



GENDER 2024

5th Edition of Global Congress on

GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

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MARCH 25-26, 2024
ONLINE EVENT



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From 'surviving' to human flourishing: Reclaiming Citizenship for women in Sex-work

Nupur Ray

Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, India

The discourse on sex-work is a deeply contested one around the possibilities and extent of its legalisation, regularisation and prohibition thereby prevailing on a strained relationship with state. The main statute dealing with sex-work in India is Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (1986). According to the act commercial sex and soliciting in a public place is a punishable offence. The act intends to protect women from trafficking i.e. forced/coerced into prostitution.

The arguments for and against the recognition of sex-workers' rights involve questions of expressions of sexual agency, reproductive health rights, protection from violence, sex- trafficking and concerns around sexual exploitation, right to bodily integrity and choice of work etc.

The paper critiques the mainstream political discourse on three grounds.

First the discourse is (mis)informed by extreme binary positions. There is a 'helpless woman forced into sex-work' vs 'woman who voluntarily chooses the occupation', purity vs impurity divide based on moral judgements about the nature of work, absolute abolition vs recognition as 'work' debate and sex-worker's rights vs rescue-rehabilitation dilemma. Thus, there are only two kinds of female subjects 'visible' in the debate. There is the 'vulnerable/helpless' woman without agency who is waiting to be 'rescued' and there is an 'empowered' subject with agency who has made a 'choice'. The false binary that has continued to dominate the discourse has oversimplified both positions as well as 'invisibilised' female body and her subjectivity as a lived experience.

This has led to further denial of recognizing the precarity of women's agency in sex-work and further marginalisation of women as right-bearing citizens of the state. Their claims to citizenship remain limited to 'bare survival' rather than the capability to aspire, flourish and live life with dignity. This became glaringly evident during the COVID-19 with very limited access to basic resources, health services, food and livelihood options during the difficult time of nationwide lockdowns.

Secondly, The paper has two objectives:

First, I shall use the capability framework to argue that the state position continues to view women in sex-work within these binaries which have confined them to rescue-reform-rehabilitation dilemma and perpetuate their marginalization. The paper argues that women's agency especially in the context of sex-work, is not a fixed idea but a fluid concept navigating through power hierarchies of socio-economic and sexual subordination. It would focus on a recent policy scheme UJJAWALA for prevention of trafficking and Rescue and Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in India.

Secondly, the political discourse ignores the intersectionality dimension based on a presupposed uniform category of women in sex-work. It fails to differentiate the layers of oppression where women from traditionally marginalised castes like Dalit community who enter the sector as a consequence of socially embedded caste-based social reproduction of sexual labour.

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Thirdly, the paper argues for a political discourse and policy framework that helps to reclaim the rights of women in sex-work as citizens of state. It seeks to argue for an expansive notion of citizenship that moves beyond keeping women in sex-work 'alive' towards providing opportunities for meaningful choices, viable exit options and informed agency.

Biography

Nupur Ray is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi. Her areas of academic interest and teaching include Political Philosophy, Gender Studies, Human Rights and Human Development. She has published widely in reputed journals including Indian Journal of Public Health and Indian Journal of Gender Studies, recently. Her recent publication also includes a jointly edited book 'Discourse on rights in India: Debates and Dilemmas' (Routledge, 2019). She has contributed chapters to edited volumes and presented papers at various national and international conferences {Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA) Annual Conferences, International Studies Association -North East (2020), International Journal of Feminist Politics Virtual Conference (IFJP-2021)} around issues/themes of human development, violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, feminist research methodology, women in sex-work etc. She is currently engaged in an Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) awarded research project on 'Declining Child Sex Ratio and Violence Against Women: Examining Girl-Child Discrimination in India'. She is heading the Women's Development Cell currently, a student-based group working towards gender sensitization and creating awareness around gender issues on college campus. She has also been actively involved in the different campaigns of women's movements in India like the One Billion Rising against Violence. She has been invited as a resource person at various faculty development programmes, faculty seminars, students' seminars and on panel discussions at various occasions.

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Gendered Spaces and Contestations: Women in Power in State Legislative Assemblies in India

Priyanca Mathur Velath

Jain University, Bengaluru, India

Gender inequality lies at the heart of power politics and there is no better place where it plays out than the Parliament or Congress. While National Parliaments have received enough research attention, in federal democracies like India, it is the State Legislative Assembly where the space given to women as political leaders that needs to be studied. To what extent is it a space for gendered representation of electoral democracy needs to be examined. Are political parties' effective vehicles addressing the concerns of women, who comprise nearly fifty percent of the population on this planet? In the unsettled nature of the democratic institutions and actors, the demand for equal space for both genders tends to fall through the gap. Gender overlaps the intersection of the tripartite correlation between democracy, governance and elections. Any holistic understanding of Elections in the 21st century, especially in pandemic reality, will be incomplete if it ignores the gender angle. Can party-political communication ignore the gender question? What new conversations are needed? This paper intends to look at the issue of gender representation for women candidates in State Legislative Assemblies in India. It will particularly look at the western State of West Bengal, which has had a history of women empowerment under its fire-brand woman Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee.

Biography

Dr. Priyanca Mathur is Head and Associate Professor at Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education, Jain University, Bengaluru, India. With a Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and an M.Sc. in Forced Migration from University of Oxford, U.K., Priyanca has been researching and writing at the intersection of gender and migration for years, and guiding doctoral scholars in that area too. Her current research projects look at Myanmarese Refugees in India and Women in Higher Decision-Making in Politics in Indian States. She is also a Gender Consultant and International Trainer the Forum of Federations, Canada for its project on Federalism and Women, Peace and Security in Myanmar.

