

# ALiGN

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Innovation on Gender Norms



**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **Women's mobilisation and gender norm change**

Diana Jiménez Thomas Rodríguez and Rachel George  
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## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Types of movements	3
Strategies for change	3
Actors for change	4
Enabling factors	4
Challenges and constraints	4
Ecosystems for change	5
<b>Feminist movements (general literature)</b>	<b>5</b>
National movements	5
Regional movements	10
Global studies of feminist movements	12
<b>Women's mobilisation and issue-focused action</b>	<b>16</b>
Environmental movements	16
Indigenous and racial/ethnic group movements	22
Land rights movements	23
Nationalist movements	28
Democratic and governance movements	30
Education movements	35
Menstruation movements	36
Work and labour movements	42
Abortion movements	45
Mobilisation against harmful practices	46
Violence against women activism	48
<b>Specific actors and contexts</b>	<b>83</b>
Men's participation in feminist/women's movements	83
The role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	89
Fragile and conflict-affected settings	89

*Cover photo: Feminist demonstrators in the National University of Colombia to protest against women violence and president Iván Duque's Government, during the national strike, November 2019. © Sebastian Barros/Shutterstock*

## Introduction

Women's movements have contributed to transformative social change around the world, and their experiences and achievements – as well as the obstacles they have faced – are captured by a range of academic literature. As part of a study on the impact of women's movements on gender norm change (see corresponding study/report: *Mobilising for Change*, ALiGN, 2021), this bibliography outlines literature from around the world on women's mobilisation and feminist movements and identifies key categories within this literature.

While it is by no means exhaustive, the bibliography provides an overview of key areas of focus within existing literature on women's movements, which span disciplines including anthropology, sociology, law, political science and history. It focuses, in particular, on available literature in English and Spanish (reflecting the language skills of the lead researcher), and on available studies from 1995 to 2021.

The bibliography highlights the diversity of frameworks around which women's movements have been studied, and explores some of the core findings of the resulting studies. Taken together, the identified literature reveals insights that include findings across the following areas.

### Types of movements

The studies identified highlight a diversity of types of movements, both in terms of the issues around which mobilisation happens, as well as the formats of activism. The studies focus on how women engage in general or issue-based social movements in a number of ways (and the resulting gender implications), as well as women's involvement in explicitly feminist movements. Some of the movements explored in the literature focused on specific issues at the local level and within a particular sector and issue area, such as the work of anti-mining movements in rural communities in Ecuador and Peru. In contrast, some movements such as an emerging feminist movement among educated women and girls in Iran worked at the national level to address multiple and explicitly feminist and/or gender-related issues, while others worked at the international level on specific singular or multi-issue agendas. Some of the studies are comparative, many of which focus on impact, while others are focused on the micro-level of a specific movement and its development, challenges and/or accomplishments.

### Strategies for change

The bibliography explores how women's and feminist movements engage in a range of strategies to enact change in their communities and beyond. These strategies are also diverse vary in the extent of their formality, as well as their action across multiple levels of society and with existing social and political institutions. These strategies include (but are not limited to) street protests, community leadership activities, working through social cooperatives and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), educational workshops and services, political lobbying, and working for legislative and judicial action.

## Actors for change

The selected studies also discussed the particular role of certain actors. There was, for example, a particular focus across the existing literature on the role of men and NGOs.

In terms of the role of men, the literature offers different perspectives on how men can serve as both allies and champions of change. Burrell and Flood (2019) discuss male engagement with feminist mobilisation as operating along a 'continuum,' ranging from men as agents of change on one side to their roles as subjects to be changed on the other. Creating men-only spaces was also discussed as a useful strategy, as employed by feminist movements in Chile (Santiago) and Lima (Peru), an approach discussed by Saavedra (2020). There are, however, concerns that men's involvement could co-opt women's struggles, reproduce gender power relations and re-entrench male privilege.

NGOs are discussed as critical actors that could engage with movements, and yet their strategic importance varied across different contexts. NGOs were, for example, central in supporting networked movements to support domestic workers in South Africa. NGOs also played an important role in working with the government in the criminalization of female genital cutting (FGC) in Tanzania, but their actions and alliance with the State may have contributed to forcing the practice 'underground.'

## Enabling factors

Women's participation in social movements, including feminist movements, has often been abled or supported by women's increased access to resources. The existence of feminist alliances, and the ability to mobilise elites and other political actors also play important roles, facilitated by the existence of a democratic civic space for action, as well as international political consensus and agreements. Moments of political transition also played an important role in enabling new openings for women's engagement in political transformation, which helped lead to sustained change in the case of Liberia's law on gender-based violence (GBV), but with mixed effects in the contexts of the so-called 'Arab Spring' uprisings.

## Challenges and constraints

Women's and feminist movements must overcome significant challenges, which include the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes or practices in society and a country's institutions, as well as the rising backlash and violence against women's social and political participation and their achievements. A lack of institutional capacity to adequately implement new legislation in full, tensions within alliances that hinder a movement's stability, the political co-optation of women's movements by the State or international bodies also present challenges, as do the risks of violence against women in public life, including those who are political and social activists.

## Ecosystems for change

One final key theme that emerges from the studies highlighted in this annotated bibliography is the importance of context, including the ways in which conflict, governance changes and crises can shape the enabling and constraining factors faced by movements. In the case of COVID-19, challenges and opportunities for women's mobilisation have been identified. These include challenging factors related to increased violence and decreased education, but also the opportunity for new feminist initiatives and mobilisations that have arisen out of the crisis context. The studies indicate the importance of an appreciation for the contextual factors that shape environments for change, as well as of understanding how crises can raise both new challenges as well as new opportunities for women's and feminist mobilisation.

## Feminist movements (general literature)

### National movements

[Razavi, S. \(2006\) 'Islamic politics, human rights and women's claims for equality in Iran' \*Third World Quarterly\* 27\(7\): 1223-1237.](#)

This article analyses women's rights activists involved in a reformist advocacy trend surrounding Islam in Iran (composed more broadly of male lay intellectuals and some clerical authorities). It highlights how these women aim to ground human rights values into Islamic tradition through a reinterpretation of the faith. However, Razavi argues that their political impact has been limited as a result of domestic and external factors, including a lack of unity between different reformist stances, a lack of female presence in government bodies, a failure to build an alternative political agenda and geopolitical changes in Iran-US relations.

The article highlights the importance of women's rights advocacy in Iran throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This has led to changes such as the removal of restrictions on the subjects that women could study in 1986; the amendment of divorce laws to curtail men's right to divorce their wives at will, and the requirement for them to provide financial compensation in divorce in 1992; the appointment of women as 'advisory judges' in the same year; and female parliamentarians declaring their will to not wear the full head covering (chador) in 2000. Between 2000 and 2003 advocates also lobbied for Iran's ratification of CEDAW.

Razavi argues that advocacy during these decades did not come from a broad women's movement, but from a group of elite women and female parliamentarians. While parliamentarians pushed for issues to be discussed within state institutions, their work was supported by women activists and lawyers, who used women's publications to air women's concerns about Sharia law. It should be noted that the type of advocacy pursued at this time by Iranian women's rights activists has been referred to as Islamic feminism, i.e., as a new way of thinking that is 'feminist' in its aspirations yet 'Islamic' in its language and authority. Yet, as Razavi points out, secular feminists, such as the eminent feminist lawyer Mehrangiz Kar, have played a crucial role in women's rights advocacy.

The article also highlights the importance of media for feminist advocacy. The monthly magazine *Zaanan* ('Women'), in particular, acted as a critical outlet and forum for women's rights advocacy. Set up in the 1990s, *Zaanan* was created and managed by Shahla Sherkat, who had previously been the director of the women's magazine *Zane-e Rouz*, which was government-controlled and aimed to promote the ideal of the post-revolutionary Iranian woman. As purges of dissident voices occurred in Iranian media in 1992, Shahla Sherkat was expelled from the editorial group of *Zane-e Rouz* and decided to set up *Zaanan* – a magazine dedicated to providing women's interpretive work on Islam and women's rights, 'with many of the contributing authors engaging in direct interpretations of canonical texts from the perspective of individual women's lived experiences, demands and desires'. *Zaanan*, therefore, provided a forum where women could express their grievances about their voices not being heard and to challenge 'women's absence and marginalisation in the centres of decision-making'.

Razavi also argues that women used *Zaanan* as a resource to 'highlight the rights that Islam accorded to women, both in their domestic roles as mothers and wives, and in the public sphere as workers, political actors and as law-abiding and faithful citizens' (p. 1231). This contested and broke the monopoly of the clergy over canonical texts. As such, *Zaanan*, according to Razavi, functioned as an important site for the promotion of gender norm change within Islam. It has also enabled connections with feminist thought and movements elsewhere, as well as between religious and secular feminists in Iran.

[Thorpe, J. \(ed.\) \(2018\) \*Feminism is: South Africans speak their truth\*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.](#)

This book is a collection of essays from more than 30 South African feminist authors arranged by five themes: inspirations; inclusions and exclusions; conversations; power and fury; and practice. Their topics include family, personal journeys with feminism, feminist influences, anger and solidarity, to discussions of intersectionality, violence, labour burdens, apartheid, histories of women's mobilisation, American hegemony over feminist discourse and frameworks, law and climate change.

The book provides an overview of the main concerns of contemporary feminists in South Africa. Interestingly, there are many different (and perhaps competing) definitions of feminism in the book, including: economic well-being, ownership, voice, independence/autonomy, choice, liberation, social justice, equality, anger, discomfort and change. The book also evidences some generational tensions, with older generations appealing to a 'politics of affinity' and younger generations tending towards identity politics.

The book shows how the participation of both black and white women in feminism has transformed gender norms around many issues, such as women's right to express anger in public, feminine beauty norms, responses to rape or sexual violence, solidarity between rape survivors, motherhood, family structures and notions of empowerment. It also shows how feminist spaces in South Africa have developed strong intersectional agendas, as gender and race inequalities are approached as intimately linked. The book demonstrates that feminism

has provided a politicising interpretative framework through which black and white women can make sense of their everyday lives in South Africa.

Lastly, the book reminds readers that 'protesting' is often a luxury practice not accessible to all women. This may be due to the costs of political action, which can include social alienation, violence and the loss of personal certainty and safety. The book also cautions against understanding protesting as the only form of feminist expression or action. In the words of contributor Aaisha Dadi Patel, 'You are the one responsible for controlling your own narrative... You are the one who has to tell your own story.' (p. 96).

