravena

Rector, University for Peace

Acknowledgements

Introduction

A journey is hardly ever linear. Many a times it is hard to even identify a starting point, for sweat and blood has been shed for it to even come to a place where the struggle starts being recognized. Over the years, many women have made sacrifices to build a movement towards equality. All this work towards research, advocacy, and activism gradually led to an incorporation of a gendered lens in international discourses. Following this, there have been multiple calls from the platforms of the United Nations and other organizations pushing for the mainstreaming of gender consciousness and gender equality.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] is one milestone among the many that is recognized for advancing work for an equitable distribution of and access to resources, opportunities, and safe lives for women, and acknowledging the need for more work to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. It is considered a "watershed moment"[2] that has been critical in directing the work on transforming the lives of women and girls everywhere. If we look at the key foci of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it calls for organizations working at various levels to work on twelve critical areas of concern including women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and media, women and the environment, and the girl child. All these areas of concern have one common goal, that is, to ensure environments that are not violent and discriminatory towards individuals and communities on the basis of their gender. However, as recognized by the Generation Equality forum, "despite the commitments made in Beijing to take strategic, bold action in 12 critical areas of concern, and some ensuing progress in these areas, not a single country today can claim to have achieved gender equality."[3]

With twenty-five years passing since this declaration, some reflection is now needed to document the progress that has been made so far, how state and non-state actors have translated this declaration into practice, and what challenges were and are still being faced in the process. It is critical to record case studies from diverse contexts to understand how the specific needs can be further addressed. This book is a step in bringing together voices from different countries and continents and weaving a picture of what gender equality looks like for people everywhere.

The book begins with a focus on the Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto by *Sodfa Daaji, Syeda Re'em Hussain, and Rahel Weldeab Sebhatu*, who share insights on Pan-African youth-led feminist activism, and highlight the challenges including a lack of intergenerational engagement and the failure of state and non-state actors to ensure ownership of the Beijing Declaration, arguing that activism cannot be apolitical and needs to be intersectional in nature, and emphasize the need to recognize the long ignored work of African feminist activists.

Jacinta Astles focuses on five Latin American countries, including Argentina, Brazil,

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[1]   United Nations. (1995). Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action.

[2] Holloway, K. (2020). The Beijing Declaration 25 years on- Three priorities for humanitarians. https://odi.org/en/insights/the-beijing-declaration-25-years-on-three-priorities-for-humanitarians/

[3] Generation Equality Forum. https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25/generation-equality-forum

Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico, and explores violence against women and the efficacy of a self-defense training programme aimed at empowering women to shed light on how the trainings have been tailored to the needs of women from different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and social-economic backgrounds, migrant, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, women with disabilities and those living in urban and rural areas, and what issues have emerged in collaborating with stakeholders from: governments, the private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and media outlets.

Vrushali Kadam and Joycia Thorat share the work of Church's Auxiliary for Social Action in India, the interventions they did in some rural areas of the state of Maharashtra for uplifting women. Situating their work in the context of the prevalent gender and caste-based disparities, they share how women from these areas have been able to benefit from the skills-based trainings and renegotiate their roles in the household, take on leadership positions in their communities, and moving towards establishing more sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Next, we move from activism and work from grassroots organizations to the realm of peacebuilding where *Louis Francis Monroy Santander*, considers gender as an avenue for analyzing peacebuilding practices within Colombia's Havana agreement of 2016 between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), particularly those influencing discourse, practice, and activism on transitional justice, and how these considered women's voices and their needs in a context where patriarchy was deeply intertwined with conservative interpretations of religion that presented hurdles in changing the approach in these peace agreements.

Continuing the theme of the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes, *Fereschta Sahrai* zooms in on Afghanistan and analyzes the trajectory of women's participation in peace processes, situating the violence that women face on the regular even outside of armed conflict, shares why the limited presence of women in Afghan peace talks along with the nature of their participation as well which needs to be more meaningful if the peace negotiations are to have any lasting impact.

Melissa Deehring and Maryruth Belsey Priebe zoom in on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in the context of Qatar, in particular, focusing on the disconnect between policy and practice in relation to news media which presents a site for witnessing the lack of focus on issues that are considered women's issues, an unequal representation of women journalists in the field itself, and the unique risks they face as women while reporting in conflict areas.

Lindah Nelimah Wakhungu brings in perspectives from Kenya to share how, when it comes to socio-economic and political empowerment of women, the state has initiated projects and allocated funds to facilitate investments in small and medium enterprises, providing micro-finance credits, extending the social security network, and has changed the constitution to make it more egalitarian including on matters of citizenship, marriage, leadership, access to education, prohibiting long practiced discriminatory customs related to the ownership of property, their role in decision-making processes and other aspects of women's lives.

Katrina Leclerc extends the discussion of women's involvement in decision-making, focusing on Canada, and argues that in order for women's voices to be privileged, institutional mechanisms need to be transformed and women need to be involved in these not just as tokens there to fulfill some quota, but as equal stakeholders who bring in issues that intersect with their marginalization for their race, sexual orientation, and gender identities.

Shifting the focus to education, *Inam Ul Haq* brings insights from Pakistan, highlighting the socio-cultural barriers that women and girls face in enrolling in schools, the dropout rates that reflect gendered disparities, the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse within educational institutions, and lack of gender inclusive perspectives in the curricula, arguing for more institutional reforms that improve the infrastructure that could lead to an increase in enrollment, and train stakeholders who are responsible for shaping the curricula and management in schools to become more gender sensitive.

Moving to the context of Ethiopia, *Bridget Kelly, Negussie Teffera, Markos Woldemariam, and Vina Smith-Ramakrishnan* discuss the different critical foci of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that the country has taken on for the improvement in women's lives. Starting with health where the maternal mortality rate has been reduced significantly, the chapter moves on to education and the social support net including menstrual hygiene training that is extended to schools, and shares an overview of the work that has been done for the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting, poverty reduction and for increasing the political participation of women.

Similarly, *Márcia Carolina Santos Trivellato and Luiza Santos* share the case of Brazil, and elaborate on the introduction of new laws as measures to put an end to domestic violence, to eliminate discrimination against women, and gender-sensitive labor market policies, and argue that while Brazil had made strides in countering the pandemic of sexual and gender based violence, Covid-19 and the policies that the country adopted to deal with it have exacerbated the structural issues that were already there and more work needs to be done to ensure that it does not expose women more to violence because of unjust policies and practices.

Following this, *Shaohua Wang* writes about the progress made towards achieving gender equality in China, including the areas of economic and social development, education, political participation, and health, and argues that significant improvements in women's lives have been made, but the challenges that women face in the form of obstacles in attaining leadership positions, in dealing with workplace harassment, persistence of the gender pay gap among other aspects of their lives need to be dealt with at a faster pace, and the inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community in such measures needs to be ensured.

Adriana Salcedo brings our focus to Costa Rica, and discusses the advances made in the areas of poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflicts, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, the media, the environment, and the girl child, reporting findings from different key actors and civil society organizations that are currently working on issues of gender equality, sharing that while Costa Rica has made significant improvements in these areas, women are still fighting battles of the current economic crisis and the vulnerabilities that it has increased, including an increase in violence against women.

In the last chapter of this book, *Monyvann Nhean* takes us to the context of Cambodia, where despite the significant representation of women in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, among others, and have seen an improvement in matters related to health such as abortion, they continue to tackle issues of pay gap, unpaid care work, harassment at work that often goes unreported, and argues that more institutional reforms need to be introduced that could continue the positive work that has been done so far but also address the gaps that exist.

With this, I invite you to explore the common patterns that these cases present, and the unique circumstances in each case. While it is clear that gender equality is far from being achieved in any of these contexts, and that women still lag far behind and suffer when it comes to all the

critical concerns that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had proposed a focus on, there are lessons to be learned from the initiatives that have been taken by states, and the relentless efforts of NGOs, civil society organizations, and activists who continue mobilizing communities and pushing for reforms.

Chapter 1

The Struggle Continues: Pan-African Youth Led Feminist Activism for Gender Equality

Sodfa Daaji; Syeda Re'em Hussain; Rahel Weldeab Sebhatu

Introduction

Young Africans are reminded of the long and radical history of Pan-African gender equality activism on the continent when they reflect on the 'Beijing Process'. The Beijing Process consists of the 1975 International Women's Conference in Mexico City, the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen, and the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women in Nairobi; which culminated in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration was shaped by the contribution of African women who amplified the voices, demands and concerns of women on the continent pertaining to women's rights and gender equality in all these different events. They demanded an end to gender-based violence and inequality in work, advocated for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and for women to occupy leadership positions (Çağatay et al., 1986, p. 403). These demands were mainstreamed and incorporated into the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA).

However, twenty-five years on, Pan-African feminist activists and activism remains at the periphery of the narrative on the Beijing Process, if not entirely invisible. Reclaiming the narrative and the role of Pan-African feminist activists in the Beijing Process highlights the importance of intersectionality for feminist activism; and that gender equality activism cannot and must not be apolitical. The Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto, which was launched in 2020 as part of the activities around the Generation Equality forum, continues the legacy of Pan-African feminist activists.

The Manifesto is a progressive document that highlights 10 practical demands which culminated from regional consultations that involved 1500 young people from 44 countries of Africa. The Manifesto recognizes that the Beijing Process led to some progress in combating harmful practices and implementing mechanisms to support women's participation in political and economic governance. However, major structural inequalities still affect the full achievement of equality for women. The Manifesto, shed light on these forms of structural inequalities and asserts solutions on how to combat them.

This chapter therefore reclaims the space and impact that Pan-African feminist activists and their movements had on the Beijing Process. It does this by presenting the trajectory of African women participation in the conferences leading up to the Beijing Conference. This chapter, therefore, analyzes the 25 years of the BDPFA through the lens of the Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto and consultations, as a critique of the progress made since 1995, and as a road map outlining how to fill the gaps in achieving gender equality. Our analysis demonstrates that the demands made by young people in 2020 are the same as those made in 1995.

A Brief Background of Pan-African Feminist Activism

The history of Pan-African feminist activism pre-dates the Beijing Process, which began with the United Nations declaring 1975 as the International Women's Year and, consequently, declaring 1976 - 1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women. This narrative and record of feminist activism on the continent is, however, often overlooked due to the male dominated depiction of Pan-African historiography or what Nanjala Nyabola refers to as "Man-Africanism" (Nyabola, 2016); as well as the depiction of feminist historiography as being western. Through recounting the memory of the Beijing Process, we are able to reclaim the Pan-African Movement as part of the African feminist movement, and feminism as part of a Pan-African philosophy.

Pan-Africanism emerged during a time of colonization and oppression and called for unity and solidarity amongst African people on the continent and in the African diaspora. Pan-African women in the diaspora were active in campaigning against colonization and advocating for democracy and human rights of the African people on the continent. The First Pan African Conference held in London in 1900 was comprised of both men and women of African descent (Hooker, 1974, p. 46). Anna Julia Cooper—educator, academic and activist—was on the executive committee of the Pan African Conference and presented her paper entitled "The Negro Problem in America". Her activism and scholarship situated Black Feminism within the Pan-African space and emboldened the call for freedom as including the end of impartial knowledge practices. She asserted that the ability to articulate one's own political, ethical and aesthetic standpoint is essential to the achievement of full freedom (May, 2009, p. 41). Other women that participated in the Conference were Anna H. Jones, Fannie Barrier Williams and Ella D. Barrier, Loudin and Adams (Nangwaya, 2016).

The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was co-founded in 1914 by Marcus Garvey and Amy Ashwood Garvey, where women were amongst the first signatories of the organization which went on to defy social norms that segregated women into domestic roles (Nichols, 2016). The UNIA was internationalist and encouraged its members to think beyond America and African American communities in order to reconstruct their identity beyond these spaces. The organization therefore became an essential actor in the Pan-African Movement, while effectively connecting the African diaspora to those on the African continent.

Amy Ashwoode Garvey played a significant role in the Pan-African Movement as she centered women's issues and organizing to Pan-African ones. She founded the newspaper The Negro World, participated in the International African Service Bureau, and was part of the organizing of the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in New York in 1927. This Congress was co-sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Davies, 2014, p. 79). In both the newspaper and at the Congress, Garvey objected against the marginalization of women (Høgsbjerg, 2016; Nangwaya, 2016). Through these different spaces which connect the diaspora to Africa, Amy Ashwoode Garvey connected with other feminist activists on the continent such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti[1]. Kuti and Garvey often wrote to each other and expressed solidarity with the condition of their people. In their correspondence, they theorized the creation of a transnational movement centered on African unity and feminist ideals (Martin, 2016, p. 55). For the Pan-African women at the time, the philosophy of Pan-Africanism was

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[1] Mother of the musician Fela Kuti.

synonymous with advocating for women's rights.

By the time Garvey connected with Kuti, Kuti was actively engaging in advocacy work and mobilizing women throughout the continent. In a speech Kuti gave in 1949, she asserted:

> "How beautiful would it be if our women could have the same opportu-
> nity with men [. . .] I am therefore appealing to the parents in this little
> article to give their daughters equal opportunity with their sons. I am
> also appealing to the men to please rally round and cooperate with
> women to redeem them from their present status. I am also saying to
> the women that it is never too late to mend." (Ransome-Kuti, 1949)

It is evident that there already existed vibrant advocacy work that called for the equality of women. Joined with Pan-African ambitions and guided by an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist agenda, the articulation of women's rights—and therefore feminist values—naturally challenged all systems of domination. The women's movement on the continent and in the diaspora, therefore, influenced the noticeable change within the formal Pan-African conferences. In particular, the 6th and 7th Pan-African Congresses placed women on the agenda (Roy-Campbell, 1996, p. 46). They called for the support of women's political struggle for equality (Pan African Congress, 1976, p. 197). Moreover, two days before the main 7th Pan-African Congress in Kampala, Uganda, a pre-Congress Women's Meeting was held. The pre-Congress was strategically organized to ensure that there was an existing framework to address women-'s concerns at the main Congress (Roy-Campbell, 1996, p. 47). Participants at this meeting ranged from women from the continent and the diaspora[2]. The workshops held at the pre-congress covered "African Women and Culture, the Status of African Women and the Law, the Survival of the African Women and Child, Women and the Environment, Women and Structural Adjustment Programmes, and Building a Pan African Women's Liberation Movement" (Roy-Campbell, 1996, p. 48).

Throughout the years leading to the 7th Pan-African Congress (as well as during it), there was a growing consensus that women—and, more specifically, African women—confront similar structures and forms of oppression internationally. In recognition of this, there was an increase in commitment to organize internationally, and for African women to advocate against the oppression of African and diasporic women, as well as to stand in solidarity with Asian, Native American, Latina, and all other oppressed women. This led to the formation of the Pan African Women's Liberation Organization (PAWLO), with the objective to coordinate more representation in Pan-African meetings. PAWLO was distinct from the already existing Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO), which was formed as an arm of the Organization of African Unity. The difference between these two organizations was that the PAWLO was comprised of women that were not directly linked to the State, while PAWO essentially composed of the wives of the African heads of state and other government officials.

PAWLO stood firmly against the institutionalization of the women's struggle, noting that it has been co-opted from the grassroots and turned into institutional jargon (Roy-Campbell, 1996, p. 52). The narrative around the creation of PAWLO emphasizes the centrality of non-institutional spaces and voices to contribute to global policy formulation on women's rights. It was through spaces and organizations such as PAWLO that radical feminist voices

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[2] See, Roy-Campbell, Z. M. (1996). Pan-African Women Organising for the Future: The Formation of the Pan African Women's Liberation Organisation and Beyond. *African Journal of Political Science / Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 1(1), 45–57, p.48 for a list of countries and women that attended the pre-Congress.

challenged neoliberal and western feminist domination over the women's agenda.

The 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen (the Copenhagen Forum) was demonstrative of the gap between western feminist voices and those of the 'Third World' and, in particular, African feminist voices. In Copenhagen, western feminists asserted the need to restrict issues to only those they perceived as "common to all women independent of nationality, race, and class" as well as remove discussions on the New International Economic Order, Women in Palestine and Women under Apartheid (Çağatay et al., 1986, p. 403). On the other hand, Third World feminists strongly advocated for an intersectional understanding of women's issues, which meant nationality, class and race could not be separated from the discussion, and that political issues are women's issues.

The striking gap between western and Third World feminists was indicative of the differences between their lived experience, knowledge, and the extent of their identification with the positions of Western government officials. Although there was a strong assertion for women's issues to be presented as apolitical at the Copenhagen Forum, the Nairobi Forum in 1985 became a strategic platform for this to be challenged. Leading up to the Nairobi Forum, activists and researchers began to purposefully incorporate into their analyses that women's issues are indeed political. Consequently, there were noticeable changes at the Nairobi Forum in comparison to the Copenhagen Forum; this was a result of much advocacy, and due to the fact that the forum was held in Africa where more African women activists were able to attend.

The Nairobi Forum was able to draw parallels between the international debt system and its role in creating impoverished conditions for the poor, in which women were the most adversely affected. It introduced a space to ensure lesbian issues were addressed as women's issues (this was done in collaboration between Latin American and African feminists). It passed a groundbreaking resolution that opposed family planning activities in the Third World being implemented by the U.S block. Through this, the issue of sexual and reproductive rights took center stage in Nairobi and, consequently, in Beijing in 1995.

The culmination of advocacy before and during the Nairobi Forum led to the input of what was considered to be radical voices into the Beijing Process (i.e. during the 1995 Beijing Conference). With more than 40,000 participants attending the Beijing Conference, as well as the parallel NGO Forum held in Huairou (near Beijing), African women were once again at the frontline, meaningfully contributing to the success of the conference. This was the case of Ms. Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, the Secretary-General of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing, who with passionate commitment and sensitive diplomacy was able to reconcile "countries at opposite ends of the moral spectrum together to agree on a final text" (Vuzo, 2020).

The Beijing Conference culminated into a global agenda for gender equality, namely the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was unanimously adopted by 189 countries. As pointed out by the UN Division for Women, in its review of the four World Conferences:

> "The fundamental transformation that took place in Beijing was the recognition of the need to shift the focus from women to the concept of gender, recognizing that the entire structure of society, and all relations between men and women within it, had to be re-evaluated. Only by such a fundamental restructuring of society and its institutions could women be fully empowered to take their rightful place as equal partners with men in all aspects of life. This change represented a strong reaffirmation that women's rights were human rights and that

gender equality was an issue of universal concern, benefiting all."
(United Nations).

The BDPFA addresses twelve critical areas of concern, namely 1) women and poverty; 2) education and training of women; 3) women and health; 4) violence against women; 5) women and armed conflict; 6) women and the economy; 7) women in power and decision-making; 8) institutional mechanism for the advancement of women; 9) human rights of women; 10) women and the media; 11) women and the environment; 12) the girl-child. With the determination to ensure peace, eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote people-centered development (United Nations, 1995a), the strategic objectives of the identified twelve areas form one of the most progressive and political documents in the history of gender equality.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a Cross-sectoral, Progressive Political Document

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA) is considered to be one of the most progressive blueprints for gender equality, influenced by the diverse voices represented by the unprecedentedly large number of delegations attending the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995. This is, in fact, reflected in the Declaration as "acknowledging the voices of all women everywhere and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances, honoring the women who paved the way and inspired by the hope present in the world's youth" (United Nations, 1995a), and as the blueprint that aimed at intensifying "efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people" (ibid).

With a gradual incorporation of an intersectional and intercultural approach and understanding, the critical areas of concern were addressed with strategic objectives and actions aiming to address, among other things, the "feminization of poverty" found in strategic objective 4 (United Nations, 1995b); equal access to education; women's access to quality health care; elimination of violence against women; increase of women's participation in conflict resolution; women's access to resources and employment; women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership; integrate gender perspective in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice; increase the participation of women to expression and decision-making; gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and elimination of violence against the girl-child.

In the context of the African continent, these identified areas of concerns were relevant as numerous conflicts came to an end after 1995. It also happened at a time when women's movements attempted to influence reform processes in areas of equality, customary law and anti-discrimination provisions, in response to societal hierarchies positioning women at the bottom. With the advent of the colonial role, women's role and position in Africa became more precarious, discounting some of the matrilineal African societies. Nonetheless, the BDPFA provided a momentum for African movements to organize into regional and national civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) to lobby their respective governments to implement international instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, despite the pivotal role played by these

organizations during the wave of constitutionalism reform, as well as in calling for the imple-mentation of CEDAW and, at a later stage, the 2003 Protocol on the African Charter on Hu-man and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (i.e. the Maputo Protocol), the few significant strides of African Countries[3] were not enough in achieving the promises and ambitious objectives of the BDPFA. It can be argued that disengagement of the biggest conti-nental resource, namely its youth population, has contributed to this underachievement.

Generation Equality Forum: An Intergenerational Celebration of Beijing+25 During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the BDPFA encountered milestones such as the African Women's Decade, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and the institutio-nalization of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, among others. In the complex and fast-moving political, social and economic environment, African women continued to mobilize and organize to address poverty, discrimination, violence and under-representation in decision-making processes. Similarly, African youth spaces—formally and informally—are mainstreaming women's rights to influen-ce norms to break gender inequality in alignment with Pan-African philosophy.

To assess the progress of the 4th World Conference on Women, UN Women together with civil society organizations launched the ground-breaking advocacy campaign "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future" (UN Women, 2019), with the aim of bringing together the next generations of women's rights activists with the gender equality advocates who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action. The Forum aims at discussing concrete actions for the realization of gender equality before 2030, by providing a global public conversation for urgent action and accountability. The implementation framework is designed within the Action Coalitions, positioning grassroots activists at the epicenter of the development of the gender equality agenda.

However, besides the intention of involving grassroots and community level engage-ment and aspiration into the conceptualization of the Action Coalition blueprint, a major factor has played an undermining role and still affects the meaningful participation of all stakehol-ders, further undermining the potential of this Forum and its ambitions to be people-owned. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the gap between intergovernmental and community level spaces excluding, ipso facto, different constituencies, including young people on the African continent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated systemic inequalities affecting women and youth on the African continent. The financial losses of women and youth predominantly working in the informal sector, are exacerbated by a high youth unemployment rate at a time when employment rates are the lowest in the world (International Labour Organization, 2020). This vulnerable position prevents women and girls from accessing social services, while also

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[3] For a more in-depth analysis of African Women's Movement, reference is made to Kwagala-Igaga Dorothy, Twesii-me Kirya Monica, Nakayi Rose - The women's movement in Africa: creative initiatives and lessons learnt, East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights (2005/01/01)

increasing the weight of social norms and inequalities between men and women, culminating into an alarming increase of gender-based violence. In addition, with the insufficient integration of women and youth into decision-making spaces, their perspectives and realities are not duly mainstreamed within pandemic crisis management, resulting in gender-blind policies and measures.

Being in the digital age, ignoring gender is not an option; this is far more relevant in the context of the pandemic, as the digital divide adversely impacted girls and young women's education and prevented them from accessing information and opportunities, including within the context of the Generation Equality Forum's satellite and/or parallel events. On the other hand, among those able to access the internet and enjoy their digital identity, there are certain groups such as women, activists and journalists who have experienced an increase of digitally facilitated violence.

Besides the efforts of youth groups and collectives to disseminate information and ensure the representation of their constituents within the Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalition, the tokenistic behavior characterizing intergovernmental spaces has fueled youth disillusion towards global processes, which are seen as being non-inclusive and uninterested in recognizing young people's contribution and participation as actors with rights to uphold and interests to defend. This is far more relevant for young women who, in many instances, feel that they are without a space in both youth and women platforms.

Surely, the pandemic has negatively affected the potential provided by the Generation Equality Forum, as a cross-sectoral platform aiming to bring multiple voices together to interact, exchange, debate and define the roadmap and priorities for the next decade. However, COVID-19 has not completely shadowed or undermined women's and youth mobilization and engagement against violations and abuses, as seen with the End SARS movement against police brutality in Nigeria, or the #ShutItAllDown Movement against femicide and gender-based violence in Namibia.

Led by African young women, among other initiatives, these instances have sparked a wave of Pan-African solidarity from the continent and the diaspora, despite the lockdown and the global health emergency, proving greater interest and commitment from youth spaces in combating all forms of violence against women and girls. The same commitment and entrenched passion emerged during the Africa Youth Beijing+25 Mobilization, as an attempt to re-center young women in the global narrative on gender equality and within the decade of action.

The Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto

The Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto (AYWB25 Manifesto) was conceived in consideration of the structural inequalities (further exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic) impeding African young women when streaming their demands and aspirations within the Generation Equality Forum and the Action Coalitions blueprint. The AYWB25 Manifesto is a political feminist manifesto that connects intergovernmental, grassroots and generational spaces. To better attain bottom-up and inclusive participation, the mobilization around the manifesto was structured through five regional barazas[4], co-organized with youth-led and

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[4] Baraza means a place where public meetings are held and a palaver or meeting.

youth-serving organizations, under the strategic leadership of the Office of the African Union Special Envoy on Youth, during the tenure of Ms. Aya Chebbi.

Guided by the FEM strategy (Foster, Enable, Mobilize), the Barazas aimed at fostering African young women participation and inclusion in the roadmap towards the Generation Equality Forum; enabling African young women engagement, capacities and skills to meaning-fully influence the Generation Equality Forums and Action Coalitions blueprint; and mobilizing African young women for Generation Equality Forum in Paris[5] so as to ensure that their demands are duly incorporated. As a result, through strategic conversations around gender based violence; economic justice and rights; sexual and reproductive health and rights; femi-nist action for climate justice; technology and innovation for gender equality; feminist move-ment and leadership reflective of the Action Coalitions thematic areas; and youth silencing the guns in alignment to the African Union theme of the year, the outcomes of the 1500 partici-pants from 44 African countries and the engagement of over 30 partners, culminated into the Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto.

Owned by African young women and reflective of the most pressing challenges they face, the AYWB25 Manifesto is a groundbreaking feminist political document that sets demands addressing the critical issues of concern for African young women. The demands articulate a secure, clear and unreserved commitment by the Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalition leadership to inform policies, institutional processes and intersectional programs and measures towards the achievement of Agenda 2030[6] and Agenda 2063[7]. By addressing these demands, young women and girls will be able to participate actively, equally and effectively at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural, and civil life and leadership, as well as in scientific endeavors.

AYWB25 Manifesto's Ten Demands

The practicability of the Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto is identifiable in the simpli-city of its language to ensure large consumption and ownership of its demands, which are reflective of the multiple realities common among African young women. In addressing the most pressing and critical issues for African young women, the ten demands of the manifes-to—when looked at in their entirety—provide a tangible roadmap towards the full achievement of equality and the emancipation of young women from entrenched inequalities and patriarchy.

The demand for economic justice highlights the burden of unemployment, and the effects of gender pay gaps on access to equitable and dignified employment. The demand on the criminalization of gender-based violence recognizes the multiple and entrenched forms of violence, including harmful practices and human trafficking, and calls on the provision of legal, physical and psychological support, as well as fund allocation in support of youth innovation and knowledge production on the subject. Similarly, the demand for the end of gender discrimi-nation recognizes the necessity of providing equitable and affordable access to goods, public services and opportunities for young women with disabilities and refugee young women, among others, as well as equitable access to land and recognition of heritage rights. In order

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[5] The Paris Forum is scheduled to take place at the end of June 2021.

[6] On Sustainable Development Goals.

[7] Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future

to attain this, the demand for access to justice and protection calls on the revision, amendment or repeal of legislations that discriminate against young women to ensure their equality before the law, fair access to justice, and financial allocation to enhance the legal capability of young women through improved access to information and legal support.

The demand on sexual and reproductive health rights addresses the necessity for provision of universal access to essential sexual and reproductive health rights and services, including the removal of taxation on menstrual products so as to drastically reduce stigma and girls' school dropout rates that are further exacerbated by period poverty. The Manifesto, through its demand on mental health and well-being, acknowledges the impact of daily sexism, misogyny and discrimination, and calls on the equitable and sustainable financing of mental health services, to improve service delivery with regard to counselling and trauma support through a youth centered and gender sensitive approaches.

With the demand on silencing the guns, the manifesto emerges the vulnerability of young women in occupied and humanitarian settings, and the necessity for ensuring the protection of their rights to peacefully protest, as well as in preserving their freedom of speech. The demand calls for the institutionalization of young women participation in peacebuilding and fund allocation to support young women organizations working at the intersection of both the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (i.e. UNSCR 2250) and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (i.e. UNSCR 1325).

Whereas the demands resonate with the BDPFA, reiterating the challenges in accomplishing the set targets, the Manifesto brings into light the nexus between digital transformation and the rights of young women, calling an end to the undue restrictions on internet freedom, and the protection of the digital identities of African young women against any form of digital facilitated gender-based violence.

It can be argued that two demands intersect the ones mentioned, namely the demand to provide a tangible solution on how gender can be mainstreamed and achieved through education, and the demand for intergenerational co-leadership. Distant from the Action Coalitions thematic areas[8], the demand on Inclusive, Equitable and Quality Education calls for an increase in national budget allocations for education (and the decrease in budget allocated for militarization), the removal of barriers that negatively affect young women and girls' education, and the institutionalization of programs to sensitize boys to respect girls and treat them as equals. The demand for intergenerational co-leadership addresses the institutionalization of co-leadership for young women's full and effective political participation, the enforcement of quotas for young women within women and youth quotas, and the appointment of young women technocrats and Special Advisors/Envoys and other positions across industries and institutions. A practical solution was provided as the "establishment of sustainable intergenerational dialogues platforms to strengthen Pan-African and inclusive networks of young and senior women for generational learning, sharing, mentoring, solidarity and empowerment" (AYWB25 Manifesto, 2020, p. 13).

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[8] Namely Gender-Based Violence; Economic Justice and Rights; Bodily Autonomy and SRHR; Feminist Action for Climate Justice; Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality; Feminist Movements and Leadership.

Conclusions

The efforts exerted by Pan-African feminist activists before and during the offset of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as explained in this chapter, are similar to the efforts being exerted by young African women 25 years after the BDPFA. Through mobilization efforts, consultations, and establishing demands that pertain to the particular concerns of African women and their fight for gender equality, the AYWB25 manifesto is a cross-sectoral, progressive political document, just like the many congresses predating the Beijing Conference. Some gaps in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are addressed within the AYMB25 Manifesto, while also taking into consideration the 'new' challenges facing African young women, including the challenges being experienced in the midst of Covid-19 global pandemic. Indeed, the struggle continues when it comes to achieving gender equality, and just like their foremothers, the African young women of today are prepared to continue the struggle for gender equality for all!

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Chapter 2

'It's Not Easy to Fight Against the System': Eliminating Violence Against Women in Latin America Through Empowerment Self-Defense

Jacinta Astles

Introduction

The global recognition that violence against women is impeding progress towards gender equality is reflected in the multitude of local, national and international initiatives. Notably, on the international level, this includes the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing Declaration). Within feminist activist groups in diverse contexts, this realisation has sparked increasing interest in self-defense as a strategy to provide women with practical tools to protect themselves, whilst "disrupt[ing] the gender ideology that makes violence against women seem inevitable." (McCaughey, 1997, ix). More recently, growing evidence supports the efficacy of such programmes in preventing, reducing, and disrupting violence against women (Ballan & Freyer, 2012; Brecklin, 2004; Gidycz et al., 2015; Gidycz & Dardis, 2014; Hollander & Cunningham, 2020; Kelly & Sharp-Jeffs, 2016; Sarnquist et al., 2014; Senn et al., 2015). Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD) is one such methodology that emerged from the women's movement and has been developed since the 1970s. It aims to provide vulnerable populations with "skills to protect themselves and others from violence" (ESD Global, 2021para. 3) by training instructors around the world. This chapter explores the progress and potential of ESD as a tool for achieving Strategic Objective D of the Beijing Declaration in Latin America. It examines the extent to which ESD programmes have been publicly recognised at local, national and regional levels, as reflected in collaborations with stakeholders from various sectors as well as through involvement in public discussions.

Beginning with a review of current literature, it becomes evident that there is a dearth of research into the role of self-defense programmes in Latin America. However, investigations from other regions provide strong evidence to support the value of ESD and similar programmes in providing practical tools for women to prevent, limit, and interrupt violence. The existing literature also suggests that such workshops can be adapted to a variety of contexts whilst maintaining their effectiveness. This study seeks to fill the gap in current literature by providing findings based on five interviews with ESD instructors from different Latin American countries conducted in May 2021. The findings strongly suggest that ESD programmes have the potential to provide an adaptable, cost effective, and valid response to the implementation of Strategic Objective D of the Beijing Declaration in Latin America.

Literature Review

Violence against women is inherently linked to imbalances of power, therefore eliminating violence is essential in the journey towards gender equality. Violence is both a means and a consequence of continuing gender inequalities globally and is manifested in different forms depending on local contexts. Paragraph 113 of the Beijing Declaration defines violence against women as:

> "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." (UN Women, 1995, p. 76).

Throughout this chapter, the term is used to refer to all women and girls, both transgender and cisgender, whilst recognising that an acknowledgement of the specific forms of violence and inequalities experienced by transgender women is absent from the Beijing Declaration. Further research should also consider the impacts of self-defense programmes on non-binary and gender fluid individuals, as well as other persons with diverse gender identities and/or expressions. This section provides an overview of the existing research into the impact of ESD and other self-defense programmes from around the world. This serves to highlight the specific positive impacts of ESD as a violence prevention strategy and its potential to be adapted to diverse cultural contexts. In particular, the research is analysed within the framework of the Beijing Declaration, with the aim of identifying whether there is current evidence to suggest that ESD can contribute to the achievement of strategic objective identified in paragraph 125.G:

> "sensitize girls and boys and women and men to the personal and social detrimental effects of violence in the family, community and society; teach them how to communicate without violence and promote training for victims and potential victims so that they can protect themselves and others against such violence" (UN Women, 1995, p. 83).

A comprehensive review of academic literature in both English and Spanish failed to uncover any research into self-defense programmes in Latin America. This dearth of literature suggests that self-defense has not yet gained the recognition of academic institutions in this region, perhaps as it is yet to achieve the popularity and reach evident in other contexts. It is hoped that this chapter will serve as a step forward in rectifying this situation, and that future research will examine self-defense programmes in Latin America from a variety of perspectives, thereby building our collective knowledge of strategies to address violence against women and other vulnerable populations.

The majority of existing research into self-defense programmes comes from the United States of America, with fewer investigations from Canada, Europe and one relevant study identified from Kenya (Kelly & Sharp-Jeffs, 2016). There also tends to be a focus towards the evaluation of ESD programmes that take place on college campuses (Brecklin, 2004; Gidycz & Dardis, 2014; Hollander, 2014; Senn et al., 2015). It is unclear whether this proportionately reflects the prevalence of ESD in higher educational institutions compared to other contexts, but it is suggested that future research focus on the outcomes of ESD in other communities, particularly those facing intersecting layers of disadvantage.

Largely originating from the United States of America, there is strong evidence to suggest that ESD programmes prevent and reduce violence by providing women with tools to identify and interrupt potentially violent situations. According to Jones and Mattingly (2016):

> "ESD curricula contain both preventative and reactive components. The preventative components educate participants about the precursors of physical violence... Awareness and communication exercises provide tools for prevention, which can interrupt perpetrator behavior before physical violence results. Drills of physical strikes and movement exercises then provide the confidence that participants will be able to effectively defend themselves if violence does erupt." (p. 264).