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Question of Gender in Indian Practical Ethics and lebenswelt

Purushottama Bilimoria

San Francisco State University US and Jindal Global University Law School, United States

I am presently working on a sequel to Indian Ethics Classical and Contemporary Challenges (vol I), with a special focus on women, justice bioethics and ecology Issues – each of which have ramifications for thinking on gender and gender-related related issues. It calls for a deeper analysis of technical and highly theoretical ethical issues that appear not to be conclusive, as changes in contexts embracing a wider range of issues and perspectives, are always possible. Yet the horizon of the possible (or pace Spivak, the impossibility of ethics for the subaltern position) provides a foothold for the beginnings of a new dialogue around ethical practices, by negotiating encounters or exchanges that do not seriously entertain the borrowed voice of the native informant. Still, there is little else to go by and, one asks rightly: who speaks for women? More particularly, who speaks for feminism, feminist ethics, Indian women, the unborn, the surrogate, the non-conscious dying – in other words, the subaltern? I will bring vignettes from Indian thinking and on-the-ground challenges that both may engage and yet disturb current Western models of gender studies.

Biography

Purushottama Bilimoria is a recent Fulbright-Nehru Distinguished Fellow and Visiting Faculty at Ashoka University in Delhi. A former Fellow of the College of the All Souls of the Faithfully Departed (Oxford), he is now a permanent senior fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies at the University of Oxford. As well he is Principal Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies (SHAPS), and the Australia India Institute, at the University of Melbourne. He is CEO and co-editor-in-chief of Sophia, International Journal in Philosophy and Traditions, based at SHAPS, and also the founder-co-editor of Sophia Studies in Cross-Cultural Philosophy of Traditions and Culture (both published by Springer). He has been teaching lately at the University of California, Berkeley, and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and teaches a course on Jainism for CSULB. Purushottama is named as 'Lead Scientist of the Russian Federation Megagrant Project in Philosophy & Culture at RUDN University of Moscow. Purushottama has a strong interest in comparative philosophy, and in particular the historical and intellectual intersection between Eastern and Western philosophies and philosophy of religion.

Taking leadership and entrepreneurial skills at a different level to embark on a journey of optimistic actions, Nooraini Binti Youp – a leader is changing lives with her strong mind-set and glorious personality. She has been successfully handling all hurdles, hardships, burdens to create a platform that is lifedefining for her students. Her go-getter approach and passion to deliver high-impact resources have helped her shape a fairer world in the education fraternity. Let's have a look at how her illustrious facade is conquering titles, winning hearts, and signifying reforms

ORAL

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Remaining at the Margin: Voices of Pakistani Dalit Hindu refugee women in India

Roshni Sharma

St. Joseph's University, India

The case of Pakistani Hindu refugee is not a typical case of forced migration. Rather, it is deeply connected with the partition of the subcontinent, highlighting the intersectionality between religion and territory. The Dalit community was relegated to the margin in the series of events during and after partition. A majority of them decided to stay back in Sindh province of Pakistan, which over the period of time resulted in further marginalisation, making the community further oppressed, because of their religious and caste identity. Deciding to migrate back to India, after having stayed, for decades, on the 'wrong' side of the border, the vulnerabilities and challenges have always been presented from a masculinist perspective. Consequently, neglecting the experiences that women from these community have faced in both the regions of Pakistan and India, carrying the intersectional realities of gender, religion, class, and caste identity. Women from the community not just remained at the margin, but have been further marginalised because of their gender identity. Though migrating with the hope for a better and respectful life to India, nothing much has changed for them, in India. Rather, the nationalist identity and the label of 'refugee' further excavates the marginalisation that they have been victims of. Based on the narratives of Pakistani Dalit Hindu refugee women, seeking refuge in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, in western India, this paper attempts to explore the ambiguities and consequences that the women within the community faces, as they juggle between their caste, religion, nationality, gender and refugee identity.

Keywords: Dalit, marginalisation, refugee women, identity, caste, intersectionality

Biography

Roshni Sharma is a research scholar, who has just submitted her doctoral thesis titled 'Refugee Women: Negotiating Womanness, Identity and Refugeehood' to Jain (Deemed-to-be) University. She has been interested in studies related to forced migration and the intersectionality between gender and refugee identity, gender studies and qualitative research methodology.

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Taking all-inclusive health education to 400million children in India

Jenni Gates

ZatchUp: The Health Education App, United Kingdom

In February 2023, ZatchUp Health Education App (based in Punjab, India), approached UK based independent counsellor, author and RSE educator, Jenni Gates, amongst a team of educators from around the globe, to contribute to providing comprehensive and all inclusive holistic health education, reaching 400million children in India. In the initial stages of the design, it became apparent that the UK and US curriculums for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education were outdated, lacking in vital information, and not inclusive of a diverse global population. It has required joined-up multi-disciplinary thinking, consultation of teachers, parents and students, and research into the needs of modern families in regions across India, to ensure the most up-to-date information is provided to the greatest reach possible - via the ZatchUp App. Matters of gender and sexual diversity, as well as faith, religion and culture are all covered in ZatchUp lessons - showing that intersectionality is not just possible, but absolutely crucial, in educating on a global level.

Biography

Jenni Gates graduated from University of Glasgow in 2002 with an MA in English Literature and Psychology. She worked in health and social care with young people and families in a variety of settings, including managing a multi award winning youth project in Scotland, and providing charity consultancy in Asia and Africa. In 2012 Jenni qualified with an Advanced Diploma in Integrative Counselling from The Iron Mill, Exeter and worked full time as a specialist counsellor for The West of England Gender Identity Clinic (NHS) where she not only gained training from world leading experts in gender and sexuality studies, but also was part of a research team, publishing a paper in the International Journal of Transgenderism in 2018: 'An exploration of the lived experiences of non-binary individuals who have presented at a gender identity clinic in the United Kingdom'. Jenni currently works as an integrative counsellor in private practice as well as under Pink Therapy. Jenni is a member of SEA (Sex Education Alliance) and has been delivering relationship and sex education across schools and education centres in the UK since 2003. In 2020 Jenni's first book was published under SAGE education titled: Lessons in Love & Understanding: Relationships, Sexuality & Gender in the classroom.