[Moghadam, V.M. \(2011\) 'Algerian women in movement: three waves of feminist activism' in D.B. Bergoffen et al. \(eds.\) Confronting global gender justice: women's lives, human rights. London: Routledge.](#)

This chapter examines three waves of the Algerian women's movement since the 1980s: the first wave being advocacy against the conservative family code in the post-Boumediène period in the early 1980s; the second wave being advocacy against the Islamist movement and the terrorism of the 1990s; and the third wave being advocacy for gender justice in the new millennium. The chapter emphasises how Algerian feminist groups have created national coalitions with human rights groups and trade unions, and with international coalitions with other feminist movements in the region, through the Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité. The chapter highlights the success of the Algerian women's movement in achieving policy and legal reforms, such as amendments to family law (in 2005), and one of the highest rates of female parliamentary participation in the world.

[Ali, F. \(2006\) 'Feminist movement and legal framework in Pakistan: implications for equal employment opportunity. Presentation at the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference, 6-9 December 2006, Queensland, Australia.](#)

This paper looks at the feminist movement in Pakistan and its impact on equal employment policy. It argues that the feminist movement has had limited success for three reasons:

(1) Feminist movements have traditionally focused on the private domain of life whereas women's roles and issues in the public life such as employment in formal organisations are generally ignored; (2) a number of parallel judicial and legal systems have resulted in contradictory implications for women's participation in education and employment; and (3) despite some provisions for gender equity within Pakistan's legal framework, their enactment within employment contexts remains far from implemented.' (p. 15)

Pakistan's feminist movement emerged after Pakistan's independence from British rule in 1947. However, efforts for gender equality can be located prior to 1947, some championed by men. For example, 'the Muslim League in 1932 [under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah] passed a resolution favouring suffrage, adequate representation and equality for women' (p. 3).

Jinnah himself may have had an impact on women's advocacy, as he made various speeches in support of these rights for women. The Indian National Congress put forward similar demands, in response to which the Government of India Act was passed in 1935, granting women limited franchise, and the Muslim Personal Law was passed in 1937, restoring some of the rights women had lost under British rule (such as those of inheritance).

The intent behind male advocacy, however – whether it came from the Muslim League or the Indian National Congress – may not have been gender norm change for the sake of equality itself. Various scholars have argued that both parties appealed for women's rights because of their perception of women as symbols for their emerging nations. As such, 'women were encouraged to partake of public life though not as claimants of their rights so much as symbols of Muslims cultural identity' (p. 3, citing Jalal, 1991).

With Pakistan's independence, women attained voting and political participation rights. In fact, the country's first legislature in 1947 had two women representatives: Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah. During this period, elite Muslim women and Muslim female parliamentarians were key actors for the advocacy of women's rights, pushing for 'women's political empowerment through legal reforms' (p. 5). As Ali writes:

'These women mobilised support that led to passage of the Muslim Personal Law of *Shariah* in 1948, which recognised a woman's right to inherit all forms of property in the newly created state of Pakistan. They were also behind the futile attempt to have the government include a Charter of Women's Rights in the 1956 constitution.' (p. 5)

In 1961, feminist advocacy achieved the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which is considered one of the country's most important socio-legal reforms for the empowerment of women. The Ordinance recognised women's rights to inherit agricultural property, to have a say in second marriage arrangements and to file for divorce, and also increased the barriers for males in asking for divorce. Yet, as Ali, argues, the rights recognised by the Ordinance benefited mostly 'educated and politically aware women', as rural and working-class women saw little benefit from these reforms (p. 5).

In its discussion of the feminist movement's impact on equal employment, the article highlights how customary practices and cultural beliefs can be persistent barriers to norm change through legal and/or policy reform. In this case, the author argues that the prevailing notion of the 'good woman' as one who stays within the limits of her house, 'adversely impacts the prospects for female employment in the formal employment sector' (p. 12). Ali identifies other (immediate, underlying and structural) barriers that hinder legal and/or policy reforms from successfully impacting gender norms as: costs of litigation, delays, complicated court procedures, harassment in police stations, women's and civil servants' lack of awareness of legal rights, low literacy rates, and a lack of secondary legal and policy frameworks.

The case of Pakistan's feminist movement shows, therefore, the importance of women's political representation and presence within official bodies for legal and/or policy change, the class characteristics that women's movements may have, and the different impact of legal



and/or policy reform for different constituencies of women. It also shows the barriers (and therefore the limits) of legal and/or policy reforms in driving gender norm change.

[Kurzman, C. \(2008\) 'A feminist generation in Iran?' \*Iranian Studies\* 41\(3\): 297-321.](#)

This article examines the emergence of feminism among Iran's educated youth and how this has shaped the expectations of young women. It describes changes in gender norms in Iran driven by 'informal activism'. Kurzman writes:

'For years, self-consciously feminist political participation was limited to the written word, including several outspokenly feminist journals. In the 1990s, however, informal activism was reported to be on the rise in women's religious circles, and among women who had been mobilized as volunteers in the nation's health-education programs. In the Khatami era, approximately 150 women's non-governmental organizations were founded in Iran, according to a press report.' (p. 319)

The article also identifies the feminist movement in Iran as a crucial force behind petitions to address gender inequality in Iranian law. It argues that the movement regained strength in 2005 and 2006, when several thousand women took part in the first openly feminist demonstrations in Tehran. The specific objective of the 2006 demonstration was to launch a campaign to gather a million women's signatures for a petition for women's rights in Iranian law. The article, therefore, highlights how social movements can flourish despite 'hostile' environments.

Lastly, the article describes how gender norms are changing in this context due to the participation of Iranian women in feminist groups. As Kurzman writes:

'Women educated in the Islamic Republic of Iran aspire to equality with men in important ways, just as educated women in other countries do. In the survey samples discussed in this study, many educated young women support women's labor force participation, even after marriage, and engage in such work themselves far more often than do less-educated women, with the exception of the tiny number of educated rural women in one sample. Many of these educated young women support gender equality within marriage, and they report that their marriages are more egalitarian, at least with regard to decision-making on key issues, than other women report. Educated young women are marrying later, having children later, and having fewer children than other women. (p. 320)

## Regional movements

[Moghadam, V.M. \(2020\). 'Gender regimes in the Middle East and North Africa: the power of feminist movements' \*Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society\* 27\(3\): 467–485.](#)

This paper examines 'gender regimes' in the Middle East and North Africa, incorporating the family as an important institutional domain. The paper highlights the importance of feminist organisation and mobilisation in driving transitions in the public gender regimes of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, emphasising the role of feminist activism in these transitions.

The paper traces feminist organising in Middle Eastern and North African countries back to the 1960s and 1970s, when 'women from left-wing organizations and pro-Palestine solidarity groups formed study groups'. These groups came to evolve into women's rights organisations. Women's organisations appeared in the early 1980s in Algeria, and soon after in Tunisia and Morocco in reaction to Muslim fundamentalist movements and structural adjustment policies. The formation of the Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité, which connected feminist organisations across the three countries, was crucial in this process, advocating for reform to family law, nationality rights, political representation and ending violence against women.

In Algeria, Moghadam writes, the feminist movement 'comprised many associations opposed to both the conservative family law and the growing Islamist movement now engaged in a civil conflict with the state' (p. 476). The movement has successfully advocated for legal reforms such as 'the 2004 amendment to Article 341 of penal code, making sexual harassment an offense' and the 2005 'amendment to the nationality code, enabling an Algerian woman married to a non-Algerian to confer citizenship on her children' (p. 477). Yet, while there is widespread support for equal rights to divorce, popular support for women's political leadership, female parliamentary quotas and equal inheritance remains low in the country.

In Morocco, the feminist movement made gains by becoming 'allied with progressive political parties'. Moghadam highlights the following successes:

'In 2002, the Electoral Code introduced a "national list" with thirty reserved seats, or a 10 percent parliamentary quota, for women (subsequently raised); the family law was replaced in 2004 with a more egalitarian set of laws and norms for marital life and family affairs; the 2004 Labor Code established the equality and rights of working women; feminists began agitating government agencies for the criminalization of domestic violence; and in 2007 the Nationality Code gave women and men equal rights to transmit nationality to their children.' (p. 477)

Moghadam also highlights coalitional campaigning for the successful campaign to repeal 'the penal code provision allowing a rapist to marry his victim and thus escape prosecution' (p. 477) and the success of the Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM) in 'overturn[ing] century-old norms denying Soualiate women (residing in rural, tribal areas) equal land rights or to share, transfer, and benefit from the rent or sale of 30 million acres of

communally owned land' (p. 478). In addition, the author credits the feminist movement in Morocco with achieving recognition of women's economic independence and political participation and leadership. Yet support in the country for equal inheritance laws remains low (at about 20%).

In Tunisia, the feminist movement emerged around issues of gender-based violence and inequality in marital relations, with 'a *centre d'écoute*, or hotline and counseling centre for women victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment' (p. 477) set up by two feminist groups in 1993. The feminist movement achieved changes to the family law, which in 1998 were followed by the Nationality Code 'whereby Tunisian mothers married to foreign men could pass on their nationality to their children' (p. 478). Moghadam describes more recent developments as follows.

'At the start of the Arab Spring, thousands of Tunisian women mobilized to warn the newly empowered Islamist Ennahda party against any backsliding on women's rights ... When Islamists in the Constituent Assembly tried to change constitutional language on gender equality and introduce "complementarity of the sexes" in Article 28, feminist activists and secular allies within the Assembly prevented that. The 2014 Tunisian constitution enshrines women's equality and stipulates that the state is responsible for ending violence against women. Tunisian feminist organizations continue to work with Algerian and Moroccan feminists within the Collectif.' (p. 477)

The feminist movement has also achieved legal reforms such as the criminalising of 'honour crimes', increases in punishment for domestic violence offences and the legal recognition of fatherhood outside of wedlock (with the concomitant financial responsibilities towards the child). In 2018, moreover, 'a presidential commission ... considered the possible adoption of an equal inheritance law and was headed by a well-known feminist lawyer' (p. 478). In addition, the author credits the feminist movement in Tunisia with achieving recognition of women's equal rights to divorce, economic independence and political participation and leadership.

Moghadam argues, therefore, that the three countries have seen increases in women's political and parliamentary representation, educational attainment and professional participation as a result of the efforts of feminist organisations. In addition, the article argues that feminist movements have succeeded in improving gender-based violence protections for women, with legal reforms to combat violence against women seen in all three countries. However, the author notes that, despite increased legal protections in some cases, women are still economically dependent on husbands or fathers, do not participate in the formal economy, do not enjoy equal family inheritance (especially lower-income women) and still fulfil gendered labour divisions.