Another research that used surveys (Brecklin's, 2004) compared two groups of women: those who had and those who had not taken a self-defense class, and found that women who had attended a self-defense programme reported less unwanted sexual content and were more likely to report that they were able to interrupt or reduce the severity of an attack through their resistance. Similarly, Hollander (2014) investigated the experiences of 75 women who participated in a 10-week feminist self-defense course, compared to a control group consisting of 108 women. This study found that "women who participate in self-defense training are less likely to experience sexual assault and are more confident in their ability to effectively resist assault than similar women who have not taken such a class." (Hollander, 2014). This finding is further supported by Senn et al. (2015), whose randomised trial of 893 first year female university students in Canada found that "a rigorously designed and executed sexual assault resistance programme was successful in decreasing the occurrence of rape, attempted rape, and other forms of victimization among first-year university women" (p. 2326). In Kenya, Sarnquist et al. (2014) found a decrease in reported rape amongst girls who participated in an ESD programme, with 65 percent reporting that they had interrupted sexual harassment using techniques from the course. These studies strongly support the assertion that ESD programmes should be used as a strategy to achieve the Beijing Declaration, as they provide women with practical tools to protect themselves and others against violence.

Another key element of ESD programmes is that they challenge underlying cultural and social beliefs which perpetuate violence against women and gender inequalities. As evident in a study conducted by Gidycz et al. (2015), "relative to control group women who were victimized, programme participants who were victimized between the 4- and 7-month follow-up blamed the perpetrator more and evidenced less self-blame."(p. 780). This highlights the potential of ESD to challenge victim-blaming cultures, thereby also sensitizing participants to the "personal and social detrimental effects of violence in the family, community and society" (UN Women, 1995, p. 83). Furthermore, Ballan and Freyer (2012) argue that self-defense classes for women with disabilities have the potential to "heighten self-confidence, reduce fear, and foster a positive self-image as well as feelings of self-worth" (pp. 1095-1096). These findings are also supported by the ethnographic research conducted by Welde (2003) which found that self-defense courses result in the reinterpretation and re-embodiment of narratives of femininity as powerful rather than vulnerable. Ultimately, ESD programmes encourage participants to connect with their innate power, through physical and verbal techniques, thereby challenging "dominant gendered scripts that portray women as inevitably vulnerable in the face of men's invincibility" (Jordan & Mossman, 2021, 1253).

Lastly, it is important to consider the extent to which ESD programmes can be replicated across diverse cultural contexts. Based on a cross-sectional study of 1,978 girls who participated in an ESD programme, and a control group of 428 in Kenya, Sarnquist et al. (2014)

argues that ESD interventions "proved highly effective at preventing sexual assault and should be replicable in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa and around the world." (p. 1226). Whilst adaptations to each cultural context are inevitable, this study provides a strong indication in favour of the potential positive impacts that ESD could bring to Latin America. Building upon this evidence, the study being shared in this chapter sought to identify the current role and dynamics surrounding ESD programmes in the region.

Methodology

The research that this chapter is based on explored the progress and challenges of ESD in Latin America, under the framework of the Beijing Declaration, and through an intersectional feminist approach. Based on "the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1245), this research sought to understand how current ESD programmes are responding to the needs of women from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and social-economic backgrounds, migrant, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, as well as women with disabilities and those living in urban and rural areas. This reflects the intersectional nature of the Beijing Declaration, which recognises the particular vulnerability of women who belong to certain minority groups (UN Women, 1995, p. 77).

In building upon existing literature, this research sought to answer the following central questions:

1. At what levels have self-defense programmes been recognised as a violence prevention and elimination strategy in Latin America?

2. What struggles have ESD instructors faced in inserting their programmes into local, national, regional and global discussions surrounding violence against women?

This was investigated through qualitative research focusing on the experiences of five ESD instructors from five different countries in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded virtually. Building upon the stakeholders identified in the Beijing Declaration, the interviews were structured around each instructor's success and challenges in collaborating with stakeholders from: governments, the private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and media outlets. Each interview also sought to identify whether such collaborative efforts were implemented at local, national, regional or international levels. Purposive sampling was used to ensure the representation of different countries in the study, considering the uneven distribution of instructors in the region. Three interviews were conducted in Spanish and two were conducted in English. They were subsequently transcribed by the researcher and analysed thematically.

Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical issues were considered in conducting this research, and steps were taken to minimise the risks for participants.

Firstly, the participants did not receive financial or in-kind compensation in exchange for their participation; however, it was ensured that there was no anticipated financial cost to participants for their involvement in the research. Furthermore, it is argued that all participants will benefit from the intended outcome of the research, in terms of increasing awareness of ESD in Latin America and the identification of best practices and ways forward. The project also sought to avoid placing any undue pressure on individuals to participate.

Secondly, a strong emphasis was placed on informed consent for all participants. The researcher obtained digital written consent prior to commencing the interviews. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the interview, why the stakeholder was chosen, the expected duration of the interview, how the information would be kept confidential and anonymous, and asked for permission to record the session. Participants were given the option for their real name or a pseudonym to be used.

Thirdly, the findings and analysis were provided to participants and they were offered the opportunity to redact, correct or withdraw their statements. The final version of the chapter was also shared with participants prior to its submission, thereby providing a further opportunity for participants to withdraw or clarify their statements.

Limitations

Attempts were made to address the limitations of the research at each stage of the process. Due to the limited time available for data collection, only one interview with each instructor was conducted. This data could be further enriched by follow up interviews, by increasing the number of interviews in each country where possible, and by conducting interviews with instructors from other Latin American countries. A further limitation during the data collection process was my language abilities. As a non-native Spanish speaker, it is possible that this reduced the depths of responses in interviews.

Interview participants represent a range of professional and educational backgrounds, and the researcher had previously undertaken a course to become an ESD instructor with all participants, thereby mitigating power imbalances between the researcher and participants. To reduce bias, reflexive practices were employed to understand the inherent subjectivity that forms part of the research process (Naples, 2003). Acknowledging my privilege as a result of my gender, ethnicity, class, abilities, and age, among other factors, made it possible to maintain an awareness of power dynamics and subjectivity throughout the research process and ensure the centrality of the voices of the instructors (Hackett, 2015).

Overall, the strength of this research comes from the in-depth insights into the instructors' perceptions, experiences, and opinions throughout their individual trajectories of creating and implementing ESD programmes in Latin America.

Findings

According to the Beijing Declaration, actions should be taken to eliminate violence against women by "governments, including local governments, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, the public and private sectors, particularly enter-

prises, and the mass media" (UN Women, 1995, p. 82). The findings of this study highlight that, with the support of these stakeholders, ESD is a cost-effective and scalable tool which should form part of efforts to eliminate violence against women. This section will explore the general challenges faced by instructors in the region, followed by an examination of the existing initiatives and barriers according to each of these stakeholder groups.

Systemic Challenges

Perhaps the most profound and immense challenge identified by interviewees is the fact that they are working within a patriarchal and misogynistic system and attempting to change it from the inside. As explained by Elena Campos:

> "the country where I am, which is Mexico, is extremely misogynistic, in many ways, and not only talking about men towards women, but society in general is very misogynistic, so in this sense, to talk about self-defense is to begin to understand that we can defend ourselves or begin to understand that we can say that we don't like something, even from there, the power to say no, in any situation, I think it's something very complex."

This idea was also supported by Pamela Mussi, an instructor in Brazil:

> "Our job and what we are doing is fighting against a system that is established in many many many many years before us and that struggle isn't fair. We have many problems and we face many difficulties and challenges that we are not supposed to. But they are here and we can we have to face them and no one tells you that. Because it's not easy to fight against the system."

This highlights how the value of ESD, as a tool that can fundamentally alter power imbalances, also creates barriers for instructors who are seeking support from the same system they are aiming to change. This is particularly true in the cases of collaborative efforts with governments, private sector enterprises and mass media.

Moreover, in all five countries, instructors discussed the difficulties in gaining recognition of ESD as a valid tool for violence prevention due to widespread misconceptions. Overall, the instructors referred to similar misconceptions across the five contexts, including ideas that self-defense classes teach participants to be violent, that it does not truly solve the issue of violence against women because the majority of men are perpetrators and therefore men should be taught not to be violent, lack of knowledge of the differences between self-defense and martial arts, as well as understandings of self-defense as only teaching physical techniques. Importantly, all instructors shared their responses to these misconceptions and examples of situations in which they were able to successfully dispel them and convince stakeholders of the value of ESD.

Alongside misconceptions is the continued lack of awareness of self-defense and its absence from wider societal discussions of violence against women. Carina Aspillaga Bórquez, an ESD instructor in Chile, described how ESD remains 'underground' and that

> "in all the public policies, self-defense is not even mentioned as an
> accurate and effective response to lower the levels of violence. No, you
> turn on the TV and in the face of femicides it is like 'we are going to
> activate more people to attend the phones' [emergency phone lines]".

This absence of ESD and self-defense programmes in wider societal conversations was echoed by interviewees from the remaining four countries. Carina Aspillaga Bórquez from Chile and Elena Campos from Mexico discussed how this can be resolved by strategically connecting ESD with other popular terms, such as 'self-care', as well as data which proves its effectiveness.

Scalability through Partnerships with Governments

Instructors in Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile and Brazil recognised the value of developing partnerships with governments to scale up and provide more stable, longer term ESD programmes. In Argentina, Tania Verasay is hoping to establish a national ESD programme through key government ministries, such as the Ministry for Social Development, the Ministry for Women and the Ministry for Justice. Ultimately, her strategy is to receive funding from the State to train instructors from different provinces:

> "It would be different trainings in the provinces, travel to a province,
> make a central training and train instructors and then those instructors
> are trained and can replicate [ESD] in the territory. So it is like a network
> of instructors in the whole country that at the same time have their own
> networks."

Tania Verasay explained that from her perspective as a civil servant, the State has an interest in creating this public policy because of its potential impact to prevent violence.

In Costa Rica and Chile, instructors have received funding from municipal governments to provide workshops. In both cases, instructors described how governments are interested in providing ESD workshops particularly around key dates, such as International Women's Day, as a public relations strategy, but do not engage more profoundly with the issue. As described by Carina Aspillaga Bórquez from Chile:

> "In the end it's like they give you the money and they put you in charge,
> but it's not like they are engaged with the discourse… They are like 'we
> gave a workshop for women' but there is no elaboration in relation to the
> impact that this generates."

Daniela Lizano described a similar experience in Costa Rica, where a municipal government chose to hire an instructor of Krav Maga, a martial art developed for the Israeli military and defense forces. She described how the class focussed on street-based violence and was not practical or informed by the most common forms of violence faced by women. This supports other investigations which found that feminist-based self-defense courses have deeper impacts than martial arts courses (Kelly & Sharp-Jeffs, 2016).

With the aim of creating a longer term impact, Pamela Mussi is using her existing networks with the municipal government of Macaé in Brazil to "to make it the first city in Brazil to apply as a law providing ESD to children in schools". Her plan is to build the relationship

between the municipal government and ESD Global and thereby acquire the funding for an instructor training in the city, which will facilitate the implementation of the violence prevention law that she is hoping to create. She hopes that this pilot project will be replicated in other cities around Brazil, potentially inspire a national policy and pave the way for other projects around the world. Previously, Pamela Mussi was able to scale up her ESD project by partnering with a national political party. This allowed her to bring ESD to ten states around Brazil.

These findings highlight the potential of ESD to be scaled up from local to state and national levels of government and can serve as a tool for the implementation of laws and national action plans addressing violence against women.

Grassroots Initiatives with Community Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations

In all contexts, instructors described their experiences partnering with local organizations, collectives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as an effective means of reaching vulnerable populations, including those that usually have limited contact outside of their community. Often, instructors provided these workshops free of charge due to the lack of funding available. In other cases, financial support came from private donors. Many of these organisations centred upon women in specifically vulnerable situations, such as migrant and refugee women, deaf women, mothers, and women facing poverty, among others. Ultimately, the instructors described how these organisations approached them with a deeper understanding of the issue of violence against women, often based on their lived experiences, and an awareness that other solutions, such as relying on police responses, are inadequate.

Interest from Educational and Academic Institutions

ESD instructors in Chile, Costa Rica and Brazil shared that they have provided workshops in high schools, universities and other tertiary education institutions. Instructors across all contexts discussed the importance of engaging with adolescents as a key to changing the culture surrounding violence against women, particularly intimate partner violence. These institutions provide a key avenue through which ESD can be expanded throughout the region whilst maximising its impact.

In relation to academic research into ESD in Latin America, none of the instructors were aware of examples of scholarly investigations into self-defense programmes from their contexts. Pamela Mussi indicated that she hopes to undertake research into ESD in her context in the future: "I intend to do that because as I told you in Brazil, we don't discuss violence prevention. We don't discuss at all." Another instructor explained how she was invited to speak on a panel after completing a university diploma, and therefore was given the opportunity to bring ESD into an academic space. This finding further supports this gap in academic research identified in the literature review.

Challenges and Successes with the Private Sector

Across the region, instructors reported collaborating with local, national and international enterprises. Elena Campos, in Mexico, explained her preference for working with local businesses, as a way to maintain her project as an initiative that is by and for the community. In Costa Rica, Daniela Lizano has provided both internal and external workshops for large corporations. For example, she provided a live streamed workshop for Saba, a brand of menstrual products, as part of their campaign focussing on women's empowerment. Other businesses have hired her to provide workshops for their employees as part of their internal human resources strategy. In Brazil, Pamela Mussi described how she convinced companies to provide ESD to their employees:

> "Usually you have to tell them that you will emphasize the productivity from women. So after the course they will start to handle better with themselves so you will improve the interpersonal relationship. They will feel safer and that will help with the anxiety and fear and they will be more creative, free their thoughts, and will have a different experience inside the company because they will change how they feel, inside themselves."

However, she also described how she faced resistance from male CEOs:

> "they usually close doors. They say, 'OK, no, it will create problems. They will start to ask for rights. They will start to complain about everything. No, we have no problems here about this. We think women are great and beautiful' and that's the same thing they say. So the big company owners when they are men like this, usually this is what they say and they have power to close doors from other companies, governments, other supporters we could have."

This shows a practical example of how progress towards gender inequality depends on the support of stakeholders who will not benefit from changing existing power structures.

Media Interest in ESD

Instructors from Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico described mass media as a useful tool for promoting ESD and gaining public support. In most cases, local and national television channels and newspaper outlets contacted them after hearing about them through their networks or via social media. Pamela Mussi explained that after being featured on a mainstream, national news programme in Brazil, her project received new contracts and was more respected. Daniela Lizano described how, in Costa Rica, the focus of the story tends to be on general violence against women, particularly in public places, rather than domestic or intimate partner violence, "because it's like those are things that people don't want to see." In Argentina and Chile, Tania Verasay and Carina Aspillaga Bórquez did not have any experience of working with media and explained that ESD continues to be largely unknown in their contexts. In Mexico, Elena Campos reported that discussions of violence against women have evolved to consider its relationship to power inequalities and that, with time, there will be more space to

involve ESD and violence prevention. She also explained how she has used her platform as a musician, and the national and international media attention this has generated, to promote ESD to a wider audience.

Conclusions

The findings of this study highlight the adaptability and scalability of ESD from local to state, national and regional levels. Despite resistance from some stakeholder groups, ESD programmes provide benefits to all sectors by supporting progress towards gender equality, which will ultimately have a positive impact on all of society. Furthermore, these findings highlight the potential of ESD to make a significant contribution to the fulfillment of Strategic Action D of the Beijing Declaration. To support this process, it is suggested that an evidence-based, regional study should be conducted on the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of ESD in Latin America in preventing violence against women. This will provide a foundation for the instructors to create partnerships in their local contexts. Additionally, multisectoral partnerships are needed which provide sustainable funding for the implementation of ESD programmes, which includes providing training for instructors who represent different regions, thereby facilitating the geographic spread of ESD. The findings of this study strongly suggest that each sector has an individual role to play and that through the support of governments, community organizations, NGOs, educational institutions, the public and private sectors, and the mass media, ESD can support progress towards the elimination of violence against women in Latin America. Ultimately, ESD provides a valid and effective tool that should form part of the implementation of Strategic objective D.1 of the Beijing Declaration, which recognises that the freedom to live without violence is fundamental to the advancement of women's rights.

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Chapter 3

Working Towards Gender Equality in India: The Case of Church's Auxiliary for Social Action

Vrushali Kadam; Joycia Thorat

Church's Auxiliary for Social Action, or CASA, had its humble beginning way back in 1947, when it emerged to provide succour to the victims and affected refugees of the India-Pakistan Partition. From sharing our inception with the birth of new India, CASA has grown into a significant premier relief and development organization. CASA would be celebrating its platinum jubilee in 2022, alongside its rich and long legacy with its share of ups and downs, whilst remaining relevant to the context as per the needs of the people of rural India. Its uniqueness comes through our multiple processes of metamorphosis and paradigm shifts with the changing times. From observing only women-centric issues to now attempting to understand and gradually address the LGBTQIA+ communities, our work with gender has been evolving for the past 75 years in the evolving Indian context, and aligns with and extends the goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for achieving gender equality.

CASA has evolved from addressing relief and rehabilitation issues between 1947-1967, focusing on needs-based approach of development (initiating programmes on the basis of the lack of basic amenities in vulnerable areas) between 1967-1987, addressing issue-based interventions (moving on from individualistic concerns to community issues, with a special focus of Dalits, Adivasis and women) between 1987-1997, focusing on a rights-based approach (ensuring the inclusion of all previous efforts) and addressing systemic issues such as exploitation, supporting rights and entitlements between 1997-2007) and dealing with relational issues i.e. between poor and rich, men and women, ecology and humanity, etc.

CASA's work is not limited as an NGO, but also as a faith-based organization and a member of Act Alliance - an accredited faith member in the United Nations' processes and a secular, professional civil society organization that reaches out to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the remotest parts of rural India. Through this chapter, CASA aims to call attention to the status of women in India, the microaggressions that reduce their visibility in power and decision-making and CASA's vision of a gender equal India that we are making come true each day.

Gender and India: Of Virtue & Patriarchy

India is a country that is synonymous with diversity in all spheres of the Indian way of life – religions, culture, tradition, cuisines, sport – you name it. The gift that this diverse country is, however, is at times heavily hooded under the shadow of patriarchy of these very diversities. Many aspects of such diversities carry forward out-dated, regressive and plainly unjustifiable modus operandi on women – and that is true for the rest of the world as well, irrespective of the names or philosophies of diverse religions, culture or traditions. However, things get slightly more specific in India.

With a population of 1.38 billion people, India is not only home to diverse cultures, but also to the practice of diverse versions of patriarchy and a predominantly male-driven caste system. India's sex ratio stands at 940 females per 1000 males as per the Census carried out by the Indian government in 2011, making it one of the weakest in the world. Millions of young girls and women in India do not have access to education either due to poverty or due to the fact that a son's education is preferred in a traditional Indian parental aspiration setting. The 2011 Census states a total of 63% literacy with basic or advanced education in India, of which only 43% were females. Moreover, young girls are unable to have access to education due to the other barriers like child marriage, menstruation, excessive household chores, gender-based violence and living in conflict areas that further disable young girls and women from having access to education.

According to UNICEF, one in three of the world's child brides are in India and of the total 223 million child brides, 102 million were married before the age of 15, with Uttar Pradesh being home to 36 million child brides, the highest in the country, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh. Girls who live in rural areas and poorer households are more susceptible to child marriages, and are mostly illiterate. In 2019, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported that 32,260 cases of rape were reported throughout India, the victims ranging between female babies and elderly women, but these were the cases that actually came under the radar. Interestingly, of all 46,164 convicted of committing crimes against women, only 2,656 were female – 43, 508 were male. In the same year, the NCRB reported that 4,120 women died by suicide due to marital issues, 1,755 due to dowry-related issues, 3,251 due to mental illness, 179 due to poverty, 336 due to unemployment, 231 due to property dispute, 71 due to physical abuse (including rape, sexual assault, etc.). It must be highlighted that NCRB records are strictly based on recorded crimes committed, accidental deaths or deaths by suicide. Thus, it is best to accept these statistics with a pinch of salt.

Gender, Caste, and Religion: At an Intersection

Gender, caste and religion intersect in more than one way. Men have been dominant as recipients, interpreters and transmitters of divine messages, while women have largely remained passive receivers of teachings and ardent practitioners of religious rituals. Attitudes developed around patriarchal interpretations of religious belief have defined and shaped the social and cultural contexts of Indian women resulting in their disempowerment and second-class status (Saldanha, 2016). Most social constructs pertaining any religion view women in the gender roles assigned to them by religious scriptures – as mothers, daughters and sisters. These gender roles, when broken down and maltreated, open pathways to the subordination of women in the Indian society. Families demonstrate their differences through language and actions while favouring sons over daughters and many communities practice traditions that do not accept women as equal partners to men, but as a support system that stays home and supports their endeavours. Similarly, the 'giving away of the daughter' is a common practice in wedding ceremonies of most popular religions, which also often results in social repercussions as married women are oftentimes considered as others by their maiden families.

Moreover, India is home to the age-old caste system – a social structure which derives a person's way of life through the duty assigned to them at birth and is hereditary in nature. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in his paper Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development describes the caste system through several definitions by scholars, mainly quoting Risley, "a caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name

which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous Community[2]. The Dalit community (those belonging to the lowest social strata of the Indian society) and women in general are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups; casteism and caste violence in India only increases the vulnerability Dalit women to violent reactions. According to Manjula Pradeep, director of campaigns at Dalit Human Rights Defenders Network, "These cases of extreme sexual violence are more examples of the dominant caste wielding power over Dalit women who are perceived as weak and vulnerable and available. Dalit women are seen as impure and deprived when they access basic amenities but their bodies are also used as objects to take revenge on the Dalit communities and keep them oppressed. With more Dalits demanding their rights, these kinds of incidents we have seen are increasing."

The reality of women being independent in thought, choices and will is still a distant dream due to socio-economic disparities within these communities, as patriarchy continues to thrive within them as well. The lives of Dalit, SC/ST women go unnoticed and undocumented in the mainstream world since time immemorial. Thus, the expectation of that changing and actual crimes being committed against Dalit women being reported in the mainstream world dominated by individuals who help uphold casteism and patriarchy is slightly more than far-fetched. However, every day, activists, women's rights organisations, NGOs, etc. are working consistently to make women's voices heard in the country.

Power, Decision-making, and Institutional Mechanisms for Women in India

Power is gendered in the Indian society, and gender relations are essentially based on power and power relations (The Development Program, 2015). Inequalities between men and women have determined patterns of power distribution and decision-making, the biggest example being the lack of women's influence in political decision-making. Gender relations, as power relations, also influence gender roles that further perpetuate the inequalities that power relations are based on in the first place. For example, the constant reiteration of a "good woman's" characteristic of being quiet and obedient, when internalized, becomes a potential barrier towards women's participation in decision-making.

In order to address these issues, India has time and again introduced a plethora of institutional mechanisms. Important legislations such as the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, 1986, etc.[1] were some national laws that brought into light the need for women to participate in decision-making process. However, women's representation in the very Houses of law-making remains poor, as the Lok Sabha houses 78 women Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha and 27 women in the Rajya Sabha. Some initiatives like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao that focus on saving the girl child, promoting gender equality, girl child protection and offers a variety of financial schemes for education allow them to be a part of the decision-making process in the country. Numerous

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[1] As per the Constitution of India. - COI_1.pdf (legislative.gov.in)

[2] English translation – "Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child".

schemes proposed by the Indian government are available for young girls and women to make use of; however, lack of education and awareness is a major factor for needy women in both rural and urban areas to have access to them.

Gender and Covid-19 in India

The vicious cycle of poverty in India revolves around the socio-economically vulnerable and marginalized communities – Dalits, Adivasis, the elderly, people with disabilities, Muslims, women and gender and sexual minorities. Needless to say, all such communities were affected disproportionately throughout the ongoing pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic, which began gaining momentum in India in March 2020, has further pushed gender equality by many, many years, undoing years of progress as young girls and women of all ages are experiencing domestic abuse, mental health issues as well as lack of basic hygiene kits due to on and off lockdowns all over the country in the past year. Migrant women – infants, adolescents, pregnant, recently post-partum, elderly, disabled, menstruating, approaching menopause, etc. had no access to proper toilet and sanitation as they walked back home, barefoot, in the hope of surviving the Covid-19 pandemic and going back to the safety of their homes, as their daily wage-based livelihoods came to a standstill.

According to the National Commission for Women, India (NCW), between March 25 and May 31 2020, just over two months into the nation-wide lockdown, 1,477 complaints by women were received by the NCW; 727 of the total complaints were received via NCW's WhatsApp helpline which was set up in April to ensure quick access to women experiencing domestic violence. The ongoing second wave of the pandemic saw the NCW receiving 648 calls on a dedicated helpline in 20 days of its launch from pregnant women requesting medical services. Here, it is extremely crucial to note that the complaints came from women who had access to mobile phones, the Internet and postal mail (means of filing complaints to NCW). There is a pre-existing gender gap between men and women's access to mobile phones in India; women in rural areas have minimal access to phones, network and the Internet thus, it is intractable for them to file quick complaints pertaining domestic violence to the NCW. The lives of rural women, were most affected during this harsh time who were unable to call for help, in any manner.

Finally, to further put things into perspective, in 2019 the first ever Sustainable Development Goals Gender Index was developed by Equal Measures 2030, an independent civil society organisation, which measured 14 of the 17 SDGs in 129 countries and 51 issues, including health, gender-based violence, climate change, etc. The index finds India, a developing economy and the world's largest democracy, ranked 95th of the 129 countries (Equal Measures, 2030).

The Rural India Context: Panchayati Raj Institutions

The Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) system in India is essentially based on the ancient rural Panchayat (council of five persons) system, later developed into a three-tier system (village, intermediate and district level) to undertake governance in rural India under the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution 1992. The 73rd Amendment gave PRI constitutional status, and requires every state to hold elections, Gram Sabhas (village meetings), and set up the three

tiers of Panchayati Raj. Moreover, the 11th Schedule of the Indian Constitution also lists 29 subjects that the PRI is expected to take responsibility for, such as, agricultural extension, land development, education, women and child development, among other things. The PRI also reserves 33% seats for the election of women; with a preference to women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. States like Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, etc. have already made provisions for 50% reservation for women in PRIs.

Maharashtra also follows a three-tier system of the PRI, which consist of:

1. Gram Panchayats at village level (minimum population of the village must be 600)

2. Panchayat Samitis at block/taluka level (a block includes multiple villages)

3. Zilla Parishads at the district level (one district includes multiple blocks)

There have also been all-women Panchayats that have been recorded, one of the earliest being in Maharashtra in a village called Nimbut in Pune in 1962, and slowly began cropping up in other parts of the state to address issues such as farmer's rights, water and electricity issues through the leadership of women leaders. PRIs have created an avenue for the empowerment and participation of marginalized sections of the society, especially women. Thus, constitutional provisions do exist to include women and women belonging to the most vulnerable and marginalized Indian communities in the decision-making processes in rural areas.

Exploring the Work of CASA for Gender Equality: Stree Shakti[3] of Maharashtra

CASA has been a significant contributor to the steady emancipation of rural India and in the state of Maharashtra. CASA functions under four main kinds of programmes, namely, Core or Direct, Bi-lateral, Package or Partnership and Emergency or Humanitarian Programs. CASA West Zone's work in the state of Maharashtra is currently home to four Core Programme areas (designed to increase the access to entitlements through institutional building and community mobilization) and one Bi-lateral Programme area (designed to focus on urgent and immediate action required in needy and vulnerable regions in the country).

The case study is largely based on CASA's extensive work in the relevant programme areas, our reports, observations and includes the analysis of a short interview which was conducted with eleven rural women leaders as a genuine testimony of the state of affairs of women within some villages, their experience of CASA's intervention and if any improvement has been made with regards to the rights of women. The women participants involved in the study belong to two Core Programme and one Bi-lateral Programme areas from Maharashtra.

The on-going second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India and the consequent lockdown restrictions did not allow us to have this discussion with the participants of these interviews in person; however, we were able to speak via phone calls. The questionnaire was constructed to address three thematic issues of this paper – power, decision-making and institutional mechanisms – and the role/status of women in the same. The interviews were conducted in the native Marathi language with eleven women leaders, including women Sarpanch (head

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[3] 'Stree Shakti' loosely translates to the feminine or divine female primordial energy in many Indian languages

of village through PRI) and Deputy Sarpanch, CASA's animators (village representatives who work with our staff in the villages), a Panchayat Samiti member, (intermediate level member of PRI), a GVKP (Gramin Vikas Karyakarta Partishthan – a rural development initiative) member and beneficiaries of CASA's support work[4]. The participants belong to three of our programme areas in Maharashtra – Georai (Beed district), Salekasa (Gondia district) and Khapar (Nandurbar district). The breakdown of responses will be elaborated area-wise, in line with our different objectives, activities and support for each programme area, which adds further perspective to our work in the emancipation of rural women in Maharashtra.

Findings from Georai, Beed

The Bi-lateral Programme area in Georai, Beed focuses on the prevention of farmer suicides, a socio-economic phenomenon in India wherein thousands of poverty-stricken farmers have died by suicide each year; Beed is one of the worst affected districts in India. The participants from are women leaders who are presently living in three villages – Ardh-Pimpri, Chorpuri and Ramnagar Tanda[5].

All three participants have been child brides, two being married at the ages of 14 and 15. The general consensus of the participants on women being considered inferior beings is positive. It must be noted that one of the participants is currently serving as a woman Sarpanch, and has touched upon the existing patriarchal social structure in her village. The majority consensus of the participants is that men do not contribute in household chores; however, one participant states about 25% men within her village to contribute. Besides, women are expected complete all household chores as a "woman's duty" in all three villages. It is agreed that there is no distinction between men and women with regards to agriculture-related chores, however household chores are considered as women's separate chores. With regards to decision-making at home, women fully participate in household decision-making; one participant states only 25% women from their village are able to make household decisions. The general consensus on women's participation in village-level decision-making process is that only some educated or knowledgeable women are now participating and changing the narrative progressively. Two of the three participants have women-led self-help groups (SHGs) created at village level, however a participant (also, a CASA Animator) belongs to the tribal at Ramnagar Tanda and is currently urging women to create SHGs, as she failed to unite the women of her settlement. All the participants have never personally experienced domestic violence, however there are rare instances occurring in all three villages which usually get solved within the household or after interventions. The general consensus among the participants is that women and girls are treated unfairly due to patriarchy, with preference given to boys. However, the old mind-set is slowly changing. All three participants are aware of CASA's work; a participant has been a beneficiary and another is currently a CASA Animator and a former beneficiary.

Interestingly, all three participants have observed improvement in the status of women in their villages. After CASA's intervention, many women have begun talking freely about their issues, have attended CASA's meetings increasingly and are not afraid to leave their village bounda-

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[4] All women beneficiaries belong to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities (Dalits, Adivasi, SC/ST), and/or are poverty-stricken, single, widows, disabled, elderly or compromised socio-economically

[5] A Tanda is not a traditional village, it is a tribal settlement. Ramnagar Tanda is home to the Lamani tribe, also known as Roma or Romani in Europe and Gypsies in America

ries without men to get chores/work done. All participants encourage CASA to continue doing what they have done to further increase women's participation in their village.

Findings from Khapar, Nandurbar

The participants from Khapar, Nandurbar (Core or Direct Programme area) are women leaders who are presently living in four villages – Ratanbara, Umarkuva, Roshmar and Shelkuva.

All women participants from this programme area are married; one participant was married as a child. Most participants agree that women in their villages are oftentimes considered as inferior beings, however men contribute significantly in household chores and that such chores aren't expected to be done only by woman as their duty in their communities. There is no distinction of roles between agricultural and household chores; both men and women contribute to both chores; all participants agreed that women fully participate in major decision-making at home in their respective villages. The general consensus is that only some women participate in village-level decision-making processes; most women do not participate. The general consensus is that only some women participate in village-level decision-making processes. All four villages have SHGs and three of the four participants are a part of one, with the exception of one participant who is a CASA Animator. It was also found that all four participants have never experienced domestic violence, and it occurs very rarely within their villages.

Most girls are not treated unfairly within their villages because of their patriarchal social structure; however, one participant believes that girls are indeed treated unfairly and that such practices are slowly changing. All participants are aware of CASA's intervention in their villages and have participated in CASA's activities – two participants as Animators, one as a GVKP member and one as a training participant. There have been evident improvements in the status of women within villages, as CASA's help to avail govt. schemes, etc. has enabled them to not migrate for work, young girls are trained for skill development, they discuss their issues freely and are active participants in CASA's meetings. The participants expect CASA to continue the work towards women's emancipation, with a special focus on skill building so they can earn on their own.

Findings from Salekasa, Gondia

The participants from Salekasa, Gondia (Core or Direct Programme area) are women leaders who are presently living in four villages – Markakhanda, Kothjmura, Latori and Khedepar.

All participants were married as adult women (today, aged between 30 to 50 years). They attested that there is no sense of women being treat as inferior beings in their villages. The general consensus is that men help with household chores, while a participant explained that only 50% of men may be doing so and not most men. All participants agree that women are expected to complete all household chores as a "woman's duty" – responses range from *sometimes* to *yes*, *almost*. All participants are positive that all agriculture work is done by both men and women, however household chores are looked upon as women's separate, exclusive roles. Most participants believe that women do fully participate in household decision-making,

however a participant elucidated that only some women do so – about 50% of all women in her village/surroundings. The general consensus is that only some women who are educated and with relevant knowledge participate in village-level decision-making processes. There are women-led SHGs created in all four SHGs, two participants are a part of one, two are not – one beneficiary and one Animator. All participants have never personally experienced domestic violence, the general consensus is that there is no known domestic violence in their villages. However, a participant elaborated that there may be rare instances, and if any, are solved or dealt with privately. As a general consensus of all participants, women and girls are very rarely treated unfairly due to patriarchy, with one participant elucidating that they indeed are treated unfairly however, the patriarchal mindset in her community is slowly changing.

All participants are aware of CASA's intervention - one is an Animator, one a Panchayati Samiti member and a beneficiary. All participants are positive that the status of women in their villages has improved after CASA's intervention, as women are freely talking about their issues, leaving village premises for work without men, utilizing the knowledge provided by CASA on govt. schemes, etc. They're collectively of the opinion that CASA must continue the work towards women's participation in their villages.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Work

The roles that participants play as women leaders have two important things in common – none of them have personally experienced domestic violence, across the diverse districts and villages in Maharashtra. This essentially indicates that women who do not experience domestic violence may have a better chance at being a local woman leader in CASA's relevant programme areas. Secondly, agricultural chores are assigned to both men and women; however, household chores are assigned as a separate role to women as their duty. Participants between the ages of 55 to 65 have been child brides, highlighting the commonness of child marriage earlier, however, two participants from Beed aged between 25 to 35 years have also been child brides (all participants from the area). Notably, none of the participants from Gondia have been child brides. Most women in all villages are able to fully participate in household decision-making, but only some women can do so on a village level (if they're educated or have relevant knowledge). Cases of domestic violence occur rarely, and if they do, abusers are never taken to local authorities and conflicts are solved privately, or through community intervention. All villages have women-led SHGs, with the exception of Ramnagar Tanda in Beed, as women hesitate in the creation and participation in one and most participants are a part of SHGs. There is a mixed response to the unfair treatment of women and girls due to a patriarchal mindset, however its existence comes through evidently from Gondia and Beed areas. Finally, CASA's interventions in all three programme areas have been beneficial to women, who are now visibly more independent, are included in decision-making processes at home and villages and are able to address their issues without a male gaze. While we are pleased to know that our contribution truly counts, we certainly need to continue to address many more women's issues and help eradicate them as a priority.

CASA's history with gender work has four defining moments. CASA has always been providing services to women at the centre of our work in rural India since its beginning keeping women at the centre of our work. In CASA's First Forward Plan, Integrated Rural Development Programme and Parliament to People initiatives ensured the participation of women as beneficiaries and leaders in our interventions is imperative. The gender understanding further evolved in the Second Forward Plan in 1990s, when CASA participated in the Beijing Platform for

Action (1995), as we actively began forming women-led SHGs and guiding women leaders at the community level. In 2006, the first Gender Policy was approved by the board and formal gender engagement was initiated (refer to Appendix 3).