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Gender and Sexuality, Ideals and Hypocrisy

Monia Chouari

Sousse University, Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences, Tunisia

Gender and sexuality are complex concepts that are constantly evolving in a non-linear pattern. Due to their intricate epistemological and philosophical nature, they remain highly controversial. Despite being used extensively in diverse research fields; they are still enigmatic and continue to trigger scholars' minds. This paper aims to investigate the rhetoric surrounding gender and sexuality in both literature and society. While Western cultures have enforced the belief that women should renounce their bodily autonomy to conform to established gender norms, women authors, such as Victorian Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte, and Emily Bronte, mapped Virginia Woolf's mindset to challenge the dominant discourse of cultural standards across various genres to enforce conceptual flexibility. This study argues that the dominant gender ideals are often hidden which can lead to moral hypocrisy. This argument is corroborated by Virginia Woolf's concept of androgyny in *A Room of One's Own*, which is applied to her novel *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). Through the creative construction of the transgendered character, Orlando, i.e., the male/female persona, Woolf's radical thoughts are in affinity with the liberal ideas of the Bloomsbury Group. Woolf's feminine power underlines the mental and physical enactment/ performance of androgynous gender and sexuality in a credibly pungent outline of the narrative. The main finding of this paper is the intersection between fiction, society, gender and sexed bodies, which is supported by transgender statistics.

Keywords: Bloomsbury Group, Gender Performativity, Transgender Theory, Virginia Woolf

Biography

Monia Chouari, holder of a Joint-PhD Degree in Literature and Gender from Burgundy University. Permanent Assistant Professor, University of Sousse. Dr Chouari is a teacher, researcher, and supervisor of Pedagogy and Applied Theories of Feminism and Gender MA theses. Dr. Chouari is an evaluator of LMD English projects in the National Sectoral Committee of the Ministry of Higher Education, Tunisia. She is a trainer in the Gender and Pedagogy Offices. She is a published doctor who organised Study Days, Workshops and International Conferences. She is active in civil society associations/ projects for women's protection against violence.

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The Man Without a Phallus and the Question of Infertility in African Space

Ophilia A. Abianji-Menang

The University of Maroua, Cameroon

Infertility is a reproductive health challenge that is perceived differently in the African space. Though it is a global issue that affects couples, Sterility is seldom attributed to men in African space. This article focuses on male infertility in Sub Saharan African space which has been underestimated because of socio-cultural factors. Drawing inspiration from Ayobami Adebayo's novel, *Stay with Me*, the novel portrays how male infertility literally does not exist in the African psyche because child bearing is a cultural role associated with women and not men. In spite of the established findings that infertility affects men, it is still viewed as a female problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, a construction that is deeply rooted in culture and shaped by patriarchy. The novel demonstrates how childlessness has been socially and culturally constructed in African space to hold women responsible for a couple's problem, irrespective of the male factors related to infertility. The spatial theory will be used to examine the socio-cultural construction of infertility in the African space. Adebayo's novel, *Stay with Me*, reveals how the space one lives in /the sociology of space shapes and influences people's understanding with regards to infertility and creates stereotypes about women for the interest of childless men. Considering that male and female factors of infertility co-exist, the dialogic approach of Mary E. Modupe Kolawole and Obioma Nnaemeka is necessary in the follow up and management of infertility rather than focus on the woman who may not necessarily be the cause of a couple's childlessness.

Keywords: Infertility, sociology of space, Erectile dysfunction, Dialogic approach, Stigma

Biography

Ophilia A. Abianji-Menang is Senior Lecturer of Literature and researcher in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Maroua, Cameroon. She holds a PhD in African Literature and Civilizations from the University of Yaoundé I, and a diploma in education from the Higher Teachers' Training College, Yaoundé, Cameroon. Abianji-Menang is an educator, a literary critic, a child and women's advocate. Her research interests are in Gender and Feminist Studies, African Oral Traditions, Postcolonial studies, Cultural Studies, Literary Ecology (Ecocriticism) and Multidisciplinary Studies. She has a number of scientific articles in national and international peer-reviewed journals.

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Beyond Victimhood: Unveiling Intersections of Intermarriage, Silence, and Supremacy in Genesis 34 and Contemporary Contexts

Sharon Jacob

Texas Christian University, United States

Interpretations of the biblical story of Dinah and the Shechemites in Genesis 34 have often focused on themes such as rape, abduction, and coercion. While these perspectives have shed light on important issues like sexual violence, consent, and the silence of victims, they tend to limit our understanding of the text to a single lens. Rarely has Genesis 34 been examined from the perspective of intermarriage, which lies at the heart of this narrative.

In recent years, religious nationalism has been on the rise worldwide, fueling supremacist ideologies that demonize the "Other" and perceive their presence as a threat to the nation's identity. India, for instance, has witnessed the emergence of Hindutva ideology, which, similar to White Christian Nationalism, is a political ideology distinct from the religion it claims to represent. Both ideologies view their respective countries through a religious lens, imagining and advocating for a purist vision of a Christian or Hindu nation. As a result, intermarriage between religions and castes is frowned upon and discouraged. This parallels historical prohibitions on interracial marriage in the United States until 1967 and the repeal of laws prohibiting mixed marriages in South Africa as recently as 1985.

While the Indian constitution under the Special Marriage Act permits inter-caste and interreligious marriages, the reality is that 99% of Indians still prefer to marry within their own religion and caste. Relationships or marriages outside one's caste or religion, especially when the woman belongs to the dominant group, are particularly controversial. It is within this context that the controversial conspiracy theory known as Love-Jihad took root in the pro-Hindutva ideology. Love-Jihad and the issue of inter-caste marriage in India propagate the notion that Muslim men or men from lower castes target upper-caste Hindu women with the intention of forcibly converting them through seduction, love, and marriage. In essence, Hindutva ideology argues that love between individuals of different faiths and castes is exploited as a political tool that is used against women belonging to the dominant communities.

By examining real-life experiences of Love-Jihad and honor killings alongside the story of Dinah and Shechem, my paper aims to reinterpret this biblical narrative. I will illustrate how intermarriage is often used as a pretext for rape, seduction, and coercion, which in turn is used to justify the violence that is unleashed upon minoritized communities. My paper, will emphasize the silence of Dinah, arguing that women's silence is exploited to narrowly frame narratives of intermarriage solely through the lens of rape and coercion. Such interpretations perpetuate the dehumanization of men from marginalized communities, who are stereotyped and demonized as the "Other." Through introducing the lens of intermarriage and miscegenation into the reading of Genesis 34, my paper aims to broaden our perspective of both Dinah and Shechem in this text, inviting us to consider an alternative point of view and interpretation.