In Algeria, 'polygamy and male repudiation remain legal; women cannot marry without a *tutelle*, and the identity card is given automatically to the male household head while a woman needs to apply separately for one' (p. 480). In addition, the author notes that protests against women's rights are still common, abortion remains a taboo subject (and is only legal in Tunisia), and that

there is strong opposition to changing norms 'concerning single mothers, equal inheritance, sexuality rights, and the marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man; and ... veiling' (p. 479).

As a side note, Moghadam's discussion of these three feminist movements emphasises the importance of women's representation in law, as female lawyers have been vital in all three feminist movements:

'Algerian women lawyers drafted legislation to improve the rights of women and young girls; Tunisian women lawyers drafted bills on mixed marriages, sexual harassment and domestic violence, and equal inheritance. Women's inclusion in the judiciary, and especially as judges, is a key indicator of changes in gender relations, given that orthodox interpretations of Sharia law prevent women from serving as judges, and declare that the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man.' (p. 476)

Her discussion, likewise, emphasises the importance of a supportive context (i.e. in the economy, polity, civil society and family) for gender norm changes to occur. This echoes the arguments of Agarwal (2002) and Walby (2004, 2009).

[Fallon, K. \(2010\) \*Democracy and the rise of women's movements in sub-Saharan Africa\*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.](#)

In this book, Fallon argues that the patriarchal nature of political and social systems prevents women from being engaged in formal political processes and from effecting change through these forums. Fallon uses the example of a coalition against domestic violence in Ghana. The introduction of legislation around this issue has been a rallying cause for women across the African continent. However, mobilisation to introduce legislation and knowledge of the workings of the judiciary, are both often limited to elite women. Fallon argues that this is the result of women's systematic and historical exclusion from the formal political arena.

## Global studies of feminist movements

[Htun, M. and Weldon, S.L. \(2010\) 'When do governments promote women's rights? A framework for the comparative analysis of sex equality policy' \*Perspectives on Politics\* 8\(1\): 207-216.](#)

This article argues that social change can be produced through policy and legal reforms, particularly when policies challenge the patterns of interaction between the state and society on relations the market; on the authority of the state, religion, and cultural groups; and the 'contours' of citizenship. However, the article also points out how progressive legal change is, in turn, influenced by a country's state capacity, policy legacies, international vulnerability and democratic level. The authors build this argument based on cross-national research that examines legal reforms for gender equality. To analyse the differences between policy changes, the authors use a typology of their own creation (see Table 1). In building a typology,

the authors coin the term ‘doctrinal claims’ to refer to ‘claims that challenge cultural norms and religious beliefs’, such as a claim to include same-sex couples in laws on domestic violence or to adopt a definition of rape in which victims are not only female and/or perpetrators are not only male.

Htun and Weldon’s typology classifies policies depending on whether or not the issue being targeted is related to women’s subordinated social position and whether or not it contests doctrinal claims.

**Table 1: Htun and Weldon’s (2010) typology of gender equality policies**

Type of policy	Definition
Status policies	These ‘attack those practices and values that constitute women as a subordinate group and prevent them from participating as peers in political and social life’ (p. 209). These include laws and policies related to family life, violence against women, abortion and other reproductive freedoms, and gender quotas.
Class-based policies	These are targeted at women’s work because of the sexual division of labour. ‘They address inequalities among women. They make it possible for all women, not just rich ones, to get help with their reproductive and domestic responsibilities. Such policies include paid maternity or parental leave and government-funded childcare.’ (2010).
Doctrinal policies	These target areas that are intertwined with the authority of religious or state institutions, such as family law, abortion, reproductive freedom and inheritance laws. ‘It is defined as doctrinal if the policy contradicts the explicit doctrine, codified tradition, or sacred discourse of the dominant religion or cultural group.’ (p. 210). Issues may be doctrinal in some countries, and non-doctrinal in others.
Non-doctrinal policies	These target areas that are ‘distant from religious doctrine and codified tradition’ (p. 210), relating to ‘zones of life rarely touched upon by scripture... or more modern dilemmas that traditional religions and customs failed to anticipate’ (ibid.), such as violence against women, gender quotas and childcare provision.

The authors argue that this typology is analytically useful for two reasons. First, the differentiation between doctrinal and non-doctrinal policies ‘helps us understand why the same country may witness progress on non-doctrinal areas... while stalling on others’. The authors continue:

'In the first instance, religious and tribal organizations abstain from involvement, while in the second, they spend political capital to preclude reform. Uganda, for example, has pushed women into power with its 30 percent reserved seat policy but has been unable to reform laws to grant women co-ownership rights with men over land. (p. 210)

Second, distinguishing between status and class-based policies helps us distinguish which groups of women are being targeted and whether other forms of inequality are being contested and addressed.

In addition to developing this typology, the paper also makes two further points. First, it highlights four factors that can shape the agendas of women's movements: state capacity; institutional legacies, international pressure, and democratic level.

1. State capacity: groups will only personell- and cost-intensive demands when and where they perceive the state as having the capacity to intervene or provide resources. In China, for example, the authors argue, 'women's groups have eschewed struggles for parental leave and day care policies because they see the state as incapable of enforcing these measures' (p. 211).
2. Institutional legacies: the history and political traditions of each country create different contexts for women's movements – some will be more receptive to women's rights than others and some will require women's movements to reframe their claims. For example, the universalistic traditions in France and the Nordic states 'reject claims by women as a distinct status group but may be amenable to claims about their class-based or their universal interests' (p. 212).
3. International pressure: low-income countries and/or countries without strong democracies may be more vulnerable to international pressure, depending on whether they are looking for financial capital and/or democratic legitimacy. The authors argue that, in such countries, women's rights may be promoted to increase the country's credentials and to acquire the desired financial capital and/or political legitimacy. They use the examples of former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's support of 'one of the most important (if not the only) feminist successes in reforming family law, the Child Rights Act ... because he felt the need to have a significant accomplishment in the area of human rights' (p. 212), and of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's attendance at the Fourth World Conference on Women and support for a gender quote law after 'the world condemned his closure of Congress and seizure of power in a self-coup' (ibid.).
4. Democratic level: depending on the level of democracy in a particular context, gender policies may be pursued by different actors. On the one hand, 'the more democratic a country is, the more developed its civil society and the more open the government will be to autonomous organizing' (ibid.), and thus to women's movements and their demands. On the other hand, under autocracies or dictatorships, the party or the person in power may have direct control. In this context 'elite women and other progressive reformers may have privileged access to power under autocracies' (p. 213) and to bringing about change.

The article argues that changes towards gender equality are not always or necessarily a result of women's mobilisations, nor of women's presence in the political sphere. As the authors write, 'gender equality policies have been adopted when women's presence in government is low (or non-existent) and when women's movements in civil society are weak' (p. 208). They highlight, for example, that some dictatorships have 'embraced progressive family reforms' (ibid.). Their typology shows how this may be especially the case when referring to non-doctrinal policies, such as women's parliamentary quotas and parental leave, as these changes do not necessarily contradict the tenets of male authority.

*Note: the authors updated and expanded their argument in [Htun, M. and Weldon, L. \(2018\) \*The Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights Around the World\*, New York: Cambridge University Press.](#)*

[Whittier, N. \(2007\) 'Gender, social movements and' in G. Ritzer \(ed.\) \*The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology\*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.](#)

Whittier offers a general discussion of the relationship between changes in gender equality outcomes and the actions of social movements. She argues that the relationship is two-sided and dynamic: social movements are themselves shaped by gender norms and can in turn effect change on gender norms – even when this is not the focus of the movement.

For example, Whittier discusses women's participation in social movements on the basis of their identity as mothers – what she calls 'maternalist politics'. She shows how this form of political participation is influenced by gender norms, and also expands gender norms around motherhood, by 'bringing women into the public sphere and often changing activists' (p. 1) own family relations and identities'

In discussing gender norm change as a result of women's participation in broader social movements, Whittier also discusses the role of intersectionality. As she points out, particular groups of women might prefer to participate in struggles other than women rights' or feminist movements and promote their gendered interests therein. It is important, therefore, to remain attentive to how women's participation in social movements in general can transform gender roles and relations. Lastly, the chapter calls attention to the backlash that has emerged in response to changes towards gender equality and that aims to hinder or reverse such change.

[Al-Ali, N. \(2020\) 'Covid-19 and feminism in the Global South: challenges, initiatives and dilemmas' \*European Journal of Women's Studies\* 27\(4\): 333–347.](#)

This article examines the gender implications of COVID-19 in countries of the Global South. It argues that the pandemic has induced a 'crisis of social reproduction' and increased rates of gender-based violence – two phenomena that are affecting diverse constituencies of women across these countries. Al-Ali also argues that the pandemic is undoing the hard-won successes of feminist movements, as it may diminish girls' education trajectories as well as

women's participation in paid and formal work. In this sense, the paper highlights how crises can strengthen patriarchal gender norms and a gendered division of labour. The paper argues that pre-existing patterns of inequalities have created heightened risks in the context of COVID for LGBTQ populations, ethnic minorities, domestic workers, migrants and sex workers.

The article also discusses feminist initiatives and mobilisations that have arisen in this context. First, it highlights how feminist groups and networks – such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria, REFEADES in the Congo and She is a Revolution in Iraq – have disseminated information about COVID-19 and demanded changes in public health care. Second, it shows how feminist organisations have mobilised to protest and address the vulnerabilities experienced by women of different constituencies. For example, FEMNET – a regional African feminist advocacy platform – launched the Twitter hashtag '#inclusivelockdown' to create a conversation that centred on African women's concerns about COVID-19 lockdowns. In Chile, the Coordinadora Feminista 8M issued a 'Feminist Emergency Plan in the Face of the Coronavirus Crisis'. Al-Ali writes:

'The plan contains detailed instructions and points of action at local and national level, ranging from calls to create registers for vulnerable community members, organize collective childcare, create community emergency networks to support victims of gender-based violence, and develop a security and protection plan for women, including an online mechanism to report domestic violence.' (p. 341)

A similar effort can also be seen in the Feminist COVID-19 Policy, published by the Feminist Alliance for Rights, which demands policies in nine key areas: food security, healthcare, education, social inequality, water and sanitation, economic inequality, gender-based violence, access to information and abuse of power. In this sense the paper highlights how contexts of crisis can spur political conversations and mobilisations. As Abu Habib (2020, quoted by Al-Ali) writes:

'The abysmal failure of our states to protect women and curb gender-based violence can no longer be hidden or excused ... the [Covid-19] pandemic has probably shown us the human cost of failing to recognize and address this pandemic [of violence against women and girls]. Unequal gender relations within families and the burden of care work carried by women and girls have finally entered the realm of social and public debates.' (p. 343)

## **Women's mobilisation and issue-focused action**

### Environmental movements

[Rocheleau, D.E., Thomas-Slayter, B. and Wangari, E. \(eds\)\(1996\) \*Feminist political ecology: global issues and local experiences\*. London: Routledge.](#)

Rocheleau et al. discuss 11 case studies (covering the Global North and South as well as rural and urban contexts) that touch upon one or more of the book's three main themes: gendered



organisations and social movements; gendered rights over resources; and gendered knowledge. The case studies emphasise the impact that women activists in environmental justice struggles are having on gender constructs, as well as in highlighting the gendered dimensions of environmental problems.