Since then, there has been consistent effort to work on gender justice. Each CASA Round Table Meeting is addressed with a comprehensive, evolving gender report, as gender justice plats a key part in CASA's work as across-cutting issue. Besides, a National Gender Task Force has been operative since 2006, although its presence was solidified in 2019. In 2020, the revised Gender Policy was approved by the national board. Furthermore, the formation of a Gender Desk in 2020 to ensure that gender justice is addressed in all our interventions, is the latest highlight in CASA's work towards achieving gender equality. So far, the Gender Desk has not only engaged locally, but also internationally at the UN CSW65, the Generation Equality Forum (GEF), Mexico and is gearing up to engage with peer organizations everywhere at the GEF, Paris later this year. Apart from participating in international engagements, CASA also tries to share and learn from community leaders in vulnerable areas all around the world to help curb the serious and growing problem of gender inequality.

CASA acknowledges the fierce voices of women leaders and reformers such as Sarojini Naidu, Savitribai Phule, Fatima Shaikh, Matangani Hazra, Sulochanabai Dongre and countless others that have dotted the Indian map in our state of colonization, through the freedom struggle, independence and thereafter, making women's voices heard. While the reality of gender equality certainly has a long way to go, CASA continues to work towards a more gender equal India by addressing women's rights, participation in public life, right to a sustainable livelihood, etc. from the grassroots that make-up most of the country.

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Chapter 4

Gender Activism in Colombia: A Critical Focus on Peacemaking and Peacebuilding

Louis Francis Monroy Santander

Introduction

Issues of women´s political participation and representation in peace negotiations, the quality of women´s participation as contrast to demands of women quotas in peacemaking as well as the importance of civil society activism and engagement towards gender issues in peace processes are all prominent in peacebuilding literature. O´Reilly et al. (2015) stress how involvement of women in peace processes leads to agreements more likely to be reached and the probability that agreements can last longer. They also mention that quality of women's participation is more important than the quantity of women participating in peace processes. Goetz and Jenkins (2016) argue that it is equally important that steps are taken to encourage and enable the participation of women´s civil society organizations in peacebuilding.

Gender, interpreted as the relationship between men and women within society, is a crucial optic for analyzing peace and conflict, to understand the impact with which violence affects men, women, and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities differently. This brings opportunities to discuss existing social patriarchal structures often exacerbated by conflict, spaces for victimization particularly affecting women, as well as opportunities for women empowerment emerging amidst conflict. Such is the case with Colombia´s war, a protracted conflict that has seen in the 2016 Havana Peace agreement a historic opportunity, to address the legacies of violence, arising from the adoption of a gender perspective. For Céspedez-Baez (2018) the genderization of Colombian peacebuilding has been product of escalating violence since the 1990s, leading to feminist activism denouncing women´s situation during war.

Colombia´s gender activism has a tradition since the 1980´s, one that prominently promotes principles and values within the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action. Feminist movements in the country have denounced issues of poverty, environment, violence against women, gender equality, expressed in the Declaration. One of Colombia´s historical reports on gender has been UNIFEM´s "Colombian women in the 1985-1995 decade", a foundation of Colombia´s presence at Beijing, addressing issues of political participation, poverty, access to health and education, employment and the issue of violence, themes permanently addressed within Colombia´s activism.

Such dynamics have led to growing women activism in Colombia, through the increase of women associations uniting as victims and non-governmental agents pressuring for agreements, and policies to include women´s concerns in a peace agenda. Under such context, this chapter narrates how gender, through women victims of war´s activism, became a key element in the Havana agreements and what this represents for a feminist civil society. The chapter briefly describes Colombia´s armed conflict, pinning down different moments of violence, bringing a focus on how civilians, and particularly women have been targeted by violence from

multiple armed actors. Then, the text describes the emergence of gender within Colombia´s peacemaking and peacebuilding framework, recognizing how war has particularly affected women but also how such situation allowed spaces for activism, placing women associations in a key space at the Havana negotiations. The chapter continues by looking at peacemaking dispositions that led to including a gender perspective in the agreements, concluding with lessons learned from feminist activism and its location within peacebuilding.

A Brief Snapshot of the Conflict

Colombia´s history developed through various violence moments, showcasing social, political, and economic exclusion and discrimination. Disputes between two main political parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, were reflected in hegemonic and repressive governments in the early XXth century. Dynamics such as the assassination of Liberal politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, a military dictatorship by General Rojas Pinilla, and a bipartisan power-sharing agreement known as "Frente Nacional" (which instead of reducing political and social exclusion, exacerbated it) stand out. The conflict has also been fed by new underlying issues: state absence and institutional inefficiency (particularly within the administration of justice), illicit crops, drug trafficking, unequal land distribution, and social inequality (González Arana and Trejos Rosero, 2016). Such dynamics have led to a war waged against civilians by various armed organizations: guerrillas and their dissident groups, paramilitaries, criminal gangs, and the Colombian military (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

Violence can be pinpointed to "La violencia", an era of bipartisan conflict between guerrilla factions of Liberal and Conservative political parties, located between 1948 to 1958. The first decades of war are understood in three moments: first, the explosion of political violence after assassination of populist leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán in 1948 leading to a rural bipartisan war; a second phase, giving rise to armed guerrillas (such as the Colombian Revolution Armed Forces or "FARC") in the mid to late sixties together with the birth of a repressive "security statute" shaping a militarized response to guerrillas; and a third stage that sees changes both in violence and in the state´s approach to conflict: the arrival in the eighties of drug-related violence with criminal cartels as key actors in the conflict coupled with the rise of paramilitary groups, and an interest of several administrations to engage in peace talks with some of these armed groups.

Since the nineties, Colombia´s violence has intensified, prompted by the role drug-trafficking has played in the economy and the State´s counterinsurgency approaches, whilst broad political dynamics of conflict remain present. Left wing guerrillas and state maintained for long periods of time a contest to determine political power, territorial and population control in rural and peripheral areas of the country where the Colombian state is particularly precarious.

Such complexity, expressed in wide ranging issues and actors, has taken its toll upon Colombia´s citizens. According to reports by the Victims Unique Record (Registro Único de Víctimas - RUV) (2020) in Colombia 9,099,358 people are recognized as victims of conflict. Through Law 1448 of 2011 (Congreso de Colombia, 2011), victims are recognized as "those persons who individually or collectively have suffered harm from acts occurring since 1 January 1985, as a result of violations of international humanitarian law or serious and manifest violations of international human rights law, occurring during the internal armed conflict" (Article 3). This population has been affected by forced displacement, homicide, threats, for-

ced disappearance, dispossession of land and property, sexual violence, terrorist attacks, and kidnapping. The identified victim population corresponds in 50.3% to women and 49.6% to men, a lower number of victims identified as LGBTI, intersex or did not report their gender (RUV, 2020).

Gender in Conflict: From Violence to Activist Spaces

Within the abovementioned conflict context, women and children have presented a differential affectation from other victim groups. For women, their vulnerability is greater considering that in patriarchal societies, prior discrimination and insecurity is added to the social control exercised by armed groups over women's bodies (Arnoso-Martínez, Cárdenas-Castro, Beristain, and Afonso, 2017). Women are at risk of sexual violence, with the "objective of wounding, terrorizing and weakening the enemy to advance in the control over territories and economic resources. Women can be direct or collateral victims of different forms of violence" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2005).

This has led to recognizing how women suffered a historical and social burden of discrimination based on the patriarchal character of society, condition further exacerbated by violence (Sánchez and Oliveros, 2014). Sánchez and Oliveros explain the plurality of experiences of being a Colombian woman, stating:

> Within the situation of the women's victimhood, several qualities converge requiring holistic and comprehensive vision regarding all the aspects that constitute victimization. These meanings include the fact of being a woman and Afro-descendant, woman and indigenous person, a woman in poverty, among other aspects that require a differential approach that encompasses all spheres of said female victim (p. 178).

There is a recognition that rural women suffer from multiple victimizations as they face the patriarchal burden of being a woman within such society, added to the fact that the armed conflict unfolds more directly in rural areas (Sánchez and Oliveros, 2014). Another feature arising is the differentiated impact conflict has on the diversity of women (as it exacerbates discrimination, exclusion, and violence against them), and how it rearranges gender relations.

Testimonies collected by the Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz account for this (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2005):

> "After my husband was murdered, as a consequence I was forcibly displaced, to come stay with my mother, work and take care of my children…. I began taking responsibility for my home, which was no longer traditional, because I became a female head of household. Everything changed because of the violent incidents".

> "I am a black woman displaced from the Chocó ten years ago. I lost my brother, who disappeared when the paramilitary forces took him away, just because he took part in a peasant march. They forced us to leave our lands, they also took my husband away and three months passed with us knowing whether he was dead or alive. With the help of the

> priest in my town I arrived at Barranquilla with my 6 children. It was very challenging to support them, but we are making it …"

> "I notice that my children behave differently since their father died. We have had very difficult times, especially because I have had to play the role of mother and father. This is a very harsh challenge. I can't find any answer for what has happened, but I am eager to continue onward and try to be fine to protect the ones who are under my responsibility".

While men often make up death toll figures, women are the ones enduring trauma from the conflict (Sánchez & Rodríguez, 2015), they suffer not only direct damage but also indirectly, as they are left alive to deal with the void left from their deceased sons, husbands or relatives. Women and children constitute 79% of Colombia´s IDP population, a figure that permits recognition of the differentiated impacts of conflict on women and girls (Bouvier, 2016). It is out of the prevalence of forced displacement narratives in public opinion, that the Colombian feminist movement moved beyond historical struggles for equality in spaces like the family, workplace and public life, to focus on the situation of women in war (Wills Obregón, 2007). Through field interviews with IDP´s, Seguin (2020) comments how women have seen through displacement an expansion of their social roles: taking over the breadwinning responsibility in their families. Seguin recognizes how a positive cognitive restructuring has empowered Colombian women victims of conflict: women gaining confidence from overcoming violence, being more future focused and hopeful for their children´s prospects, with a proactive attitude that has seen unity in women peacebuilding associations.

Another issue comes from how physical, psychological, and sexual violence exercised against women seeks not only to attack the person but becomes a tactic of punishment and control used by the armed groups. Céspedez-Baez (2018) comments that in Colombia´s feminist reading of forced displacement, women fled from their towns to get away from a growing incidence or threat of sexual violence. Sexual violence is used when there is a perceived disobedience on the part of a certain community towards the mandates of the armed group or when there is a perceived link to an enemy group. As described by the United Nations Rapporteur (cited in Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2005):

> Perhaps more than the honor of the victim, it is the perceived honor of the enemy that is targeted in the perpetration of sexual violence against women; it is seen and often experienced as a means of humiliating the opposition. Sexual violence against women is meant to demonstrate victory over the men of the other group who have failed to protect their women. It is a message of castration and emasculation of the enemy group. It is a battle among men fought over the bodies of women.

Equally relevant has been the recognition of the Colombian State's responsibility for its action or omission against women's rights. Women's victims of armed conflict distrust the Colombian justice system as it doesn't guarantee their protection and security, feeling that justice serves violent people. When women report cases, they are persecuted and left without protection from those who threaten them (Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, 2013b).

> "The truth about what the war has meant for women does not seem to be of interest to the institutions that are obliged to guarantee justice. (...) "Hours are spent listening to the perpetrators", (...) They feel that the perpetrators are better served and accompanied than the victims, and

> they demand a response to their demands (...) Women victims are not
> only bearers of pain, but they also have ideas about how to rebuild their
> lives that should be the basis for reparation" (Ruta Pacífica de las Muje-
> res, 2013b, p. 477).

Due to the historic discrimination Colombian women have endured, within and outside of conflict, together with the differentiated effects of war on women and girls, this has forcefully brought a space for activism, as women are left to pick up the broken pieces from war. They are the ones uniting and organizing in favor of themselves, their families, and communities. Women see not only an opportunity for peace and repair but also for taking political action, changing the structural conditions that make the places they inhabit a hostile environment for feminized bodies. Women acting collectively towards peace see in their work the opportunity to redefine gender relationships by breaking into spaces of political power - such as the Havana agreements - (Sánchez & Rodríguez, 2015). Such effects have justified women´s presence and leading role in peace, bringing the idea that gender equality and enhanced women political participation can repair the legacy of sexual and gender-based violence (Bouvier, 2016).

Various associations emerged out of the will of women victimized within the conflict. These women claim to have suffered multiple and severe forms of victimization before becoming leaders. It is interesting to see how women overcome the violation of human rights, their own and with their loved ones, transcending their condition of victims to become social leaders in a country where this role is threatened by armed actors (Restrepo, 2016). The support between women victims and survivors to heal and empower themselves, strengthens the social fabric, favoring the construction of peace by fortifying women's agency (Restrepo, 2016, p. 2). The following section will focus on one of the key achievements of this type of activism: the inclusion of gender within decisions at the Havana negotiating table.

Institutional Pathways to Gender Equality Through Women´s Activism

In analyzing Colombia´s development of a gender perspective, Alvarado-Cóbar et. al (2018) highlight the U.N.´s Women, Peace and Security framework (WPS) as enabler for addressing gender within armed conflict. It is the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 the instrument for addressing the specific needs of women, supporting local women´s peace initiatives and promoting the protection of women´s rights as something more that their presence in a negotiation process.   Three lessons derive from Alvaro-Cobar´s analysis:

- Excluding a gender perspective is detrimental to peacebuilding, with serious consequences for the kind of post-conflict environment emerging from it

- Conceiving women as victims within the resolution has made protection a key pillar that often overshadows the other dimensions of the WPS agenda: participation, prevention, and peacebuilding.

- Gender as a perspective for analyzing conflict, requires understanding power relations between genders, and a consideration of power dynamics: how such relations occur within the existing conflict.

Such considerations can be identified in Colombia´s adoption of a gender dimension within its peace process. The Havana agreements are internationally recognized as "paradigm-breaking" by their efforts on implementing gender approaches on each point of the accords. The Havana negotiations were the first (out of a decades long history of peacemaking endeavors) to create a gender sub-commission reviewing the whole text of the agreement, guaranteeing provisions for women empowerment and gender equity. The first references to gender in Colombian prior to Havana emerge in the Justice and Peace law (975 of 2005) with a small mention of the need to adopt a gender perspective to the conflict and its finalization (Torregrosa, Mazuera & Mahecha 2018) In 2008, Colombia´s Constitutional Court recognized, through sentence T- 496, that this law had gaps in terms of security and protection to female victims, becoming an obstacle to their right to truth and justice, since they were being killed. The Court decreed that the law must be adjusted to include a gender approach (Guzmán & Uprimny 2010), setting a judicial precedent, recognizing the need to address the conflict and the initiatives to end it from a differential perspective.

This precedent was ratified in 2008 by the same court through the "092 Auto" resolution, acknowledging war has a differential impact on women, calling on the government to implement an institutional strategy for restituting displaced women's rights (Gallego 2017). Parallel to institutional developments, women's organizations engaged in bottom-up work, ensuring that differential perspectives were considered by decision makers. These efforts bear fruit with ratification of law 1448 of 2011 (the land restitution and victims' law) where gender was included as a guiding principle (Gallego 2017). Such approach began its path to become not only a social exigence, but a legal obligation in Colombian transitional justice.

Since women victim organizations had been fighting to be included in transitional justice discussions for many years, in 2012, when negotiations between the Colombian government and "FARC" guerrillas began, they were ready with an agenda for inclusion in peacemaking. Gradually, women made their way into the negotiations, not only by including petitions, but by being part of the negotiation teams. Their main success was creating a gender sub-commission mandated with incorporating gender approaches to every point of the agreement. This commission was formed by 5 female members of each delegation, working to fight against the invisibility of women's special needs and harms in an agreement that from the beginning was being negotiated only by men (Bedoya et al. 2016).

This commission included eight thematic axes (Bedoya et al, 2016):

1. Equal conditions for men and women in accessing and formalizing land property.

2. Respect for economic, social, and cultural rights of women and people with diverse gender identities in rural areas.

3. Promotion of women participation in decision making bodies, following principles of parity and universality.

4. Protection and prevention measures designed for specific risks related to women.

5. Access to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition underlining the differential ways in which armed conflict affected women.

6. Public recognition, non-stigmatization and dissemination of the hard work performed by women as political subjects to end armed conflict.

7. State commitment towards empowerment and consolidation of women's organizations aiming to women political and social participation.

8. Disaggregated information systems to monitor the implementation of the agreements.

Such provisions helped shape institutions and legislation needed to start deconstructing the structural patriarchal violence victimizing women, contributing to overcoming the conflict as well as the sociopolitical conditions allowing it. The agreement, and through it the whole state infrastructure, acknowledged that women play a key role in peacefully solving conflicts and in consolidating peace. It admits that war hits women differently than men, requiring concrete and differential measures to face those risks (Bedoya et al. 2016). This last achievement is not only a recognition of women´s activism, but a major shift of the official discourse regarding women's role, risks, and harms in the new society under construction (Gallego 2017).

Colombia´s Peacebuilding: The Trajectory of Feminist Activism

The right to be a part of the negotiation process was not given to women by political elites from during negotiations, or because they considered it a natural right for Colombian women. It came out of a feminist political fight they undertook. Negotiation teams were initially conceived as masculine political spaces. However, long before the first encounters between government and FARC, women were playing a role as peacemakers in local communities (Bouvier 2016). Women organizations have had a tremendous impact in their communities, becoming recognized leaders, and a source of legitimacy, justifying their presence in peacemaking. Even if the political international atmosphere was positive for women's participation in peacemaking, earning a space in the negotiations came because of ongoing activism and important commitment to peace long before peace negotiations were even considered, making their way into a traditionally masculinized domain.

Despite such achievement, social understanding and implementation of gender has not been void of obstacles. Céspedes-Baez (2018) explains that the agreements deployed a wide understanding of gender, allowing shared social understandings of the conflict and strategies to resolve its structural causes. Yet, there have been areas in which consensus had not been reached, evidenced through social argument stating that the agreement subverted traditional heterosexual values in the country, denouncing gender as an imposed ideology. The peace accord, via its gender dispositions, allowed inclusion of a fluid perspective where LGBTQ communities could have a role in transitional justice, ordering measures to promote the constitutional rights of LGBTQ persons. Yet, the use of gender in the text has been socially confusing as it sometimes identifies women and the gender binary, yet in others it is used to refer to sexual orientation and diverse gender identities, creating spaces for attacking the agreement.

Havana´s principles of equity, non-discrimination, and acceptance of diverse gender identities was far too ambitious for what the deeply catholic, overtly conservative, and non-educated parts of Colombian society were willing to accept. Evidence of this asseveration is the controversy in the 2016 peace referendum, which voted against the agreement. Traditional sectors of Colombian society actively mobilized to condemn the gender perspective, labelling it a conspiracy to destroy traditional family values, indoctrinating children into a sort of new homosexual world regime. Therefore, after losing the referendum, government and FARC had to replace the word "gender" by "women" along the final text (Ruiz-Navarro 2020). This illustrates how political changes were happening out of activism and weren't necessarily happening alongside cultural changes permitting deconstruction of patriarchal structures that sustained multiple expressions of violence against women and LGBTI+ communities (Velasquez 2016).

As a response, Colombia´s feminist critique insists that state institutions must make more efforts in a more eclectic way to destabilize patriarchal hegemonies. "Deep transformations in areas as fundamental as education are needed to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination, to resignify traditional gender roles, to inculcate respect to diversity, to promote women-'s autonomy, empowerment and leadership, as well as reeducate and sensitize men in order to develop new, more inclusive and less violent masculinities" (Vargas & Pérez 2018, p.410). Critics argue that the gender perspective assumed by the agreement falls short of compensating for the historic debt that State and society have with women, especially rural women. The absence of gender perspectives in the state's conduct contributed to violence against women and has worsened its consequences, since society, state and even academia have ignored it, offering partial, insufficient, or inadequate responses (Guzmán & Uprimny 2010).

Even with specialized mechanisms to repair and allow justice to victims such as a specialized court or a Truth Commission, women face numerous "obstacles to access justice, that might also affect their possibilities to participate in the truth-building process" (Guzmán & Uprimny 2010, p. 17). Among such obstacles are the persisting discriminatory patterns in the practices of public officers and judges, fear to stigmatization, threats, and failures to provide protection to victims and witness' programs, economic and geographic barriers, specific barriers to indigenous women, lack of qualifications of the public officers to adequately respond to gender-based violence, lack of psychosocial support for the victims, among many others (Guzmán & Prieto 2013).

Particularly concerning has been the negative turn against the agreements after a new administration was elected. Even though the accords were widely participatory, 301 women's organizations presented more than 7 thousand contributions to the agreement (Fundación Ideas para la Paz 2017), feminists denounce lack of political will from the government of Iván Duque (elected in 2017) to implement not only the gender specific commitments of Havana, but all of it. Women's organizations denounce government negligence to comply with commitments acquired through the peace accord, especially those related to gender. A report on the implementation of the agreement published in 2018 shows that from 130 concrete and measurable commitments related to gender the government signed, 51% have not even started yet, 38% are at minimum implementation, 7% are at a medium level of implementation and only 4% have been fully implemented. Once again, a differential result can be evidenced since specific gender commitments present a delay on implementation of 14% more than the general commitments (Instituto Kroc et al. 2018). These delays show a lack of will from the current government, as well as disparagement for the women's desire of peace, equity, and specific needs, putting in danger their lives and the opportunity of a deep social transformation of the conditions that permitted the occurrence of human rights violations against women during Colombia's conflict.

Underestimation of the fact that male chauvinism is deeply rooted in Colombian culture and that it has constituted the basis of the traditional Colombian society for several years, coupled with women´s difficulty in accessing justice for women and lack of political will have all undermined a serious, participative attempt to transform patriarchal structures that placed women as main victims of conflict. However, activists continue to fight by calling all women to massively-mobilize to shield and protect the major step this agreement represents to the feminist fight. Such calls bring themes present in the Beijing Declaration and Plan for action at the center of feminist activism discussions, concerns expressed since 1995 and are part of current critical discussions about Havana and the current tensions within Colombia´s still ongoing violence that affect women. The aims of gender equality, eradication of violence against women, empowerment and extension of women´s participation in political, social and economic deci-

sions on development that are structural to Beijing´s dispositions are also central to Colombia´s present needs and possibilities for peacebuilding.

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Chapter 5

Including Afghan Women in Peace Talks – Now or Never?

Fereschta Sahrai

Introduction

According to the Global Peace Index, Afghanistan was ranked the least peaceful country in the world for the second consecutive year in 2020. Despite efforts that have been made to find a peaceful solution for the conflict, which led to the US-Taliban agreement in February 2020 and the beginning of subsequent Intra-Afghan talks in September 2020, with the announcement of the international troop withdrawal by September 2021 and a parallel increase in violence, the fear of the Intra-Afghan peace process collapsing and a relapse in continued civil war or complete Taliban dominance is omnipresent.

UNAMA noted an increase of violence of about 45 percent since the Intra-Afghan talks began in September 2020 compared to the last three months of 2019 with an increase in women deaths by 13 per cent (UNAMA & OHCHR, 2021, February, p. 11-13). Besides, the Afghan Human Rights Defenders Committee (AHRDC) is reporting of 17 human rights defenders being killed since September 2020 until May 2021, 9 of them being journalists and more than 200 more having faced serious threats without any party having been held accountable for it (International Federation for Human Rights. 2021, May 19).

Considering the current situation, the linkage between an increase or decrease of violence and continuing power struggles over the future socio-political system or power-sharing formats within the framework of the Intra-Afghan dialogues is undeniable. It further raises questions on the role of Afghan women who were promised liberation from the strict Taliban rule and preservation of their rights back in 2001. Their positioning in the overall peace process comes to the fore and deserves high priority, not only in terms of their participation in the peace processes which have until today been mainly coined by male and foreign dominance, but even more so regarding the preservation of their rights and their socio-political positioning in the transitional phase of US troop withdrawal and especially thereafter.

Women's Role in Peacebuilding

More than 75 years after the signing of the UN Charter expressing "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" (UN, 1945, June 26, Preamble) and 25 years after setting the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action in September 1995 with the aim to "advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity" (Beijing Declaration, 1995, September, page 2, point 3), violation of human rights and dignity, gender inequality and here specifically women's equal participation in peacebuilding

on higher levels are still an issue, aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic that raised general inequality, poverty and domestic violence in many parts of the world.

Regarding the role of women in peacebuilding, empirical studies have shown that peace negotiations with stronger participation and influence of women not only resulted in more agreements to be reached, but also increased its probability of implementation as well as its positive correlation with the durability of peace (Paffenholz et al., 2016; Krause et al., 2018, p. 3; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Nonetheless, only 13 out of 130 peace agreements between 1990 and 2014 have been signed by women (Krause et al., 2018, p. 3).

Similar disproportionalities can be seen in the case of the Afghanistan peace processes, where no woman and not even the Afghan government as state entity was included in the overall 11 rounds of US-Taliban talks in Doha. In the ongoing Intra-Afghan peace negotiation frameworks, only 4 out of 21 members of the negotiating team on the Afghan government's side are women and no women is participating on the Taliban's side.

The trajectory of women's participation in national and international peace processes on Afghanistan since the Beijing declaration and Action Plan gives an insight into where Afghan women were, are and will be positioned in the future when it comes to their active socio-political inclusion and in line with the UN Charter's prohibition of the use of force (Article 2), stresses the questionability of war as a means for peace and protection of people's, specifically women's rights in the first place.

Trajectory of Women's Participation in the Afghanistan Peace Processes

When the Beijing declaration was announced in 1995, Afghanistan was in the midst of a brutal civil war between different Mujahiddeen parties, warlords, tribal leaders and the rising Taliban. 'Mujahideen' here refers to the multiple Islamist parties, mainly supported by the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan such as the Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin, Jamiat-e Islami, Ittehad-e Islami, Hizb-e Islami Khalis and other sunni-Islamic opposition groups, who after fighting the Soviet forces and the Afghan communist government, got entangled in attempts of forming a united front (first from exile in Pakistan, then in Afghanistan), but ended up in different rival factions, fighting over power and leadership, drowning the country in a lawless and brutal civil war and eventually leading to the Taliban takeover of power.

In its broadest sense, 'Mujahideen' are "Muslims who fight on behalf of the faith or the Muslim community" (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.), pursuing the "human struggle to promote what is right and to prevent what is wrong" (Ibid.) in the religious and ethical faith of Islam. In the case of Afghanistan, it at times designated everyone who fought the Soviet occupation and with it the communist government during the war from 1978 to 1992, as such also the aforementioned parties. However, its usage in the broad sense has oftentimes been instrumentalized, misused, used indistinctly or simply changed with the political context. Under the constantly rivaling armed fights of these groups, the people of Afghanistan were exposed to daily attacks, rocket launching, mine planting, robbery, etc. Women specifically were suffering from sexual harassment and violence, killing, rape, forced marriage, abduction, strict applications of Islamic principles and other crimes as opposed to certain liberties they enjoyed during the Communist regime and prior the monarchy under former king Zahir Shah.

With the Taliban take-over of power in 1996, atrocities of the civil war have been ruled out, re-

lative security established in the sense that rocket launching, armed fighting, corruption, robbery and other delinquencies have been nearly abolished, yet women have been equally banished from the public sphere under the exertion of extremely restrictive readings of Islamic principles by the Taliban and hence deprived from economic, political and social life spheres. Women in Afghanistan have hitherto seen violence and banishment from the internal warring parties and ignorance by the international community.

With the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) buildings in New York on September 11th 2001, international attention has been redirected towards Afghanistan through the march-in of US troops and the declared `war on terror´. Morally underpinned by the urgency of establishing democracy and securing human rights and specifically women's rights, the Taliban were ousted from power through the US military Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) with the support of the Northern Alliance, consisting of Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara fighting groups. Reconstruction efforts began, enabling parts of the population, especially women and ethnic minorities in bigger cities a relatively free exertion of their socio-cultural and socio-political interests. However, when it comes to peacemaking on a high level, the first international conference on Afghanistan on December 5th 2001 in Bonn (Germany) did not deliver the moral goods it has promised when legitimizing the war. The aim of the conference to choose the leader for an interim government and to initiate further democratic processes led to an agreement, signed under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) by the various Afghan factions. Nonetheless, only 4 women (most of them exiled Afghan women) participated in the conference compared to 36 men (Zeier, 2001, November 28) while the Taliban were excluded completely. The included factions were limited to "leaders representing certain military forces but in no way close to the real composition of Afghan society" (Ansari, 2021, April 14), reflecting the malformation of the state-building process right from the beginning. With regard to women's participation, it is further being reported that "just days before the conference, it was still not clear whether or not women would be participating" and that it was not until "the delegations actually began arriving (…) did it become clear that the delegations had decided to heed international pressure and include women" (Zeier, 2001, November 28).

A transitional government was eventually established and Hamid Karzai selected as chairman through an *Emergency Loya Jirga* in June 2002, attended by 1550 delegates, only about 200 of them women. (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d). The process was presented as "the most democratic process in Afghan history to date" (Fänge, 2012, p. 3), although there was just one female candidate Masooda Jalal compared to 17 male candidates running for presidential elections. Many participants reported "backroom deals", complaining that warlords and commanders dominated the process and women were silenced. Although the first Ministry of Women's Affairs was established within the framework of the interim government administration, its minister Sima Samar stated that "this is not a democracy; it is a rubber stamp" and explained that "everything has [had] already been decided by the powerful ones" (Disillusioned delegates walk out of loya jirga, 2002).

A year later, at the *Constitutional Loya Jirga* in December 2003, similar procedures were reported. Although women, included in the process, presented 20 percent of the 500 delegates and seven out of the 35 members were present in the Constitutional Commission, intimidation by warlords and other powerful stakeholders dominated the scene (Grenfell, 2004, p. 2). Given these circumstances, Paffenholz et al. rightly points out that inclusion should not be restricted to "counting women, but making women count" (2016).

The post-Taliban phase did bring manifold achievements in the form of national and international documents being signed and national action plans being released. On March 5th 2003 for instance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

women (CEDAW) was acceded.

With presidential elections launched in 2004, the Afghan Constitution was drafted stating in its Article 22 that "the citizens of Afghanistan – whether man or woman – have equal rights and duties before the law" (2004). The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) was released in 2008 emphasizing that "women will constitute an increasingly important voice in Afghan society and politics" (p. 16). Subsequently, the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) was launched in June 2015 stressing "women's empowerment and gender equality" (p. 9). And recently the National Action Plan-2 (NAP-2) beginning in July 2019 was published emphasizing that "transparency, civic participation and accountability" as well as "women empowerment" will be pursued through the Development of Women Grand Council and National Women Empowerment Plan.

All these documents and commitments show progress towards the inclusion of women on paper. However, practical implementations in the field of high-level national and international peace processes are still limited. The NAP-2 document further raises questions on why the relevancy of women's issues is solely assigned to the OGP value of public participation (see Open Government Partnership-Afghanistan (OGP), January 2020 - August 2021, p. 8) and thus legitimizes the assumption of women's inclusion again having a solely symbolic value.

While these commitments and declarations certainly did contribute to and enabled the participation and inclusion of women in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, in the developmental and education sector, in the Afghan parliament and other government institutions as well as their coordination in civil society organizations in Afghanistan, substantial gaps still remain when it comes to peace negotiations and women's leadership positions with decision-making power on high-level Track I level of governance. This domain still remains a male and foreign coordination privilege until today.

At the National Consultative Peace Jirga in 2010 which brought into existence the High Peace Council (HCP), attributing it the role of advancing peace talks with the Taliban, 80 percent of the participants were men and nearly 20 percent were women. The disproportionality in participation resulted in the actual inclusion of only nine female members into the HPC compared to the appointed 70 male members (Cordaid et al., 2020, September, p. 8). This worrisome inequality in women's participation numbers constitutes a challenge for gender equality and for the peace process. This inequality is reflected in terms of the content agenda where "gender issues were not adequately addressed" and no open discussion took place regarding women's "concerns on rape, sexual and physical violence" committed against them, neither regarding the issue of women's rights in peace negotiations (Hamid & Latif, n.d., p. 156). These types of repeating neglects of women's key concerns lead to women only being relegated to "a small role in peace building and reconciliation in the public sphere" (Oxfam, 2016, September, p. 2).

Despite the movement and network of vivid and resilient women's groups in Afghanistan with activists repeatedly demanding a 25% quota for women on the High Peace Council as well as on the Provincial Peace Councils (Afghan Women's Declaration, 2011, December 5, point 14), their demands translated into reforms only in 2016. Consequently, more Afghan women have been added to the Executive Advisory Board in 2017 with one woman having been included as deputy head which temporarily led to an increase in women's participation to 30% at the Jirga held in 2018 (Kakar, 2019, June 13).

While the peace deal between the Afghan government and the armed group *Hizb-e-Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is oftentimes being upheld as "an important precedent" (Cordaid et al.,

2020, September, p. 4) due to the leading role of the female deputy head of the High Peace Council (HPC) involved, assuming a direct correlation between the "success" of the deal and one women being involved is far-fetched, without discarding empirically supported findings of the importance of women's active participation in peace negotiations.

Once these developments of upgrading women's participations in peace talks within the framework of the HPC assumed shape, a separate advisory board was established in 2019 and the dissolution of the HPC was carried out making space for the establishment of the State Ministry for Peace in July 2019 and the High Council of National Reconciliation (HCNR) in May 2020. The latter was based on an agreement between president Ashraf Ghani and chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, both men, and also involved contested people such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and other former leaders of the same Islamist parties that had drowned the country into a brutal civil in the nineteen nineties.

Hence, not only do women face quantitative limitations in participation and restrictions in terms of being appointed leadership roles within public institutions responsible for the peace process, but also struggle with the dissolution of whole institutions due to their dysfunctionality which cause serious barriers in advancing women's full and dignified inclusion and hampers a sustainable peace likewise.

Despite Afghan women's effort, activism and good coordination with women all over the country which in December 2011 resulted in the Afghan Women's Declaration, presented at the second International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn and again in February 2019 in the broadened Declaration of Afghan Women's National Consensus for Peace, their claim for peace, ceasefire and respect for women's needs and views did not result in a meaningful peaceful solution to the conflict. Women's potential as actors for change is still constantly being minimized not only through limited and non-decisive participation, but also through constant parallel institutional recreational formats that undermine the achieved goals. The second International Conference on Afghanistan on December 5th 2011 in Bonn is another example for how women are being sidelined by not being considered a full part of the government's delegation, but rather as part of civil society delegation with a limited speaking slot of three minutes (Human Rights Watch, 2011, October 30).

Moving ahead with frameworks of peacemaking at the national and international level, it is clear that formal peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government were majorly backed, supported and hosted by foreign countries. One example is that of the Murree talks in Pakistan in July 2015 which took place without any involvement of women at all. Further attempts, such as the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) established by Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States in 2015, with meetings held in 2016 - intended to draw the Taliban to the negotiation table - were followed by four rounds of peace talks within the framework of the Moscow format which intended to provide multilateral format for regional actors to push forward the Afghan peace process between 2016 and 2019.

While only one woman was present in the first round of Moscow talks in November 2018, two women participated in the second and third round in February and May 2019, before decreasing to zero presence of women in the final series of talks in September 2019.

The numbers of women participating in national and international peace processes alone remain minimal, bordering absurdity. On top of that, women's groups complained that neither the QCG group, nor the Moscow Format were inclusive in the sense of active participation of women (Safi, 2017), including the fact that no clear information or guarantees were articulated regarding women's rights in peace negotiations as well as in its aftermath.