Biography

Dr. Jacob's research interests include gender and sexuality studies, feminist theory, race and whiteness theory, and postcolonial theory. She is currently working on a project on the rise of Religious Nationalism in global contexts. Her publications include a monograph entitled, *Reading Mary alongside Indian Surrogate Mothers: Violent Love, Oppressive Liberation, and Infancy Narratives*.

She has also co-authored an essay entitled, "Flowing from breast to breast: An Examination of Dis/placed Motherhood in Black and Indian Wet Nurses," in *Womanist Biblical Interpretations: Expanding the Discourses* published by Society of Biblical Literature Press. Her essay entitled "Imagined Nations, Real Women: Politics of Culture and Women's Bodies. A Postcolonial, Feminist, and Indo-Western Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Handbook to Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics* was published by T & T Clark earlier this summer. More recently her essay entitled, "Jezebel and Indo-Western Women: Nation, Nationalism, and the Ecologies of Sexual Violence in Revelation 2: 20-25" in *Ecological Solidarities: Mobilizing Faith and Justice for an Entangled World* (World Christianity) was published by Penn State University Press, 2019).

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Sharon is also a regular contributor to the Electronic Feminist Studies of Religion where she has written several blogs on various topics. Some of her latest blogs are, *Can We Speak? When Speech Has Color: Aphonic Speech and Respectability Politics*, *“Jauhar, Mass-Suicide, and the Spectacle of Death: A Reading of Mark 5:1-20,”* and *“When the Subaltern Speaks! Why Caste Must Matter in the Case of Hathras.”* In addition, she has also authored blogs on topics of Whiteness and White Supremacy, and Caste Supremacy in the Indian context. Here are few examples of her latest works are as follows; *“The Cost of Infinite Gratitude on Immigrant Workers in the Workplace and Beyond,”* *“White Incredulity and Why it Matters? Distrust, Disbelief, and the Immigrant Experience,”* *“Not Loved Back! George Floyd and Rohith Vemula: Race, Caste, and their Intersections.”*

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Double-Crossed: Black and Female Intersectionality in Hollywood

Frederick W. Gooding

Texas Christian University, United States

Black women are consequently too frequently rendered invisible within Hollywood's mainstream movie space. This presentation focuses mostly upon black female iconography within mainstream film since movies are more ubiquitous and typically enjoy larger audiences and longer shelf lives than individual television shows. To this extent, few studio-backed, widely distributed movie vehicles feature a solitary black female lead actress. The fact that these controlling images remain largely unchallenged within Hollywood means that such narratives continue to elevate white women at the expense of black women who remain visually subjugated as a reflection of their oppressed status within society.

Hence, the oft-exploited nature of black female imagery and their intersectionality not only reflects black female subjugation off screen within society, but it also reinforces what we do not want to happen to white women, or at least, will not allow to happen to white women as part of the white male-dominated patriarchy's partiality for white female protection. Thus, the idea that all black women were designed essentially to either serve white men in a sexual manner or a servile manner is a perverse fiction of white imagination crystalized in film that has yet to undergo sustained challenge or disruption within Hollywood. For, in looking at most black female mainstream characters, it is important to look at not only the image the black woman creates, but also the shadow she casts. In other words, black female iconography gives us information twofold: 1) about the continued marginalization of black women, 2) and also of the sustained glamorization of white women.

Biography

Frederick W. Gooding, Jr. (PhD, Georgetown University) is the Dr. Ronald E. Moore Endowed Professor of the Humanities and Associate History Professor of African American Studies within the John V. Roach Honors College at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX. Featured in national outlets such as "New York Times," "USA Today," and "TIME Magazine," Dr. Gooding is a professor of pop culture who engages audiences on subtle racial patterns "hidden in plain sight." Dr. Gooding has also provided social commentary on CNBC, CBS, and Fox News networks and has reached an international audience through his writings and invited lectures.

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5 things every health care provider should know about biological sex and gender

Jeannette Wolfe

UMass Chan School of Medicine- Baystate, United States

The science surrounding how biological sex and/or gender can impact clinically relevant health outcomes has exploded over the past decade. Yet, many practitioners remain unaware that an individual's biological sex can influence how their body responds to trauma, toxins, infections, medications and chronic diseases, or that an individual's gender can affect their interaction with providers and health care systems. This talk focuses on 5 things every health care provider should know about sex and gender to ensure that they are practicing up to date medicine.

Biography

Dr Jeannette Wolfe is a Professor of Emergency Medicine at UMass Chan School of Medicine-Baystate and the endowed Joy McCann Professor at UMass Chan School of Medicine. She has spent her academic career working in one of the highest acuity emergency departments in the United States and has studied, written and lectured about sex and gender differences in medicine for more than a decade. Her two main focuses are to help integrate the variables of sex and gender into main stream medicine and to ensure that women in medicine have the tools to optimize their professional careers. She is the host and creator of the seX & whY podcast.

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Denial of sexual and reproductive health and protection rights: experiences of adolescent girls and young women in Nigeria and Bangladesh

Ajita Vidyarthi
Plan International, Canada

Two qualitative gender equality and inclusion studies conducted in Sokoto and Bauchi states in Nigeria and Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh provide a striking image of similarity in the lives of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in the otherwise distinct cultural and political contexts. Experiences of child, early and forced marriage, early and forced pregnancy, intimate partner violence, absence of sexual consent, poor decision-making power and restrictions on physical mobility are some among the many examples of denial of rights and fundamental freedoms experienced by AGYW in both countries. The study explores how these and other social and gender barriers impacts realization of health rights and access to services. In-depth evidence collected directly from AGYW confirms that prevailing gender inequalities and gender-related barriers at the household, community and health facility and school levels are key determinants of poor sexual and reproductive health and rights and protection outcomes. The findings underscore the need for adopting gender transformative elements into health programming, with a clear focus on positioning AGYW as leaders of change, engaging men/boys as partners of change and supporting duty-bearers to become responsive to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of AGYW. Recommendations from the studies provide direction to local programming to systemically address the roots causes of gender barriers and achieve transformative and sustainable realization of health rights for all AGYW, especially those at most risk of poor health outcomes due to their unique intersectional identities.