Chapter 2, by Campbell, discusses women's participation in the forest protection movements that emerged in the 1980s in rubber tapper communities in the Brazilian Amazon (see the next entry for more detailed notes on this chapter). Campbell discusses the struggle of rural women to participate in decision-making within the group. Chapter 3, by Miller et al., discusses the opposition of the West Harlem community to a sewage treatment plant and women's activism within the campaign (in New York, United States). In Chapter 4, Brú-Bister documents the role of women in opposing a hydroelectric power plant in Austria, highlighting how their political participation led to their greater involvement in national politics. In Chapter 5, Walst-Walter examines women's participation in three movements against toxic-waste dumping in three regions in Spain populated by ethnic minorities. Chapter 11, by Bellows, discusses the Tested Food for Silesia programme, a movement for safe food supplies organised by Polish women on the basis of their identity 'as mothers'. In Chapter 12, Seager examines the mobilisation of women in two communities in the United States against toxic waste disposal from nuclear sites. She highlights how the women's political participation was explained on the base of their identities of 'mothers' and 'housewives' and how this subsequently led them to take part in citizen science projects under what Seager calls 'housewife epidemiology'.

[Campbell, C. \(1996\) 'Out on the front lines but still struggling for voice' in Rocheleau, D. et al. \(eds\) \*Feminist political ecology: global issues and local experiences\*. London: Routledge, pp. 27-61.](#)

Campbell examines the role of women in the rubber tappers' movement in Xapuri (Acre, Brazil) – organised and led by Chico Mendes in the 1980s – that sought to protect the Amazonian forest from deforestation and secure the political and economic autonomy of rubber tappers. In contrast to most analyses of the movement, which centre on male participants, Campbell highlights how 'women have been crucial in the defense of the forest ... [as] many women were on the front lines at most *empates* [stand-offs], standing between the chain saws and their forest homes... [and as they] played critical roles as union members, elected leaders, teachers, church organizers, and rural health agents' (p. 27). She also argues that women were also key to the development of the movement, as the gendered division of labour – in which women oversaw domestic work – allowed rural men to join and participate in the movement.

The chapter examines three issues relating to the participation of rural women in the movement: factors that facilitated their participation; the ways in which they participated; and the impact of their participation on gender roles and relations.

Campbell highlights the role of the church as a structure through which women accessed the movement. Women were monitors of many church groups, and this provided them with their first opportunities to perform roles as community leaders. As a result, the *Comunidades Eclesias de Base* (Basic Ecclesiastical Communities) served as a site for learning and

consciousness-raising for rural women. Campbell also highlights that female heads of household found it easier to claim space and voice within the movement.

Campbell argues that rural women were involved mainly in three roles: as promoters (in charge of raising the movement's membership numbers), as caretakers (in charge of feeding the movement's members on certain occasions and cleaning the movement's spaces) and as peacemakers (placed at the frontlines of crucial and violent *empates*, along with children, to deter violence). As a consequence, Campbell argues that women's participation during the first stages of the movement did not equate to voice or decision-making authority. Yet, Campbell highlights how women contested these roles over time and sought to expand them.

As such, her findings echo those in other literature on South American women's participation in social movements: while their involvement is initially seen as 'an expression of their roles as wives and mothers' – as these are roles that allow them to participate in the context of sexist attitudes – over time, their participation comes to 'redefine and transform their domestic role from one of private nurturing to one of collective, public protest, in this way challenging the traditional seclusion of women in the private sphere of the family' (Safa, 1995, in Campbell: p. 28).

In terms of the impact of their participation, Campbell argues that 'the women in the Xapuri movement are slowly changing their roles and gaining a stronger voice in their homes, the union office and even in national and international gatherings' (p. 28). She documents how women's goals changed over time: from gaining political representation to achieving economic independence, which led female participants to establish a Brazil nut drying and shelling enterprise. This, the women argued, had a positive impact on their decision-making power in the household.

The author argues that through these economic projects women gained 'self-confidence and respect ... [which] has encouraged them to state in a louder voice their desires for a stronger role for women in the union and the cooperative' – a development that stands in contrast with the previous lack of self-confidence and self-esteem women expressed (p. 49).

Campbell highlights how the emergence of a nationwide women's movement created the space for rural women to demand change more effectively in the rubber tappers' movement – a possibility that was also enabled by the death of Chico Mendes, who opposed women's participation in the movement and who believed gender concerns were secondary to the movement's goals. Campbell emphasises the importance of the creation of a women's group linked to the movement, as this group served as a space for dialogue between women and promoted the participation of more women in the movement.

Yet, Campbell is careful to stress that these results were not evenly experienced by all women in the movement and that women incur a cost by contesting gender roles and relations. As she writes, 'for many women, however, their lives have not changed since the movement began... women would need a safe environment in which to begin to express such self-confidence and resistance to a domineering husband' (p. 52).

[Jenkins, K. and Rondón, G. \(2015\) 'Eventually the mine will come': women anti-mining activists' everyday resilience in opposing resource extraction in the Andes' \*Gender & Development\* 23\(3\): 415-431.](#)

This article examines the experiences of women in anti-mining movements in rural communities in Peru and Ecuador. Its findings are based on 26 life history interviews with women from the Asociación de Mujeres Protectoras de los Páramos in Huancabamba, Northern Peru, and the Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama, in surrounding areas of Cuenca, Southern Ecuador. It argues that women's resilience is demonstrated through their commitment and tenacity, their ability to deal with long-term stress and to find inner strength, their use of the land to strengthen rural livelihoods, and their determination to oppose the mine despite recognising that 'eventually the mine will come'.

The article is relevant for this annotated bibliography because it calls attention to how the women's activism entails struggles at the household, family and community level, as they transgress gender norms by participating in a social movement. It also calls attention to the economic and labour-time costs of activism for women. However, the authors do not examine how rural women and men negotiate such struggles and is uncritical of the extra costs women are taking on because of their activism. The article also argues that activism has an impact on women's personal growth but does not elaborate on the reasons for this or the way in which this growth manifests.

[Deonandan, K., Tatham, R. and Field, B. \(2017\) 'Indigenous women's anti-mining activism: a gendered analysis of the El Estor struggle in Guatemala' \*Gender & Development\* 25\(3\): 405-419.](#)

This article examines the participation of Qechi Mayan women in the opposition to the Fenix nickel mine in El Estor, Guatemala. It argues that mining has gendered impacts and affects women disproportionately and, therefore, that the participation of Qechi Mayan women reflects gendered motivations and strategies. The authors argue that women were motivated to mobilise as 'carers' and that their participation has been enabled through practices of female solidarity, consciousness building and what Berriane (2016; see entry under Land rights movements) calls 'bridge leaderships' – with individual women (and men) in the movement playing a key role in mobilising other women. However, the article is limited in its evaluation of the impact of indigenous women's political mobilisation on gender relations, as the study did not include men or consider the consequences of women's participation on their own lives.

[Hallum-Montes, R. \(2012\) 'Para el bien común' indigenous women's environmental activism and community care work in Guatemala' \*Race, Gender & Class\*, 19\(1/2\): 104-130.](#)

This article examines the motivations and strategies of the environmental activism of indigenous women in Guatemala. Its findings are based on interviews with 33 Kaqchikel women (between 2006 and 2009) working with a transnational environmental organisation. The author finds that:

'gender, race, and class figured prominently in women's decisions to become environmental activists [as] women mobilized around their identities as mothers and caregivers, and viewed their environmental activism as a way of caring for both their families and the indigenous community' (p. 104).

The article highlights various important gender dynamics within environmental movements: (1) the use of family and friends as networks for mobilisation; (2) the use of maternal discourses by women to recruit other women; (3) the role of key individual women in mobilising other women; (4) the promotion of care work as 'shared responsibility', which can be seen as a contestation of gender relations; and (5) the use of 'motherhood' politics as an entry point for women's political participation. Hallum-Montes argues that indigenous women develop a 'critical consciousness' through their involvement with activism, as a result of the space the movement provides for women to meet and talk to each other.

The article, however, does not address the consequences of indigenous women's activism, only their motivations; nor does the analysis include men and the reasons why they do (or do not) participate. This inhibits the possibility of an analysis of how gender relations may (or may not) be changing in response to Kaqchikel women's social movement participation.

[Jiménez Thomas Rodríguez, D. \(2018\) 'Soybeans, development, and violence: the environmental resistance of Mayan women and men in Hopelchen, Campeche, Mexico'. Master's thesis, University of Oxford.](#)

This thesis examines the participation of Mayan men and women in a movement against genetically modified soybean seeds in southern Mexico between 2010 and 2018. On the gender dynamics of the movement, the thesis calls attention to the barriers Mayan women faced when participating in the movement, how they sought to overcome them and how their participation enabled them to renegotiate gender roles and relations.

Both Mayan women and men expressed concerns about the impact of genetically modified soybeans on their economy, the well-being of their children and future generations, and on the survival of their culture. However, Mayan women described their participation in the movement as difficult, as they face discrimination not only as indigenous people when interacting with the government, but also as women within the movement. They had faced confrontations and criticism for their involvement from their families and wider communities.

The opposition of men, however, had decreased over time. Men described how they had begun to welcome women's involvement, explaining women's participation in gendered terms. One man, for example, explained that women had to participate because they needed to learn about the struggle so that they could educate indigenous children about it. Yet, Mayan women explained their participation differently. They stressed that it was important for them to participate because women possess capabilities and principles men do not, thereby claiming authority for women to do things on their own terms.

Women's participation, and the sense of authority they derived from it, made the movement a space of empowerment for them. Being part of the movement enabled women to acquire knowledge, speak up, expand their mobility and practice female solidarity. Furthermore, Mayan women's participation was also leading to a renegotiation of gender relations within their families. As women's participation increased, household duties were being divided among household members.