While in the mentioned formats, women were at least minimally present, the following peace talks held between the US and the Taliban in Doha between 2018 and 2020 culminated in a deal between the two parties after 11 rounds of talks with no women involvement in any of them. Parallel intra-Afghan dialogue formats between civil society and Taliban representatives in April 2019 solely constituted an informal meeting of about six hours and a two-day intra-Afghan dialogue between Taliban and 50 politicians and civil society activists, 11 of them being female delegates (Cordaid et al., 2020, September, p. 33-34).

These sequences in the Afghan peace processes show repeating patterns of neglect towards putting into practice written and agreed-upon commitments to address women's concerns and fully realize their active participation in shaping the socio-political landscape both by national and international key stakeholders.

Cordaid et al. revealed that out of "67 exploratory meetings, formal and informal negotiations and internationally backed consultations between 2005 and 2020, (…) women were present on only 15 occasions (22%)" (2020, September, p. 3). This clearly reveals the elite character of negotiation frameworks and dominance of the overall peace process not only by male but also by foreign forces, thus manifesting the exclusion and marginalization of women as well as large parts of the civil society in repeating cycles.

Violence Against Women in Afghanistan and Dichotomies of Their Participation

The violence perpetrated against women in Afghanistan can be understood by applying Galtung's classification of direct, structural and cultural violence. This will help in understanding the different components of the conflicts within the peace arrangements that are hindering women's full participation at high-level peacebuilding level accordingly and reveal others that bear the potential to enable women's inclusion for sustainable peace.

Galtung's definition of direct violence reflects the conventional notion of violence, as an act of direct physical or *psychological harm*. Physical harm just covers the *somatic* damage that the human body is suffering whereas psychological violence covers broader dimensions of mental impediment, like for example "lies, brainwashing, threats, indoctrinations of various kinds, etc. that serve to decrease mental potentialities" (Galtung, 1969, p. 169). There are *negative* as well as *positive* means of influencing, meaning either in form of punishments or by means of rewards (Galtung, 1969, p. 170). This differentiation enables a deeper understanding of *structural violence*.

The first type of violence that women in Afghanistan are facing on a daily basis is direct violence as a consequence of war, be it in form of bombardments, rocket launching, targeted attacks, domestic violence, abduction, forced marriage, but also intimidation, manipulation, brainwashing and harassment of multiple kinds. The repeated demands for ceasefire by women's as well as civil society organizations with the support of the Ulema and tribal elders in the country can and did function as peace enhancing factors by raising awareness for the human costs of war, maintaining the public national as well as international attention and thus being present in public discourses. However, the real-life abolition and prevention of direct violence requires more than just an addition of exclusive peacemaking frameworks and a constant struggle of women and civil society activism. Addressing root causes of the conflict as well as of direct violence, the elimination of structural and cultural violence as exerted within

both warfare and peacemaking frameworks are indispensable to break the cycle of political suppression and cultural oppression that hamper sustainable and positive peace in its sense of establishing social justice and equity at all ends.

While direct violence is described as "an intended act of commission", structural violence encompasses "unintended acts of omission (if intended, then they are acts of commission)" (Galtung, 2010, p. 7). This type of violence finds its embedment in the structure of a society meaning that "violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations" (Galtung, 1969, p. 168). Now in both cases of exertion of influence - *negative* as well as *positive* - "human beings are effectively prevented from realizing their potentialities" (Galtung, 1969, p. 170).

Structural violence can manifest itself in different dimensions. Five of these are being specified here to help locating them in real-life conflict constellations within the peace processes in Afghanistan. First, *marginalization*, meaning "to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) and *exclusion*, meaning "to prevent someone or something from entering a place or taking part in an activity" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) are being classified by Galtung as dimensions of structural violence. Second, *discrimination* describes the degradation and followingly marginalization and exclusion of a person or group of people due to some specifically defined characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, etc.). Third, *political suppression* as yet another dimension of structural violence is closely linked to the aforementioned aspects and can have different mechanisms (economic, cultural, health-related, educational, etc.) which prevents a full political participation and inclusion and hence enhances the discrepancy between the actual and the potential. Fourth, *denial of assistance* for its part entails all sorts of omissions in actions, but also omission in transparent transfer of knowledge and information. Finally, *segmentation* and *fragmentation* which encompass the division of societal groups, structures, etc. with *fragmentation* entailing a functional component of disabling the segmented parts to be fully functional and integrated, constitute structural violence.

All these forms of structural violence have been perpetuated alongside peace rhetoric and their manifestation in writing, as the trajectory of the peace processes has shown. The marginalization, exclusion and discrimination of Afghan women right from the beginning of the so called democratization process for the preservation of human rights and women rights within the framework of the first Bonn conference on Afghanistan in 2001 is just one example of the congenital defect of structural peace. Their representation faced severe restriction in terms of numbers as well as of type of representation majorly through Afghan women in exile. Subsequent national formats of conflict resolution through Jirgas have repeated structural violence in form of political oppression by silencing, threatening or ignoring women *per se*. The joint declaration by Taliban and Afghan government representatives at the peace talks in Moscow in February 2019 entailing the "protection of social, economic, political and educational rights of the Afghan women in line with Islamic principles" (Langari, 2019, February 6), yet leaving Afghan women in the dark of what this declaration exactly means for the rights of women in everyday life constitutes yet another example of structural violence in form of denial of assistance, withholding direct access to and clarification of information. The US-Taliban deal signed a year later was still very obscure in clarifying "how Afghanistan will look in terms of governance, fundamental rights, or economic development apart from vague mentions by the Taliban negotiators about a sharia-based system and the ills of immorality, particularly in relation to women's rights." (Hamta et al., 2020, August 7, p. 11), thus inflicting additional denial of assistance as well as psychological harm to female participants of these talks and women in Afghanistan in general and preventing their full exertion as actors of change.

The third type of violence that is key for women's participation in peace processes is cultural violence, covering "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). The basic mechanism of *cultural violence* consists of legitimizing *direct and structural violence* and at the same time setting them as moral value to be acceptable to the society. Rigid behavior codices like those exerted under the Taliban regime, like mandatory wearing of the hijab, growing beards for men, prohibition of music, etc. and using these self-imposed codices to legitimize *direct violence* like lapidation, lashes, torture, etc. or structural violence in forms of exclusion of groups from society, prohibition to practice a profession, etc., are all defined as cultural violence, emanating from mental, ideological, religious or cultural social constructions. Making violent acts opaque is another form of *cultural violence* (Galtung, 1990, p. 292), oftentimes exerted in secret frameworks of negotiations or as exerted by the media in form of detention and distortion of information.

Major drivers of the conflict and what can be termed as structural as well as cultural violence, are manifested in the "institutionalized abuse of power and institutionalized misogyny affecting women as one half of the population" (Hamta et al., 2020, August 7, p. 8), nationally as well as internationally and taken together, reflect political oppression of women by silencing their voices in decisive peace negotiation formats, exclusion of women from high-level peace talks and from signatory authority, marginalization in the sense of acknowledging them in most peace frameworks just as part of civil society and not as full negotiation participants, discrimination in the form of not sharing with them the same access to resources and spaces, and by not making women's rights concerns a priority on the negotiation agenda, segmentation and fragmentation via unbalanced support by international donors through particular focus on national women's groups in Kabul, overviewing local potentials of grassroots initiatives.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that in order for national or international conflict resolution mechanisms - be it in forms of negotiations or Jirgas - to be successful in terms of leading to (sustainable) peace as outcome, all these different types of violence need to be deciphered, labeled as such and addressed. Differentiating between aspects of conflict that allow heterogeneity of representation on the one hand and acts of commission or respectively their omission classified as violence, is crucial for setting the public perception right and must be seen as a precondition for peace processes to be meaningful in terms of women's inclusion as well as of national sovereignty over the peace process which are closely linked.

The sole inclusion of a handful of women while maintaining the numeric disproportionality as well as the exertion of these different sorts of violence ensures that lasting peace remains an elusive endeavor. Limited participation of women in the numeric sense as well as in the sense of its meaningfulness in terms of their empowerment towards active change evoking directions in Track I elite peace talks does constitute a challenge and diminishes the possibilities for a peaceful and enduring outcome.

As the Beijing declaration states that "the implementation of the Platform for Action requires commitment from Governments and the international community" (Beijing Declaration, 1995, p. 3, point 21) alike to enable women's active role in high level peace talks and leadership positions. The inherent structural interplay of national, international and cultural restraints are voiced in claims for supporting women's equal participation in peace talks and

granting them decision-making power and leadership while discerning that "under the govern-mental structure for the peace effort, very little has been done" (Azadmanesh & Ghafoori, 2020, September, p. 1).

Recalling that the fight for women's rights constituted the moral legitimization of the `war on terror´, continuing warfare on the basis of gender within peacemaking frameworks not only constitutes the violation of Afghan women's rights and dignity but counteracts the very basic principles of the UN Charter. The so called `local turn´, in the course of which an Afghan led and Afghan owned peace process had been emphasized, is again turning back to an inter-national issue with talks being planned to take place between the Taliban and the Afghan government in Turkey with the support of the US, Russia, China and Pakistan.

Being kept between dynamic forces and counterforces, the Afghanistan peace proces-ses and with them the positioning of women as well as the sovereignty of the country are at a critical juncture. The current Intra-Afghan dialogues hence constitute a major yet sensitive opportunity and framework for women to voice their concerns and to have a say with regard to the future of the country as well as for national and international key stakeholders for transfor-ming former failures into transparent, just and peace enhancing actions. It is time to recognize that without the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, lasting peace cannot be ensured; it is time to work towards rectifying the gendered nature of the shortcomings of Afghan peace processes to move towards inclusion, equity, and justice for all.

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Chapter 6

Beyond Beijing: Using the News Media to Advance Women, Peace and Security in Qatar

Melissa Deehring; Maryruth Belsey Priebe

Introduction

The news media plays a powerful role in women's empowerment and advancement and in so doing has a significant impact on international security. Women's empowerment and leadership is an international security issue because, as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) contends, women's full involvement in all peace and security decisions is essential to global stability and prosperity. News media is an influential tool for advancing WPS because strategically planned content can influence social values directly related to WPS such as encouraging female literacy and education, reducing gender bias, supporting women's leadership and political participation, and combatting gender-based violence. Conversely, news media that reflects accepted cultural norms, regardless of bias, or repressive or violent characterizations, reinforces and strengthens existing gender imbalances.

This paradoxical relationship between news media's influence and women's empowerment presents challenges for every society, but has been especially challenging for cultures in the Arabian Gulf as they balance modernization and the influx of liberal Western influences with longstanding conservative tribal traditions. The State of Qatar (Qatar), in particular, stands out due to its influential Al Jazeera Media Network (Al Jazeera), and official stance on advancing WPS and increasing women's participation in leadership, the economy, politics, and peacebuilding. While Qatar has positioned itself as a modern, educated and open society, there is a disconnect between policy and practice; we argue that the current Qatari media does not reflect WPS policies. This chapter will therefore explain how WPS connects with the news media, examine the status of WPS and media in Qatar, and make policy recommendations.

WPS and the News Media: Connected by Policy

The 1995 *Fourth World Conference on Women* in Beijing, China stands out as a memorable moment for documenting the connection between WPS and the media. During the conference, media was recognized as essential to the advancement of women's equality (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 22; United Nations, 1995) after then-first lady of the United States (U.S.), Hillary Rodham Clinton, declared, "women's rights are human rights" (Clinton, 1995). Additionally, a gender-balanced media that portrayed "women and men in a non-stereotypical, diverse and balanced manner" was touted as a powerful educational tool. Governments were encouraged to examine the impact of gendered stereotypes that foster inequality and gender-based violence and to take measures to eliminate those images (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 22; United Nations, 1995, pp. 13 & 27). The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (Beijing Declaration) exhorted governments to require media to take responsibility to promote non-stereotyped images, es-

tablish codes of conduct, and eliminate presentations that generate violence. Also, governments were asked to reinforce media's role in "informing and educating people about the causes and effects of violence against women and in stimulating public debate on the topic" (United Nations, 1995, pp. 53–54).

Since Beijing, research has shown the news media's powerful role in either reinforcing or challenging gender-based norms. The media's language and images are influential in identity development, determining societal roles, and interpreting and evaluating issues (T. Williams, 2000, p. 579). The media's content and language present pictures of societal roles and influence how people form opinions and behave. "Media does not tell people what to think, but it tells people what topics to think about, and how to think about them by focusing on some aspects and not others" (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media & Plan International, 2019, p. 10; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). As the Beijing Declaration noted, "Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society…" (United Nations, 1995, p. 99). Media's gender stereotyping fails to portray women as independent, multi-talented individuals with the potential to contribute meaningfully and fully throughout society. Moreover, typically women are not portrayed as corporate, political, religious, or academic leaders. Worse, while many news stories present opportunities to focus on gender inequality, globally only 9% do so, while merely 4% challenge traditional gender stereotypes (UNESCO & Global Alliance on Media and Gender, 2018, p. 59; WhoMakesThe-News.org, n.d.). The core theoretical problem for WPS advocates is that when gender is ignored or imbalanced within the media, the public may not realize there is an issue.

A gender-balanced news media has the potential to advance WPS by raising women's issues in foreign policy circles (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 25; Robinson, 1999). The media is vital when setting political agendas and directing public interest to particular topics (Qatar, n.d., p. 321). The issues the public contemplates and talks about most often are those put forth by media outlets; people ignore what the media ignores (King et al., 2017). As scholars have noted, "It is not until the media begins reporting on a war that it becomes a topic of public discussion and, therefore, a relevant problem in communities not involved in the conflict" (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 25). Yet, the media largely ignores WPS issues. As an example, irregular or gray zone warfare disproportionately impacts women and children (Johnson-Freese, 2019, p. 13); but these stories rarely make headline news. Likewise, rape is widely used as a weapon, but is frequently absent from news coverage (Fröhlich, 2017, pp. 28–29, 32; Meyers, 1997). "When the media do pay attention, their accounts invariably evoke a mixture of terror and titillation and include nebulous exhortations for someone – the United Nations, countries, nongovernmental organizations, someone – to do something about these terrible crimes" (Hudson & Leidl, 2015, p. 5).

Complicating the situation, news media tends to portray men as active participants in war and conflict, and women as powerless, peace-loving victims, thereby engendering stereotypes WPS research refutes. This reality diminishes the potential for WPS principles to improve security planning. Studies have shown that merely one out of 10 news stories is primarily focused on women and that for almost two decades this proportion has remained constant (UNESCO & Global Alliance on Media and Gender, 2018, p. 59). Additionally, there are significantly fewer gender-sensitive studies of mass media's presentation of violence and security policy compared to studies done on such issues in other disciplines (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 26; Lindstad, 2017). News media must reveal how women are increasingly involved in conflicts and mobilize the public, politicians, and security professionals to address gendered security issues. Foreign policies and security planning are worse for lack of a gender lens, and a news media that fails to reflect WPS policies is partly to blame.

WPS and the News Media: Connected in Practice

A gender-imbalanced news media not only presents theoretical problems for WPS, but practical issues as well. Since 2005, the number of female newspaper, television, and radio reporters globally has held steady at 37% (Macharia, 2015, p. 48). Without equal numbers of female reporters, news media tends to filter out important human security stories and deemphasizes gendered aspects of others. "Female journalists and editors pursue, write about and publish gender-related stories more often than their male colleagues" (Johnson-Freese, 2019, p. 18; Kareithi, 2014; Ross, 2014). Yet, women reporters cover less than 40% of national and international news, 31% of political and government stories, and 39% of social, legal, and economic stories (Macharia, 2015, pp. 51–52). Unsurprisingly, only 3% of political, government and economic issues, and 4% of social and legal stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes (Macharia, 2015, pp. 76–77).

Women's unique insights during conflict are also lost without equal numbers of female war correspondents. Women journalists receive different conflict-related assignments, have different interactions with sources, and can diffuse tension and aggression better than their male colleagues, resulting in unique stories that otherwise would not be told (Awad, 2012; Barnett, 2018). Women cover conflict differently in part because of their continued exclusion from military and political forums during conflict, which forces women war reporters to seek out less elite sources and report "stories about people, not frontlines" while breaking from militaristic bias (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 29). Moreover, female conflict reporters are frequently accorded guest-like access to local populations due to their 'third gender' status; they are perceived as different from men and local women, which enables female reporters to write stories distinct from their male colleagues (Doucet, 2012; Fröhlich, 2017, p. 29). However, despite female war reporters' ability to "often accomplish the extraordinary in their work" (Fröhlich, 2017, p. 29), female correspondents are least likely to be assigned stories covering: war, civil war, terrorism, state-based violence, national defense, military spending, internal security, gender violence, femicide, female genital mutilation, harassment, sexual assault, trafficking, rape, domestic politics, and government (Macharia, 2015, pp. 56–58).

The unique security risks women media professionals face is another way news media and WPS intersect. When gender-sensitive media policies are nonexistent or go unimplemented, security risks increase for women journalists, thereby further impacting which stories are told and how. Threats against women in media have serious consequences; 37% of female journalists who were victims of online abuse stated they avoided reporting on certain stories and 29% indicated threats and attacks made them consider quitting the profession (Ferrier, 2018, p. 44). In a study of nearly 1,000 women in media, 65% had experienced acts of intimidation, threats, or abuse related to work ranging from verbal epithets to death threats (Barton & Storm, 2014). Another report found 26% of female respondents reported being physically attacked, 10% had experienced a death threat during the past year, 90% indicated online threats had increased during the past five years, and 82% said digital attacks, such as social media hacking or data theft were also on the rise (Ferrier, 2018, p. 26). Both freelancers and contract media workers reported gender as a significant contributing factor in online and offline attacks (Ferrier, 2018, p. 27; Høiby & Ottosen, 2019).

WPS concerns also arise when media's gender imbalance results in differing coverage of women in politics. The WPS framework emphasizes the benefits of women's political leadership, which has been linked to lower levels of corruption, higher levels of national economic importance, and renewed public trust in government (Hunt, 2007). Yet numerous studies show

worldwide, media worldwide, media reporting on female politicians is qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of their male peers (Anderson et al., 2011; Fridkin Kahn, 1996; Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2019; Ibroscheva & Raicheva-Stover, 2009; Kahn, 1994; Lühiste & Banducci, 2016; Ross & Comrie, 2012; Wasburn & Wasburn, 2011). In Latin American countries, UN Women found that female political candidates received dramatically less media attention than male candidates and significantly more negative portrayals (Llanos et al., 2011). In the U.S., female political candidates receive proportionally less news coverage; are more likely to have their competence and appearance scrutinized; are more likely to be questioned about women's issues; and are more likely to have their potential influence questioned (Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2019, p. 526; Wasburn & Wasburn, 2011). This gendered imbalance has been shown to strengthen the glass ceiling for female politicians (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2019, p. 525). In addition, research has found a direct link between increased media sexism, where female experts are under- or misrepresented, and a decreased number of women willing to become political candidates (Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2019).

Gender imbalanced political reporting also harms future supplies of female political candidates. One survey of young girls found 67% of respondents aged 11-17 were interested in politics, but only 32% felt society encouraged women to pursue political careers (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014). Additional research found that about 30% of boys and girls aged seven wanted to become the President of the U.S., but when the same students were 15-years old, significantly fewer girls than boys had the same goal (Heldman, 2011, sec. 23:42). However, 65% of respondents from the first survey felt increased media coverage of female politicians would boost the number of girls pursuing political careers (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014). This view is not without merit. Gaye Tuchman's seminal 1978 essay argued that opportunities for modeling, the psychological phenomenon whereby children copy watched behavior, are increased by television (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 6, 33–37). If television news media equally covered women in politics, it could make an important difference to girls' future political ambitions.

Given the pivotal role news media plays in shaping public discourse on matters of human security and female political ambition, it is imperative to challenge the media's role in perpetuating imbalanced gender stereotypes. The stories the media tells and how the media frames issues of security, violence, women's agency, leadership, political power, and war are crucial to seeing WPS goals realized.

WPS Principles in Qatar's News Media

As a United Nations Member State, Qatar officially endorses WPS and has created policies to prioritize gender equality and women's increased societal participation (Deehring, 2020, pp. 5–6; Qatar News Agency, 2019). However, while Qatar has embraced WPS principles, Qatari news media has not. News in Qatar remains significantly gender-imbalanced, despite a plethora of content sources. During the past three decades, Qatari media has proliferated to four daily newspapers in Arabic, three in English, and more than 200 general and special interest magazines (Kirat, 2016, p. 172; Lance & Paschyn, 2018). Qatar has several satellite television channels and radio stations (Kirat, 2016, p. 172), two main government-owned channels, Qatar Television and Al Rayyan TV (Lance & Paschyn, 2018, p. 44), and the internationally focused Al Jazeera broadcasts to more than 310 million households in more than 100 countries (Al Jazeera Media Network, n.d.). Qatar's gender-imbalanced news is also not due to la-

ck of a female audience. Three-quarters of Qatari females report they watch television news once daily compared to 60% of Qatari males (Dennis & Martin, 2019). While only 11% of Qatari females read daily newspapers versus 18% of Qatari males, more than 80% of both genders receive daily news via smartphone (% Who Use the Following Social Media Platforms, 2019). Instead, to understand how Qatari news media fails to follow WPS policies, it is important to analyze Qatari media's portrayal of gender stereotypes and women's issues, gender imbalance within the profession, the security of female reporters, and coverage of female political candidates.

Broadly speaking, Gulf leaders ascribe to central Islamic cultural pillars, including the centrality of the traditional family to social order, and the importance of women's virtue as a moral anchor (Kirat, 2014, p. 44). Overall, Gulf media reinforces these conservative views (Kirat, 2014, p. 44), despite growing modernization and regional wealth. "Tribal 'tradition' … especially in relation to … expected social roles, is often increased, not decreased by wealth" (Fromherz, 2012, p. 8). As such, Gulf news media presents women as symbols of religious piety and social stability, alongside women's participation in public life and the workforce as signs of modern progress (Liloia, 2019, p. 346). Consequently, Gulf news media rarely challenges gender-based norms. Topics surrounding marriage practices, gender-related religious debates, domestic violence, and politics are discouraged (Urbisz Golkowska, 2014, p. 58). A 2010 study found Gulf news also neglects stories of violence against Muslim women, and when they are covered, the focus is primarily on perpetrators' motives, actions, apprehensions, and punishments, while female victims are cast as subordinate, mentioned without identification, and rarely permitted to speak for themselves or express a sense of agency (Halim & Meyers, 2010, pp. 92–100).

Al Jazeera arguably does the most to mainstream women and gender issues in Qatari news media. The network has been recognized for providing a platform for women's agency, and lauded for hosting numerous female voices from all political, social, and ideological backgrounds (Guta, 2019, p. 264). Proponents argue Al Jazeera has encouraged public dialogue within Qatar about previously taboo WPS subjects such as women's empowerment, polygamy, divorce, sexual harassment, abuse, infidelity, maternal health, contraception, and abortion (L. A. Williams, 2014, p. 55). Some have even suggested Al Jazeera is feminist, particularly in headlines and in telling stories of upheaval (Sakr, 2005, pp. 145–146; L. A. Williams, 2014). However, critics suggest this praise is overstated and point to programs such as *For Women Only and Pioneers* as examples of programming focused on Iraqi and Palestinian women's issues, ignoring Qatari women's issues. There is also concern the network gives voice to conservative Muslim dissidents espousing restrictive, sometimes violent gender norms (Miller & Verhoeven, 2019). Others contend the network's women journalists are confined to certain subjects (food, family, fashion) or homogenized into a monolith pitted against men (Guta, 2019, p. 264). Al Jazeera English has been accused of discussing women's issues in talk shows but not in flagship news programming (Guta, 2019, p. 265), and Al Jazeera Arabic has been criticized because only two news stories out of 133 between October 2017 and April 2018 related to women or women's issues, and both focused on subjects outside Qatar (Guta, 2019, p. 265).

Qatar hosts two mass communication and journalism schools[1] that have graduated hundreds of media and public relations professionals during the past several decades, most of them women (Rajakumar et al., 2017, p. 23). However, only 34% of Qatari journalists are wo-

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[1] Qatar University Department of Mass Communication and Northwestern University Qatar School of Journalism

men (Kirat, 2016, p. 175). While women feature prominently on Al Jazeera (L. A. Williams, 2014), and *The Stream* reports it has achieved gender parity in booking guests (Malone, 2019), research shows women are significantly less visible in local news media (Al-Malki, 2012; Lance & Paschyn, 2018, pp. 44–45). Additionally, while some Qatari women have become well-known media personalities, notably Hanan AlEmadi of Qatar Television (*Exclusive*, n.d.)[2] and Asma AlHamadi of Al Jazeera (*Instagram:Asma Alhamadi*, n.d.),[3] of Qatari journalists, "men outnumber women, and negative perceptions of female television presenters persist" (Lance & Paschyn, 2018, p. 45). Egyptian nationals constitute the largest percentage of Arabic media journalists in Qatar, while Indian nationals predominate Qatar's English media (Kirat, 2016, p. 175). Hypervigilant societal monitoring of online behavior, with an expectation it will match offline behavior, is one reason so few Qataris, particularly women, are featured in local media (Rajakumar et al., 2017, p. 24). Additionally, cultural taboos prohibit Qatari women from appearing in published media, with risk of damage to personal and familiar reputation for any violation (Lance & Paschyn, 2018, p. 95).

The prevalence of female journalist security concerns in Qatar is difficult to ascertain because news outlets like Al Jazeera rarely report threats (Baker et al., 2018, p. 6). Female journalism students from Qatar have reported dismissive treatment due to their gender (Chen, n.d.); female Al Jazeera presenters have jointly resigned due to repeated criticism of their appearance and attire (Reporters Without Borders, 2010); and Gulf news institutions more frequently train and promote male journalists (Mellor, 2019, p. 3). Nevertheless, actual threats, violence, and harassment of female journalists in Qatar remains unreported by public and private authorities. All journalists in Qatar are prohibited from publishing stories critical of the government, ruling family, or Islam, and violators face possible prison sentences or deportation (Freedom House, n.d.). While Qatar's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression (The Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar 0 / 2004 | Article 48, n.d.) and state-sanctioned retaliation against journalists is rare, some interference does occur. In 2012 and 2013, student journalists were temporarily detained after filming emergency first responders without permission (Chatriwala, 2013); a BBC and German crew were temporarily detained for trespassing in 2015 ("Arrested for Reporting on Qatar's World Cup Labourers," 2015; "Arrested for Reporting on Qatar's World Cup Labourers," 2015); and three Danish journalists were temporarily detained in 2017 (Freedom House, 2017).

Finally, while scant research analyzes Qatari media news coverage of female political candidates, one study indicates some positive coverage. In the 1999 Central Municipal Council election, eight female candidates filed to run and the women indicated the Qatari media was supportive of their participation (Lambert, 2011). However, researchers noted the Qatari government provided journalists with favorable women candidate stories and instructed journalists to portray women's political rights only in positive terms (Lambert, 2011). It remains unclear whether the Qatari news media would have provided prominent positive coverage of female candidates absent government intervention. World Bank statistics show only 10% of national parliament seats were held by women in 2019 (*Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (%) | Qatar*, n.d.), suggesting news media may not have covered female politicians as transparently or frequently as their male counterparts.

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[2] Hanan AlEmadi: first female Qatari TV presenter.

[3] Asma AlHamadi: TV presenter on Al Jazeera Arabic.

Conclusions

Qatar has committed to increasing women's societal participation, advancing WPS, and encouraging female leadership. A gender-balanced news media that conveys women's perspectives and reflects WPS principles is a simple yet powerful way to encourage Qatar's public to understand and actively support the WPS agenda. Given how WPS and the news media are interconnected, it is crucial the Qatari government view its local news industry as a key partner for advancing women. Several policies would go a long way towards building WPS values into Qatari media.

First, since even Al Jazeera's policies do not contain direct language mandating inclusivity or gender balance of talent, experts, guests, or subjects (*Code of Ethics | News | Media, n.d.; Editorial Standards*, n.d.), the Qatari government could call for all media organizations in Qatar to develop gender policies and gender-awareness ethics and practice codes (UNESCO & Global Alliance on Media and Gender, 2018, p. 61). Such policies should require enforcement frameworks and could impose deterrent-level fines for sex discrimination or other non-compliant actions. Similarly, the government could include issues of gender balance and demonstrated adherence to gender policies in any media evaluation criteria or could create an Equitable Portrayal Code, similar to the one implemented by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in 2008 (Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council, n.d.).

Second, the Qatari government could require news organizations to offer trainings regarding causes and impacts of bullying and sexual harassment at work, how to mitigate risk while in the field, and physical security/self-defense, as well as providing therapy services after reports of work-related harassment or violence (Barton & Storm, 2014, pp. 30–31). Similarly, the government could encourage trainings that teach future and current media professionals to recognize bias, consider whether individuals of differing genders could offer unique perspectives for each story, and avoid gender-specific or sexist language in stories (Kanigel, 2019, p. 219). In addition, the government could urge news media managers to avoid assigning journalists to stories using conventional cultural norms and to have gender balance on all expert panels, speakers' lists, and teaching sessions.

Finally, the government could emphasize partnerships with the news media to promote WPS awareness. This approach is consistent with the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women's recommendations for Qatar to "take systematic measures to engage the media and NGOs in combating negative stereotyping and societal attitudes" (*Concluding Observations on the Initial Report of Qatar*, n.d.; CEDAW, n.d.). Partnerships could be used to encourage news media to seek out qualified female sources when reporting a story, especially in sectors such as science, technology, and politics, and to look for women who break gender stereotypes, such as female doctors or engineers. Similarly, partnerships could be used to reflect Qatari women's actual social and professional achievements, education, contributions, interests, and activities.

Despite celebrating the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, the World Economic Forum has suggested that the world will not reach gender parity for another 100 years at the current rate of progress (Zahidi, 2019). This lack of advancement is surely due, at least in part, to the fact that news media do not reflect WPS policies or prioritize linkages to WPS. Given the potential for women's leadership to stabilize and improve the legitimacy of governments, contribute to the hastening of development, and increase the length of peace negotiations, surely 100 years is too long. News media has tremendous potential to be the accelerant that moves the world in a more secure direction

based on gender-equality, including in Qatar. Whether Qatari news media will reflect increased gender balance depends on the resolve of Qatar's government to choose policies that enable the kind of change necessary for true reform.

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Chapter 7

Women in Kenya: A Critical Exploration of the Socio-economic and Political Journey

Lindah Nelimah Wakhungu

Introduction

Kenya's enactment of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) has espoused a robust policy and legal frameworks to promote, implement and monitor the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. One of the national blueprints for development, Vision 2030, outlines flagship projects for the promotion of gender equality, inclusive economic growth, prevention and response to elimination of female genital mutilation, gender-based violence, gender Mainstreaming and the empowerment of the girl child. This is because women play a critical part in development and the society as a whole (Hyun et al. 2020, p. 15).

Kenyan women under the leadership of Kenya's first female Cabinet Minister of Culture and Social Services Nyiva Mwendwa, who led an enormous delegation to the conference outnumbering the Americans and Nigerians (KNA 1996), took the BPFA earnestly. Prior to the Beijing conference, a task force reviewed all Kenyan laws with a focus on how it affected/limited women fundamental freedoms and human rights. Not only did the delegation have preliminary comprehensive positional papers on education, empowerment, the girl child, health and economic involvement, they had garnered regional support in the shape of the Dakar African Platform for Action (APFA, 1994).

After the conference in 1995, the Minister together with the Kenyan women set up a task force to have an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the Beijing platform to enable swift implementation and propose the government to domesticate it (KNA, 1996). In 1999, the task force printed its findings and issued recommendations to the government, for Kenya's laws would either have to be reformed or be repealed to guarantee equal enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms and rights by women (Task Force Recommendations, ROK 2004, p. 7).

The following outlines some key achievements by the Kenyan government post Beijing conference:

Socioeconomic Progress Towards Gender Equality

Beijing Platform for Action remains a powerful source of inspiration in the advancement of the rights of women and girls. The Kenyan government recognizes the need of empowering women economically as it is a critical step in realizing gender equality besides achieving sustainable development. There are laws and policies that embraces prolific employment and access to decent work, reducing poverty and overall inequalities as outlined in the critical areas of BPFA, number one and six. Some of the programs put in place by the government

includes gender mainstreaming, affirmative action and gender-responsive budgeting. The government has separately set some exceptional catalytic reserves devoted to women, persons with disabilities and the youth for advancement programs (PSCU report, 2020). These include:

Women Enterprise Fund (WEF)

This is one of the flagship projects initiated by former President Mwai Kibaki. The program aimed to promote women empowerment and improve their livelihoods – women who were excluded from the formal financial sectors and to attract and facilitate investment in women-oriented small and medium enterprises for wealth and employment creation (GOK 2009). The program is implemented under the direction of the ministry of Gender and Public Service. For over its 13 years of existence, more than Ksh 6.3 billion have been disbursed to microfinance institutions, non-governmental organizations involved in microfinancing, savings and credit cooperative organizations (SACCO), that in turn lend to the women groups as microcredit. An estimated 63, 342 women groups in 290 constituencies have benefitted from the microcredit that provides micro-finance credit and other financial support for women (WEF GOK, 2009).

Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF)

This is another flagship project under the social pillar of Vision 2030 that was established in 2007 with a predetermined emphasis on enterprise development as a main scheme that was aimed at creating an upsurge in economic prospects for, and involvement by the Kenyan Youth-both women and men in state building. This fund aims to inspire young people to be job creators by minimizing dependency on dwindling formal employment by focusing on entrepreneurship, through access of easy-affordable monetary and business development support to the youth who are interested to start or expand businesses (YEF GOK, 2009).

Uwezo Fund

This is an additional flagship program for vision 2030 meant at empowering special interest groups of women, youth and persons with disabilities access to seed money, to interest-free loans as well as mentorship opportunities, thereby promoting businesses and enterprises at the county level to enhance economic growth and realization of SDGs 1, 5, 8, and 10. (GOK, 2013).

Access to Government Procurement Opportunity

Another avenue for affirmative funds includes Access to Government Procurement Opportunity (AGPO) program that set aside 30 percent of all procurement opportunities for the women, youth and persons with disabilities to do business with the government. AGPO program was

established in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (COK 2010), Article 227 for the fair, equitable, transparent and cost-effective public procurement of goods and services, COK 2010 Article 55 on affirmative action and the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015 (AGPO, 2013).

National Safety Net Social Protection Program

The country also has four main cash transfer:

• Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPCT); the program aims to offer consistent and liable cash transfer to underprivileged and vulnerable older persons (65 years and above) in identified justifiable households. OPCT is a nationwide program and presently covers 203,011 households (GOK, Social protection,2021)

• Cash Transfer for Persons with Severe Disabilities (PwSD-CT); the program was launched in June 2011 and targets adults and children with severe disabilities, who need comprehensive support of a caregiver. The program aims to improve the capacities of caregivers who are majority women through cash allocations and as such, increase the means of support of persons with severe disabilities as well as lessen adverse impact of disability on households.

• Hunger Safety Net Programs (HSNP); the overall objective of this program is to decrease extreme hunger and vulnerability through delivery of consistent and unreserved cash transfers to targeted households.

• Cash for Assets (CFA) programs: is mutual conditional cash transfer scheme between World Food Program (WFP) and Government of Kenya. The program reaches food insecure households in seven arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) regions in eastern and coastal Kenya, where beneficiaries work on community resources to build resilience against drought. (KNSSS, 2020, p. 5).

Education for Achieving Gender Equality

Kenya adopted inclusive laws and policy framework to protect and implement the right to education that is allied to international human rights instruments and BPFA critical area on education and training. Most of the international instruments that protect the right to education have been ratified by Kenya and they form part of its law. COK 2010 Article 53 (1) (b) stipulates that each child have a right to free and compulsory basic education. Article 55 (a) further obligates the state to take measures, including initiating affirmative action programs to guarantee that the youth access relevant education and training. Minorities and marginalized groups under Article 56 (b) have a right to be provided with special opportunities in the field of education (RTE, 2014, p. 5 and 6).