Biography

Ajita Vidyarthi, currently Senior Advisor, Gender Equality and Inclusion at Plan International, Canada, has worked towards the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls since 2009 through research, advocacy and technical support to gender transformative, rights-based programs, implemented by Canadian and India-based non-profit, government and UN agencies, and partners in Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania) and South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka). Her experience includes thematic focus on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls and young women, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, women's economic rights and migration. She has a double Masters in rural management and social anthropology of development.

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Sex and Intimacy with Avatars: Exploring Queer Feminist Sexual Ethics in Virtual Reality

Kate Ott

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, United States

Feminist sexual ethics moreso than other moral philosophy approaches focuses on the contextual embodiment of the moral subject to determine normative standards of ethical behavior. Sexual behaviors or various gendered and sexually intimate practices in virtual reality raise significant questions about embodiment, its extension or lack thereof, and the unreliability of contextual markers to assess social power dynamics. Queer feminist sexual ethics that forefront gender fluidity and values-based ethical decision-making for oneself and in actions toward an other or any other will be explored as possible creative ethical approaches. Questions to be explored are: how various sensory experiences in VR provide affective feedback and shape moral socio-emotional responses in and sexual and gender identity of users? How are power dynamics assessed when cultural markers of one's offline embodiment can be radically altered for one's online appearance? What are the possibilities and pitfalls for disrupting or reinforcing gender and sexual stereotypes? Is sex or intimacy in a VR space to be understood as "real" and thus requiring ethical standards of evaluation; in other words, is there moral harm and social goods that come from VR sexual and gender expression, relationships, and behaviors (even if with an avatar or bot)? Given the features of digital technology that make it flexible, adaptive, and networked, queer feminist sexual ethics for digital spaces needs to balance static normative claims with fluid and innovative approaches. This requires expansive understandings of embodiment, robust notions of the ethical other, and a further queering of sexuality and gender.

Biography

Kate Ott, PhD is a feminist religious ethicist with research specializations in digital technology, sexual and gender, children and youth, and professional sexual ethics. She serve as the Stead Professor of Christian Social Ethics and Director of the Stead Center for Ethics and Values at Garret-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL as well as a lecturer at Yale Divinity School in New Have, CT. She is author of *Sex, Tech, and Faith: Ethics for a Digital Age* (2022) and *Christian Ethics for a Digital Age* (2018).

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Queering Approach to Social Egg Freezing by Chinese Single Women: Their Real Needs, Legal Barriers They Face, and Potential Negative Consequences

Iris (Jingyun) Pi

SOAS, University of London, United Kingdom

Queering Approach to Social Egg Freezing by Chinese Single Women: Their Real Needs, Legal Barriers They Face, and Potential Negative Consequences: This dissertation employs queer theory to examine why Chinese single women should be granted the legal right to access social egg freezing. It investigates the current legal barriers they face in mainland China and the potential societal consequences. Through thematic analysis, academic legal analysis, and a case study, I argue to offer clear answers within related Chinese laws to enable single women to access social egg freezing, addressing their pressing needs and averting social inequalities such as stratified reproduction. This research underscores the importance of queering conventional reproduction and kinship and relevant laws in Chinese society. Analysis reveals that Chinese single women have a genuine and immediate interest in utilizing social egg freezing, driven by desires, such as for expanded choices and the possibility of having biological children without marriage. However, existing Chinese laws surrounding social egg freezing remain ambiguous, failing to definitively permit or deny access to single women. This legal ambiguity translates into practical legal barriers and potential for positive social changes. In practice, many financially capable Chinese single women seek social egg-freezing services abroad due to their unavailability in mainland China. Failure to queer existing laws could result in future social inequalities, such as a divide in reproductive options. Consequently, the study concludes that it is imperative to queer current Chinese laws to grant single women the legal right to access social egg freezing within mainland China, thus safeguarding against potential societal inequalities. However, this dissertation acknowledges the need for further research to comprehensively assess the extent of single women's access to social egg freezing and consider additional factors, given the time constraints of this study.

Biography

Iris (Jingyun) Pi, B.S. in Economics, M.A. in Social Work, and M.A. in Gender Studies and Law, is a global citizen and gender specialist in sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth partnership, mental health, climate change, and sustainability. She has cross-cultural educational and professional experiences in the UK, Iceland, the Philippines, Egypt, and the U.S. She used to work for the United Nations Population Fund as an Innovator in Mobile Health and co-founded Stories to Action. She published blogs such as "Chinese Female Health Worker's Menstrual Hygiene Needs in COVID-19" and "From Victim to Victor: Survivor-centered Approach in Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-related Settings" to amplify voices to significant but overlooked gender issues.

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Dichotomy or Dualism of the Generic Structure in Gendering Power and Action: A Study in the Great Indian Epic Mahabharata's Female Characters

Jayshree Singh

Bhupal Nobles' University, India

The women protagonists of the Great Indian Epic "Mahabharata" are not only canonised as mythical, legendary, but they have been the representations of an archetypal image; whose illuminating presence on the Earth in the Vedic age of Indian History brought along with their birth or carnation an oracle or proclamation or denouncement or something unexpected, apocalyptic in the historical, social, and cultural perspective. The selected few female characters such as women of the famous Indian Epic are Shakuntala, Gandhari, Kunti and Draupadi have been widely read and analysed for they configure social status of women in the cultural structure of patriarchy of the Indian society. From the point of 'dualism' of 'materialistic feminism' these women have been under purview of gender lens due to their self-capacity and self-indulgence, that emanate moral dilemma, gender socio-religious cultural structure and last but not the least their love, passion, and riddles of existence. And in context of social ecology and women's role in the social order raise an inquiry regarding the consequential aspects of the conflict in actions, in thought. An implication of the complexity of the inherent character relates to the notion of odds, and in terms of space and times results in the ingenuity of action and thought; subsequently changes destiny and times of the material world. From the point of 'dichotomy' that identify these women characters in the classified sense as 'ecofeminists' for they ground the fact of social injustice on one hand, while on the other hand they enforce political critique of non-essentialist view, which metaphorically leave an enigmatic element to imply trap of contention and contestation. How the same in the world of men's power, play and possession showcase womanhood as a defaulter of voiced silences or voiceless silences or subversion, aggression, shame, sin, or guilt. Subsequently, when human mind in context of gender-eye undergoes through ordeal and crisis with such an imbalanced notion of flaw, then revelation of truth remains blindfolded in blindness.