These processes of empowerment and renegotiation can, however, be limited. The renegotiation of domestic work might be limited by the fact that women perceive men's participation in domestic work as 'help', and still see care work as their responsibility. In cases where they fail to renegotiate gender divisions of labour, women's involvement in the movement may increase their responsibilities and work.

[Bastos, S., Dary Fuente, C., Batz, G., De León, et al. \(2018\) \*Pensar Guatemala desde la resistencia: el neoliberalismo enfrentado\*. Guatemala: F&G Editores.](#)

This book examines resistance movements in Guatemala that confront 'extractive development' projects. It makes brief reference to the barriers that women face in participating in environmental movements in Guatemala as a result of persistent sexist attitudes.

[Jenkins, K. \(2015\) 'Unearthing women's anti-mining activism in the Andes: Pachamama and the "mad old women"' \*Antipode\* 47\(2\): 442-460.](#)

This article analyses two women-only organisations against mining – one in Ecuador and the other in Peru – in order to understand women's activism. Jenkins highlights three different narratives used by the women in her study to explain their activism, all of which were based on 'essentialised notions of femininity' (p. 448). These were: gendered responsibilities around water; a gendered connection with the figure of Pachamama; and gendered roles around motherhood. She uses Spivak's concept of 'strategic essentialism' (see [Spivak, G. \(1988\) \*Deconstructing Historiography\*, in Guta, Ranajit and Spivak \(eds\) \(1988\) \*Selected Subaltern Studies\*, Oxford University Press](#)) to explain women's use of gendered discourses, arguing that this practice subverts the negative role given to women in traditional development paradigms, enabling them to reclaim 'the right to be an obstacle to progress' (p. 454). In her discussion of these organisations, the author briefly discusses the barriers to participation that these women have experienced in mainstream anti-mining movements due to the persistence of gender constructs that chastise women for engaging with politics in the public sphere.

[Jenkins, K. \(2017\) 'Women anti-mining activists' narratives of everyday resistance in the Andes: staying put and carrying on in Peru and Ecuador' \*Gender, Place & Culture\* 24\(10\): 1441-1459.](#)

Jenkins explores women's anti-mining activism in Peru and Ecuador and theorises that their resistance using the concept of 'everydayness'. She argues that their activism/resistance is

characterised by 'everyday life' in three ways: (1) it involves everyday confrontations (and refusals) within their communities; (2) it modifies women's everyday life as it forces them to incorporate and adapt to extraordinary circumstances; and (3) it builds upon women's everyday life to create an environmental imaginary that protects the land from mining. In addition, the article highlights how the two women-only organisations discussed were formed because women felt 'marginalised within the mainstream social movement', demonstrating the contested internal dynamics of social movements (p. 1443).

## Indigenous and racial/ethnic group movements

[Zanotti, L. \(2013\) 'Resistance and the politics of negotiation: women, place and space among the Kayapó in Amazonia, Brazil' \*Gender, Place & Culture\* 20\(3\): 346-362.](#)

This paper explores the participation of Kayapó women in resistance strategies through three ethnographic accounts. Zanotti examines resistance dynamics that women might enact even when they are (mostly) not present at overt protests. In doing so, she argues that our conceptualization of 'resistance strategies should be inclusive of negotiated politics, everyday resistance and microscale strategies of contestation: (p. 346). As such, Zanotti's analysis reminds us that gender norms are not only contested through social mobilisations but also through everyday 'mundane' interactions.

[Asher, K. \(2007\) 'Ser y tener: black women's activism, development, and ethnicity in the Pacific lowlands of Colombia' \*Feminist Studies\* 33\(1\): 11-37.](#)

This article examines the impact of the black women's movement on the Colombian regional development agenda and on the agenda of black ethnocultural movements, and vice versa – that is, the impact of both agendas on the development of the movement. It shows how black women (working in cooperatives and in the networks Matamba and Guasa) have used the agendas of economic development and of black movements to claim a space of their own within both of them.

The article locates the Colombian black women's movement in the 1990s, influenced by the emergence of black movements and an Afro-Colombian identity, the adoption of a new constitution in the country, and the passing of Law 70 (which granted black communities important rights, such as collective titles to land), increased attention to gender in international and national policy circles, and a regional development agenda focused on modernisation and later on sustainable development (Plan Pacifico).

The article shows how the agendas of movements change or expand over time. In this case, it documents how black women's cooperatives began to expand their concerns from economic issues to issues based on political identity. Asher provides a case study of a women's group formed out of a broader movement – in this case, women's participation in black movements led them to form an agenda of their own.

The article also calls attention to the impact of international politics and discourses on movements. Asher identifies the impact of the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and its narratives linking women, development and the environment, as well as a new internationally sponsored project, Program for Black Women, as key factors that influenced black women's cooperatives in Colombia. In this sense, she also argues for the importance of funding to foster 'gender movements'.

The article's discussion of Colombian black women's activism shows the barriers that women face when mobilising politically. It documents how gender tended to be sidelined in the Afro-Colombian community movement in favour of what were perceived to be 'more important issues'; with gender seen as a divisive issue and black women who advocated for gender-related causes marginalised within the movement. Asher, therefore, highlights the ambivalent position women can have in identity-based movements and how this hinders gender norm change. In this case, black women 'were lauded for fostering a distinct black identity through their many quotidian tasks... [and yet] their essential positions in maintaining black family and community life served to justify or obscure their more domestic roles in current ethnic struggles' (p. 26).

The article, lastly, highlights the importance of working with and on men. Asher describes how the cooperatives approached non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for help with educating men in their communities: 'we already know our rights. Now we need to learn how to obtain our rights ... we need to educate our men' (p. 22).

## Land rights movements

[Agarwal, B. \(2002\) 'Are we not peasants too? Land rights and women's claims in India'. SEEDS no. 21. New York: Population Council.](#)

In this report, Agarwal argues for the importance of lower-income women in India owning land: of having a 'field of their own' (p. 2). Pertinent here, however, is the report's discussion of the Bodhgaya and Tebhaga land rights' movement in India.

The movement – a struggle by landless labourers and sharecroppers for land rights – began in 1978 and was the first movement where women's land rights were explicitly addressed. It was led by the Chatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, a Gandhian-socialist youth organisation with membership restricted to men and women under 30 years old. Young women played a key role in the movement, participating – despite increasing levels of violence – in land occupations, street protests and arrests. In fact, over time, women's participation matched, in numbers, that of men.

Women's participation in the Bodhgaya movement affected gender norms, as female participants began to organise *shivirs* (camps) to discuss their own concerns as women and their experiences as women within the movement. Topics of discussions included women's need for land rights in their own name, women's labour exploitation, gendered divisions of labour, gender-based violence and discrimination against female children. As a result of these

camps, the women issued a collective statement to the male participants in the movement, denouncing gender-based violence and demanding land rights for themselves. Despite this, when the movement achieved a victory in 1981, women were not included in the list for land rights. This exclusion was protested with declarations such as:

We were in the forefront of the fight, carrying our children in our wombs and in our arms. We went to jail and faced the lathis [sticks]; we also did all the housework. But when the land was distributed, we were pushed back, we didn't even come to know by what rules the land was distributed. (Manimala, 1983, in Agarwal: p. 15)

By 1982, women in the movement had convinced the men of the importance of women having land rights. However, because of patriarchal prejudices of the local administration, women's land rights were not recognised in practice. The administration argued that there was no precedent for land being in the name of anyone other than the head of the household (i.e. a man). Yet, because of a united stance among men and women in the movement – with men refusing to file for the rights to more land until women's rights were recognised – the movement achieved the recognition of women's land rights within three years. Women received one acre of land through individual, joint, widowhood and destitution titles (even unmarried adult daughters received land for the first time in modern Indian history).

Agarwal writes:

'Women encountered opposition at three levels: from husbands, from the Vahini activists, and from government officials. Women's ability to overcome these layers of opposition depended on several factors: men's recognition over time that women's contributions were crucial to the movement's success; the growing solidarity among women and their articulation of their gender-specific interests as distinct from those of the men of their class and community; the support of some middle class female Vahini activists with a feminist perspective; and the process of debate in which women persuasively countered opposition ... It is noteworthy that a largely illiterate peasant community discussed at length issues such as women's independent rights in economic resources, domestic violence, female education, and postmarital residence, and on several counts resolved them in women's favour. The debate, although arduous, brought significant rewards. The question of gender equality began to be seen by many not as divisive but as integral to the movement's success. As a result, women's participation in decision-making also increased, wife-beating and verbal abuse against women was deemed shameful, and male villagers began to take care of cooking and childcare in the women's shivirs, while the women participated in discussions.' (p. 8)

As well as producing changes in gender relations, women's participation also led to an increase in their own self-esteem, confidence and bargaining position.

The report also discusses the important supporting role of Vahini feminist activists and of the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Agarwal compares the Bodhgaya movement with the 1940s Tebhaga movement, in which there was:



'an absence of cohesiveness among women on gender questions; a lack of spokespersons among them who could articulate a feminist perspective; and the absence of a widespread women's movement in the country'. (p. 9).

Agarwal argues that these were decisive factors in producing different results in each movement. While gender relations changed as a result of women's participation in the Bodhgaya movement, they did not change in the Tebhaga movement. For example, she documents how participation in the Tebhaga movement gave peasant women grounds on which to denounce gender-based violence ('when the two together are fighting against the enemy, how then was it possible for one soldier to beat the other after returning home?' (p. 12)).

She highlights how this led to the organisation of a campaign against 'wife-beating', yet this did not lead to long-term changes, due to the lack of a supportive context. As a result, concessions were only temporary and women 'were forced to return to housework and largely unchanged gender relations within the family when the struggle ended' (p. 13). As a side note, the article mentions how the Indian women's movement achieved important legal reforms, such as the amendment of dowry and rape laws, and how middle-class Indian women have been crucial in the promotion of the economic and social welfare of poor rural women.

[Agarwal, B. \(2010\) \*Gender and green governance\*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.](#)

This book examines the participation of women in Community Forests Initiatives in India and Nepal. Agarwal's analysis highlights how women's participation should not be evaluated on the basis of the number of women present in a given space but also according to the quality of their participation. Agarwal introduces the term of 'participatory exclusions' to refer to instances where women are present within organisations or institutions but without holding any real decision-making power.

[Rao, N. \(2005\) 'Questioning women's solidarity: the case of land rights, Santal Parganas, Jharkhand, India' \*The Journal of Development Studies\* 41\(3\): 353-375.](#)

This article discusses the organisation for land rights in Jharkhand, India, and how women mobilise for their interests. Rao examines the limits to women's collective action around land rights and shows how women's participation in social movements does not always result in gender changes. In fact, in this case, Rao found that women aligned themselves with men rather than with other women, in order to increase the legitimacy of their claims.