The Basic Education Act (2013) was enacted into law to regulate the provision of free compulsory Primary and secondary education, adult basic education. Further, the Children's Act also recognizes and safeguards children's right to education. Others include the second Medium Plan Term-2013 of Vision 2030 and Policy Framework for Education and Training of 2012 (RTE, 2014:13).

Critical to empowering the girl child through education, Kenya adopted a re-entry poli-

cy, which permits pregnant girls to remain in school for as long as they want and allows them to resume their studies six months after their delivery. There are other affirmative action interventions as well such as lower admissions cut off for female students joining Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics courses. Engendering tertiary and polytechnics through the integration of gendered content into the courses with particular attention as well to the intersection of gender with culture, ethnicity, and class. The technical courses that had previously targeted male students, has seen a shift towards an increase in female enrollment to courses such as plumbing, electrical engineering and welding, and the introduction of Gender Studies in various universities (Bunyi, 2003, p. 5 and 6).

Gender Inclusion in Politics

Ever since Kenya's independence, it was only in 1974 when Dr. Julia Ojiambo was appointed as an Assistant Minister for housing and Social Services. Later, hon. Nyiva Mwendwa was the first woman appointed to the cabinet serving from 1995 to 1998. Ms. Grace Onyango was the first woman elected as a Member of Parliament in the second general Election in 1969 to represent Kisumu town constituency. Nevertheless, the trend improved in the ninth parliament when the NARC government came to power in 2002 and appointed seven women to cabinet positions, including three cabinet ministers and four assistant ministers (FIDA, 2013, p. 11).

The BPFA and the conference ushered a new era in women's politics in Kenya for it created an agenda for power, decision-making and institutional reforms. It was post Beijing conference that political space expanded for women as prior pursuit for significant legal reforms and women political participation agenda that had started in the early 1960s got an impetus from the recommendations.

The following table shows women's political representation in parliament since 1963-2013.

Parliament	Date	Constituencies (total)	Women (elected)	Nominated members (total)	Nominated members (female)
1st Parliament	1963-1969	158	0	12	0
2st Parliament	1969-1974	158	1	12	1
3st Parliament	1974-1979	158	4	12	2
4st Parliament	1979-1983	158	5	12	1
5st Parliament	1983-1988	158	2	12	4
6st Parliament	1988-1992	188	2	12	0
7st Parliament	1992-1997	188	6	12	1

Parliament	Date	Constituencies (total)	Women (elected)	Nominated members (total)	Nominated members (female)
8st Parliament	1997-2002	210	4	12	5
9st Parliament	2002-2007	210	10	12	8
10st Parliament	2008-2013	210	16	12	6

Source: Henrich Böll Stiftung, Nairobi, 2010

The table above shows that the pursuit of women's political representation and gender equality in leadership in Kenya has been a long and winding journey. For instance, notable women as such Phoebe Asiyo tabled affirmative action motion in parliament in 1997 to have women occupy least one third (33.3%) in National parliament (NA Debate, 1997: Vol 334). Subsequently, a similar motion was tabled in the eighth parliament referred to us the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) by Beth Mugo. It comprehensively outlined the problem of women's representation in politics. Later on, in the tenth parliament, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs Martha Karua tabled a motion to amend the Repealed Constitution to provide for 50 seats in Parliament for women. The bill failed to get the 65% required threshold (Kabira, 2012:39-40-41).

The March 4, 2013 general elections offered a new prospect to the county and was considered a landmark as it was the first general election under the new constitutional of 2010 encompassing new election laws, and introduction of devolved governments. It was the first general election with six elective position, forty-seven elective affirmative action position. Notably the election integrated use of biometric technology voter registration and identification (FIDA report, 2013).

The Constitution tasked the state to ensure women's rights through the two-thirds gender principles. COK tasked the state with taking legislative and other measures to implement the principles and ensure that elective, appointive and nominative bodies shall uphold the two-third principle. In addition, the constitution compels the electoral system to adhere to the two-third principle during party nominations and general elections (Association of Media Women in Kenya, 2014; Gender Forum, 2013).

The following shows how women performed during the 2013 general elections:

Position	Total number nationwide	Women elected	Women Nominated
Member of National Assembly	290	16	5
County Women Representative	47	47	n/a
County Assembly Ward Representative	1450	82	680
Deputy Governors	47	6	n/a
Governors	47	0	n/a
Senators	47	0	18

A gendered analysis of 2017 elections by National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya) outlined some key notable shift and gains made by women during the 2017 general elections. Women were elected as governors and senators, which was historical. There was a 29 percent increase in women vying for different positions and the elections ended with women occupying 172 of the 1,883 elected seats in Kenya, an increase from 145 in 2013 elections.

General Elections Results, 2017 by Gender (NDI 2018)						
Position	**Elected**		**Nominated**		**Total**	**% Women (Ele+Nom)**
	men	women	men	women		
President	1	0	-	-	1	0%
Deputy President	1	0	-	-	1	0%
Senator	44	3	2	18	67	31%
Member of National Assembly	267	23	7	5	302	9%
Women Member of National Assembly	0	47	-	-	47	100%
Governor	44	3	-	-	47	6%
Deputy Governor	40	7	-	-	47	15%
Member of County Assembly	1334	96	97	650	2177	34%
Total	1731	179	106	673	2689	36%

Challenges to Ensuring the Two-Third Gender Rule in the General Elections

There has been two general elections, 2013 and 2017 under the constitution of Kenya 2010; however, the 2013 general elections failed to meet two-third gender provision with the exception of the County Assembly. Judicial redress to make sure that the parliament endorses legislation for implementation of the two-thirds gender rule has been relatively dawdling and ineffective. Arguments surfaced that failure by the Senate and National Assembly to meet and observe the constitutional mandate rendered the two houses unconstitutional (Barasa, 2012).

Subsequently, the 2017 general elections failed to meet the two-third gender threshold. In spite of years of implementing this new constitution, women face significant obstacles every time they were seeking out both elective and appointive posts in Kenya. Women account for just 23 percent of the National Assembly and Senate — a figure that includes seats reserved exclusively for women representatives (Odouri, 2016, p. 12).

The legislature until now has failed to enact the legislation, and guide the implementation and realization of the gender rule. Women make up 21% of the National Assembly, falling below the 30% constitutional requirement. Political parties are the greatest stepping-stone and key gatekeepers to women's entrance to leadership, yet most political parties are owned and

controlled by men who often are hesitant in supporting and nominating women aspirants. Therefore, internal party reforms are the first step to promote women's progress in political arena. All parties should upheld democracy and transparency, embrace gender-sensitivity during nomination of candidates, as well as devolve party decision-making mechanisms; which is a prerequisite for women's advancement as leaders within parties and as nominees for elected office (OSCE/ODIHR, 2014).

The 2010 Constitutional Gender Equality Provision

One of the key shortcomings of the first constitution of Kenya is that it discriminated against women in favor of personal laws in dealing with matters pertaining to a person and their family (thelawdictionary.org, 2018). For instance, section 82(4) of the former constitution prohibited discrimination except in relation to non-citizens and especially women who lost their citizenship after marriage to foreigners.

It also reserved the right to discriminate in areas that affected women, namely, adoption, marriage, citizenship, divorce, burial and devolution of property after the death of the husband or in matters of personal law. Such discrimination was situated and considered justified within the context of Kenyan society that has various ethnic groups with different customs and practices. Therefore, Kenya ushered in a new constitution on 27 august 2010 with the following gender equality provisions:

Citizenship

The constitution recognizes women as full citizens of Kenya in chapter 3; they do not lose their citizenship through marriage. In addition, women can bestow citizenship to their offspring irrespective of whether or not they are married to a Kenyan. Kenyan women who marry non-nationals are entitled not to lose their Kenyan nationality at the time of marriage, in marriage and even after termination of the marriage. Better still, Kenyan women can pass citizenship status to their partners. Dual citizenship gives an opportunity to women and men to hold citizenship of two nations. The article protects Kenyan women from losing their identities after they get married to foreigners (COK, 2010, chapter 3).

Equality in Leadership

Chapter 7, article 81(b) states that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender. Hence, all state organs are required to ensure that women are included and that men do not exceed 2/3 of any appointive or elective body, be it at the ward level, county level, national parliament or any other appointive or nominative by any arms of the government. Political parties are also mandated to respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality and gender equity in their operations (COK, 2010: Chapter7, article 81(b)).

Equality in Marriage

Article 45 (1) distinguishes the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society and the necessary basis of social order, and promulgates that this unit of family shall enjoy the recognition and protection of the State. Parties to a marriage are entitled to equal rights at the time of the marriage, during the marriage and at the dissolution of the marriage. In Kenya, marriages conducted in any tradition or system of religion are acknowledged and recognized as legal. Men and women are guaranteed equal rights in their marriage and children's custody is to be shared equally at the time of the marriage and even at dissolution (COK, 2010, article 45 (1)).

However, same sex marriage is prohibited in Kenya under the penal code. Kenya's High Court on May 24, 2019 upheld laws criminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults, a step backward in the progress Kenya has made toward equality in recent years (HRW, 2019).

Equality in Employment

The constitution therefore tasked the Public Service Commission to implement affirmative action in recruitment and promotion of civil servant. All recruitment and promotion will have to adhere to the two-third principle.

Equality in Access to Education

The constitution accords women equal right to that of men in accessing education.

All Discriminatory Customary Practices are Prohibited

The constitution accords every person a right to freedom and security which includes the right not to be subjected to any form of violence from either public or private sources, torture in any manner whether physical or psychological, corporal punishment or punished in a cruel manner in inhuman or degrading manner. The constitution protects women from violence.

Matrimonial Property is Protected

Article 68(c) (iii) mandates parliament to formulate laws that shall regulate the recognition and protection of matrimonial property and in specific the matrimonial home during and on the dissolution of marriage. Women will no longer experience violations and threats of being thrown out of their matrimonial home and dispossessed just because their marriage has ended (COK 2010 pg.46, 47).

Women's Rights to Inheritance and to Own Land is Guaranteed

Article 40. (1) Subject to Article 65 gives every person the right, either individually or in association with others, to acquire and own property of any description in any part of Kenya. Women can now own property, have it registered in their name or in joint names. Women are also entitled to inherit land or give it out to any person of their choice. Women can manage and dispose of their property. Women's right to access to land has been captured in article 60 (1) which states that land in Kenya shall be held, used and managed in a manner that is equitable, efficient, productive and sustainable and in equitable access to land. Women are now able to own, use, manage land and access it just as a man can. Women should face no biasness or discrimination on matters of land based on our African culture and traditions that passed inheritance of land and property through the male lineage.

Equal Parental Responsibility

Article 53(e) states that every child has a right to parental care and protection, which includes equal responsibility of the mother and father to provide for the child, whether they are married to each other or not. It will be no longer be a burden of women alone to provide for children after dissolution of marriage and in case of single parenthood and the father of the child is alive.

Legislative Progress for Gender Equality

Marriage Act 2014

The Act provides states the minimum age of marriage as eighteen therefore child marriages is prohibited in Kenya. The acts also state that marriage is a voluntary union of a man and a woman and both parties have equal rights and obligations at the time of marriage, during marriage and at the dissolution of marriage hence, forced marriages are prohibited.

Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015

The act provides for the protection and relief of victims of domestic violence, protection of a spouse and any children or other dependent. The act defines violence as abuse that includes: child marriages, female genital mutilation, forced wife inheritance, interference from in-laws, marital rape, virginity testing, widow cleansing, and damage to property, defilement, economic abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, harassment, incest, intimidation, sexual abuse amongst others. (PADVA 2015 pg. 18, 19).

Matrimonial Property Act 2013

The act provides for the rights and responsibilities of spouses in relation to matrimonial property, and concerned purposes, and protection of women in marriages. As seen, Kenya has strived to domesticate article 21 of the Maputo protocol that articulates for the rights of women to inherit property from their husbands. The article provides that a widow shall have the right to equitable share in the inheritance of the property of her late husband. Besides, a widow is accorded the right to continue living in the matrimonial home and in case of a remarriage, she will retain this right provided the house belongs to her or she inherited it from her late husband.

Sexual Offences Act

The act makes provision about sexual offences, definition, prevention and the protection of all persons from harm, unlawful sexual act and connected purposes. Sexual offences include; rape, sexual assault, compelled or induced indecent act, defilement, child trafficking for purposes of sex, child sex tourism, child pornography, prostitution of persons with mental disability, incest amongst others.

The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2011

The Female Genital Mutilation Act was enacted by parliament in 2011 address the prohibition of FGM more comprehensively.

Basic Education Act

The act provides for the protection of women and especially girls from all forms of abuse including sexual harassment in schools and other educational institutions. It promotes literacy among women through education and training at all levels and all disciplines predominantly in the fields of science and technology, besides promoting the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions.

Law of Succession Act 2012

Also referred to as law of inheritance, the act prescribes the rules which determine what ought to happen to a person's estate after his or her death. Most of the dependents are family members. Upon death, the estate of the deceased has to be taken care of, managed, administered and or distributed.

National Gender and Equality Commission

The commission mandate is to promote and ensure gender equality, principles of equality and non-discrimination for all people in Kenya as stipulated in the COK 2010. The commission focuses on the following Special Interest Groups (SIGs): women, persons with disability, children, youth, and older members of society, minority and marginalized groups (COK, Article 59 (4))

Others acts includes the following:

• Micro and small enterprises act 2012

• Employment and labor relations court act

• Treaty making ratification act 2012

• Counter trafficking in person's act 2010

• Citizenship and immigration act 2011

• National gender and equality act 2011

Conclusions

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action offered a blueprint for Kenya for its journey to gender equality. As discussed above, Kenya has made tremendous stride in ensuring women-'s rights through various programs, policies, institutions and most of all enacting a progressive constitution in 2010. The Constitution of Kenya offers very many opportunities for women to achieve and enjoy their rights as full as well as equal citizens of Kenya. Being the highest decree of the land, it is a stepping-stone for women to realize and achieve gender equality. Women make up to 52% of the Kenyan population hence the constitution is an avenue which women can use to hold government, leaders, duty bearers, private sector, NGOs, Faith Based Organizations, Community Based Organizations, International Community, the media and any other organization answerable with an aim of upholding the spirit of constitutionalism.

Although the Constitution offers distinct chance for progressing women's agenda and equality as analyzed above, it all comes down to political will of the government of the day to implement it. It is true that the 47 women representative position is both an avenue for advancing women representation and at the same time a challenge since majority of women are disinterested to compete on other posts such as senator, governor and members of parliament. Male political aspirants have used this in political campaigns to discourage voters against electing women in other posts. It is now upon women roll up their sleeves and strategize to realize the provisions of the constitution. Despite disheartening Supreme Court judgement on realization of two-third gender principal that it will be progressive and dependent on the states further action, it is now upon women to network with other likeminded stakeholder to come together towards the attainment of gender equality and especially the representation of women in leadership.

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Chapter 8

More Than Tokens: Canadian Women in Decision making Processes in the Post-1995 Beijing Platform for Action Era

Katrina Leclerc

When the world gathered in Beijing in 1995 for the Fourth World Conference on Women, few knew the outcome of this gathering would continue to resonate with such weight today. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action outlines the commitments of governments to women's rights and the advancement of said rights across the world. In this chapter, I argue that the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas of the United Nations should be used as tools for the monitoring and implementation of the Beijing Platform's action areas. Particularly, this chapter focuses on the complementary nature of the peace and security agendas to the Platform's action areas.

This chapter highlights examples of Canadian successes and shortcomings, twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, on the two action areas of women in power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms. These examples demonstrate how the action areas are applied in the lived realities of women and young women. Specifically, how women above the age of 35 and young women between the ages of 18 to 35 experience realities addressed by the Beijing Declaration. Canadian examples are used to argue the need for concrete action plans and substantive inclusion of women and, specifically young women, at every level of decision-making and institutional accountability to ensure both the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality.

Overview of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)

The WPS agenda was officially introduced in October 2000 with the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (referred to as Resolution 1325). The unanimous adoption of the resolution by the Security Council demonstrated sustained commitment by Member States for the integration and recognition of women in peace and security. The resolution, which had been advocated for by the women's movement long before 2000, is based on four pillars. These primary pillars include: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery (Security Council, 2000).

For the following two decades, the international community continued to grow the contents and reach of the thematic resolutions on WPS, which included several additional UN resolutions, increased research and attention by academia, and a range of programs and organizations focused on the advancement of WPS. To date, there are ten WPS resolutions focusing on the expansion of the four primary pillars and ensuring the experiences of women in conflict are recognized, included, and addressed (GNWP, 2021). There has been an increa-

sed attention to the political participation of women in formal decision-making and peace processes, the protection of women in armed conflict, and the meaningful inclusion of women at all levels of society.

The thematic peace and security agendas have continued to grow and expand since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, including the rather recent introduction of the YPS agenda. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (henceforth Resolution 2250) was adopted in December 2015 after several years of renewed attention to the impacts and role of young people in peace and security – this launched the YPS agenda (Berents and Prelis, 2021). The three YPS resolutions, 2250, 2419, and 2535, outline five priority pillars for the inclusion of young people (Security Council, 2015; Security Council, 2018; Security Council, 2020). These primary pillars are: participation, protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement and reintegration (Security Council, 2015).

Since 2015, the YPS agenda has begun to establish mechanisms to implement its policy priorities and ensure the monitoring of commitments. With 1.85 billion young people around the world, thousands of youth-led movements and organizations have taken shape, many of which focus on implementing the five pillars of YPS (Berents and Prelis, 2021). There has also been increased attention by some scholars and policy-makers to the agenda. To date, no country has officially developed a comprehensive framework to implement the agenda; however, Finland, Jordan, Kosovo, Nigeria, The Gambia, and the Philippines have announced the development of their formal plans (United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2021).

Shifting Focus to Domestic Agendas

Many scholars and practitioners have noted a shift in discourse and conceptualization of the two agendas. Increasingly, they are being recognized by local civil society as tools to address issues beyond traditional war and armed conflict. In fact, several grassroots movements and researchers argue that the two peace and security agendas also apply to domestic contexts where overt violence is not present. For example, in the Canadian context, members of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C) and the Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security (CCYPS) advocate for a significant policy shift to include inward-looking priorities in the implementation initiatives for both agendas (Leclerc, Woroniuk, and Wählen, 2021; CCYPS, 2020).

Structural Violence

The ongoing shift towards domestic priorities in many non-conflict zones resonates with the Canadian experience. This can be understood through the concept of structural violence which was coined by peace scholar Johan Galtung in 1969. Galtung (1969) viewed structural violence as a type of intended or unintended harm based on social structure and social institutions which limit the basic needs of individuals or groups (p. 171). Structural violence remains foundational in many peace and security spaces as it challenges the systems which enable negative peace (Galtung, 1969). Negative peace, as defined by Galtung (1969), is the absence of personal violence whereas positive peace is the removal of structural violence (p. 183; Galtung and Fischer, 2013, p. 173). The arguments for the relevance of WPS and YPS as tools to implement the Beijing Platform are founded on the acceptance of these concepts. It is thus by

prioritizing positive peace – the absence of structural violence – that societies and their citizens can thrive.

In the Canadian context, there are numerous examples of the relevance of the peace and security agendas. This includes in challenging the status quo through the implementation of the Beijing Platform's action areas on women in power and decision-making and redefining the institutional mechanisms to enable gender equality and human rights. Both the WPS and YPS agendas have strong provisions and pathways towards reforming systems of discrimination and injustice, the Beijing Platform itself also outlines these recommendations. This chapter argues that the WPS and YPS frameworks enable the Beijing Platform's calls within domestic contexts. With their various policy and institutionalized commitments, they are well placed to support the advancement of the principles of the Beijing Platform.

Beijing Platform Action Areas

For several decades, governments have grappled with the concepts of gender equality and human rights of women. The attempts to improve the lives of women and young women in various parts of the world have resulted in numerous frameworks, commitments, and declarations. The Beijing Platform is among these. To date, no country in the world has achieved complete gender equality – Canada is no exception. The following examples explore the implementation of the two Beijing Platform action areas on women in power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms with the purpose of outlining the current state of Canada's progress and shortcomings in achieving gender equality.

Women in Power and Decision-making

As of July 2014, Statistics Canada (2016) claimed that there were slightly more women than men in the country. They projected similar growth rates for both genders with a slightly higher female population over the next five decades. Yet, Canada's Parliament remains wildly dominated by men in its elected House. The Inter-Parliamentary Union's (2021) recent statistics, as of the latest October 2019 election in the House of Commons, demonstrate that only 29.59 per cent of elected members were women. The Beijing Platform for Action recalls the Economic and Social Council's target of having 30 per cent women in decision-making positions by 1995 – Canada has achieved this twenty-four years later (1995, p. 79).

However, not all is lost for gender balance within the Canadian Parliament. As a bicameral system, Canada operates with an elected House of Commons and an appointed Senate. As of January 2021, the Senate of Canada in its composition has forty-five women appointed senators of its ninety-one occupied seats (fourteen are currently vacant), making it nearly 50 per cent women (Senate of Canada, 2021).

These statistics are far from unique within elected and appointed governing systems across the world. Despite the numerous attempts of some political parties and several non-governmental organizations to increase the rates of women entering political life in Canada, a plethora of barriers continue to plague even those who are successful in their bid for formal decision-making power. There have been numerous reports, both public and internal, of harassment against women parliamentarians – including but not limited to threats, sexual mis-

misconduct, demeaning behaviour, and belittling by colleagues. Women face barriers in entering political life including through sexist norms and media coverage which often undervalues their abilities as individuals (Equal Voice, 2020, p. 9). Some of these additional barriers are also cited in the Beijing Platform and remain today (1995, p. 79).

Women who have additional intersectional identities also face disproportionate discrimination in instances of decision-making. For example, Member of Parliament Celina Caesar-Chavannes, an elected member of the Canadian governing party in 2015, eventually left her political caucus. She later chose not to seek re-election citing anti-Black racist micro-aggressions and persisting sexism as reasons for refusing to continue to seek office (Toronto Star, 2017). Caesar-Chavannes also reported tokenistic actions by the governing authorities as a reason for her exit (CBC News, 2021). Although Canada has made progress in recent years, it is still only barely meeting the progress that was expected a quarter of a century ago. Combining this with ongoing issues like micro-aggressions and tokenism, Canada has a long way to go.

Tokenization of Women

Tokenism in this context is understood to be an act or a series of acts to provide a platform of false political influence to an individual of a specific group, sometimes intended or perceived as representation. The primary problem with tokenism, or the nuance that differentiates tokenism from representation, is that tokenistic actions seek primarily to make an individual or a group visible rather than to provide them with influence and power to make decisions. In the case of Caesar-Chavannes, she has publicly shared online that once appointed in the role of Parliamentary Secretary, she was continuously invited to conferences, meetings, and spaces "related to [her] Black-ness" (CBC News, 2021). She was seldom included in spaces where discussions were had or decisions were made that did not relate to the colour of her skin. This is not uncommon.

Many young women who beat the odds and are successfully placed or elected in positions of power often find out that their roles are not to govern, decide or influence, but rather to speak for a specific group they ought to represent – despite their individual merit or credentials. This is highly critiqued by young women who also seek opportunities to be heard, such as on various councils or advisory boards. This is increasingly popular in a Canadian context.

For instance, the Prime Minister of Canada launched a Youth Council early in his first mandate in 2016 (Government of Canada, 2020; Privy Council Office, 2019). Many current and former members of this intentionally diverse Youth Council recall the lack of substantive influence their roles had and many expressed frustration based on often surface-level interactions with the Prime Minister and his team (CTV News, 2018). One example is regarding the Government's decision to provide a multi-billion-dollar buyout to a pipeline in Western Canada. Members of the Youth Council wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister about their disappointment in his decision which garnered heavy media attention (CTV News, 2018). Arguably, as young people who had direct access to the Prime Minister they should have been able to discuss this issue with the Government in a substantive manner. Therefore, the question remains why the letter and outspoken approach were necessary. If the Youth Council members were considered important actors in substantively discussing policy decisions, it remains questionable why they would need to resort to public activism for their position to be heard. This demonstrates that the Council struggled to avoid tokenism. Although this may not be the intent, by not providing true decision-making power to these young people, some are left feeling po-

werless and reduced to being tokens to serve as pawns for the political gain of others.

Institutional Mechanisms

In addition to the role of women and young women in formal decision-making positions and the question of substantive influence, the Beijing Platform for Action calls on governments to establish national machineries for the advancement of women (1995, p. 84). Within a Canadian context, two specific calls from the Beijing Platform are particularly relevant. First, the establishment of mechanisms at a national level and secondly, the integration of gender-based analysis in policies and programs; both remain incomplete today.

In 1971, Canada appointed its first minister responsible for women's affairs, later in 1976 the Status of Women Canada became an agency (WAGE, 2021a). It was not until 2018 that this agency was enacted into an officially-recognized and funded department, called Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), by way of federal legislation (Minister of Justice, 2018). As emphasized within the Beijing Platform, many problems with establishing national machineries included the lack of commitment at the highest levels of governance (1995, p. 84). This can be observed in the case of Canada which took over two decades to officially recognize the coordinating body primarily focused on domestic women's rights as an official department. Until then, ministers of Status of Women remained junior members of cabinet and were allocated mostly small and limited budgets for their responsibilities. With the establishment of the first gender balanced budget in 2018, Canada has demonstrated concrete commitments to funding gender equality and prioritizing the advancement of women within society (WAGE, 2021b).

The second priority outlined within the Beijing Platform worth noting is the call for gender-based analysis of policies and programs (1995, p. 84). The now department of WAGE is responsible for coordinating and providing support for gender-based analysis plus[1] (GBA+) to all policies, programs and legislation (WAGE, 2021c). According to the Canadian Government, this has been a priority since 1995, coinciding with the year the Beijing Platform was adopted (WAGE, 2021c). In 2015, the government re-committed to ensuring gender-based analysis across all departmental decisions and mandated the then Status of Women agency, now Department of Women and Gender Equality, to ensure this analysis be conducted.

Over the years, several non-governmental organizations have also turned to gender-based analysis as a method to address intersectional barriers experienced by women and other genders. Intersectional feminist analysis is described by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) as: "A framework for analyzing the ways in which different girls and women experience multiple forms of oppression or inequality. These multiple forms of oppression are simultaneous and cannot be separated from experiences of sex-and/or gender-based discrimination" (2021). Organizations, such as CRIAW, have developed training sessions on GBA+, have continued to consult and conduct research on impacts of policy and legislation, and are now at the forefront of ensuring institutional accountability within the government. Despite the Government of Canada making progress on these priorities in recent years, in many ways, it is the non-governmental organizations that are left to lead this

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[1] Gender-based analysis in Canada includes a "plus" recognizing that gender analysis goes beyond sex and gender. It examines further identifiable characteristics which may impact a person's livelihood (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021).

work and this paradigm needs to shift.

Peace and Security Frameworks as Tools for Institutional Accountability and the Beijing Platform Implementation

The Beijing Platform for Action was instrumental in setting the scene for the adoption of Resolution 1325, which launched the WPS agenda. Once Resolution 2250 was adopted, on YPS, many called for strong collaboration between both peace and security agendas, including with specific reference to their synergy in the third YPS resolution adopted in July 2020 (Security Council, 2020). These two agendas are tools for the implementation of the various commitments and demands outlined in the 1995 Declaration. There are several examples of the complementary nature of the two peace and security agendas to the Beijing Platform – the following four examples are a sample.

First, the role of women and young women in decision-making is outlined in the Beijing Platform and emphasized within the peace and security agendas. In fact, both WPS and YPS agendas have a participation pillar which demands the full participation and representation of women and young people in decision-making (Security Council, 2000, p. 2; Security Council, 2015, p. 3). The concept of violence of exclusion is cited in the Independent Progress Study on YPS, as "a form of structural and psychological violence that is indivisible from their political, social, cultural and economic disempowerment. This manifests in both mistrust by young people [and women] of state–society relations and in mistrust of young people [and women] by their communities and wider society" (Simpson, 2018, p. 63). This also applies to exclusion faced by women in various spheres, including but not limited to social, economic, and in decision-making.

Second, several YPS actors have challenged tokenization and cited it as a factor for the limiting participation of young people in governance and policy development. The CCYPS is among these actors who have publicly spoken out against tokenistic tendencies within Canadian participation initiatives. In the 2020 submission of the CCYPS to the Canadian State of Youth Report, the Coalition asked for "the de-tokenization of young people by investing in programs and initiatives that highlight key contributions of young people in local communities and other social justice initiatives, including youth in political decision-making, civic engagement, and community development" (p. 4). Thus, the two peace and security agendas challenge tokenization and non-governmental actors use these as tools for meaningful decision-making of women and young people.

Third, the question of funding national machineries which reflects the levels of political commitment to specific issues is relevant to the peace and security agendas. For instance, National Actions Plans (NAPs) have been the primary method adopted by over ninety-two countries for the implementation of WPS in their domestic and foreign commitments (PeaceWomen, 2021). However, NAPs have been heavily criticized by practitioners and other groups for being critically underfunded. In fact, only twenty-eight NAPs currently have a dedicated budget (PeaceWomen, 2021). The second Canadian NAP on WPS, which was launched in 2017, provides some hope in the funding commitments which are attached (Global Affairs Canada, 2017). Since Canada's feminist foreign policy, announced in 2017, the Canadian NAP on WPS has been a pivotal component of the policy (Amnesty International Canada, 2020; Freeland, 2017). Furthermore, this NAP has been co-signed by several ministers com-

mitting to implementing their respective aspects both internationally and domestically. Thus, the institutionalization of the WPS agenda by several countries serves as a leading opportunity for the Beijing Platform's priorities to be implemented by governments.

Fourth, in addition to the NAP on WPS which includes explicit reference to GBA+, analyses of that nature also demand the recognition of the experience of women and young women on the ground. This is in line with the Beijing Platform which validates the expertise of local people in influencing, developing, and implementing policy. One example concerns the treatment of LGBTQIA2S+[2] community members in Canada. Many are aware that Canada has had a tumultuous relationship with the LGBTQIA2S+ community over its history. Following the 2017 apology by the Canadian Prime Minister to LGBTQIA2S+ community members who had been harmed by federal legislation, policies or practices, Canada initiated a process to develop a LGBTQIA2S+ Action Plan (PMO, 2017; Government of Canada, 2021). As of 2021, several hundred individuals and organizations have responded to a survey and been invited to consultation sessions (Government of Canada, 2021). Organizations, such as Egale, have already developed their own Action Plans for LGBTQIA2S+ rights in Canada, with hopes to influence government policies (Egale, 2020). This ongoing consultative process and coordinated activism within communities demonstrates the recognition of the need of local women, young people and other voices to be involved in both the analysis and development of policy solutions which affect their lives. This is enabled in many ways by the pre-existing frameworks which are operationalized by the peace and security agendas within a country context.

Conclusions

Some significant advancements of the Beijing Platform's two action areas of women in power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms have been prioritized by Canada these past two decades. However, progress remains challenging for specific groups, and particularly individuals living with intersectional identities, such as young women, racialized women, and members of the LGBTQ2+ community. The Beijing Platform's twenty-fifth anniversary was an opportunity for renewed commitments by the international community, including Member States, to the achievement of women's rights and attainment of gender equality. Despite the slow progress, the peace and security agendas offer specific tools to galvanize the Platform's commitments and ensure solutions.

The WPS and YPS agendas are an opportunity to strengthen the influential decision-making and institutionalization of women and young women in Canadian society. Through conscientious prioritizing and attentive substantial collaboration, women and young women can successfully have an impact on policies and decisions that affect their livelihoods. It is the responsibility of the Canadian government to meaningfully include them; however, this inclusion also requires challenging the tokenization of women and young women in the government's approaches. Through attentive, collaborative, and substantive action to implementing the Beijing Platform, hope remains that gender equality can be achieved sooner rather than later.

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[2] Referring to members of the community who identify as two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender-diverse, gender-fluid or other sexual orientations.

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Chapter 9

Gender Justice in the Context of Education in Pakistan

Inam Ul Haq

Justice is needed in every aspect of life for peaceful coexistence to be possible. This includes justice for everyone, including men, women, and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Unfortunately, there is not a single society worldwide that can claim to have achieved gender equality (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015). However, constant efforts at various levels are always being made.

Among these efforts towards the end of the last century was the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 which was agreed on as the plan to move forward to achieve the goal of gender equality with twelve critical concerns, one of which was that of education. To achieve gender equality, gender socialization is needed which in large part includes education (Blanco-Garcia, Sanchez-Antolin, & Ramos, 2013). Within the realm of education, gendered patterns have the potential to be constructed and re-constructed through a reform of the existing power structures in order for them to be more gender equitable (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015). Considering this, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been instrumental in directing attention towards gender equality in different avenues of socialization (Krook & True, 2012).

At the Beijing conference, six key strategic objectives that were identified in relation to education included: equal access to education; illiteracy among women; access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education; non-discriminatory education and training; sufficient resources for and to monitor the implementation of educational reforms; and lifelong education and training of girls and women. Afterwards every five years, a global evaluation report of the goals set at Beijing Platform for Action comes under discussion as a follow-up: Beijing +5, +10, +15 and now +25. The governments of 189 countries committed to take action as per Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action including Pakistan. However, Pakistan is still facing many of the challenges recognised at the Beijing +5 at the 23rd session of General Assembly in June 2000 such as that of a lacking institutional infrastructure including physical facilities, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and domestic work-load in addition to education on girls, among others.

Priorities and Trends in Pakistan – Key Actors and Perspectives

Towards the turn of century till 2006, the situation of education and gender parity in Pakistan had improved from before. The Gender Parity Index in 2006 indicated 0.76 as the score that Pakistan had, with 18.3 million boys and 14 million girls in primary schools which means that more than 4 million more boys were getting their basic education than girls (Hausmann, D.

Tyson, & Zahidi, 2004). The number of girls in urban areas exceeded that of the number in the rural areas where boys were twice the ratio of girls. However, an exception was evidenced in GPI at higher secondary level on both of the graphs, overall as well as in the urban-rural context, where gender parity was observed in favour of the girls. At the provincial level, only urban Punjab had shown a relatively better situation for girls. But overall, Pakistan lagged behind many other countries including Iran and Egypt (Lynd, 2007). However, in Pakistan, the situation of education has not presented an encouraging picture especially throughout the decade, from2008 till2018, starting from a global recession and later continuing to further deteriorate due to economic instability, global isolation as well as security unrest, among other reasons. During this period, girls' schools were also a particular target for terrorists in some parts of the country. In 2015, Oslo Summit on Education & Development declared Pakistan among the worst performing countries in education. And till 2018, the situation had not improved for girls and boys in schools but it was particularly worse for girls (Watch, 2018). However, there has been some major progress since then albeit with various challenges. According to (ASER, 2019), more parents opted for public sector over the private sector in the year 2019. Along with this, when the issue of 'ghost staff'(a euphemism for the phenomenon of teachers drawing their salaries without showing up to teach in schools) was taken care of, and teachers started showing up in the schools, there was visible improvement in the attendance patterns of students as well.

Despite some of these initiatives, the government needs to play a more active role in the area of education as it is the prime responsibility of governments to provide its people with equal fundamental rights. Unfortunately, Pakistan, like many other countries, has fallen victim to neo-liberal interventions and has been caught in priorities other than overcoming gender disparity in education. According to Steer, Gillard, Gustafsson-Wright, & Latham (2015), around one-third of the primary level education of the country depends on the private sector. These schools are found outperforming the public schools even though they are vulnerable, non-strategic, and inconsistent in reaching out to the poor and providing good quality education. Considering this, the government needs to step up for its people and establish more infrastructures that can contribute to reducing these disparities. Among other steps, a raise in the educational budget is much needed. Other than the private sector, private partnerships, philanthropic and religious schools (Steer, Gillard, Gustafsson-Wright, & Latham, 2015) and NGOs at the regional and global level are key stakeholders working for improving the situation of education and gender equality in education and need to be taken into the fold appropriately for bringing reforms in the field of education.