The scholarly argumentation questions – When such women were a part of super-elite or blue-blood patriarchal families, then why were they not in a status of inclusion? Why was a logic of democratic urge not a privilege for these women characters? Why does gender-stereotyping cause prejudice and oppression of emotional urges, a psyche of protest, voice of resistance and blind silence among these women? The framework constructs around gender-orientation, sexist hostility, and social injustice. (From the point of cultural subjectivity of relativism and perception, intersection has been conjured as prior knowledge, that has been professed from generation to generation in generic terms in Indian society to spread prototypes of these selective mythical legendary women characters).

Biography

Dr Jayshree Singh is Ph. D. in American Literature and Post-doctoral fellow from Osmania University Campus for International Programs, Hyderabad. She is working currently in Bhupal Nobles' University Udaipur as the Head of the Department of English - Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities. She has been deputed as the Convenor of Board of Studies. Her other extension services are as the Adjunct Faculty of Legal English Writing and Research in the Faculty of Law, BNU Udaipur and the Translator in Pratap Shodh Pratishtan (Oriental Archives Research Study Centre) Bhupal Nobles' University Udaipur and English Language Trainer in Placement Cell. She has been since 2009 the Ph. D. Degree (Doctor of Philosophy) Research Supervisor - Bhupal Nobles' University Udaipur & Mohanlal Sukhadia University Udaipur, and have got five scholars awarded thesis from MLSU and two from BNU in the subject English Literature and five are registered under her supervision. She has special interest in holding Conference/Workshops (offline) Webinar/Seminar (Online) and loves to work as Concepts' writer, convenor, coordinator, Technical Operator, Organiser. Her UG and PG Teaching Experience is 21 Years. She has been a prolific writer as a researcher and critic so credited with Publications more than 50 including books and research papers. Her area of research interest is in South Asian Indian Literature, American Literature and British Literature, besides cultural studies and film studies. She is confidently holding students' welfare activities such as Inter-college Debates, Literary - Cultural Events, besides finding pastime academic interest in Curriculum Development, Content writer, Canvas.com brochure, certificates, banner designer etc.

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Community engagement with social media health messages in an age of misinformation: a case study of the NGO Open Arms in Florida

Carolina Matos

University of London City, United Kingdom

How do young members of disadvantaged communities in countries like the US, which has been affected by political polarisation and attacks from far-right populist politicians on women's rights, make sense of messages on reproductive health in the misinformation age? Following from the conclusion of a Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funded project which examined how 52 NGOs from across the world are making use of communications tools for advocacy on sexuality and reproductive health (SRHR), this study engaged with communities in Florida, US, in partnership with the NGO Open Arms, to assess how they consume media content on reproductive health, particularly on social media, within a context of proliferation of 'fake news'.

Applying a feminist methodological epistemology and a participatory approach which aims to 'empower' participants, two focus groups with males and females from diverse ethnicities, between 18 and 40 years of age, were conducted with Open Arms in July and August 2023. Findings revealed how groups are exposed to a lot of inaccurate news, misinformation and 'myths' around fertility treatments on the web, and how they feel there is a need for better scientific information on reproductive health in the media and on the Internet, one which is also more 'entertaining' and which speaks directly to their experiences. This study concludes in favour of improving health literacy approaches as well as communications on reproduction health.

Biography

Carolina Matos is a Senior Lecturer in Media and Sociology at the Department of Media, Culture and the Creative Industries (MCCI) at the School of Communication and Creativity at City, University of London, and also a former visiting associate professor in Global Communications at the School of Communication, University of Miami, US. With more than 20 years' experience in UK HE, Matos' research is the area of gender, media and development, international journalism and media reform, as well as health communications and how communications can be used for social change. Matos has taught and researched at the LSE, University of Essex, Goldsmiths College, and UE in the Sociology, Politics and Media and Communications Departments.

Matos investigates the role of media and communications in processes of democratisation and development, paying particular attention to structural inequalities of gender and race. She has conducted research in the global North as well as in the global South, from Latin America to India, and the US. Matos is the author of four books, various chapters and articles, including *Gender, health communications and reproductive health in international development* (McGill Queen's University Press, 2023) and *Media and politics in Latin America: globalization, democracy and identity* (IB Tauris, 2013), which won the international Premio Jabuti prize, 1st category in Communications.

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Young feminists' perception and relationship with the label "feminist" in contemporary Japanese society

Momoko Kagesawa

University of York alumni, United Kingdom

In recent years, people's awareness of women's rights has developed in Japan through the rise of several feminist movements. However, some feminists seem to avoid using the label "feminist" to describe themselves, even though they support ideas that feminists aim to achieve, as seen in other countries as well. This research explores feminists' perception and relationship with the label "feminist" and examines what the use of feminist label means to feminists themselves in Japanese contexts, conducting interviews with Japanese self-identified feminists in the ages of 20s. The findings highlight multiple and entangled aspects that would impact feminists' identities and attitudes toward the feminist label both positively and negatively, as well as their struggles to pursue feminist lives in Japan.

Biography

Momoko Kagesawa completed her Master's degree in Women's Studies at the University of York in 2022. For several years, she has been actively engaged in many feminist activisms and various social/political movements, both independently and as a member of an activist group, in Japan and the UK. She has also been continuing her research, organised several lectures and seminars about Women's/gender issues at the university and the grassroots feminist community, and attended and presented her works at academic conferences. Now she is preparing to proceed to Ph.D. in Women's/Gender Studies.