[Deere, C.D. \(2003\) 'Women's land rights and rural social movements in the Brazilian agrarian reform' \*Journal of Agrarian Change\* 3\(1\): 257-288.](#)

Deere examines the demand for women's land rights in Brazil in three rural social organisations: the landless movement Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), the rural unions and the autonomous rural women's movement. She argues that the

persistence of these three groups was key in attaining gender-progressive land legislation in Brazil (in the agrarian reform and later in the 1988 Constitution), as the persistence of strong rural women's organisations has been elsewhere. Deere stresses the importance of 'strong' and 'persistent' movements in light of how cultural practices and legal frameworks that discriminate against women are entrenched and thus difficult to contest. In fact, in Brazil the attainment of women's land rights took 12 years of political mobilisation. Deere argues that, in asking for women's land rights, rural women had to contest the perception of women's reproductive and productive work as invisible, as well as the notion of male authority within the household. The author also highlights the importance of a 'supportive context' for the success of the rural women's movement. In this case, the emergence of union politics and a 'new unionism', as well as of a strong women's movement against gender-based violence, was key, as both increased public pressure and governmental receptiveness to the demands of rural women.

The mobilisation of rural women in Brazil began in the 1980s, as women increased their participation in agriculture. The movement initially demanded women's inclusion in rural unions and the extension of labour rights and social security benefits to rural women workers. The movement also came to represent an important space for dialogue among rural women. Articulação das Instâncias de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais-Sul (Movement of Organizations of Rural Women Workers-South), created in 1988 and linking women from five states, sought, for example, to provide a discussion forum. As such, it encouraged the discussion of women's health, sexuality and professional/working recognition. The organisation's agenda soon expanded to women's land rights. It pushed for constitutional reform through a nation-wide signature campaign – an idea that emerged from the coalition of rural women with feminist activists and scholars.

According to Deere, this coalition, and the coalition between rural women and women in government institutions and political parties, were key to the success of the movement's demand for women's land rights to be included in the 1988 Constitution. Another gain for rural women in the 1988 Constitution was the recognition of the working rights of rural women (as of men) and thus the achievement of social security benefits in cases of unemployment, maternity and disability. However, the legal reform proved to be limited. Formal equality in land rights did not increase the share of female beneficiaries of the agrarian reform in practice because of discriminatory institutional practices against female-headed households and the optional (not mandatory) character of joint titling for male-headed households.

In discussing the MST, the paper also makes an important contribution regarding gender dynamics within broader social movements. It documents how, as women joined the MST, class and gender were deemed to be incompatible issues within the movement's agenda. The creation of a National Commission of Women of the MST in the late 1980s was important. It lobbied for the creation of women's groups in local chapters of the movement, for a women's commission within each state, as well as for the recognition of women's demands by the movement's leaders. By 1989, when the MST published its *General norms* for the first time, the document included a chapter on women. The norms incorporated the objectives of encouraging women's participation at all levels, contesting sexism within the movement,

promoting women-only spaces for dialogue among women, and having a women's commission. Yet, the norms made no mention of women's land rights, as they specified that land titles were to be collective and not individual.

From 1989 to the mid 1990s, gender issues continued to be perceived as divisive. In 1996, the first national meeting of MST women occurred, leading to the creation of the National Collective of Women of the MST, which had the mission of guaranteeing women's equal participation in the movement and women's achievement of land titles. In 1999, the collective transformed into the National Gender Collective, now involving both men and women and stressing the 'need for a "cultural revolution"' in gender relations. One of the first activities of the Gender Collective was the publication of a training pamphlet consisting of eight topics for sessions, for both men and women, designed to promote reflection on gender relations.

[Berriane, Y. \(2016\) 'Bridging social divides: leadership and the making of an alliance for women's land-use rights in Morocco' \*Review of African Political Economy\* 43\(149\): 350-364.](#)

This article analyses the coalition between the Soulaliyate women's movement, which emerged in the context of increased land commodification in Morocco, and the Democratic Association of Women (ADFM). It focuses on understanding the dynamics of the coalition.

The Soulaliyate women's movement was a grassroots movement representing the interests of rural women. It began in 2007 in reaction to the exclusion of women from the distribution of the compensation that was being provided to rural communities by private and public companies in exchange for what had previously been collective land.

This case study stresses the importance of feminist leadership and feminist coalitions – what the author terms 'bridge leaders'. As the article highlights, the making of the movement was the coalition between 'Soulaliyate women', who had little previous political experience or capital, and the ADFM, an elite-based feminist organisation created in the 1980s, with connections to international donor agencies and a stable reputation for supporting legal reform to improve women's rights. The ADFM took up the case of Soulaliyate women in 2007, actively contacting rural women and bringing them together under the umbrella of collective action.

Yet, the case also shows the tensions of coalitions. In this case, as the movement has grown in visibility, a number of other alternative partners (women's associations, human rights organisations, political parties and local politicians) have shown interest in supporting the Soulaliyate women's cause. As a result, Soulaliyate women and the ADFM have distanced themselves from each other to pursue different partnerships instead. This move was motivated by previous tensions in the alliance as the priorities of each group had different time frames. While the ADFM aims to change legislation and thus has a long-term perspective 'that fits with the nature of institutional reform', rural women sought to stop land privatisation as soon as possible and thus had a shorter-term working perspective.

Between 2009 and 2012, three administrative circulars were issued by the Ministry of the Interior instructing its local representatives to ensure that women are included among the beneficiaries of collective land. However, the movement continues to mobilise to get these changes written into legislation.

## Nationalist movements

[Berhe, A. \(2008\) \*A political history of the Tigray People's Liberation Front \(1975-1991\): revolt, ideology and mobilisation in Ethiopia\*. Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit.](#)

This book explores the resistance of the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia and its impacts on the country's process of democratisation. Chapter 10 examines the role of women in the TPLF – who made up about one-third of the Front's members – and argues that their participation led to shifts in gender relations and discourses.

Berhe recounts how the TPLF began as a male-dominated organisation that prohibited women's participation (especially in decision-making processes). It relied on gendered divisions of labour, and women and men took part in separate activities. Women were gathered together to be exposed to the movement's propaganda, and the movement's leaders argued that women's rights were not of concern until after victory.

With time, however, women began to ask to have their domestic workload reduced so that they could participate in the Front. The few women who already participated in the Front supported these efforts, as they advocated for more female participation (acting as what Berriane (2016) calls 'bridge leaders'). Women's increased participation led to shifts in gender norms, as, for example, gender coding between fighters became non-existent, gender-based violence was established within the TPFL as a serious crime, and women's land rights were recognised as they were beneficiaries from the TPFL land policy.

In addition, women's participation led to changes in their self-perceptions, as it increased their knowledge and self-confidence. As Berhe writes, this was related to the opportunities they had to: 'discuss social issues in public which had hitherto been a male domain'; to 'communicate with the authorities and present their own cases themselves'; and to become 'not only entitled to seek justice on their own account but also to dispense it' (p. 292). Similarly, female participants also gained political skills, which were crucial in allowing them to pursue other gender justice issues, such as child marriage. Moreover, Berhe argues that women in the TPFL became role models for future generations, showing how activities could be shared on an equal basis with men.

Yet, the broader impact was limited, as despite the changes sparked by women's participation, women continued being responsible for cooking, the collection of water and firewood and attending local cultural ceremonies – maintaining traditional gendered divisions of labour.

[Al-Ali, N. and Tas, L. \(2018\) 'Reconsidering nationalism and feminism: the Kurdish political movement in Turkey' \*Nations and Nationalism\* 24\(2\): 453-473.](#)

This article explores how gender demands are addressed within a broader social movement. It uses the case study of the Kurdish women's movement and the wider Kurdish nationalist movement, looking at how the movement politicised Kurdish women's rights activists. It also examines how Kurdish women activists reacted to gender dynamics within the Kurdish movement.

The article is situated within literature on gender and nationalist movements. Within this body of literature, feminist scholars have emphasised how 'feminist claims within nationalist movements [have often been] side-lined, constructed as "inauthentic" and frequently discredited for imitating supposedly western notions of gender-based equality', even in struggles where women play active combatant roles, such as in Eritrea (Bernal, 2001; Hale, 2002), Vietnam (Omar, 2004), Nicaragua (Omar, 2004), Palestine (Hasso, 1998), Sri Lanka (Alison, 2003) and Algeria (Salhi, 2010).

Omar (2004), for example, looking at the Vietnamese and Nicaraguan cases, documents the tendency of nationalist movements to include women as active combatants during conflict and then to reinstate traditional gender roles after the end of the conflict. Thus, feminist nationalist movement scholars have shown the tensions that tend to exist within nationalist movements around gender claims, how experiences of marginalisation within movements have motivated women in some cases to raise gender claims, and how (when taken up) these tend to lead only to transitory changes in gender social roles.

Yet, the case of the Kurdish women's movement, the authors argue, shows how nationalist and feminist movements can be better understood as intertwined rather than in opposition. This is because 'Kurdish feminist organisations emerged partly as a reaction to both the oppression by the Turkish state as well as the nationalist and often patronising attitude of the Turkish feminist movement'. The author argues how 'despite the critique of Kemalism as patriarchal and authoritarian by the more radical and autonomous Turkish feminist organisations that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s', the demands of Kurdish women were ignored or dismissed by Turkish feminists. They explain that the Kurdish women's movement thus formed in response to the ethnocentric character of the Turkish women's movement.

The article traces the politicisation of Kurdish women to the 1960s and 1970s and their experience of marginalisation within the Kemalist state project. From the 1980s onwards, they mobilised through the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which encouraged women to participate – in accordance with a tendency by nationalist movements to use women as symbols of culture and tradition – as it recognised that the strategy for armed resistance required an active participation of women. In fact, various women's organisations were created within the PKK, the most important being the Free Women of Kurdistan Troops.

The authors find, though, that despite their participation and contribution to the Kurdish movement, women felt unrecognised at this time, as their gender concerns and issues were dismissed. The authors explain this dismissal as being part of the Marxist revolutionary

tradition, which sees gender struggles as secondary in importance. A decade later, in the 1990s, Kurdish 'women became politicised on a large scale and learnt about their legal rights', increasing their participation in protests that were now not only directed at the Turkish state but also at gender inequality within Kurdish society. The article finds that women during this period, while more aware of sexist attitudes in Kurdish leadership, also experienced greater confidence in their political roles.