Progress for Gender Equality in the Realm of Education

Access to Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) And Skills Development Programs

Considering formal education, Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-17 recorded that a retention rate of 67% in fifth-graders was observed at the national level (Mughal, 2020). In the case of skills development education, women, despite being more than half of the population of Pakistan still lag behind in employment rates as compared to women in other developing countries. According to the Labour Force Survey in Pakistan in 2019, only 24% women enter the labour force while according to International Monetary Fund's report in 2016, women's participation

in labour force could boost up Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) up to 30%. There are a total of 3,842 TVET institutes all over the country. The number of women training schools increased from only 236 TVET's in 2000-1 to 1,154 in 2018-19 and the enrolment rate also increased from 14,000 to 161,000 female students. However, disparities still exist due to prevailing socio-cultural factors, expected pre-requisite courses required to be passed in order to enter into non-conventional occupations that are not realistic, and limited or no information about TVET (Bashir, 2019).

Literacy of Women

Literacy rate is estimated by the percentages of the people of age 15 years old and older who can read and write. According to UNESCO (2021), the current statistical figures available for the overall literacy rate in Pakistan are for 2017 which remained 59.1%; for men it was 71.1% whereas for women it stopped at 46.5%. For 2017, the total number of illiterate population was 54,875,788 people: among which there were total 19,844,700 men whereas the number of women in this category was 35,031,088 (UNESCO, 2021). This trend needs to be tackled seriously because illiteracy rates for women are continuously increasing (Neil, 2021).

Strengthened Education Curricula to Enhance Gender Responsiveness and to Eliminate Bias

There is wide support for moving towards gender parity through more qualitative inputs like strengthening the curriculum (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015). The needs and perspectives of women and girls from different social groups must be considered in such a curriculum to overcome the differential treatment they face. Women, along with the other challenges they already face, also have to overcome the challenge of non-representation of women's perspectives in the curriculum (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005).

In practice in Pakistan, there is substantial evidence of institutional problems such as a lack of gender representation among the textbook board members resulting in a gendered perspective being left out of the curriculum (Mirza , 2004). Other than this, various other state and non-state actors interrupt the process of gender mainstreaming into the curriculum because of lack of political will, weak coordination and monitoring mechanisms, and cultural constraints (Verge, Ferrer-Fons, & Gonzalez, 2017).

Teacher Training and Inclusion

Along with curriculum development, teacher training for pushing the teachers to nurture gender parity in their classes is also crucial. Teachers are the ones who possess the authority to shape narratives within a classroom's boundaries (Sunderland, 2001). Teachers are the translators of the developed curricula and these translations are impacted by teachers' own belongings to social groups and their own subscriptions to various ideologies (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005). No matter how much of egalitarian perspectives are incorporated in the curricula, teacher training, learning materials, and resource materials these are mainly dependent on the one who are interpreting these in the classroom (Aikman, Unterhalter, &

Challender, 2005).

Teachers are majorly at a disadvantage position in Pakistan, especially female teachers. At primary schools, they are particularly overburdened with the workload due to non-availability or lack of teaching staff in schools and shortage of resource materials (Farooq & Kai, Female teacher problems at primary level in Pakistan adminidtered Kashmir, 2017). Other than these, inadequate salaries in exchange of the extreme workload and being women they are faced with the phenomenon of double-shifts due to traditional role divide and familial burdens on them.

Challenges In Achieving Gender Equality in Education

According to PAGE (2017), drop-out rates remained higher for girls in year 2015-16 with 34% girls and 22% boys at primary level, 57% for girls and 48% for boys at middle, and 73% girls and 65% boys at higher secondary level. Whereas the enrolment rate remained higher for boys with 55% in comparison to 45% for girls at primary level, at secondary level a total of 56% boys while 44% girls were enrolled, and 60% for boys and 40% for girls at higher secondary level. Meanwhile the urban-rural gap at the primary level remained wide by 17% for the out-of-school children which included 39% in rural and 22% in urban regions of the country. It can be deduced that the children in rural areas are more likely to be out of school compared to the ones growing up in cities and towns. This urban-rural disparity raises concerns about the scarcity of educational institutions in less developed areas, large distances acting as a deterrent to school attendance, as well as the absence of facilities such as boundary walls and toilets that deter students from staying in schools. Moreover, the enrolment rate of girls in public sector remained higher with 44% than in private sector. Whereas for boys the enrolment rate was higher in private sector with 58% enrolment and 56% in public sector. According to Pakistan District Education Rankings report in 2016, FATA and KP were home to wide gender disparities for girls in education (Sheikh, 2016). In 2018, 32% girls whereas 21% boys from primary level education were out-of-schools. According to (ASER, 2019), learning situation is deplorable in Pakistan where 41% of fifth graders were not able to read a story in their regional and national language for both genders but to compare, boys outperformed girls in both literacy as well as in the numerical tests. This accounts for the differential educational achievements in standardized tests among boys and girls.

In relation to this, it should also be noted that till 2018, a total of 22.5 million girls were reported to be out of school. Breaking down it into levels, 59% girls around aged 11-13 were out of school in comparison to 49% boys, and only 13% girls managed to remain at school by the age of 14-16. Although the situation was not any good for boys too but it was clearly worse for girls (Watch, 2018). These statistics could be corroborated with the report on barriers to girls' access to education in 2018 by Human Rights Watch that pointed out various challenges faced in girls' equitable access to education including child labour, honour killings, and fear of getting kidnapped.

Socio-cultural Norms As A Barrier to Gender Equality in Education

Along with individual concerns, institutional and socio-cultural factors (Batool, Sajid, & Shaheen, 2013) are more involved in and responsible for adding to the barriers in the development and progress of girls and women. The existing socio-cultural norms become the strongest ba-

rrier and resist any intervention that is in conflict with the prevalent cultural norms and/or expectations of accepted gender roles (Aikman & Rao, 2012). Apart from the situation at schools, a relatively small proportion of women succeed to reach at tertiary level education, academia and research, and academic managerial jobs. Some deeply rooted socio-cultural challenges which involve forced and early marriages, beliefs about limiting women to private spaces and household responsibilities lead to a restricted access and experience of education for women (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015). Furthermore, equality in pedagogy is highly affected by the prevailing assumptions about men and women (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005). Assumptions like 'girls find mathematics difficult' are still widespread across the globe. Historical (social and cultural) and geographical contexts are mainly responsible for the survival of these assumptions till today (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005). According to women in higher education in Pakistan, the major barriers in their progress are socio-cultural which burden them with multiple responsibilities at the same time, thereby limiting their growth. Likewise, a lot of women are even hesitant to confidently speak about their capabilities and achievements because of the way their abilities are institutionally undermined throughout their lives. Other than these, women have also pointed out that managerial styles adopted by men in supervisory positions within the academia are discouraging; the language used with them and about them and the informal culture within schools makes the environment difficult for women to work in (Irum, Bhatti, & Munshi, 2015).

Challenges Related to Conditions in Implementation

Pakistan due to its inadequate educational budget remains lacking in terms of the institutional infrastructure provided in educational institutions. Even now, there are buildings at risk, incomplete physical features like furniture, toilets, electricity and drinking water facilities (Coswosk, Neves-Silva, Modena, & Heller , 2019). There are still schools at distances that are not easily walkable from communities hindering access to students. Other than these, the problem of ghost schools and teachers still exists with teachers employed on paper but not actually coming to schools to teach, along with the problems of teachers lacking training and resource materials, and availability of state-of-the-art curricula are some major institutional challenges yet to overcome.

What is the Way Forward?

The year of 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which was a rallying point at the global level including the multigenerational 'Generation Equality' campaign for "realizing women's rights for an equal future" (WOMEN, 2020). So what more needs to be done in the context of Pakistan for improving educational contexts and opportunities for women and girls?

In Pakistan, there is still a need to provide equal access to girls and to increase their enrolment rates and bring down the drop-out rates from schools. Because of this institutional gap, the quality of education gets compromised due to a lack of institutional focus upon gender parity (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015).

Other than this, the provision of safe space for girls is needed because sexual harassment and violence at school add to the challenges on this road to gender equality (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005). Schools need to be 'girls-friendly' which means breaking

down traditional notions and patterns of exercising authority, and changing power structures to give more leadership opportunities to women and remove misogynistic people at the helm of affairs in decision-making bodies (Akpakwu, Bua, & Terhile, 2014) as well as tackling the hidden curriculum which keeps pushing for an agenda that only serves to maintain the status quo (Lee, 2014).

Moreover, we need to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) that focuses upon and attempts to address social injustice, violence, and discrimination. . It is a tool to work with the human attitudes and practices that are at the heart of gender inequality in education that we continue to witness (Saqib, et al., 2020). Therefore, ESD could be very useful in creating gender awareness, sensitivity and gender socialization.

Last but not the least, bringing pedagogical reforms can create equitable circumstances for girls. The study by (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005) greatly emphasized over pedagogical reforms to move forward towards gender equality. For this purpose, it suggested reforms in classrooms' spaces including the organization of the classrooms including lectures as well as changes to the curriculum. It emphasized the pivotal role of teachers in turning a curricula successful or a complete failure. Participation from girls and women must be encouraged in order to boost their esteems and self-concepts regarding their abilities to move forward in life. The focus of the curriculum should be on developing critical literacy and consciousness among girls and women. Other than girls, other disadvantaged groups of students must be encouraged in the same way to develop their confidence in their own capacities. Moreover, the structures that promote exclusion of girls and women must be discarded. It include power structures consisting of rigid hierarchies which gain their powers via exclusion and maintain their hegemony through supporting and providing only those who are like them apparently and/or ideologically. Patriarchal norms and practices deny girls and women of their fundamental human rights including their universal right to quality education.

One of the most challenging barriers in this journey to gender equality in education is that the actual terms and concepts and the meanings attached to them are varied across the levels of work. The terms gender, mainstreaming and equality are understood, interpreted and even being negotiated differently across the local, regional and global levels (Unterhalter, 2010). Towards achieving the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming, although could have played a pivotal role, remained silent and missing in education (Unterhalter, 2010), even though the then UN General Assembly Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali described it as the key feature of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Silfver, 2010). Gender relates differently with other aspects that determine the unequal positionings in power structures like ethnicity, race, class, ability and sexuality (Silfver, 2010), and this also needs to be understood to learn about the way it manifests itself in different socio-cultural contexts. This understanding is much needed to succeed in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. Gender equality is about removing institutional barriers and challenging the deep rooted socio-cultural disadvantages that have been limiting people's life chances based on their gender (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015).

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Chapter 10

Then and Now: Ethiopia's Progress and Challenges in Implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Bridget Kelly; Negussie Teffera; Markos Woldemariam; Vina Smith-Ramakrishnan

Prior to the 1995 Fourth World Conference in Beijing, Ethiopia declared its commitment to improving the status of women through the 1993 *National Policy on Women* and the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1994. With this focus, Ethiopia was well positioned to not only endorse the Beijing Platform for Action without reservation, but also play a key role in the preparatory process at the regional level (United Nations, 1997). In addition to adopting the Beijing Declaration, Ethiopia has been an active participant in implementing international goals beginning with the Millennium Development Goals from 2000 to 2015 and continuing with the Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 to 2030. As demonstrated by these actions, Ethiopia has shown dedication to improving the quality of life for women and girls throughout the country.

With these international commitments at the forefront, Ethiopia identified priority areas within the *National Action Plan for Gender Equality* (2006) that address five critical areas informed by the Beijing Platform for Action: (i) women and health; (ii) education and training of women; (iii) the girl child; (iv) women and the economy; and (v) women in power and decision-making. Through coordinated efforts by the government with non-governmental organizations, bilateral donors, and international bodies, Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in addressing these imperatives.

The successes towards a more gender-equitable country that have been achieved over the last two and a half decades are commendable; however, this progress stands to be halted, or even reversed, as armed conflict, compounded by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, continues to devastate Ethiopian women and girls. Furthermore, to truly achieve gender equality in Ethiopia, stronger efforts are needed to address the disparities that exist with regard to socioeconomic status and geographical location.

Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The government, civil society, and international bodies have worked together to improve the status of women in Ethiopia and the results are substantial. Since the incorporation of the Platform for Action into its national strategy, Ethiopia's contraceptive use among women of reproductive age has increased almost six-fold; the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has more than halved; incidents of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage have decreased roughly 20 and 30 percent, respectively; and primary school enrollment rates for girls have increased by over 60 percent (Ethiopia DHS, 2001 & 2017). Additionally, more women are participating in the formal labor market and have

a more equal share of seats at decision-making tables than ever before.

Women and Health

Improvements in women's health are central to the achievement of equal treatment and repre-sentation of women in Ethiopia. Studies have shown that women's empowerment is strongly associated with a desire to have fewer children (Atake & Gnakou, 2019), and Ethiopia has experienced the fastest decline in fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa (Berlin Institute for Popu-lation and Development, 2018). In 1995, Ethiopia saw a high total fertility rate (TFR)—the average number of children born per woman—of nearly 7 children per woman, but much work has been accomplished to significantly reduce the TFR to 4.1 children per woman today (World Bank, 2019a). In urban areas, the TFR is nearing replacement level fertility, the point at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next (Tegegne et al., 2019).

Ethiopia has also achieved a much more rapid increase in contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) than any other country in the region (Worku et al., 2015). The expansion of contracepti-ve use improves women's agency, education, and labor force participation, and is therefore key to realizing the objectives within the Platform for Action (Lee & Finlay, 2017). Comparing the country's Demographic and Health Surveys 2000 (2001) and 2016 (2017), the CPR steadi-ly increased from only 6.6 percent to 41.4 percent of married women ages 15-49 years who use a modern method of contraception.

Though still one of the highest in the world, the MMR in Ethiopia has significantly declined since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration. Ethiopia has successfully reduced maternal deaths among childbearing women from 1,080 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1995 (WHO, 2015) to 401 maternal deaths (World Bank, 2019c), more than a 60 percent decline over the past two and a half decades. Improved gender equality through the promotion of reproductive health services is directly linked to better health outcomes for both mothers and their children (IPPF, 2015).

Education and Training Among Women and Girls

Educating girls is one of the most effective means of creating healthy and sustainable commu-nities. Education is a social determinant of health that lays a critical foundation for the entire course of a woman's life and aids in achieving gender equality. An educated girl in Ethiopia is more likely to avoid early marriage, seek healthcare, and gain independence (The Borgen Project, 2019). Furthermore, the benefits of education can be seen beyond the individual person—educated mothers are more likely to have fewer, healthier, and better-educated children (Kiross et al., 2019). Major strides have been made in school enrollment rates among girls in Ethiopia over the past two and a half decades. Primary school enrollment rates for females have gone from 17.3 percent in 1995 to almost 81.5 percent today (World Bank, 2020a), and secondary school enrollment rates have risen from less than 10 percent in 1995 to 30 percent today (World Bank, 2020b). Social support systems within schools are providing secondary school girls with support in areas such as menstrual hygiene and mental health that help to lower the attrition rate. Additionally, more Ethiopian females are entering institutions of higher education (World Bank, 2020c).

　　　　Training programs are also vital to the overall status of women in Ethiopia, both in what they provide in terms of job opportunities and what they do for women's overall health. Ethiopia's Health Extension Program (HEP) is a prime example of how expanding training programs has provided economic opportunities to women while simultaneously improving women's health. First implemented in 2003, the HEP is an innovative community-based program that creates healthy environments by making essential health services available at the kebele (village) level. By training female health extension workers (HEWs) from rural areas to provide support to their communities, the program addresses a critical shortage of skilled health workers and improves coordination of service delivery. Upon completion of their training, HEWs are assigned, as salaried government employees, to health posts and work directly with households to provide basic preventive services including the dispensing of contraceptives. Today, more than 42,000 government-salaried female HEWs are deployed across 15,000 kebeles in the country (Assefa et al., 2019).

The Girl Child

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is a traditional practice that involves cutting and removing parts of the external genitalia of females. The practice causes lasting harm, including severe pain and shock, infection, hemorrhage, dyspareunia, increased risk of HIV transmission, and complications in childbirth (UNFPA, 2020). While more work is needed to end this practice, the prevalence of FGM/C in Ethiopia has decreased from 85 percent of women and girls having undergone FGM/C in 1995 (WHO, 1999) to 65 percent in 2016 (Ethiopia DHS, 2017)—a significant 20 percent decrease. Social perception of this practice has also shifted over time. At the turn of the millennium, only 3 in 10 Ethiopian women and girls opposed FGM/C. Today, 8 in 10 women and girls believe the practice should end. If the progress from recent years continues, the prevalence of FGM/C could fall to below 30 percent by 2030 (UNICEF, 2020a).

　　　　Ethiopia has also seen a remarkable decline in the proportion of girls who are married in early adolescence, reflecting the country's lauded efforts over the past decades to end child marriage. Child marriage, another harmful traditional practice, causes poor health outcomes, produces psychological and emotional traumas, interferes with educational attainment, denies autonomy and decision-making abilities, and exposes girls to gender-based violence. At the turn of the millennium, 70 percent of Ethiopian women ages 25-49 were married by age 18 (Ethiopia DHS, 2001), compared to 58 percent more recently (Ethiopia DHS, 2017). If the progress seen in recent years continues, the prevalence of child marriage in Ethiopia will drop to 20 percent by 2030 and to less than 10 percent by 2050 (UNICEF, 2017).

Women's Economic and Political Empowerment

For Ethiopia to continue its trajectory of development progress, efforts to reduce poverty and secure the full and equal participation of women and girls in economic and political systems must remain a priority. While data indicates that the female employment rate is not yet equal to the male employment rate, notable progress has been made. Prior to 2000, the labor participation rates for women and men aged 15-64 years were 69 percent and 91 percent, respectively. Now, the employment rate gap is steadily closing as 76 percent of women and 87 percent of men participate in the labor market (World Bank, 2019b).

At the federal government level, Ethiopia has also made strides in gender equality and representation. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's cabinet in 1995 was comprised of all men, except for Education Minister, Genet Zwedie (UNDP, 1995). Ethiopia now has a more gender-balanced cabinet, appointed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, made up of 8 women and 12 men. Major ministries, such as health, urban development, and transport are led by women (Borkena Ethiopian News, 2020). Some of Ethiopia's most prominent offices are also led by women, such as Sahle-Work Zewde, the President of Ethiopia, and Meaza Ashenafi, the President of the Federal Supreme Court. In the lower chamber of the legislative body, the House of People's Representatives has increased women's representation, with a majority of its parliament comprised of women (House of Peoples Representatives of the FDRE, 2020). This type of representation plays a significant role in ensuring that national laws and policies are gender-inclusive, as is evident through the work conducted by the Women Parliamentarian's Caucus to empower women and ensure their full participation in all areas of Ethiopia's development.

The pace of poverty reduction in Ethiopia has been impressive, particularly so when compared to other African countries (World Bank, 2014). In 1995, Ethiopia had one of the highest poverty rates in the world, with over 69 percent of the population living on less than $1.90 USD purchasing power parity (PPP) a day and 46 percent of the population living below the national poverty line. The most recent data shows a significant improvement, with less than 33 percent of the population living on less than $1.90 USD PPP and less than 24 percent of the population living below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2015).

It is important to note the inequities that exist when discussing the progress made over the years. Regional and socioeconomic disparities in Ethiopia have contributed to unequal access to health services, education, and economic empowerment. Women and girls from the poorest households, residing in rural communities, and/or among the lowest educational quintile are experiencing the least progress in these critical areas of concern (Ethiopian Public Health Institute & Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, 2019). This has serious implications for policy and practice alike, and more attention from the government and its international partners is needed to close the gap.

Contributing Factors to Success

The government of Ethiopia has declared its commitment to improving of the status of women through various policies—such as the *National Policy on Women, National Population Policy Ethiopia, National Action Plan for Gender Equality, and the National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy*—and the creation of the internationally acclaimed HEP, among other programs. Even prior to its commitment to the Platform for Action, Ethiopia made a concerted effort to improve girls' educational access through implementing the *Universal Primary Education*. This policy eliminates school fees for primary public school and the first two years of secondary public school, thereby removing a financial barrier that prevents girls from attending school (Omoeva & Moussa, 2018). The government also tripled the number of elementary schools from 11,000 in the 1990's to 32,048 in 2014, bolstering student enrollment from less than 3 million to more than 18 million during that timeframe (Ministry of Education, 2015).

In demonstrating concern for the welfare of the girl child, the Ethiopian government has outlawed and criminalized the practices of child marriage (*Revised Family Law Code*, 2000) and FGM/C (*Revised Criminal Code*, 2005) since the introduction of the Platform for Action. It

also implemented national strategies—such as the *National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in Ethiopia* and the *National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C*—with detailed interventions to end harmful practices against girls (Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, 2019). Additionally, the government has created "One Stop Centers" in collaboration with UNICEF to increase access to referral services, strengthen community outreach and protect girls from sexual violence. (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2019).

The two iterations of the *Growth and Transformation Plan*—Ethiopia's national development strategy—have also contributed greatly to the elimination of harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence, as well as to the promotion of women's political, social, and economic participation, the improvement of educational achievements of women and girls, and the creation of job opportunities for women in agriculture. Other government programs, such as the Productive Safety Net Program, are credited with the reduction of poverty rates (World Bank et al., 2013). In January 2021, the government also launched a ten-year development plan with the aim of furthering the economic growth of Ethiopia by achieving a principal objective to develop the overall capacity of women in their participation in economic, social, and cultural affairs (Planning and Development Commission, 2021).

Along with government efforts, civil society organizations (CSOs) play leading roles in improving the status of women in Ethiopia. CSOs work with communities to ensure that policies and funding translate into success at the grassroots level. In 2019, the government of Ethiopia liberalized the Civil Societies Proclamation, making it easier for CSOs to form and engage in any lawful activities to accomplish their objectives (Birru, 2019). This step has gone a long way in allowing non-governmental actors to help alleviate the many challenges faced by women. From advocating for laws that protect women's rights to educating families on the importance of educating their daughters, much of Ethiopia's current development success can be attributed to civil society efforts and partnerships.

Financial assistance from foreign governments and international organizations has also had tremendous influence on the progress made since 1995. The U.S., the largest bilateral donor to Ethiopia's health sector, is a major contributor to Ethiopia's efforts to increase family planning and contraceptive services throughout the country (USAID, 2019). The U.S. also provides assistance for education strategies to keep girls in school to avoid early marriage and pregnancy, supports women's ability to create businesses and secure their own livelihoods, educates communities about the health risks of FGM/C, and strengthens primary health care to end preventable child and maternal deaths (USAID, 2018).

UNFPA (2019), UNICEF (2020b), and UN Women (2016) all offer financial and programmatic support to increase the status of women in Ethiopia. Combined, these international bodies contribute roughly $40 million USD annually to help achieve the overall goal that every woman, adolescent, and child in the country has access to quality health care, education, and economic empowerment. In the 2019 lending program for Ethiopia, the World Bank committed $700 million USD to the delivery of essential services such as health and education and $375 million USD to the *General Education Quality Improvement Program*, with a focus on gender equality and closing the job and asset gap between men and women through fiscal year 2022 (World Bank, 2017).

As a result of national policies, civil society, bilateral donors, and international bodies, knowledge of contraceptive methods is now almost universal, school enrollment rates among girls have increased significantly, and women are more independent and politically engaged. Though the progress made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration is remarkable, cha-

llenges remain that threaten the major strides made thus far.

Challenges to Progress

As observed in a majority of least developed countries, the outbreak of a pandemic has posed significant challenges to achieving the objectives within the Beijing Platform for Action. In Ethiopia, the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on economic wellbeing and health outcomes are well documented. Ethiopia's economic growth fell more than two percentage points in 2020, a decrease that is largely attributed to the pandemic; it is projected to fall an additional four percentage points to 2 percent growth in 2021, down from 8.4 percent growth in 2019 (African Development Bank Group, 2021). Global level studies show that people whose human rights are least protected, especially women and girls, are experiencing unique difficulties from COVID-19. As also observed throughout the world, women are more likely than men to have lost their jobs since the start of the pandemic. As the primary household caretakers in Ethiopia, women have been disproportionately affected in the ability to maintain stable employment during the pandemic as opposed to their male counterparts (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Due to limited access to finances, education, and other opportunities, women in Ethiopia are overrepresented in the informal labor sector, meaning they have fewer social and economic protections (African Department & UN Women, 2018). This makes it incredibly difficult to sustain shocks brought on by events like COVID-19.

Although the extent of the damage caused to women's rights by COVID-19 is not yet clear, the disruption of essential services and the diversion of resources from sexual and reproductive health care due to the prioritization of the COVID-19 response has likely increased maternal morbidity and mortality, adolescent pregnancy, harmful traditional practices, and other reproductive health crises. In addition, the pandemic has had adverse effects on supply chains in Ethiopia, disrupting and/or delaying the transportation of contraceptive commodities. Equipment and staff involved in the provision of sexual and reproductive health services have been diverted to fulfill other needs, clinics have closed, and people have been hesitant to visit health facilities (Feyissa et al., 2020).

Compared to all other African countries, Ethiopia experienced the highest number of days of school closed—over 200 days —due to COVID-19 (African Development Bank Group, 2021). The closure of schools due to the pandemic negatively impacts the human rights of female students. Girls, especially those from low-income families and/or living in rural areas, are most at-risk for dropping out of school and will need the most support to return to school following the pandemic (Research for Equitable Access and Learning, 2020). School closures increase the likelihood of child marriage and the risk of FGM/C (UNICEF, 2021). Ethiopian women are also more likely to report that the incidents of gender-based violence have increased during the pandemic and are more likely to report their mental and emotional health being negatively affected (UN Women & UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2020).

The devastating effects of COVID-19 on Ethiopian women's lives are further intensified by the impact of conflict within the country. Ethiopia faces massive challenges of humanitarian crisis with recurrent inter-ethnic and intra-border disputes (Kleinfeld & Parker, 2020). As old hostilities between different regional states within the country continue to persist, tension between the federal government of Ethiopia and the leadership of the northern Tigray region has recently erupted into military conflict. These conflicts have left critical health and educa-

tional infrastructure to crumble. The disruption of essential services like transportation and telecommunications, essential medical care, and electricity and water services further exacerbate the dire state of emergency care in the country (OCHA, 2021).

Ethiopia has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). According to the International Organization for Migration (2021), a total of 1.96 million IDPs were identified in 1,222 sites across 11 regions in Ethiopia in recent months. Conflict remains the primary reason people flee their homes, as 62 percent of displacements are due to fighting within Ethiopia's borders.

Research has shown that armed conflicts and subsequent displacement have adverse effects on population health outcomes, many of which impact the health and well-being of women and girls (Levy & Sidel, 2016). Troublesome accounts of sexual violence have been reported amid the recent conflict in Ethiopia. Many local and international bodies have called for an immediate end to targeted sexual attacks of women and children, but there are reports that gender-based and sexual violence continues (Boezio, 2021). Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation in conflict settings, by both combatants (during the conflict) and by intimate partners or acquaintances (in post-conflict settings). Conflicts often indirectly lead to poor health outcomes, including increased incidents of malnutrition, physical injuries, acute and infectious disease conditions, and poor sexual and reproductive health, of which women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of morbidity and mortality (Bendavid et al., 2021). Consequently, women and adolescent girls affected by conflict face increased risks of unintended pregnancy, which in turn leads to increased rates of unsafe abortion and maternal mortality due to the likely collapse of local health systems (UNFPA, 2015).

Looking Ahead

Considerable progress in women's equality has been made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration. The use of modern methods of contraception among women of reproductive age has significantly increased, fertility rates have substantially declined, incidents of child marriage and FGM/C are decreasing, and overall school enrollment rates among girls are on the rise. The stronger gender balance in the current cabinet and the appointment of women in key government positions are notable achievements. There are indeed many accomplishments to applaud, thanks to government policies, civil society partnerships, and investments in women from bilateral donors and international bodies; however, challenges remain.

The outbreak of COVID-19, coupled with current conflicts within Ethiopia's borders, has led to the disruption of reproductive health services and education. This counters the investments and efforts made since the Beijing Platform for Action. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have agreed to conduct a joint investigation into the human rights violations and abuses allegedly committed by all parties in the context of the Tigray conflict (OHCHR, 2021). While this demonstrates the determination that exists among the international community and the Ethiopian government to investigate and hold perpetrators accountable, concrete actions need to be taken to prevent the recurrence of sexual violence in conflict settings. While the joint investigation proceeds, the international community should ensure that Ethiopia receives predictable and sustainable support enabling it to live up to its pledges to the Beijing Declaration and other international commitments to protect the gains made in women's lives.

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Chapter 11

Journey towards Gender Equality: The Case of Brazil

Márcia Carolina Santos Trivellato; Luiza Santos

Gender inequality remains a major problem in our modern societies. Its relevance as a central problem is revealed both in the degree of violence that accompanies it and in the fact that it is present in practically all existing human societies. According to the Global Gender Gap[1], the global score in 2021 is 67.7%, which means a widened by almost 0.6 percentage points, on average, compared to the previous edition of the index. Despite this overall widening, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge negative impact, making the closing of the Global Gender Gap increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years.

In Brazil, this situation gains even more problematic outlines because the country stands out for its high levels of violence and gender inequality. Despite global and regional advances regarding the protection of Human Rights and, jointly, the rights of women, Brazil still has difficulties in implementing these protective mechanisms in its national territory.

In the last 26 years, the country has advanced a lot, implementing several legal norms, public policies, investment in strategic areas, among other actions to increase gender equality. However, such measures are not sufficient to achieve the objectives and goals of the Beijing Declaration and its Plan for Action. In addition, this situation worsened even further because of the COVID-19 pandemic with the intensification of risk factors and the unpreparedness of official bodies to deal with violence in adapting their work to the new pandemic scenario. As a result, in the Global Gender Gap Index of 2021, the country occupied the position 93º, with a score of 0,695, a growth of only 0.004 points compared to 2020[2].

Given this scenario, it is questioned what are the main normative, programmatic, and socioeconomic advances and setbacks that Brazil has achieved since the promulgation of the Beijing Declaration until today, including considering the COVID-19 pandemic? In this sense, the objective of the research is to analyse the impacts of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action on the different political, legal, social and economic structures of the country, pointing out to what extent Brazil has managed to implement its normative and programmatic principles in the construction gender equality.

To achieve this goal, we intend to present a descriptive overview of the three main international plans as theoretical frameworks, starting from the Beijing Declaration, with the IV

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[1] World Economic Forum. (2021). Global gender gap reporter, p. 6. Available in: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf. The Global Gender Gap Index, developed by the World Economic Forum, benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity; Educational Attainment; Health and Survival; and Political Empowerment. Besides that, it tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time through a method to measure scores on a 0 to 100 scale and scores can be interpreted as the distance to parity (i.e. the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed). In 2021, the Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks 156 countries, providing a tool for cross-country comparison and to prioritize the most effective policies needed to close gender gaps.

[2] Op. cit., p. 11.

United Nations Conference on Women, known as Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030). The first one with a theoretical-normative character and the others with the nature of programmatic norms. This will be followed by a discussion of the process of implementation of these mechanisms by Brazil, the commitments and goals signed by the country. In view of the above, an overview of the results, advances and challenges related to combating violence against women in the country from 1995 to today is presented, making a special note of the situation of COVID-19.

Methodologically, the research was carried out based on bibliographic research, mainly based on resources from international organizations, such as the UN, and on the platforms of the Development Programs, such as the MDGs and the SDGs. In addition to them, Brazilian government resources on the subject were also consulted. To verify the statements throughout the text and to better visualize them, quantitative data were collected. In research carried out in reports, the most current data was used. Finally, although there is a dearth of data for the pandemic year 2020, some perceptions of the increase in gender violence have been used, as indicated in official channels of international organizations.

Global Actions for Achieving Gender Equality

In September 1995, the IV United Nations Conference on Women took place on Action for Equality, Development and Peace. In this event, 12 areas of priority concern were listed: (1) "women and poverty"; (2) "education and training of women"; (3) "women and health"; (4) "violence against women"; (5) "women and armed conflict"; (6) "women and the economy"; (7) "women in power and decision-making"; (8) "institutional mechanism for the advancement of women"; (9) "human rights of women"; (10) "women and the media"; (11) "women and the environment" and; (12) "the girl-child"[3]. On this occasion, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were also approved, documents that incorporate previous treaties on the protection and development of women, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[4].

The Conference, the Declaration and Platform for Action generated important advances for women, including but not limited to the perception of the "feminization of poverty"[5], the reduction of inequality in political participation and in decision-making bodies and the decrease in " , the reduction of inequality in political participation and in decision-making bodies and the decrease in violence against women. The theoretical-normative advance applied to social daily life was enhanced with the development of programmatic norms, mainly the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, produced by the UN and adopted by its member states. The main objective of both was to promote the implementation of theoretical-normative documents with themes relevant to the development of global society,

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[3] UN Women. World conferences on women. Available in: https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women

[4] Camara Dos Deputados. (2005). Declaração de Beijing. Available in: https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/59229-declaracao-de-beijing/%C2%B4mailto:agencia@camara.gov.br%C2%B4//

[5] ONU Mulheres. Declaração e Plataforma de Ação da IV Conferência Mundial sobre a Mulher. Available in: https://www.onumulheres.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/declaracao_beijing.pdf

including gender equality and its consequences[6]. These practical actions are built and executed through goals[7], targets[8] and indicators[9]. The objectives are common to all participating states. In turn, goals and indicators vary according to what the population in each country needs to improve. For example, there are countries that achieved some of the SDGs' goals even during the development of the MDGs.

Between 2000 and 2015, the Millennium Development Goals were developed by 191 UN member countries. The idea of these goals was to encourage the development of states through 8 objectives: (1) "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger"; (2) "achieve universal primary education"; (3) "promote gender equality and empower women"; (4) "reduce child mortality"; (5) "improve maternal healthy"; (6) "combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases"; (7) "ensure environmental sustainability" and; (8) "global partnership for development"[10]. Their importance lies in the fact that they integrate essential pillars for the promotion of gender equality, since violence against women is interdisciplinary and is placed in the multiple dimensions of everyday life. Thus, in addition to Objective 3, which deals directly with the theme, all other objectives are important in guaranteeing human and fundamental rights, therefore, in strengthening the condition of women in different areas of life.

Between the years 2015 to 2030, 17 Sustainable Development Goals were developed by 193 UN member states, which seek to improve the results already obtained with the MDGs. Are they: (1) "no poverty"; (2) "zero hunger"; (3) "good health and well-being"; (4) "quality education"; (5) "gender equality"; (6) "clean water and sanitation"; (7) "affordable and clean energy"; (8) "decent work and economic growth"; (9) "industry, innovation and infrastructure"; (10) "reduce inequalities"; (11) "sustainable cities and communities"; (12) "responsible consumption and production"; (13) "climate action"; (14) "life below water"; (15) "life on land"; (16) "peace, justice and strong institutions" and; (17) "partnerships for the goals"[11]. Among the goals of ODS 5, there is "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation"[12], which demonstrates an important commitment to achieving equality of gender.

The editions of these theoretical-normative documents and the development of programmatic norms in addition to the strengthening of the feminist movement in favour of the fight for gender equality were the main factors responsible for the promotion of gender equality at the global level. In addition, these actions are also important in the fight against discrimination against women at the national level, influencing the signatory countries to pursue their goals and objectives.

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[10] ODM Brasil. Os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento do Milênio. Available in: http://www.odmbrasil.gov.br/os-objetivos-de-desenvolvimento-do-milenio. Access in 28 May 2021; UN Millenium Development Goals. Available in: https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.