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Endometriosis: Gendered Pain

Lee Mariño Clyne

Mills College, United States

The central research question of the current study was, “How does gender identity affect the experience of living with endometriosis?” A chronic condition with limited treatments, endometriosis is understudied. Almost all research on endometriosis addresses the condition as a “women’s issue.”

The current study utilized semi-structured interviews with 10 individuals with endometriosis, 6 participants of whom openly discussed their experiences specifically as transmasculine and trans nonbinary people with endometriosis. The author of this study, also a disabled transgender person with endometriosis, served as the interviewer and developed a 9-minute documentary from the filmed interviews, which they wish to present. (<https://youtu.be/ZPRaFIIDcdo?si=gnaCq-Yyg4snJ4Or>)

Dialogue from interviews was transcribed and coded to extract common themes in patient-perceived feedback about the current medical treatment of the condition. The findings of this study have implications for improvements to the offering of healthcare in a way that is trans-affirming. More research is needed to understand the unique experiences of trans people living with chronic health conditions.

Biography

Lee Mariño Clyne is an out queer and transmasculine non-binary disabled Latine student.

They are also a certified full spectrum doula, healthcare interpreter for Spanish, medical assistant, and current applicant to medical schools.

Lee dreams of one day providing gender-affirming surgeries, and they are passionate about being there to support members of their queer and trans community through various health journeys, however they can. The research they are presenting examines trans peoples' experiences of endometriosis. Lee has endometriosis themselves and has led research focusing on the mental health impacts of chronic pain conditions, on endometriosis specifically, and trans health more broadly. Their current work for the trans community is as Co-President of Queer Care Inc., a nonprofit for the Bay Area and NYC that offers free pre and post-op support to trans people undergoing gender-affirming surgeries.

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Shifting Boundaries and Unyielding Loyalty: the Bianca Case and Post-War China's Female Collaborator Trial

Jingyi Liu

Duke University, United States

This research adopts a de-moralizing perspective, focusing on the Bianca case from 1945 to 1947 to explore the issue of Female collaborators in the Japanese-occupied period in the Republic of China. Bianca Sannino (1918-1993) was born in Rome to an aristocratic family and married with a Chinese military student. After the outbreak of World War II, she separated from her husband, a Chinese general, and was in occupied Shanghai while he fought in China-Burma-India Theater. After war finished, Bianca was suspected of gathering intelligence for the Japanese intelligence agency and engaging in black market trading.

By analyzing related case files preserved in the court from Guangdong Provincial Archives in China, the article strives to reconstruct the trial process and incorporates a diverse range of materials including legal history documents, memoirs, newspapers, and autobiographical novels into the scope of investigation. From a gender perspective, the study analyzes the alignment of modern Chinese nationalism with masculinism, and how women astutely manipulated masculinist rhetoric to carve out their own narrative space. Interracial marriage, the pattern of bigamy in Chinese society during wartime; the hegemonic masculinities displayed in military trials is also the focus of research. Bianca case suggested that the wartime alterations in regional affiliations and population mobility challenged the nationalist discourse's binary structure of loyalty and betrayal, which also accounted for the challenges China faced in adjudicating and penalizing traitors after the war. By analyzing this case, which involves the history of emotion, non-fiction literature, and legal history, this research enriches the phenomenon of "collaborators" that was discussed in the historical and literary circles in 1980s. And, more importantly, it seeks to carve out a new space for the voices of involved women.

Biography

My name is Jingyi Liu. I hold a bachelor's degree in Chinese Literature and Language from Peking University and a master of Arts degree at Duke University. My academic research is around Chinese literature and comparative culture study in modern and late Imperial period. Currently, my ongoing research mainly focuses on the interaction of modern Chinese women with modern Chinese nationalism discourse dominated by male.

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Jane Doe Post Roe

Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández
Northeastern University, United States

This paper examines zero-tolerance as a twin edict of immigration policy and anti-abortion law post Row. How does the necessary exclusion of pregnant refugee teens, position the fetus as more of rights bearing subject than the mother, considering Dobbs and state-by-state near abortion bans. As a Latinx feminist scholar, I trace the zero-tolerance policy about refuge (being a refugee and being an abortion refuge/refugee) post Dobbs to rethink the role of new Latinx Jane Doe(s). With the Supreme court's institutionalization of white Christian nationalism's pro-life, anti-abortion, I reveal how racist exclusion of living Central American humanity is legal. Post Dobbs, pregnant, unaccompanied Central Americans and Latin Americans must go to U.S. states that have not banned abortion, an arduous task after undocumented migration itself. Dobbs legitimates fear and anger embodied in white supremacy and US empire in the moral battle of the righteous vs. unrighteous. Given the apocalyptic feel and consequences of the Dobbs decision, this scholarly piece on the intersections of immigration, abortion access, and race seems most appropriate.

Biography

Dr. Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández earned a bachelor's degree in literature from the University of California Santa Cruz and master's and doctoral degrees in English from Cornell University.

Previously, she was an associate professor of gender studies at the University of Arizona and was the inaugural chair of the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She was the founding director of the Mellon Mays Program at UT.

During her tenure as the Inaugural Executive Director of the Mills Institute, Guidotti-Hernández worked closely with alumnae and was instrumental in creating a strategic plan, a plan of research, and graduate certificates that focused on Gender and Racial Justice, DEI, and Disability advocacy.

Promoting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and queer access to higher education, leadership positions, and DEI best practices rounds out her experience as a public-facing intellectual and industry leader. She writes for and has served on the Ms. magazine editorial board for two decades and provides media expertise on Latinx and Feminist issues with regularity.

In May of 2024, she will direct the Dialogues in Civilization course, "Mexico City: Gender and Migration."

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Believing the Stories that are told about Sexual Violence

Andrea Adams

University of the District of Columbia, United States

Red Dot Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the global eradication of gender-based violence. Over the past 12 years, the organization has worked with community partners, government organizations, and individuals through numerous training and educational interventions using the data from its web platform safe city, which captures victim stories and maps them at the location where they occurred. Through the app's aggregated data, communities gain a better understanding of how gender-based violence manifests in different environments. The presentation will discuss technologybased trauma-sensitive approaches that use the stories of more than 50,000 reporters to impact the gender-based violence landscape, while also discussing the progress made to date, current and emerging challenges, and opportunities to accelerate wider implementation.