The authors argue that the Kurdish women's movement is a good example of an intersectional movement, as it recognises how different systems of power interlock and affect Kurdish women. The article also shows how gender-based violence can operate as an issue that transcends divisions between women, with the Kurdish women's movement and Turkish feminist groups collaborating in this area.

The case study also points to the importance of sympathetic leadership – in this case of Abdullah Öcalan and in particular the principle of *jineoloj*, or the 'principle that without the freedom of women within society and without a real consciousness surrounding women, no society can call itself free' (p. 14, citing Nurhak, 2014). Yet, the case also shows the barriers that women's movements tied to nationalist struggles may face in engaging with issues of sexuality and reproductive rights. The authors argue that nationalist women's movements are unlikely to campaign on these issues, as women in nationalist struggles tend to be seen as biological and symbolic reproducers of the nation, and engaging in such issues can alienate them from the mainstream movement.

## Democratic and governance movements

[Moghadam, V.M. \(2018\) 'Explaining divergent outcomes of the Arab Spring: the significance of gender and women's mobilizations' \*Politics, Groups, and Identities\*, 6\(4\), 666–681.](#)

In this article, Moghadam examines the impact of women's organisations during the Arab Spring, and how they shaped the protests' outcomes in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, in comparison to Bahrain, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Moghadam argues that 'women's legal status, social positions and collective action prior to the Arab Spring helped shape the nature of the 2011 protests as well as the political and social outcomes for individual countries' (p. 666).

The author finds that countries with robust women's movements (such as Morocco and Tunisia) had a stronger civil society than those countries with weaker, or non-existent, women's movements. She argues that a robust civil society was in fact a prerequisite for a productive outcome of the 2011 protests. The author also finds that in those countries that placed tighter restrictions on organising by women's civil society, such as Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Egypt, there was high military spending that 'not only misallocated resources that could have been used for deeper and more extensive social development, but in retrospect also portended the role of militarism and hyper-masculinity in the Arab Spring processes' (p. 673). The paper concludes:

'The setbacks in Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen resulted from the following factors: pre-existing gender relations were patriarchal and women's organizations and mobilizations were weak; civil society was neither robust nor well organized; state institutions were more authoritarian, patriarchal, and militaristic; and international influences and interventions had adverse or destructive effects.' (p. 676)

On particular relevance for this annotated bibliography is the article's analysis of women's movements in the region. It highlights the unique presence, in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, a transnational feminist network, the Collectif Maghreb-Egalité. The network originated at the UN Fourth World Conference in Beijing and was initially formed to focus on the achievement of egalitarian family codes. Moghadam's discussion of the Collectif highlights the network's use of printed and broadcast media to share information. The article also comments on the status of women's rights in each country and changes in legal and/or policy frameworks achieved by women's movements, including:

- Bahrain: women achieved the rights to vote and hold electoral office in 2002; in 2006, the country's first female judge was appointed, and in the same year a law 'that required women to obtain consent from a male guardian when obtaining a passport' was abolished and the minimum age at which a woman could marry was set to 15 (p. 671, citing Kelly, 2010, p. 15).
- Egypt: women achieved the right to vote in 1956; in 2000 they won the right to a *khul'a* divorce (the right to initiate divorce, although at the expense of losing any remaining claims on the dower); and prior to the 2011 protests, they achieved a parliamentary quota, the first convictions against sexual harassment and the implementation of various programmes against female genital cutting.
- In Libya, Qadafi's ascent to power in 1969 'resulted in the issuance of laws that granted Libyan women more personal status rights, made primary and secondary education compulsory for all, and provided working women with an array of legal rights, such as generous maternity leave' (p. 671, citing Abdulatif, 2013). At the time of the 2011 protests, however, family law continued to place women under the authority of male relatives, national laws concerning women's rights were neither implemented nor monitored, and there were no independent women's rights organisations in the country.
- In Syria, women acquired the right to vote in 1949. By the time of the 2011 protests, women had gained a significant presence in parliament. However, the Personal Status Law still denied women their rights concerning marriage, divorce, child custody and a violence-free life. At the time of the protests, there was no women's movement in the country. However, women have been politically involved in the armed conflict in the country, including through the activist network Syrian Women for the Syrian Revolt.
- In Yemen, after the country's unification in 1990, women's status declined as Islamist politics rose and as Sharia law was institutionalised. There was no women's movement in the country by the time of the Arab Spring.

[Meintjes, S. \(1996\) 'The women's struggle for equality during South Africa's transition to democracy' \*Transformation\* 30: 47-65.](#)

This article provides a brief history of women's organising in South Africa. It highlights the crucial role played by the Black Sash (as part of the Women's National Coalition) in ensuring gender equality was included in the South African Constitution during the 1994 constitutional process.

The Women's National Coalition was formed in April 1992 by approximately 60 national organisations. It was organised by the African National Congress Women's League, and as such provides an example of a case where the formation of a coalition with political parties proved important. Its work was key for the enshrinement of women's representation in the country's new Constitution, and in ensuring women's interests were protected by the Bill of Rights.

The campaign leading up to these successes 'involved mobilising the media, initiating education workshops around the country on the themes of women's legal status, access to rural and urban land and resources, violence against women, health and work, as well as conducting the research', and it aimed to transform 'the profile and discourse around women and gender relations' (p. 62).

Intersectional gender politics in South Africa can also be traced back to the work of the Black Sash. As Meintjes writes:

'Resolutions singled out problems faced by women in the rural areas, in the work-place, and the "double shift". Patriarchy, in combination with racial oppression and class exploitation, was seen as the principal cause of these problems.' (p. 48)

For this reason:

'The [Women's National Coalition] approached the matter of diversity with sensitivity. Whilst recognising that women shared subordination and oppression, their experiences in everyday life differed according to their material circumstances. Middle-class women and working-class women, black and white, Christian, Hindu, Islamic women saw and experienced life very differently. This recognition of difference was what in fact made possible the coalition of women across such a broad ideological and political range.' (p. 59)

Meintjes argues, however, that this recognition alone has proved insufficient in successfully bringing together different constituencies of women. In tracing the history of women's mobilisation in South Africa, the paper argues that the United Women's Organisation was an important site for the empowerment of women:

'Each branch became an arena for the empowerment of women: there they built confidence and learned about conducting meetings, taking minutes, engaging in discussion, and establishing their own area programmes based on their specific needs and interests. Each member had the opportunity to chair meetings and take responsibility for minutes and organising meetings.' (p. 56)



[Moghadam, V.M. \(2014\) 'Modernising women and democratisation after the Arab Spring' \*The Journal of North African Studies\* 19\(2\): 137-142.](#)

This paper argues that women's rights movements in Middle Eastern and North African countries have been important democratising forces in the region. It builds on the author's previous work, from the early 1990s onwards, highlighting how 'the region's female population and their feminist organisations ... are the main advocates and agents of democratisation'.

For example, by 2012, two political parties in the region were led by women: the Workers' Party in Algeria, founded and led by Louisa Hanoune, and the Progressive Democratic Party in Tunisia, led by Maya Jribi. In Tunisia, the women's movement played a crucial role in the period of democratic transition in preventing the emergence of an all-male political system in the country and the erosion of women rights under a new Islamic government. As Moghadam writes:

'The women's rights organisations – long active in civil society even under authoritarian rule – mobilised immediately after the collapse of the Ben Ali government to ensure a democratic transition ... Fearing that the 'Dignity Revolution' in which they had taken part would come to favour Ennahdha – the Islamic party that had been banned since the early 1990s – and recalling Ennahdha's regressive stance on women's issues in the past, Tunisian feminists staged a protest on the eve of leader Ghannouchi's return from exile in January 2011 ... After Ennahdha won a plurality of seats and formed a coalition government, feminists remained vigilant. When Islamists within the constituent assembly sought to replace the term 'equality' with words akin to complementarity or partnership, women's rights activists and their male supporters in the secular and left-wing parties took to the streets and the domestic and international media in protest. The constituent assembly retained the term equality.' (p. 140).

The author argues that the link between women's movements and processes of democratisation exists because 'women [often] see a democratic polity as both a desirable alternative to authoritarianism and a pathway to their own equality and rights'. Yet, she explains:

'Whether or not a women-friendly democracy takes hold depends on a number of factors: the institutional and normative legacy of the past, the role, visibility, and influence of women's rights organisations before and during the transition, and the nature of the new government and its capacity for a rights-based economic and political system.' (p. 141).

Ultimately, therefore, the paper argues for the importance of women's participation in political processes for advancing gender justice. Yet, the paper recognises that:

'[While] women's parliamentary representation is an important indicator of women's rights and their access to political power, and the 'quota revolution' has served to increase women's political participation in many parts of the world... [it] is not the only significant indicator of women's empowerment; others are the presence or absence of

legal reforms and constitutional guarantees of equality, the number and visibility of women's rights organisations and well-resourced policy agencies, and the female share of the paid labour force and women's earnings relative to men's earnings' (p. 141).

It argues that this can be seen in the cases of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, where, despite women's high parliamentary share, gender equality is still elusive.

The case of Egypt shows, however, how women's democratic aspirations – and potential – can be undermined by military power and violence. During the uprisings in Egypt, female protestors were repeatedly assaulted, and the rise of President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood saw the emergence of 'a constitution steeped in religious language and devoid of attention to women's rights' (p. 138). This can also be seen in the case of Libya, where, Moghadam argues, 'women's participation and rights cannot be realised, much less form the basis of a democratising process' in a violent political environment.

In discussing the link between democratisation and women's movements, the article traces the successes of the women's movements in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, countries distinctive for 'the extent of women's rights activism' (p. 139).

Regarding Algeria, Moghadam emphasises the importance and success of the women's movement since the 1990s in attaining increased female participation in parliament. She calls attention to how, even though the change was short lived because of the government's fall, the political support offered by President Bouteflika in 2002 to female parliamentary representation signified an 'important backdrop to the high rate of female parliamentary representation today' (p. 138). The author also calls attention to the role of the Algerian women's movement in building the Colectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité, which has brought together women's rights activists from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Regarding Morocco, the author credits to the 'more than a decade of women's rights coalition-building, advocacy, and lobbying' (p. 140), the changes that occurred in the 2000s to the electoral code to introduce a 'national list' that reserved 30 parliamentary seats for women (2002), to the labour code to introduce the concept of sexual harassment in the workplace (2004), to the penal code to criminalise spousal violence (2004), to the family law for more egalitarian marital norms (2004), and to the nationality code to give women and men equal rights to transmit nationality to their children as required by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2007). Yet, she also emphasises the importance of the wider political context. This is because the changes occurred and were supported by the political liberalisation that comprehended the decade of the 1990s in Morocco.