[11] ODS Brasil. Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável. Available in: https://odsbrasil.gov.br/. Plataforma Agenda 2030. A integração dos ODS. Available in: http://www.agenda2030.com.br/os_ods/. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The 17 Goals. Available in: https://sdgs.un.org/goals UN Sustainable Development Goals. Take action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Available in: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

[12] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Sustainable Development Goal 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls - targets and indicators. Available in: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5

The Implementation of International Gender Equality Standards in Brazil

Brazil, like the other countries participating in the IV United Nations Conference on Women, adopted the resulting Beijing documents at the event, namely the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. These documents brought numerous advancements in gender equality in Brazil, increasing the participation of women in the various facets of social life, changing prevailing mentalities and bringing prospects for the future. The Beijing Conference´s impact in the country was also a result of previous process of equality construction, linked to the realization of the Environment and Development Conference (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the 2nd World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) and, mainly, the International Population and Development Conference (Cairo, 1994)[13].

In 2000, the Brazilian government presented for the Special session of the United Nations General Assembly Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty First Century, the Brazilian National Report on the implementation in Brazil of the Platform For Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), consisting of advantages and difficulties about the application process of the Declaration and its Plans for Action[14]. This report is structured in three parts: "Tendencies to attain gender equality and the advancement of women"; "Financial and institutional measures"; "Implementation of the critical areas concerned of the Beijing Platform". Its importance lies in showing that it cannot be said that the gender approach has been applied in that actions to reach all areas (federal, state and municipal) or levels (planners, executives and managers) for its implementation until that time, although various actions for promoting gender equality and women´s progress have been formulated and established in Brazil until 2000, especially in the fields of health, education, violence and human rights[15].

According to the Brazilian National Report on the implementation in Brazil of the Platform For Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), on the part III, topic A "Policies, programs, projects and proven practices", the government acted in the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action. In the part III, topic B "Obstacles encountered", the report identifies obstacles to implement policies and measures in the critical areas of concern. They are: lack of general and professional training, lack of statistical data, lack of technical evaluation, low effectiveness of the norms and legal texts, political resistance of higher echelon public officers, invisibility of the black woman, and mainly, lack of mechanisms with power and technical and personnel infrastructure and the non-inclusion of gender perspective in ma-

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[13] United Nations. Brazilian national report on the implementation in Brazil of the platform for action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995): for the special session of the United Nations General Assembly "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty first century", p. 1. Available in: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/responses/Brazil.pdf

[14] Camara Dos Deputados. Declaração de Beijing, 2005. Available in: https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/59229-declaracao-de beijing/%C2%B4mailto:agencia@camara.gov.br%C2%B4

[15] United Nations. Brazilian national report on the implementation in Brazil of the platform for action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995): for the special session of the United Nations General Assembly "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty first century", p. 3. Available in: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/responses/Brazil.pdf

cro-economic[16].

In addition to this implementation document, in 2005, the Brazilian Government responded to the Questionnaire on the application of the Beijing Platform (1995) and the Results of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (2000), requested by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to all countries, as a subsidy for the evaluation that was made at the 49th Session of the CSW, on February 28th[17]. The Questionnaire was prepared in the form of a guide for the debate of the round table of the Commission for the Legal and Social Condition of Women, with guidelines and questions that had as main objective the visualization of the juridical-institutional advances, as well as the obstacles and problems encountered during the application of the Beijing documents[18]. In response, Brazil prepared a document divided into 4 parts: (1) the general panorama on structural issues transversal to the theme of gender equality in the country, such as income distribution, ethnic discrimination, high rates of occupation of the labour market by men and maternity assistance; (2) the progress made in relation to the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action, explaining how each of the biases were developed internally and how they evolved in terms of numbers/percentage; (3) institutional development with the restructuring of the Women's Councils at national, state and municipal levels, as well as the creation of cooperation agreements, human and financial resources between the extinct Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management and the Councils. In addition, there was the creation of the State Secretariat for Women's Rights (SEDIM)[19], the Special Secretariat for Policies for Women (SPM)[20] and the organization of the National Conference on Policies for Women[21] and; (4) the main problems and measures to address them in the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action[22].

These two documents are important mechanisms for monitoring the implementation by the Brazilian government of the objectives and goals outlined by the Beijing Platform. Despite the obstacles presented, they point out significant advances in the promotion of gender equality in the country until 2005.

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[16] Op. cit., p. 58-59. [17] Camara Dos Deputados. Declaração de Beijing, 2005. Available in: https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/59229-declaracao-de-beijing/%C2%B4mailto:agencia@camara.gov.br%C2%B4

[18] BRASIL. Beijing 10+: resposta do Estado brasileiro. Brasília, 2005, p. 35-76. Available in: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/politicas-para-mulheres/arquivo/assuntos/acoes-internacionais/Articulacao/articulacao-internacional/resposta-brasileira.pdf

[19] Created in 2002, he worked in actions related to the Ministry of Justice, in particular policies to prevent and combat sexual and domestic violence.

[20] Created in 2003, it has the task of formulating, coordinating, monitoring and, in some cases, executing public policies aimed at gender equity, being responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform.

[21] Held in 2004, it proposed guidelines for the preparation of the National Policy Plan for Women.

[22] Brasil. Beijing 10+: resposta do Estado brasileiro. Brasília, 2005, p. 4-33. Available in: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/politicas-para-mulheres/arquivo/assuntos/acoes-internacionais/Articulacao/articulacao-internacional/resposta-brasileira.pdf

Advances and Obstacles in the Implementation of the Ideals from Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Brazil

Brazil, in the process of implementing the Beijing Platform, signed its commitment to take a series of measures in favour of gender equality in the national territory. Thus, since 1995, important political, legal, social, and economic advances have been achieved regarding gender equality. The analysis of this situation can be started based on the documents previously presented and complemented using reports developed by the Institute of Applied Research (IPEA)[23] and by the extinct Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights[24]. IPEA[25] analysed the general situation about violence against women between 1995 and 2015, using quantitative data from different sources to analyse the issue. In turn, the National Review Report of the Brazilian State on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[26] also presented a detailed analysis of the advances and obstacles to the promotion of gender equality in Brazil between the years 2014-2019[27]. Finally, government websites present research on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on cases of violence against women.

Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA)

The document produced, in addition to presenting data on the evolution of the phenomenon in Brazil, addressed national legislative changes on the topic, such as the edition of Law n. 10.886/2004, which introduced the crime of domestic violence in the Penal Code[28] and the subsequent publication of the Maria da Penha Law[29] in 2006, which (re)criminalizes violence against women and, together, suggests a series of educational and preventive measures. In short, there have been major legislative and institutional advances in addressing violence against women, which remains a very relevant issue in the national context. Despite this, considerable resistance still exists in the concrete application of these understandings by the operators of the policies, both in terms of management, as well as in the legal and police application. Notwithstanding, violence against black women (for being women and black women), indigenous women (for being women and indigenous people) and lesbian and transsexual

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[23] In Portuguese, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada.

[24] In Portuguese, Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos.

[25] Engel, Cíntia Liara. A violência contra a mulher. Ipea. Available in: https://www.ipea.gov.br/retrato/pdf/190215_-tema_d_a_violenca_contra_mulher.pdf

[26] In Portuguese, Relatório Nacional de Revisão do Estado Brasileiro da implementação da Declaração e Plataforma de Ação de Pequim.

[27] Brasil. Relatório nacional de revisão do Estado brasileiro da implementação da Declaração e Plataforma de Ação de Pequim. Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos, 2019. Available in: https://www.gov.-br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/atuacao-inter-nacional/relatorios-internacionais-1/RelatrioNacionaldeRevisodoEstadoBrasileirodaimplementaodaDeclaraoePlataformadeAodePequim..pdf

[28] In Portuguese, Código Penal.

[29] In Portuguese, Lei Maria da Penha.

women (for being sexually distant and/or gender identity women in a heteronormative society) worsened and there are still challenges of policies to confront gender-based violence. Finally, the report showed an increase in deaths of women for being women in contexts other than domestic violence. However, in 2015 there was an important advance in tackling the problem with the enactment of the Femicide Law[30], Law n. 13.104/2015, which established femicide as a qualifying circumstance for the crime of homicide.

National Review Report of the Brazilian State on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

In 2019, the Brazilian government presented the National Review Report of the Brazilian State on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In Section 1, entitled "Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks", he stated that public policies aimed at women were implemented in a transversal and consistent manner, reinforcing the measures to promote equality between men and women. In addition, it was presented that the top five priorities for accelerating the progress of women and girls in the country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programs were: equality and non-discrimination before the law and access to justice; eradicating poverty, agricultural productivity and food security; eliminate violence against women and girls; political participation and representation; right to employment and labour rights (such as gender pay gap, occupational segregation, professional advancement). In addition, the report noted that, between 2014-2019, specific measures were taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women who experience multiple and interconnected forms of discrimination: indigenous women; women belonging to racial, ethnic or religious minorities; disabled women; women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities; younger women. In addition, the report listed the top 5 priorities for accelerating progress for women in Brazil between the years 2020 to 2025 through laws, policies and programs will be: equality and non-discrimination before the law and access to justice; quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls; eliminate violence against women and girls; political participation and representation; female entrepreneurship and women-controlled companies.

In Section 2 of the Report, entitled "Progress through the 12 Critical Areas of Concern [of the Beijing Platform for Action on the 2030 Agenda]", the report noted that steps taken to advance gender equality in relation to the role of women in paid work and employment were the introduction and strengthening of active gender-sensitive labour market policies (such as education and training, skills, subsidies) and; the adoption of measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace. As a second advance, it introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave and; promoted decent work for child caregivers, including immigrant workers, in order to reduce and/or redistribute assistance to unpaid domestic work and promote work-family reconciliation. In addition, it has reduced/eradicated poverty among women and girls by promoting access to decent work for poor women through active labour market policies (such as professional training, skills, labour subsidies, etc.) and specific measures; introduction or strengthening of social protection programs for women and girls (such as income transfer for women with children, job security and public service system for women of working age, pensions for elderly women).

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[30] In Portuguese, Lei do Feminicídio.

In addition, it promoted women's access to health services through the expansion of universal health coverage or public health services; expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive, mental health, maternal health and assistance to people with HIV to improve health statistics. In order to improve education and skills outcomes, it provided gender equity and human rights training for teachers and other health professionals and; strengthened measures to prevent teenage pregnancies and to allow adolescent girls to continue their education in the event of pregnancy and/or maternity. To address violence, it introduced or strengthened laws to combat violence against women, and their execution and implementation. As a way to prevent violence against women and girls, it promoted local and community mobilizations. Regarding the promotion of female participation in public life and decision-making structures, reforms were made to the Constitution, laws and regulations that promote female participation in politics, especially in decision-making levels, including reform of the electoral system, adoption of special measures temporary, such as quotas, reserved seats, indicators and targets and; data collection and analysis on women's participation in politics, including women in appointed and elected positions. In order to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the agenda for women, peace and security, adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security; integrated women's commitments, peace and security into key national and inter-ministerial policies, planning and monitoring framework; used communication strategies, including social media, to raise awareness of the women, peace and security agenda.

There was also the promotion of equal participation of women in humanitarian activities and crisis responses at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level to expand leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peace promotion, humanitarian action and responses to crisis situations in decision-making levels in situations of armed or other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis situations? It promoted the equal participation of women in humanitarian activities and crisis response at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level. In order to improve judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls and situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian actions and responses to crisis situations, it has adopted measures for the production, use or trafficking in illicit drugs and; adopted measures to combat trafficking in women and children. In addition, it adopted measures to combat negative social representation and practices and increased awareness of girls' needs and potentials; strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training; faced the disadvantages of health indicators due to malnutrition, early pregnancy (such as anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in order to eliminate discrimination against and violations of girl's rights. Finally, it adopted measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicine, biodiversity, and conservation techniques to integrate gender perspectives and issues into environmental policies. In all advances, domestic or intimate partner violence (including sexual violence and marital rape); sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational contexts and at work; feminicide and trafficking in women and girls were the forms of violence, context and situations prioritized for action.

In three respects at least (the prevention and response to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images); the approach of representing women and girls, discrimination and/or prejudice of gender in the media and the integration of gender perspectives in policies and programs for disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate mitigation), it was not possible to identify specific actions to promote gender equality.

Section 3, known as "National Institutions and Processes", noted the creation of the NationalSecretariat for Policies for Women (SNPM)[31], part of the now extinct Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, which works to promote equality of gender and female empowerment. In addition, civil society organizations participated as stakeholder groups for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In Section 4, called "Data and Statistics", the enactment of laws, regulations, or statistical strategies/programs was established establishing the development of gender statistics; the use of more gender-sensitive data in formulating policies and implementing programs and projects and; conducting new research to produce specific national information on specialized topics (such as time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability) as the top 3 areas in which Brazil has made the most progress when it comes to statistics at the national level. In addition, the top 3 priorities for strengthening national gender statistics are designing laws, regulations, or statistical programs/strategies to promote the development of gender statistics; use of more gender-sensitive data in formulating policies and implementing programs and projects; greater use and/or improvement of administrative or alternative data sources to address the data gap. In turn, the gender-specific global indicators of the SDGs available in the country are the proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic work and care, by sex, age and location (Indicator 5.4.1); proportion of seats held by women in: (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (Indicator 5.5.1); proportion of women in managerial positions (Indicator 5.5.2) and; proportion of people who have a mobile cell phone, by sex (Indicator 5.b.1). On this theme, the National Policy for Statistical Information related to violence against women of 2016 is cited, which aims to gather, organize and analyse data on these types of cases, integrating the organs of assistance to women in situations of violence within the scope of the Powers Executive, Legislative and Judiciary.

Covid-19 and What It Means for Gender Equality in Brazil

In 2020, according to the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, 105.821 complaints of violence against women were registered on the platforms of *Ligue 180* and *Disque 100*[32]. According to the ministry, a change in the methodology adopted in 2020 prevents data from being compared with previous years. In addition, a study by the Observatory of Women Against Violence reveals an increase in the record of these crimes in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. The document is the result of an evaluation of the experiences and practices of each state in the past two years.

According to studies by *Fio Cruz*, the reasons for this increase are due to the fact that during the pandemic period women in a vulnerable situation are distant from the two social protection networks, reducing the possibility of resorting to help, in addition to living together for a prolonged period. with your partner and potentially your abuser. Most Brazilian women have always been on multiple work shifts. In addition, there is a load of domestic and care work for children and other family members, creating a situation of stress and predisposing factors for triggering events of violence by an intimate partner, all heightening during the pandemic.

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[31] In Portuguese, Secretaria Nacional de Políticas para Mulheres.

[32] These are 24-hour service channels that receive, analyse and forward allegations of human rights violations to the responsible bodies.

Conclusions

The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and Beijing's documents were important for the gathering of previous guidelines on the promotion of gender equality, as well as for the direction of new programmatic norms on the theme, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on global actions, UN member states, such as Brazil, took initiatives to implement the suggested guidelines. Finally, the implementation of the actions adopted by Brazil has generated documented results over the past 26 years, with the National Review Report of the Brazilian State on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, released in 2019, the most current.

In view of the information discussed in this chapter, we argue that Brazil was successful in most areas related to gender violence between the years 1995 to 2019. In this period, the joint work of the Beijing documents and, mainly, objectives, targets, and indicators of the MDGs and SDGs were undertaken. Despite this progress, international organizations that study gender violence demonstrate that the year 2020 presented worrying obstacles and challenges regarding gender equality, due to the pandemic of COVID-19 and the conduct of Brazilian domestic and foreign policy. The measures adopted allowed the improvement of the situation of women, but they were not enough to deal with this challenging and structural problems, requiring work - and accountability as a whole from the government, international organizations and civil society.

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Chapter 12

The Journey to Gender Equality in China: Progress and Challenges

Shaohua Wang

Considered one of the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted unanimously by 189 countries at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing, defined the framework for change by making comprehensive commitments under 12 critical areas of concern. For the past 25 years, it serves as a source of guidance and inspiration for gender equality, and the review and appraisal by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) every five years since 2000 have provided opportunities to reconnect and reflect. Today, despite considerable progress, the Platform's envisioned gender equality in all dimensions of life is still an unfinished agenda.

This chapter focuses on gender equality in China since 1995, the progress made so far and the challenges faced in the process. By describing and analyzing the achievement and challenges China faces while promoting women's cause and gender equality, the author aims to revisit the spirit of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and provide an objective and concise depiction of the gender journey China has gone through legally, economically, socially, and on the rights to education and health.

The Progress for Gender Equality in China

As a developing country with the world's largest population, China, among countries accelerating the advancement of gender equality and women's all-round development, has created "a new pattern of women's development with Chinese characteristics" (Du, 2020). Chinese women make up 18% the world' s total female population in 2019 (World Bank, 2019; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2020). Gender equality and women' s development in China "not only give expression to China' s own progress, but also constitute a historical contribution made to global equality, development and peace" (SCIO[1], 2015). A solid body of legislation for the defense of the rights and interests of women has been significantly promoted. Women's "half-sky"[2] role in economic and social development is clearly evident. The level of women's social security continues to improve. Women's education level, health conditions, and their participation in international exchanges and cooperation have become increasingly extensive.

The founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 ushered in a new era for women in China, changing their social status from an oppressed and enslaved group in the

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[1] The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China.

[2] "Women hold up half the sky" was the slogan from Mao Zedong's era and widely accepted as the heritage of women's liberation in China. It is known to every household until today.

past thousands of years to masters of their own fate. The Constitution of the PRC stated the fundamental national policy of equality between men and women. PRC's first enacted law was the Marriage Law which closely related to women's rights and interests. It established the principles of freedom of marriage, monogamy, and equal rights between men and women. In 1992, the first special law of China to protect women's rights was enacted and implemented- Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, which was revised in 2005, with regard to women's political rights, cultural and educational rights, labor and social security rights, property rights, and personal rights. The Anti-Domestic Violence Law was promulgated in 2015, which provided a better legal guarantee for promoting the resolution of women's domestic violence problems and maintaining equal, harmonious and civilized family relationships. In the same year, Amendment (IX) to the Criminal Law abolished the crime of prostitution with under-age girls[3], and increased efforts to severely punish criminal acts that violated the rights of under-age female. In 2018, the Law on Land Contract in Rural Areas was revised to ensure that rural women have the right to be named on the certificate and the rights under their names (People's Daily[4], 2019). On the basis of insisting that men and women enjoy equal rights to land contract management, the principle of equality between men and women in contracting households has been further emphasized. The general principles of the civil law that have been promulgated and the divisions of the civil code that are being compiled all adhere to the principle of equality between men and women. Special plans for work on specific fronts substantiated the guiding principle of protecting women's rights. The plans include the National Human Rights Action Plan (2016-2020) and the 13th Five-Year Plan[5] (2016-2020) for the promotion of legal rights and education. Mechanisms for assessing policies and measures for ensuring gender equality were established. From 2012 to 2018, an evaluation system was set up in 30 provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities)[6] for the evaluation of the implications of laws and regulations for gender equality. The concept of gender equality has been introduced into drafting, implementation and supervision of laws and policies (SCIO).

Women are important builders of the country. Equal participation in economic activities and equitable access to economic resources are the basic conditions for the well-being and development of women. The female labor force participation rate in China has stayed above 60 percent for at least two decades (World Bank, 2021), one of the highest in the Asia-Pacific region (UN Women, 2019). In 2018, the number of female employees reached 340 million (Li, 2020), women entrepreneurs in the Internet sector reached 55% and overall accounted for 43.9% of all employed persons in society in 2019 (World Bank, 2019). Ensuring equal land rights and mobilizing rural women's enthusiasm for production effectively guaranteed the land rights and economic interests of women, and helped invest in rural revitalization and contribute to the modernization of agriculture and rural areas. In terms of poverty reduction, China has rolled out a series of plans with an emphasis on the equal participation of and benefit for poor women (Li, 2020). The number of people living in extreme poverty has decreased from 98.99 million at the end of 2012 to 5.51 million at the end of 2019, and poverty has been reduced by more than 10 million annually for eight consecutive years (Xinhua Net, 2021). China hit the

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[3] There were years of judicial disputes around the subject. Some argued that separating the crime of prostitution with under-age (14 years old) girls from rape de facto stigmatized the victims of child prostitution and sexual exploitation.

[4] The People's Daily is the largest newspaper group in China, and an official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

[5] FYP. The central government blueprint for China's long-term social and economic policies.

[6] There are 34 provincial-level administrative divisions in China with twenty-three Provinces, five Autonomous Regions, four Municipalities, and two Special Administrative Regions.

 World Bank target of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 a full decade early. United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) Guterres highly praised China's contribution in the history of human poverty reduction (MFA[7], 2021). This has mattered in relation to gender equality since about half of the reduced poverty population were women (SCIO,2019). It is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[8] of "leaving no one behind."

It was stipulated by law that men and women have equal rights to vote, to be elected, and to manage state affairs. The proportion of women representatives in the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party[9] of China in 2017 was 24.2%, which was 14.9% higher than that of the Eighth National Congress in 1956. The percentage of women in neighborhood committees has always maintained a high level, which reached 49.7% in 2017. Women among corporate employee directors and employee supervisors constituted as 39.7% and 41.6%, respectively in 2017(SCIO, 2019).

The right to education is a basic human right. The results of eradicating women's illiteracy have been remarkable. By the end of 2017, the national illiteracy rate of females aged 15 and above dropped from 90% before the founding of the PRC to 7.3%. The proportion of girls in ordinary primary and ordinary junior high schools reached 46.5% and 46.4%, respectively, an increase of 18.5% and 20.8% from 1951(SCIO, 2019). In 2017, the net enrollment rate of primary school-age girls was 99.9%, which was the same as that of boys, meaning that equal opportunity has been provided at the stage of nine-year compulsory education (Liu, 2019). Women's access to high school, higher education, vocational education and continuing education have reached a record high. The proportion of female students in regular colleges and universities in undergraduate and junior college has reached 52.5% of the total number of students (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2020). In master and doctorate programs, female students reached 51.2% and 40.4 %, up 20.6 and 24.9 percentage points from 1995(Li, 2020).

Women's and children's health is the cornerstone of national health. Women's health continues to improve. In 2015, the average life expectancy of women was 79.4 years, 10.1 years higher than in 1981, and 42.7 years higher than when New China was founded. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) achieved MDGs ahead of schedule, and dropped from 80 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 18.3 per 100,000 live births in 2018. (WHO[10], 2018). The gap between urban and rural areas has been narrowing, and the ratio of urban to rural maternal mortality has dropped from 1:2.2 in 1990 to 1:1.3 in 2018. Moreover, the maternal and child health laws, regulations and policy systems have continued improving. In 2018, there were 3,080 maternal and child health care institutions, 807 maternity hospitals, and nearly 640,000 maternal and child health workers (SCIO, 2019). The World Health Organization listed China as one of the 10 countries with high performance in maternal and child health. In the 1990s, China carried out high-quality people-oriented family planning services, and promoted informed choice of contraceptive methods.

It has been a constant effort to ensure and improve women's livelihood in development. The medical security system covers in both urban and rural areas. Approximately 540 million women participated in basic medical insurance nationwide in 2018. Women who participate in

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[7] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

[8] MDG1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; SDG1: No poverty.

[9] The party congress that is held every five years since 1987, the next one will be in 2022.

[10] World Health Organization.

the basic medical insurance for urban and rural residents are entitled to reimbursement of reproductive medical expenses. Employers must not cut pay, or terminate the employment contract of female employees due to pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding (State Council, 2012). The minimum legal maternity leave for female employees was extended from 90 days (1988) to 98 days (2012) (ILO[11], 2012). 11 provinces have successively adjusted relevant laws and regulations, setting up spouse care leave, adding maternity reward leave to 128 to 180 days (China Economy, 2016).

China attaches great importance to international exchanges and cooperation in the area of the development of women globally. At present, China has maintained friendly exchanges with 429 women's organizations and agencies in 145 countries, as well as relevant United Nations(UN) organizations and specialized agencies. In the realm of national diplomacy, the dialogue and exchanges between Chinese and foreign women led by the All-China Women's Federation(ACWF) have continued. Twenty years after hosting 1995 FWCW and contributing to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the UNs and the 20th anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women, China and UN Women jointly hosted the Global Women's Summit. More than 140 heads of state and government as well as representatives of UN agencies and international organizations attended the meeting. Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the summit and delivered an important speech, profoundly expounding China's proposition to promote equality between men and women and the all-round development of women. The summit achieved fruitful results, injected new impetus into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and set a new milestone for the development of the global women's cause. Since 2015, the ACWF has trained more than 2,000 leading women in 98 countries. Since 1982, Chinese representatives have been elected members of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women nine times. China is one of the major contributors to UN peacekeeping operations and the largest troop contributor among permanent members of the Security Council. Nearly 1,000 women from China participated in UN peacekeeping operations. The Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalion to South Sudan has a combat squad composed of female soldiers. Mao Ping, the first female commander dispatched to perform peacekeeping missions, was awarded the "Outstanding Woman Award" by the Lebanese government. A number of female diplomats are active in the field of national diplomacy. As of October 2018, China has 2,065 female diplomats, accounting for 33.1% of the total number of diplomats, including 14 female ambassadors, 21 female consuls general, and 326 female counsellors above the chu level[12] (SCIO, 2019).

It was not until the 20th century when reforms for women's rights began as issues concerning women came under the spotlight in China. By the late 20th century, women began to gain greater autonomy through the formation of women-only organizations ("Feminist movements," n.d.). In the first decades of the Reform[13] period there was a top-down women's movement initiated by the party-led ACWF (Nielsen, 2018). Compared to the "non-governmental organizing" path that characterized the development of feminism during the 1980s and 1990s, Chinese Feminism has experienced a "paradigm shift" (Wang, 2018), post-2000 feminism demonstrated in performance art, philanthropic volunteerism, and cyberfeminist articulations

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[11] International Labour Organization.

[12] There is no equivalent in English or Western political system. It can be understood as "section chief rank".

[13] Reform and Opening-up, or the economic reforms termed "Socialism with Chinese characteristics", started from 1978 and marked the turning point of new era.

(Ibid.). The mobilization through social media, especially through Weibo and WeChat[14], contributed tremendously to: the amendment of Marriage Law in 2001 so the abuse was considered ground for divorce (Hunt, 2015); the inclusion and further definition of sexual harassment in 2005 and 2006 (BBC, 2005; Li&South, 2006); the first gender discrimination lawsuit brought and won by a woman in 2013 (FlorCruz, 2013). The continuous public debate and final enact of first nationwide Anti-Domestic Violence Law was initiated by Kim Lee, an American and the wife of Li Yang, a famous language instructor, posting the pictures of her bruised face on social media (CNN, 2015). #MeToo Movement in China started with university students coming forward with allegations against their former supervisors on Weibo (Lin&Yang,2019; Wu, 2018), which soon resonated with people who had been sexually harassed and encouraged them to speak up (ABC News, 2020). In December 2020, a court in Beijing held a hearing on Zhou Xiaoxuan (Xianzi)'s case. She, through her WeChat acoount, accused Zhu Jun, one of the most prominent TV hosts, of sexually harassing her six years ago. This was analyzed as a "landmark case" that would define the future of #MeToo Movement in China (BBC, 2020). New generation of feminist scholars, activists, organizations have kept contributing to the gender equality in China outside the system. The civil organizations providing legal support and anti-violence consultation are growing, the visibility of LGBTQI+ community can be easily seen through the various WeChat official accounts dedicated to raise awareness and disseminate gender non-conforming norms, and events often in semiprivate and semipublic spaces.

The Challenges to Gender Equality in China

To deconstruct the challenges China faces in achieving gender equality, and provide an objective analysis at home and abroad, Global Gender Gap Report (GGGP) and its Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) are being referenced[15]. The former was published annually by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to share the latter that provides a measure of gender equality. The GGGI identifies the gender gap in the fields of economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment of participating countries in a systematic and comprehensive matter.

The GGGR reflects the gender equality of a country through two indicators: the ranking and score. The higher the score between 0 and 1, the closer the participating country is towards gender equality. According to the ranking data from 2006, China has dropped from 63rd to 107th in 2021 (Figure 1); when it comes to the score, it started at 0.656 in 2006, continuously increased until 2013, slightly decreased for five years, and started to mount during 2018 to 2021, with the tendency to increase (Figure 2).

It would however be incorrect to conclude that China's ranking in terms of gender equality kept dropping and remained stagnant. The drastic falling in rank caused a great controversy in China (Chen and He, 2020). The fundamental argument lied in the indicators, which we-

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[14] Respectively launched by Chinese technology companies Sina and Tencent in 2009 and 2011, Weibo is a micro-blogging application with over 516 monthly active users (compared to Twitter's 300 million)as of fourth quarter in 2019(Hu,2020), which makes it the second largest social media platform after WeChat, a multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app with 1.24 billion monthly active users in the first quarter of 2021(Thomala, 2021).

[15] The analysis is based on the GGGR 2006-2021 (without 2019), WEF. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/reports?utf8=%E2%9C%93&query=Global+Gender+Gap+Report

argued as "unreasonable", and that some data was not updated in time (Tang, 2019; Yang, 2018; Zheng, 2019). The rank varies based on the number of all participating countries and it has never been a stable variable. When GGGR published for the first time in 2006, there were 115 countries[16] (WEF, 2006). In 2021, there were 156 countries covered, adding three countries (WEF, 2021). It was argued that in order to have a more accurate reflection, the ranking of China needs to be compared among the 107 countries (Ibid.) covered continuously from 2006 to 2021. Hence, instead of considering the ranking in the GGGR as sole reference measuring gender equality, it should be seen as a relative indicator.

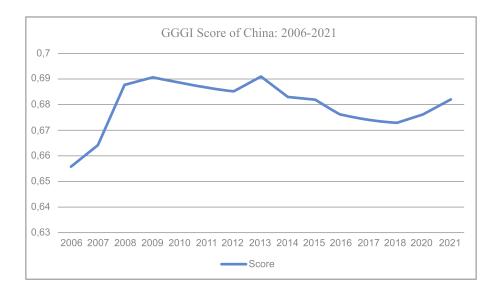Figure 1 GGGI Ranking of China:2006-2021. Source: WEF (2006-2018, 2020-2021)

Figure 2 The GGGI Score of China. Source: WEF (2006-2018, 2020-2021)

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[16] Namely, Afghanistan, Guyana and Niger.

Overall, GGGR provides a platform to focus on gender inequalities and could serve as a starting point for us to understand and improve the situation of gender inequalities in China. The challenges that cannot be underestimated showed in the slow development of the protection for women and LGBTQI+ community, low representation in politics, a lack of female leadership and pay gap economically, sex imbalances with demographic malus crisis for now and the foreseeable future, and discrimination against women under the influence of patriarchal culture and gendered roles in public and private life.

For the legal protection, it was not until May 2020 that the new Civil Code clarified the definition of sexual harassment as what's "carried out against the will of another by means such as speech, text, images, or physical conduct", and that "government, companies and schools should make an effort to stop such behavior" (Ni, 2021). As the issues of the rights of the LGBTQI+ community are being taken more seriously now, China has expressed opposition to discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. According to Nielson (2018), "China is slowly on its way to accept more sexual diversity", though some criticized that "Beijing has often not lived up to, or has actively undercut these professed values" (Longarino, 2020).

The Chinese political landscape remains dominated by men (WEF, 2020). The GGGR in 2020 stated that:

> Women hold only two ministerial positions and make up only one-quarter of the National People's Congress membership (as of 2018). Leadership positions in the economy also largely remain the preserve of the men, with one woman for every five men in these roles. (p.30)

Nearly one-quarter (24.9%) of all positions in China's single-house parliament are held by women, placing it at 75th place out of 188 countries (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020).

As a country of 1.41178 billion people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), with 48.76% of the population being women, a more equal relationship would occur "when resources are relatively adequate", but "that females are disadvantaged when resources are scarce in more prestigious occupations, higher income" (Yang, 2020). China has one of Asia-Pacific's highest labor force participation rates for women (Asian Development Bank, 2017), yet women's labor force participation has been declining since 1990s from 73.2% in 1990 to 60.5% in 2019, while 75.3% of men participated in the labor force in 2019(World Bank, 2019). There are a few setbacks for women, including diminished employment opportunities, a lack of childcare and eldercare options, a resurgence of traditional stereotypes about women's work (Connelly et al, 2018). A gender pay gap has narrowed down but persists (Huang, 2019), women earn on average of 38% less than men for doing similar work (WEF, 2021). At workplace, only 11.4% of board members and 16.7% of senior managers were women (Ibid.). China's gender imbalance has contributed to slowed population and labor force growth, increased proportions of single men, and the trafficking of women (UNFPA[17], 2018). Women are still seen as primary caregivers and are expected to stop engaging in paid labor outside the house to care for their families. Women in China spend three times that of men, or one-sixth of their lives, on unpaid household labor (Bloomberg News, 2019).

Gender disparity shows up from the very beginning, with sex ratio at birth(SRB). In the absence of interventions, the normal range of SRB should be 103 to 107 male babies to 100

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[17] United Nations Population Fund.

female babies (UNICEF[18], 2018). The GGGR in 2014 listed China as one of the five countries that were not doing well with the SRB (WEF, 2014). Health and survival subindex remained staged until 2016 (WEF, 2016), or around 105 boys for every 100 girls (WHO). When it came to 2020, the very skewed sex ratio at birth (885 girls per 1,000 boys) weighed heavily on China-'s performance in GGGI. In 2021, China continued to have a huge Health and Survival gap, the lowest level among all 156 countries, mainly due to lowest progress of any country in closing gender gaps in SRB: 88.8 girls were born every 100 boys in 2018, which is around 112 boys for every 100 girls, reflecting strong son preference and gender-biased prenatal sex selective practices (WEF, 2021). The rapid fertility declines, resulting from China's one-child policy, son-preference culture, combined with the advent of sex determination technologies, have contributed the birth of fewer girls (Kaur, 2016). Sex imbalances is a tragedy of the commons as it affects everyone. The possible social consequences on women are the less positions in community and political voice (Eklund, 2013); increased frequency of exploitation of women, female trafficking, gender-based violence; more pressure on women to marry and bear children. There would be delayed marriage among men, increasing competition among unmarried men, and with stronger impact on vulnerable men who are poorer, less educated and from remote areas, in involuntary marriage. Therefore, changing in marriage patterns and family structures, and causing more inequality in the society (Guilmoto, 2011).

The traditional Confucian culture in China linked "unequal gender stratification and distribution of power and resources" (Zuo et al, 2018) with "three obedience", namely women subordinating to their fathers as daughters, to their husbands as wives, and to their sons in widowhood. Men were considered as breadwinners and women were expected to take care of the family. Even the percentage of women receiving high level of schooling and entering larbor market, the emergence of "re-traditionalization of gender in the family" was observed (Nielson, 2018), and those of the social division of labor (Jia& Ma, 2015; Yang, 2017), which enhanced Confucian family ideology and gender roles in public and private life. Studies on social role theory (Eagly, 1987) gender role theory (Gutek et al, 1991) and gender role attitudes and male-female income differences in China (Qing, 2020) have shown that traditional gender role attitudes have a significantly negative impact on women's earning and have no significant effect on men's average incomes. Compared to those of women, the gender role attitudes of men tend to be more traditional. This outcome implies that traditional gender role attitudes are "deeply rooted in gender inequality in the realm of income distribution, which has a profound and invisible impact" (Ibid.).