The presentation focuses on how victim stories are used to empower victim safety strategies; uncover place-based solutions to reduce gender-based violence; showcase the process of aggregating self-reports that provide evidentiary keys to prevention solutions, and how local reports inform global trends.

Biography

Andrea Adams, Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A., is an Assistant Professor whose research is focused on data privacy, crowdsourcing, and gender-based violence. Andrea is a Board Advisor and Co-CEO for Red Dot Foundation Global, which uses its crowdsourcing smartphone app safe city to map gender-based violence globally. Andrea is a licensed attorney and teaches ethics in the Criminal Justice Bachelor/Homeland Security Master's program at the University of the District of Columbia in Washington, DC, USA.

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The contours of Black female athlete activists: Incorporating a culturally liberating counseling and mentoring approach

Gyasmine George-Williams

California State Polytechnic University, United States

Black college athlete activists play a significant role in the struggle for social justice. Realities such as institutional racism, discrimination & status work together to influence their behaviors & experiences. A unique subset of Black college athlete activists is Black female athletes who also identify as activists. Consequently, Dr. Harry Edwards, sociologist, professor, civil rights and athlete activist asserts that this new modern wave of activism will be led by women, in particular Black women (2018). Although Black women have a long history of resistance and struggle, not much has been studied about this rich tradition (Nance, 1996; Taylor, 1998a). Albeit, Black college athlete activists are understudied subjects overall, however, Black female athlete activists are “unknown and, of course unheralded” (Oglesby, 1981, p. 1). Female college athletes are part of an elite group as an athlete on campus, yet remain at the bottom of the societal totem pole of privilege being female and Black, combating historically racial and gender oppressive structures. A common narrative of this subpopulation share is that they often feel disconnected from mainstream approaches to counselling and support services. This feeling of disconnection has been often shared because those approaches fail to reflect their cultural interests, intersectionality, and lived experiences. This presentation incorporates tenets from Black Feminist Thought (1990), Critical Race Theory (1993), the Black Athlete Activist Leadership Model™ (BA2L) (George-Williams, 2019), and The Activism Growth Model (AGM) (George-Williams, 2021) and introduces strengths-based holistic counselling of student-athlete activists, especially those of the Black female activist diaspora.

Biography

Gyasmine George-Williams, Ph.D. is an activist, socio-cultural practitioner, and Assistant Professor of Race, Sports and Social Justice at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in Southern CA. She earned her bachelor's in Psychology from California State University, Los Angeles, her master's in College Counselling and Student Development, and her masters in educational counselling with a Pupil Personnel Services Credential from the University of La Verne, and earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education as well as a certificate in Strengths-Oriented Leadership in Higher Education from Azusa Pacific University in Azusa CA. In addition to serving as faculty, she currently serves on the Faculty in Interest Needs Committee on NCORE (National Conference on Race and Ethnicity) and is a board member for the Coalition for the Diaspora for Black Student-Athletes (CADSA). As a professor and socio-cultural higher education practitioner, she actively equips her students with the tools to engage and develop multicultural competencies, challenge ideologies, and formulate a critical lens. At La Verne and previous institutions, she has created formal mentoring programs for students of colour aimed at sustaining a safe and welcoming climate for students, faculty and staff.

She is a frequent presenter at conferences throughout North America and internationally, including the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE), the North American Society for Sociology of Sport (NASSS), the Black Student-Athlete Summit, International Activism Conference, Advancing Women in Leadership Conference, and at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. Dr. G has created research-based models curated to honour and centre the experiences of activists. The Activism Growth Model™ is a guide for activists in this very timely moment on how to utilize their voices for change. Her second model, The Black Athlete Activist Leadership™ model is designed to enable stakeholders (including coaches, administrators, and institutions and the broader community) to serve athlete activists and activists of colour holistically. She is the author of “Love is at the root of resistance: Strategies of activism, advocacy and Liberation” where she unpacks both models and more. She is also the founder of 7Ten Legacy LLC, consulting, publishing, and research rooted in advocacy.

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Is it Just Me? Queer Palatability During Interactions with Heterosexual, Cisgender Men

Cameron Carley

Western University, Canada

Queer men's conceptualizations of their queer identities continue to shift and expand: They cannot be captured by a singular definition. Similarly, queer men's expressions of masculinities are equally as complex, as they depend on how they compete and interact with other masculinities, including heterosexual, cisgender (het/cis) masculinities. Specifically, I am interested in "queer palatability," described by the multiple ways that queer men modify their behaviours to appear more palatable and acceptable to the het/cis men they interact with. In 2023, I conducted a study that examined how queer men negotiate their identities through the expression of queer masculinities during interactions with het/cis men. From six semi-structured interviews with queer men living in Alberta, Canada, I aimed to understand the behavioural implications of their interactions with het/cis men. A notable conclusion emerging from this study indicated that queer men would change their behaviours in ways that appealed to the expectations of queerness by het/cis men. Particularly, palatable and acceptable expectations of queerness was created and sustained by het/cis men, which queer men felt pressure to adhere to. However, these universal ideas were not indicative of the expansiveness of queer experiences. During this oral presentation, I unpack the idea of queer palatability, explaining the complexities and tensions of how queer identities operate in diverse spaces. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the impacts that behaviours, interactions, and culture have on queer men's masculinities and identities that constantly shift, transform, and compete with other masculinities and identities.

Biography

Cameron Carley (they) is a Japanese European settler living on Turtle Island, also known as Canada. They have completed their Master of Arts in Educational Research specializing in Curriculum and Learning from the University of Calgary. They are currently pursuing their PhD in Critical Policy, Equity, and Leadership Studies at Western University. As a new PhD student, they are continuing to learn from colleagues and peers, eagerly seeking out conference and publication opportunities. They have attended multiple national and international conferences and continue to publish articles and book chapters with the labs they are a part of.

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