On the one hand, men are seen as dominators of the society under the influence of traditional Confusion culture and gendered roles. On the other hand, discrimination against women and the need to achieve gender equality poses an important challenge for China. Some gender stereotypes and discriminatory language in 2018 included requirements for women with children and to possess specific physical attributes (e.g. age, height) that were not related to job duties (Human Rights Watch, 2018). In 2019, China enacted laws to expand workplace protection for women. These included "prohibiting employers from asking women about their marital or family status and from requiring women to agree not to have children as an employment condition" (Webster & Rosseau, 2019). Employers and recruiters may face a $7,400-fine with gender discriminatory job ads. However, it was unclear how well the law was enforced (Qin, 2019). Some employers defied labor laws that were against pregnancy discrimination, leaving women little success in seeking legal redress (Stevenson & Chen, 2019). The demographic imbalance on the marriage and sexuality market, as well as that of on the labor

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[18] United Nations Children's Emergency Fund.

market require a restructure to change men's superiority, otherwise it will continue exacerbate the marginalization of women's work in society, and limit the economic empowerment of women, which in turn may fuel discrimination against "a permanent minority within Chinese society: women" (Attané, 2012).

Conclusions

With decades of effort, China has consistently advocated and practice gender equality in a "top-down pattern" (Yang, 2020) by ensuring a rigorous application of the laws and public policies that benefit and protect women. Growing participation in economic activities and equitable access to economic resources, political rights and social security are covered. The right to education and health are protected. International exchanges and cooperation for women's development in and outside of China is booming, while social media starts to play a crucial part in advancing gender equality and feminist movements in China. Yet, there are still realistic challenges in achieving gender equality in China. The undesirable speed of protection for women and LGBTQI+ community is discouraging, the underrepresentation in political and economic leadership positions is unpleasing, skewed sex ratios and its impacts on the society and each group of people are alarming. Traditional culture and gendered roles exacerbate discrimination against women, hence intensify inequality both in public and private life.

When referring to the national policy on gender equality in China, the direct translation is the "equality between man and women", which reflects the binary narrative that is still in place. If China could navigate the narrative from binary to inclusivity, it would be a great step. China has continuously consolidated the institutional construction that promote gender equality, women's all-round development, and oppose all forms of gender discrimination under the law. Yet, gender inequality is deeply rooted in traditional cultural norms (Jayachandran, 2015), so China's top-level design of gender equality policy should be paralleled with changes in culture. Specific policies that contribute to advanced gender culture and their effective implementation and operation are key to achieve gender equality in China. Therefore, measures to raise gender awareness should be embedded early in the education system, innovative activities based on socioeconomic and psychological basis to promote women's active participation in all walks of life should be encouraged.

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Chapter 13

A Critical Overview of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: The Case of Costa Rica

Adriana Salcedo[1]

Introduction

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), a highly relevant international policy tool for advancing gender equality in more than 180 signatory countries. Considering this, it is important to understand the progress, challenges and opportunities facing the implementation of these agreements in Costa Rica.

Costa Rica has historically been characterized as a country where the rights (especially the political rights) of women and girls have been recognized for several decades. However, challenges in terms of inclusion, participation, reproductive rights, job opportunities and cultural obstacles for many of Costa Rican women and gender minorities persist to this day. This chapter highlights several of the advances and challenges that have arisen to date in the key areas considered in the Declaration and in the Beijing Platform for Action, including: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflicts, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, the media, the environment, and girls.

Since the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in Costa Rica in March of last year, many of the challenges experienced by various civil society organizations working on the different areas of the Declaration, as well as by government institutions and international organizations, have intensified. The periods of confinement and restrictions on mobility complicated and slowed down the execution of projects and other initiatives, as well as the implementation of policies to promote equality.

In order to analyze this situation, a research team at the University for Peace designed a methodology to gather first-hand information from different key actors and civil society organizations that are currently working on the implementation of one or more lines of action considered in the Declaration. The research design also included a critical review of key bibliogra-

phic resources of what has been produced on this matter to date; a mapping of civil society organizations working on the specific areas of implementation; a consultation and the application of a brief survey of these organizations, and the realization of two virtual events. All these efforts allowed us to systematize a series of recommendations to be taken into account by decision makers, relevant institutions and civil society organizations working on the implementation of the different key areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Costa Rica.

Historical Context and Developments[2]

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, together with The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), is one of the most important instruments for the promotion of women's rights throughout the world. In this context, Costa Rica, as an active member of the United Nations, committed to addressing the 12 areas of special concern developed in this instrument: children, environment, economy, decision-making, poverty, violence, education, health, media, armed conflict, institutions and women's human rights; thereby joining the fight for equity and equality for women in Costa Rica.

Consequently, in 1995 the National Assembly of Costa Rica published the "Declaration and Platform for Action of Beijing, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995", as the official document that establishes the main guidelines, strategic objectives, actions, and institutional and financial arrangements for the Costa Rican government to meet its commitment to implement the Beijing Declaration.

In this context, the National Institute of Women (INAMU), in its role as the governing body for the promotion of the effective exercise of women's human rights has produced a series of publications, in coordination with the Costa Rican State and civil society, that present the country's commitments under the plan of the Beijing Declaration and the progress made in achieving them. According to the *Tercer Estado de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres en Costa Rica* (2019) developed by the aforementioned institution in the process of ratifying instruments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Costa Rica reaffirmed its commitment to work towards gender equality in key areas such as education, including by modifying the curriculum to tackle stereotypes and roles regarding women in education and, more broadly, in society.

Likewise, one of the points highlighted in the aforementioned document is social co-responsibility with regard to care, as is underscored in the Beijing Plan of Action, which recognizes that gender inequality as a social issue that is directly linked to economic, cultural and power structures, and which promotes the involvement of different social actors who are responsible for providing alternative services and modalities.

Along the same lines, Costa Rica's Report on the application of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the results of the Twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015 (INAMU, 2014) presents a general analysis of the Declaration and Platform in Costa Rica, analyzing the country's achievements and challenges since the adoption of the commitment, progress with re-

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[2] This part was written by Daniela Fonseca López who carried out the bibliographic review of the documents referred to in this section.

gard to the twelve main areas of concern, as well as the advances, opportunities and difficulties that the country encountered.

Subsequently, in 2019, INAMU presented the National Report on the application of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the results of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, setting out the main advances and challenges for the 2014-2019 period.

The report drew on the Guidance Note for the Preparation of Exhaustive Examinations at the National Level (UN Women 2018), a document that was put together with inputs from a national consultation process with civil society via a public questionnaire and workshops held with representatives of social and women's organizations, the private sector and state institutions, under the leadership of the National Institute for Women and with the support of the United Nations System in Costa Rica.

With regard to political rights, in 2008, as part of the measures adopted at the institutional level by Costa Rica, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal published its Institutional Policy for Equality and Equity, as a strategic instrument to guide medium- and long-term actions related to the country's commitment to achieve gender equality and equity in this institution. It is important to note that this policy underscores the importance of starting from instruments such as the Declaration and Platform for Action of Beijing.

In addition, the United Nations Development Program (2018) published a report entitled "From Commitment to Action: Policies to Eradicate Violence against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean", which is a guide and information manual on Costa Rica's plan of action to combat violence against women. The report discusses the importance, challenges and achievements of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the national level.

Finally, within the framework of the Institute of Social Studies in Population (IDESPO) of the National University, Espinoza Herrera and Porras Solís (2019) published a document titled: "Living Conditions of Women 65 Years of Age and Over", in which they analyze the correlation between gender and the phenomenon of demographic aging.

These authors argue that aging, as a phenomenon, impacts the lives of men and women differently, and they mention the importance of supporting human rights and the implementation of actions and plans, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to confront gender inequality and inequity, and to promote active aging.

Recent Advances in Implementation

Following the publication by INAMU (2019) of the "National Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Results of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) in the Context of the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", there have been important advances in the country that need to be highlighted. One of the most important in terms of legislation and the creation of public policies for gender equality and non-discrimination is the approval by the National Assembly of the Law against Street Sexual Harassment.

Another important advance refers to the approval of the Technical Standard for the Medical

Procedure Linked to Article 121 of the Costa Rican Penal Code, on assisted abortion. This regulation enables the therapeutic interruption of pregnancy to protect and safeguard the life of a pregnant woman when her health and physical integrity are at serious risk. Although the approval of the Technical Norm constitutes important progress, there is still much to do in terms of the regularization of this procedure in cases of rape, statutory rape and incest, among other causes.

Analysis of Progress, Challenges and Opportunities

As a fundamental part of this update on the implementation of the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the University for Peace organized two virtual meetings (a webinar and a panel of experts) that brought together experts on gender equality to discuss progress, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Platform and its impact on the lives of thousands of women, youths and girls in the country.

The aforementioned events managed to analyze in depth the most significant achievements in key areas for female empowerment, such as: sexual and reproductive rights, political participation, economic autonomy, non-discrimination and legislative advances.

Additionally, priority areas for the country were also identified, including: the issue of gender based violence, labor rights, especially with regard to migrant workers (and their key role in times of pandemic), reproductive rights, obstetric violence and wage parity, among others.

The webinar, titled "Analysis of the results achieved in the implementation of the different agreements of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action in Costa Rica", benefited from the participation of the following experts: Saskia Salas - official of the National Institute of Women; Monserrat Sagot - Director of the Center for Research in Women's Studies at the University of Costa Rica, and Ivania Solano - Official of the Women's Ombudsman's Office. The recording of this event is available at the following link: https://youtu.be/IVYSYSGhO1g.

In the same vein, on March 16,2021, UPEACE hosted the "Panel on the implementation of the agreements of the Beijing Platform for Action in Costa Rica", with the distinguished participation of: Susana Malcorra as representative of GWL; Carolina Hidalgo – Representative to the National Legislative Assembly for the Citizen Action Party, and Rafaella Sánchez - Coordinator of the Technical Unit for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women of the UNDP-CR). The recording of this important event is available at the following link: https://youtu.be/6xvSkuET3H4

Findings and Recommendations

One of the most important points discussed in the aforementioned events was the role and impact that the crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the lives of millions of women, that threatens to set back by various decades the most important advances and achievements in terms of rights and gender equality both in Costa Rica and in the world. Thus, as the invited experts mentioned, not only have women been affected with regard to their degree of economic and labor independence (due to the massive loss of jobs that are deemed 'female' jobs), but also, the pandemic has confined them to private spaces where they frequently ex-

perience violence.

Both the webinar and the panel discussion analyzes in depth the most significant achievements in key areas for female empowerment in the last two years, including sexual and reproductive rights, political participation, economic autonomy, non-discrimination and legislative advances. In spite of the significant progress achieved in several of the aforementioned areas, spaces that warrant prioritization in the context of the pandemic were also identified, among which the following stand out:

Gender-based Violence

During the two virtual events, the worrying increase in cases of sexual and gender-based violence that have occurred at the national and global levels in connection with the confinement measures due to the pandemic was analyzed. Likewise, on a similar theme, the increase in reported cases of obstetric violence in health care centers in the country in the context of the pandemic was highlighted, since many of the pregnant women who go to these centers do not receive due attention (Observatory of Reproductive Rights of the National University of Costa Rica 2020).

Loss of Livelihoods

The speakers emphasized the loss of female jobs (especially in the area of service provision) due to the pandemic, as well as the precariousness of female employment associated with the current economic crisis. Additionally, the persistence of important challenges in areas such as wage parity was discussed, notwithstanding several initiatives adopted by the national government and the international community, such as the Gender Equality Seal, an initiative under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program in Costa Rica (UNDP) that seeks to promote empowerment and gender equality as an engine for sustainable development.

Labor Rights and Economic Progress

The importance of having appropriate mechanisms to strengthen women's labor rights, especially those concerning migrant workers, received special attention. Migrant women employed in the health and care sectors, who have played a key role in tackling the pandemic, deserve special attention.

In addition, the experts mentioned the need to advance the discussion of a bill to eliminate any discrimination in sales prices based on gender through the so called 'pink tax'. In addition, INAMU in association with UNDP-CR launched the Gender Equality and Equity in Employment Program in 2016. This is an effort to incorporate private and public organizations in the country committed to working towards gender equality and the economic empowerment of women *(Sello de Igualdad).*

Political Representation and Inclusion

Although Costa Rica has made important progress in this area, the general recommendation of the experts was to intensify efforts not only to strengthen the political quota system and other formal participation mechanisms, but also to promote and facilitate spaces for participation and deliberation by women in their communities. Thus, despite of the approval of a mechanism to promote horizontal and vertical parity to secure women's representation and participation in electoral processes in 2015 (Sala Constitucional, Resolution 2015-016070), the challenges still persist as it was exposed during the 2020 electoral process, where few women participated and were elected to public offices, especially at the municipal level. According to UNDP-CR (2019), in 2010, only 10 women were elected as mayors in the 81 municipalities in the country and this number only increased to 12 women mayors in 2016, going from 12.3% to 14.8%. In the other elected positions, inequalities also stand out: in 2016 the intendencias were occupied by 37.5% women and 62.5% men; 40.4% of women in the regidurías versus 59.6% of men and 36.3% of women in the sindicaturas versus 63.8% of men. This scenario speaks about the need to promote not only greater participation of women but also to work on the different societal challenges (such as political violence towards women) that have intensified during the 2020 electoral process.

An Inclusive Education

This area has seen one of the largest negative effects of the pandemic. An important challenge to highlight is the accessibility and connectivity of students and the need to coordinate government actions to include a greater number of children within the virtual and blended teaching modalities.

Youth Participation

The inclusion of alternative voices such as those of young people is a priority to advance on issues of social inclusion and incorporate their proposals in public policy matters and related actions. Similarly, the creation of inclusive spaces that promote the participation of young women in the public life of their communities was proposed.

The Promotion of an Intersectional Approach

Both in the work of the government and in that of civil society institutions and private companies, an intersectional approach was highlighted as the way to go. For example, the inclusion of differentiated services and comprehensive care for women that takes into account their diversity was proposed, while maintaining an inclusive approach with regard to the rest of the population. In this context, the promotion and recognition of investments that have the "gender label" and that provide economic autonomy (entrepreneurship) and also social autonomy were discussed. Some interesting examples in this area are FOMUJERES and EMPRENDE that aim to strengthen women's entrepreneurial capacities to enhance their economic autonomy by investing in small *mypes* in rural and territorial development, but also, promote women's ini-

tiatives aimed at organizing and associating for the promotion of their rights. Both initiatives are led by INAMU.

Discrimination and Everyday Life

The fundamental need to work on the everyday environment was emphasized, with a view to dismantling stereotypes via an inclusive education, the generation of deliberative spaces and, above all, the formulation of public policies on gender equality that connect and respond to local realities and that contribute to strengthening women and their social actions.

Better Inter-Institutional Coordination

Finally, the experts participating in the webinar and in the panel of experts agreed on the need for better inter-institutional coordination between state agencies, international organizations and civil society that work on the implementation of the Beijing agreements from different fronts.

Conclusions

As we have seen in this brief overview, Costa Rica has carried out significant efforts to promote gender equality in the different areas established by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, nevertheless, more remains to be done. Even though the country counts with a solid institutional setup and has a long democratic tradition, many Costa Rican women and gender minorities still experience gender discrimination in their everyday life and through some laws and social and cultural practices that need to be dismantled in order to provide the same opportunities for all its citizens.

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Chapter 14

The Journey to Gender Equality in Cambodia

Monyvann Nhean

Cambodian women constitute 51.5 percent of the total population (Ministry of Planning, 2019). In the 26-years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Cambodia, the country has achieved some progress for gender equality particularly in the areas of women in power and decision-making, economy, and health. However, there are still some gaps and barriers to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The social structures, including gender roles, norms, beliefs, and traditional practices impact gender equity in Cambodia. This chapter shares some of the areas in which critical progress has been made in relation to gender equality in Cambodia, and the challenges that need to be addressed.

Gender Inequalities in Cambodia

Larsson (1996) states that before the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was rolled out, women in villages generally thought men were knowledgeable, wise, strong, and diligent. In the Cambodian context, women were expected to be quiet, to walk very gently without making the skirt rustle, and to obey their husbands while playing the traditional four domestic roles as mother, older sister, friend, and servant. Similarly, a study by Gorman, et al (1999) explains the hierarchical system of social relationships and women's inferior status in comparison to men. It shares that women have lesser positions of authority, decision-making, and prestige than men. Additionally, in the paid labor market, a significant gender difference is seen in participation rates.

If we take a look at the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is used to measure gender inequality in three critical areas of human development including sexual and reproductive health, power in decision-making, and employment opportunities (UNDP, n.d), and consider the case of Cambodia, we will find that there is a long way to go. The country was ranked at 117 out of 162 in GII in 2019, and this low ranking is visible in many realms including in the percentage of women in the National Assembly and the labor force that are fewer than men, along with the Maternal Mortality Rate being of concern in Cambodia (UNDP, 2020).

Progress So Far in Cambodia

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was ratified, which dwelled on twelve key areas to achieve gender equality in 189 countries, including Cambodia. It proposes that women obtain full rights, fundamental power in a decision-making position, and equal opportunities, and achieve development and peace (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2004). In relation to Cambodia's participation in the Beijing Conference, the technical advisor of the Ministry of Women's and Veterans Affairs (MoWVA) of Cambodia presented a report titled "Women: Key

to National Reconstruction" that discussed women's situation in the country. Subsequently, in response to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) was established officially in 1996 under a male minister, taking over from MoWVA that had formerly operated since 1993. Its role was to defend women's rights both at the domestic and workplace levels and respond to issues of economy, health, education, social protection, and more. Eventually, MoWA, with the technical and financial support of many development actors such as UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, JICA, and ADB, created a Five Year Strategic Plan For Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment, called Neary Rattanak. This has been updated every five years since 1999 for the enhancement of gender equality in social, economic and political empowerment (So, Kim, & Doung, 2013).

Along with the Action Plan, the country has developed other strategic plans that incorporate gender mainstreaming, women's economic empowerment, and the elimination of gender-based violence over the past two decades (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2019). For instance, the core development plan called "The Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency in Cambodia," the first phase of which started in 1998, prioritizes gender equality and social protection (Chap & Chhorn, 2019; Royal Government of Cambodia, 2018). In addition, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) which was launched in 2006 has also been synchronized to the Rectangular Strategy and it has advanced gender equality especially in relation to the role of women in leadership both at the national and sub-national levels (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2019).

Furthermore, the national machinery for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been organized across ministries in Cambodia. Its partnership is significant to create and reinforce institutional gender equality. One example is that, in 2005, the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) in relevant ministries and government agencies were founded. These were formed across the government, and 24 out of 28 ministries and institutions have formulated Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs). Moreover, the government has allocated a national budget for 22 GMAPs as official development assistance (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2019). In 2019, MoWA received a national budget of approximately 50,888 million Riels ($12,722,000) for implementing four programs, namely women's socio-economic situation, legal protection for women and children, gender mainstreaming in national and sectoral policies, and institutional management and development. (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2019; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2020).

More recently, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has appointed a female minister, and a total of 236,182 women public civil servants have been promoted at both national and sub-national levels. MoWA is currently working for the capacity development of its public officers on public administration management, gender-responsive planning, leadership, monitoring and evaluation, ASEAN, and MOU preparation. Moreover, the establishment of the MoWA contributed not only to women's empowerment but also further inclusiveness. MoWA has founded various mechanisms such as the Disability Action Working Group authorized in 2015 for coordination and consultation on disability issues within the Ministry. Its function is to strengthen the response to the needs of people with disabilities who are employed in MoWA. Such effort resonates with the concept of intersectionality, which concerns individuals' unique experiences and perspectives that are formed by many factors, for instance, age, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background (Christoffersen, 2017).

In addition to the abovementioned progress, a digital platform for dissemination and communication of information, for instance, through a Facebook page and website of MoWA, has also been created and updated for the public (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2020). Such

mediums are expected to contribute to the enhancement of civil society's engagement in the promotion of gender equality.

Key Successes of Gender Equality in Cambodia

This section will look further into key successes from three dimensions, namely power and decision-making, health, and economics.

Gender Balancing in Power and Decision-making

Two years before the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted, Cambodia officially ratified a new constitution in September 1993. However, the Members of the Cambodian National Assembly (parliament) assembled a new government without having women being a part of the process or holding leading positions such as those of a Minister or Secretary of State. One of the consequences of this was that a male Secretary of State came to be responsible for Women's Affairs. Such institutional practices continued even after the state began to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by upgrading the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs to the Ministry of Women's Affairs; a man was still appointed to be the Minister and all the provincial governors were men (Larsson, 1996).

Another problematic practice worth mentioning is that in the National Election in 2013, women were listed at the bottom of the ballot to implicitly make them less likely to be elected for leadership positions. Most importantly, it is widely known that women are only selected for some positions to fulfill the government quota. The percentage of women in the parliament acutely declined after the national election in 2013 because of the lack of commitment from political leaders at the national level to create the action plan or legal framework on "gender, political empowerment and participation" (Khourn, 2019, p. 22).

However, as mentioned above, following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Cambodian government has integrated gender mainstreaming and set indicators for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) to empower women and promote gender equality at all levels of institutional ministries. Recently, as a result of the implementation of NSDP 2014-2018, the State has allocated the national budget to 28 ministries and national institutions and five major components have been prioritized. Among these, women's empowerment in decision-making includes "1) Women's Economic Empowerment; 2) Legal protection for women and girls, crippled women[1], and vulnerable groups; 3) Women in the Public Sector and Politics; 4) Gender and health; 5) Promoting social morality, women's value, and Khmer family including women, and education; 6) Gender and climate change, disaster management, and green development" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2019, pp. 91-93).

Consequently, the percentage of women has increased especially in the public sector. According to data from 2018, women made up 20 percent in the parliament and 19.5 percent

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[1] This has been quoted from the official document. It needs to be acknowledged that more sensitivity and consciousness of language is needed in drafting these documents. More appropriate terms that could be used here include 'women with disabilities', or 'differently abled women'.

in the senate in 2018. In the government, there was one female deputy prime minister, three female ministers, forty-five secretaries of state, and sixty-nine undersecretaries of state in 2018. At the sub-national level, 4 percent were female governors, 17.33 percent were deputy-provincial/municipal governors, 3.55 percent District/Khan governors, and 26 percent deputy-district/Khan governors in 2018. About 130 women were Commune/Sangkat chiefs and there were 235 female commune clerks.

Presently, the promotion of gender equality continues to be one of the cross-cutting themes and thus the government has expanded it in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023. It is instrumental in pushing all institutions to have strong collaboration for its implementation at both national and sub-national levels (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2019).

Working Towards Gender Equality in Healthcare

A critical concern about health in Cambodia is the extremely high mortality rate compared to the other countries in the Global South (Larsson, 1996). According to Larsson (1996), infant mortality was estimated at 115 per 1000 live births, children the under-five mortality rate was 181 per 1000 lives — more than 900 Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) per 10,000 births. One of the reasons was that sexual and reproductive health services were exceedingly insufficient. In fact, more than 90 percent of women delivered at home. In addition, most male nurses did not provide adequate counseling on sexual and reproductive matters to women, especially in the rural areas where 80 percent of the population is located. Moreover, maternal disability and pregnancy-related complexities did not have access to equitable public health care (Larsson,1996).

Despite all of these issues, the Cambodian government's efforts have led Cambodia to be ranked 46 out of 156 countries for health and survival in the Global Gender Gap Index report in 2021 (World Forum Report, 2021).   According to the Health Strategic Plan Phase III 2016-2020 (HSP3) (2016), there is an ambitious vision of "Quality, Effective and Equitable Health Services", and its goal is to "improve reproductive health and reduce maternal, new-born and child mortality and malnutrition" (Ministry of Health, 2016, p 5). Similarly, the strategic plan's vision proclaimed that "all people in Cambodia have better health and well-being, thereby contributing to sustainable socio-economic development." The HSP3 is applied as the Ministry of Health's (MoH) "strategic management tool" to lead the MOH, and all health institutions, and to address relevant stakeholders to utilize the resources more efficiently and bring the health strategy into an action plan (Ministry of Health, 2016).

This has been a gradual process. A country report of the MoWA (2019) revealed that the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) reduced from 437 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 170 in 2014, decreasing further to 140.8 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 (Ministry of Planning, 2020). The infant mortality rate also declined to 18 deaths per 1000 live births and under-five mortality rate dropped to 28 per 1000 lives in 2019 (Ministry of Planning, 2020). Additionally, it raised the percentage of births that involved professional midwives from 32 percent in 2000 to 89 percent in 2014. Furthermore, the total fertility rate declined from 3.0 in 2010 to 2.7 in 2014 per woman. Besides, about 66.4 percent of pregnant women had four Antenatal Care (ANC) appointments before delivering the infant and the proportion of births introduced by two ANC appointments rose from 25.4 percent in 2000 to 90.5 percent in 2014. Additionally, the percentage of pregnant women giving birth by cesarean section grew from 2.56 percent in 2010 to 5.37 percent in 2014. Under these circumstances, the country has shown its commitment to

decreasing MMR with a target to reach 70 per 100,000 live births in SDG 2030 as well.

Another issue is that of abortion. Prior to adopting the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action, abortion was a critical concern in Cambodia because it was illegal, unsafe, expensive, and yet very common (Larsson, 1996). The complexities growing from induced abortion were a root cause of maternal mortality. Only 7 percent of all the respondents in the Knowledge Attitude Practices survey on Fertility and Contraception in Cambodia (Ministry of Health, 1995) reported using modern contraception (Larsson, 1996). Two years after the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action in 1995, Cambodia drafted the "Law on Abortion" and it was enacted by the National Assembly on October 6, 1997. This Law contains five chapters on "General provisions, Procedure, and conditions for abortion, Controlling/inspecting competence, Penalties, and final provisions" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1997, pp. 1968-1973). The proportion of abortions increased from 5 percent in 2010 to 7 percent in 2014 in two surveys with women aged 15-49. There were also abortions undertaken that were against the "Law on Abortion" in Cambodia. A notable proportion of abortions were carried out by unqualified service providers or non-approved health centers, and these were generally for late terminations, rather than those who sought an early abortion (Assaf & Hong, 2017).

The Intersections of Gender Equality and Economic Progress

In Cambodia, there were no available reports detailing unemployment and under-employment from the 1990s, but it was observed that women were mostly involved in agriculture, small businesses, the service sector, and low-skilled work. It was estimated that women made up 65 percent of agricultural producers who substantially contributed to food security in Cambodia. Even though they represented small and medium enterprises in rural and urban markets, more than 58.9 percent of the workforce, and one-third of the public civil servants were women, most of them were working in lower positions. In contrast, other sectors, particularly those involving professional roles, including teachers and nurses, were overwhelmingly held by men.

In the 1990s, opening up to foreign investment and economic reform strategies enabled an increase in the national economy and benefited the population, but women were often excluded. Although the transformation led to tens of thousands of state employees being fired and industrial opportunities in the private sector increasing, women generally received fewer opportunities than men and only those with a professional background were able to secure the jobs (Larsson, 1996). The ages of participation in the labor force in Cambodia are from 15 to 62 years old, and 77 percent of woman in this age group and 89 percent of men were in the labor force in 2015 (Ministry of Planning, 2018). Eighty-nine percent of women's employment accounts for three sectors - 66.3 percent represents agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, 12.7 percent represents the sales, local trade, and services, and 10.3 percent represents manufacturing (ADB, n.d). In recent times, the tourism industry has made a significant impact on the Cambodian economy. The average annual GDP growth rose 7.2 percent from 2011 to 2015 and was estimated to be steady for the next five years. The total number of international visitors to Cambodia has been predicted to rise more than ten times to 5.6 million visitors per year, and this sector contributed to the GDP's growth at 6.2 percent in 2010 to 16.3 percent in 2017 (OECD, 2019). In Cambodia, the garment manufacturing sector represents a third of the Gross Domestic Product. It was estimated that the country has been able to raise its annual income from USD 20 million to USD 5 billion, with 80 percent of garment exports (CARE, 2017). The manufacturing sector has employed more than 90 percent of women who migrate from rural areas with 43 percent having low-level literacy and knowledge. Around 17 percent

are less than 19 years old, and 61 percent are 20-29 years old (ADB, 2015). This provides more employment opportunities for women outside of traditional low-paid agricultural work. The country report of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (2019) to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) showed that women's engagement in the service sector increased significantly from 31.4 in 2014 to 35.9 in 2017, while the proportion of women in the industrial sector grew slowly from 24.5 in 2014 to 25.1 in 2017.

More recently, the Gender Gap Index report of the World Economy Forum (2021) ranked Cambodia at 46 out of 156 countries in Economic Participation and Opportunity so the progress in this sector is visible and being acknowledged.

Challenges in the Work Towards Gender Equality in Cambodia

Despite all the progress shared earlier, Cambodia has still been ranked 96 out of 129 countries in the gender index report (Equal Measures 2030, 2019) and it is anticipated that the country would not entirely be able to achieve the commitment of gender equality by 2030, the target year of the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. This section will discuss some challenges that Cambodia continues to face.

Gender Imbalances in Power and Decision-making

The Neary Rattanak IV, Five Year Strategic Plan For Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment (2014-2018), articulated the five main challenges of Women in the Public Sector and Politics. It acknowledged that promoting women in political participation is a challenge; in their homes, women remain responsible for unpaid care and domestic work, and there exists the impediment of practicing their full rights in public work and decision-making positions. Women in the workplace are demanding a supportive atmosphere for more productive and effective work. Promoting gender equity and social inclusiveness in the good governance agenda are required to provide capacity development to young women in leadership (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2020).

Even though the situation has improved through gender mainstreaming especially in the public health sector, increasing the number of women in decision-making positions still remains a challenge because of a lack of organizational support and a lack of gender-sensitive policies (Vong, Ros, Morgan, and Theobald, 2019). The findings of Transparency International Cambodia (2021) recognize several key challenges from the individual and collective levels that prevent women from obtaining leadership positions. Women are demotivated by family, lack of confidence, educational background, male suppression in the public spheres, social stigmatization around sexual and reproductive health, and rights and freedom of choice. Furthermore, a lack of transparency and opportunity, nepotism, age discrimination, and freedom of speech have also been pointed out in the same study, and those are intertwined with preventing women from attaining leadership roles.

Barriers to Gender Equality in Healthcare

Assaf & Hong (2017) share that a high percentage of young female teenagers get pregnant in Cambodia without any reproductive health knowledge. This study also demonstrates that all the background factors have a substantial relationship with adolescent fertility rates. Teenage fertility rises with lower levels of education and poorer household wealth in general. The highest percentage was among young women without a high school diploma, which increased by 20 percentage points from 17 percent in 2010 to 37 percent in 2014. In addition, this study argues that women beer promoters working in bars (work that many women in Cambodia are engaged in) are more likely to be at risk of sexual intimidation, as well as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS. They remain stigmatized, challenged with conditional services, and live with the negative attitudes of health service providers, with personal shame, and a lack of support from partners and families. Women are not provided with health care nor are permitted to seek the help of health care providers because of restrictions placed by the owners of the companies they work in (Webber, Spitzer, Somrongthong, Dat, and Kounnavongsa, 2012). A more recent study by Gartrell, Baesel, and Becker (2017) also found that women with disabilities generally got very basic information on sexual and reproductive health and rights from their peer networks, family members, and the community-based meetings prepared by Village Health Support Volunteers or NGOs. In addition, the limitations of the educational system for considering the needs of people with disabilities is also a barrier for women with disabilities in getting a thorough understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Cambodia. Furthermore, education about sexual and reproductive health and rights is included in the higher grades curriculum, yet the completion rate of the school is low, especially for people with disabilities. Education for sexual and reproductive health and rights is essential and needs to be prioritized urgently to be included in the institutional curriculum.

Barriers to Economic Progress for Women

In Cambodia, a large number of women have migrated from the rural provinces to be hospitality and tourism workers. One study with women who work in bars as beer promoters shows that many women are harassed in the workplace, with 80 percent experiencing unwanted touches; and 38 percent of them being pressured in to having sex. Sixty-one percent of respondents to a study, said they had experienced sexual harassment for about 12 months. A focus group discussion with female employees working in restaurants along a popular tourist area of the riverside in the capital found that all participants had experienced and seen sexual harassment in their workplace but were concerned about giving up their jobs when they experienced sexual harassment. None of them had reported or sought support from the police because they thought that the police would just charge them money and not intervene in the issue (Leang & Op, 2015). Entertainment workers commonly reported violence against them. Many women experienced all forms of violence, including domestic violence, and violence at the workplace. Transgender Entertainment Workers experienced rape or attempted rape, yet none of them could submit an incident report to the authorities (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, 2012). Another report from CARE (2017) reveals that one out of three women workers experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in a year. Many female workers were concerned about the inefficient response system for reporting sexual harassment, especially due to duty bearers who are "disinterested and disempowered."

To address sexual and gender-based violence, there are several national response mechanisms, including the Cambodian Labor Law 1997, Criminal Code 2009, and the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW) currently in place in Cambodia. The country enacted The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (2005) to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (Leang & Op, 2015). Regardless, ninety percent of women have not known that they have the right to be free from violence or how it is possible to exercise this right (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014). A report also described that the duty bearers have limited knowledge of sexual harassment, there is no clear definition of sexual harassment in the workplace, and the duty bearers blame, delay, and do not take any serious actions when sexual harassment is reported to them (ibid). More than one-third of local authorities, including the police, believe that a husband has a legitimate reason to perpetrate violence if his wife had a conflict with him and did not follow him or showed disrespect towards him (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014).

Along with this, in relation to the garment industry that employs many women, due to the is concerns of the human and labor rights violation in Cambodia (Tanaka, K. 2020, p. 1) and in violation of the European Union's "Everything But Arms" (EBA) demands, the EU announced it was to temporarily withdraw the tariff-free status granted to Cambodia in February 2019. The withdrawal of the tariff-free status from Cambodia will continue to impact garment exports to the EU (Banga and Willem te Velde, 2020) will affect the living conditions of nearly a million garment workers, particularly women, and indirectly affect several million Cambodians whose livelihood is associated with garment and footwear manufacturing (Heng, 2020).

Moreover, during the Covid-19 crisis, there has been an estimated economic drop of 4.1 percent, poverty is expected to double to 17.6 percent, and employment to decrease by 4.8 percent. This will have an impact on the most vulnerable groups. Nearly 11,000 tourism workers have been affected in their employment opportunities. About 6.1 million informal workers are at the risk of losing job opportunities and cannot get financial support from the government due to their unregistered status of employment. The unemployment crisis has vastly impacted people's household incomes. It is estimated that about 539,758 households, equivalent to 2.2 million people are in the trajectory of poverty (UN, 2020). In the pandemic, social events, movement from one place to another, and religious gatherings were restricted by the government in 2020. Although the government announced to pay $40 to 70,000 laid-off workers, the $40 does not cover nearly enough for survival (Tuy, 2020). Nearly 91,500 workers have been laid off since 91 factories have fully suspended their operations and 1,522 factories have partly postponed their production. About 60 percent of The Garment Manufacturers Association Cambodia (GMAC)'s factories have had orders cancelled, which has had an impact on nearly half a million million workers and their households (Dellen, 2020). In general, women are experiencing major challenges, with several factors rooted in economic disempowerment such as lower educational background, lack of access to essential resources to strengthen economic independence, and the ongoing role of unpaid and care work in households (ADB, 2015).

Conclusions

This chapter highlighted the key achievements and challenges towards gender equality in the three main areas in Cambodia, including power and decision-making, economy, and health. The country has developed not only its core national strategic plans, and policies, updating

them every five years to ensure gender equality in social, political, and economic empower-ment, but has also established the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) and appro-ved the national budget for Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs) across ministries after adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. In addition, the national strategic plans have been synchronized from one to another to promote gender mainstreaming at the ministerial and institutional levels. The increased numbers of women in decision-making, more equitable access to health, and economic development have been shared in this chapter.

In contrast, the results of the implementation of Neary Rattanak IV, Five Years Strategic Plan For Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment also reveals that there are still restrictions for women in attaining leadership positions in the public sector and politics. Full implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the guidelines for promoting gender mainstreaming are required before economic and social stigmas can be removed for women.

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