In discussing the women's rights movements in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, when compared to Egypt and Libya, Moghadam points to two important factors that have contributed to the success of women's rights movements: having power to influence political elites, and having requisite civic skills to build and sustain democratic culture.

## Education movements

[Bano, M. \(2017\) \*Female Islamic education movements: the re-democratisation of Islamic knowledge\*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.](#)

This book examines home-based and madrasa-based female Islamic education movements in Syria, Nigeria and Pakistan. It seeks to explain the drivers of women's participation in these spaces, as well as the impacts of the movements.

Female education movements emerged alongside the Islamic intellectual revival movements and reform movements of the 1970s. Despite girls and young women having had more access to education since the 1960s, such access has not translated into economic wellbeing for them, as there are few suitable labour options for them once they finish schooling. Yet, at the same time, education made economic wellbeing through marriage less desirable for young women, as they developed different aspirations. Enrolling daughters in formal Islamic education programmes became, thus, a good option for parents:

'In teaching them to value their role as mothers and homemakers, they sought to minimise the risk of girls becoming frustrated with their life options. For the girls themselves such an education proved appealing, because the Islamic conception of gender norms gave them confidence, social recognition, and an appreciation of the roles that were available to them in real life' (p. 49).

The female Islamic education movement has attracted elite, middle-class and low-income women alike, although for different reasons. Bano argues that elite women join because of a desire to access social networks and key knowledge, while middle-class and low-income women join because 'knowing the complexities of Islamic law concerning gender norms helps them to assert increased authority within the household' (p. 24). She suggests that this reflects how 'Islam, even in its most restrictive interpretations, appears to be more empowering and protective of women's interests than the social norms that prevail in many culturally conservative societies' (ibid.). Thus, women from lower- and middle-income backgrounds are driven to these spaces to gain a 'better understanding of their rights and obligations within the household, since this remains their primary concern' (p. 47), while for educated women, mixing Islamic knowledge was important to learn and apply alongside the realities of their everyday lives and experience.

Bano explains how different groups of women had different motives for joining the Islamic education movement, and that improvements in women's education linked to increasing access to professional roles; changing attitudes towards marriages; increasing exposure to Western societies through media and travel; and opportunities for foreign education and overseas employment.

Yet, even though such exposure to Western society caused Muslim women to appreciate 'the civil and economic liberties achieved by Western feminism' (p. 49), it motivated their rejection of the sexual liberty Western feminism advocates for, as elite Muslim women perceive it as having negative effects on women's well-being. Islamic knowledge, in this sense, emerged as a

way of doing things otherwise: it enabled Muslim women to create a different and, from their perspective, better institution than that of Western feminism.

As a side note, the book also emphasises the importance of media for gender norm change. Bano highlights how women's increased access to media networks and the Internet, and 'the rolling out of gender-empowerment programmes supported by the state and funded by Western aid programmes' (p. 6), has correlated with more women accessing education (including at university level) and the labour market, more women occupying traditionally male professional roles (including in politics), and changing household dynamics, particularly among younger couples.

## Menstruation movements

[Roh, J. \(2019\) 'Feminist menstrual activism in South Korea \(1999–2012\)' \*Asian Journal of Women's Studies\* 25\(1\): 96–116.](#)

Women's groups in Korea raised the topic of menstruation in the late 1990s and the 2000s. This article examines three activities of the movement: the 'Menstruation Festival' (1999), the 'Pad Up-Down Campaign' (2002) and 'Bloodsisters Solidarity' (2012). Roh argues that, by raising the topic of menstruation in Korean society, women's activists contested the country's 'androcentric, gender-discriminatory culture'.

The 'Menstruation Festival' (1999–2007) brought menstruation to the public sphere for the first time. Created by a group of university students who met at the feminist café Goma, the festival was an unapologetic celebration of menstruation, with event titles such as 'Bloody Maiden', 'Excitement over the Moon', 'Unforeseen Delight', 'Girls Who Have it Hard' and 'Dreaming Menstruation'. Painted sanitary pads were used as decorations.

As Roh (2019) explains, the festival aimed to 'convey the message that women should accept menstruation positively as their own bodily experiences and overcome the inferiority complex and shame associated with menstruation that is culturally constructed by social taboos' (p. 100 citing Park, 2004). The festival therefore, aimed to disrupt the perception of menstruation as something 'to be concealed', 'embarrassing', 'annoying', 'dirty' and 'painful', and gave a cultural alternative where menstruation was something normal, natural, enjoyable and diverse. It also called out Korean culture for concealing menstruation, linking it to maternity and providing solely negative interpretations of the experience, as well as for present cultural restrictions on women's sexual self-determination. As Roh argues:

[The festival was] a delightful counter-attack against the gender-based cultural politics that had made women the inferior gender by censoring, distorting, and deprecating the menstrual experience ... [and it] deserves to be evaluated as an experimental feminist cultural movement that aimed to realize the inner strength of feminist agents, expressing and restructuring their sexual self-determination in resisting sexual violence and their rights to a menstruating body' (p. 130).

In 2002, while the festival was still ongoing, Korean WomenLink (and its Women's Environmental Centre, now the Women's Health Team) started a campaign called 'Pad Up-Down'. This campaign demanded that sanitary products be exempted from VAT, so that women could have non-conditional access to them. To back up its campaign, in 2000, Korean WomenLink carried out a survey on the use and perception of sanitary pads, creating the first database on women's experiences and practices of menstruation (besides those done by marketing companies).

Korean WomenLink was successful: in 2004 it achieved partial VAT exemption for sanitary products. However, the campaign's aims were subverted by the National Assembly, which framed menstruation as a maternity issue – instead of a women's rights issue – and also included diapers in the tax measure.

In 2003, a new organisation, called Bloodsisters Solidarity, began to discuss the environmental and health concerns of sanitary pads and products. Its proposal was a radical one: not only did it start workshops and campaigns on 'do-it-yourself' cotton pads, it also challenged environmental and health notions of purity and virginity for women, encouraged women to relate differently to their menstruation processes, encouraged women's ownership over their own bodies, and rejected the sexist ideas on which sanitary products were promoted in Korea.

As the result of the efforts of these three groups and initiatives, some of which lasted until 2012, menstruation in Korea went from being a socially prohibited topic of discussion to a human rights, health and environmental concern. By 2012, a public debate had been established about women's unequal access to sanitary pads/tampons and the health risks these posed because of the chemicals in them. As Roh writes:

'For example, in 2016, sanitary pads for the low-income groups had become a social issue amid reports of female students who could not afford sanitary pads, having to either use insoles and towels or miss school. In 2017, the disclosure of all materials included in sanitary pads had also become significant after safety concerns regarding their disposal were raised' (p. 96).

As such, Roh argues that women's menstrual advocacy shifted menstruation from a biological and hygiene concern to one of social justice and sexual and reproductive rights. In addition, the activism of women participating in the 'Menstruation Festival', Korean WomenLink and Bloodsisters Solidarity promoted women's ownership of their bodies and the revalorisation of their 'femininity', which in turn led to their rejection of patriarchy's deprecation of the female body and, therefore, of women. The women involved in organising these events and campaigns experienced a process of self-empowerment and politicisation that led them to become political actors for life.

[Rajagopal, S., and Mathur, K. \(2017\) 'Breaking the silence around menstruation': Experiences of adolescent girls in an urban setting in India' \*Gender & Development\* 25\(2\): 303–317.](#)

This paper examines the restrictions women and girls in Jaipur (India) face because of, and during, menstruation, 'analys[ing] the role and impact of government-led policy and interventions'. As the authors write:

'The continued silence around menstruation needs to be broken: not only by addressing the practical issues of menstrual management, but also by creating a supportive environment for empowering girls with information about their bodies, and destigmatising the issue of menstruation.' (p. 303)

The authors argue, therefore, that taboos around menstruation must be broken, not only for health reasons, but also to 'empower' girls about their bodies, as menstruation is an issue embedded within girls self-confidence and self-esteem.

[Azcue, L. and Patiño Araoz, L. \(2018\) 'La menstruación como política pública: Un estudio exploratorio de proyectos legislativos sobre gestión menstrual en Argentina'. Presentation at X Jornadas de Sociología de la Universidad Nacional de la Plata, 5–7 December 2018, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Ensenada.](#)

This article examines the different proposals that have emerged from feminist movements in Argentina around menstruation and period poverty. It shows how feminist movements have succeeded in framing the issue of menstruation as a public issue and the myriad of law projects that have emerged as a response.

Menstrual activism in Argentina originated on International Women's Day (8 March) in 2017. As part of the Paro Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Strike), which calls all women to stop all forms of labour for the day with the aim of rendering visible women's paid and unpaid work, the Colectivo Economía Femini(s)ta (the Feminist Economy Collective) started a campaign called '#MenstruAcción' ('#MenstruAction'). The goal of this campaign was to show how ideas about menstruation are connected to gender inequality, and to incorporate the issue of menstruation on the agenda of feminist demands aimed at the Argentinian state. The campaign asked for three things: for the elimination of tax on sanitary products, for sanitary products to be provided for free in community spaces, and for the state to produce information about the impact of women's lack of access to sanitary products. The collective's strategy relied heavily on the dissemination of statistics about the relationships between menstruation, health, education and environmental issues.

The campaign resulted, a year later, in a number of legal projects. These were of two types: (1) those that demanded the free distribution of sanitary products and (2) those that demanded tax exemption for sanitary products. One project operated at a national level, three operated in Buenos Aires, one in Rosario, one in Viedma and one in Ushuaia. Both types of projects appealed to similar arguments, including: the difficulties faced by women with a low income in

accessing sanitary pads; women's lack of means to purchase sanitary items because of their unequal salary vis-à-vis men's; discrimination towards women in public policy, evident in sanitary products not being considered 'essential' products; the stigma that women face and that prevents their access to public spaces when menstruating unless they are able to 'hide' their menstruation through the use of sanitary products; and the high cost of sanitary products.

The article discusses in detail the case of Viedma, where two women's organisations – the Consejo de Mujeres de Viedma and the Mala Junta collective – successfully proposed a project on menstruation to Viedma's municipal authorities. The project consisted of two elements: (1) the free distribution of menstrual sanitary products in schools, jails and public hospitals, and (2) an education programme on menstruation that positioned menstruation as a key health issue and promoted alternative sanitary practices (such as the use of the menstrual cup). The organisations' arguments for the incorporation of this project by Viedma's municipal authorities rested on environmental concerns about the disposal of conventional sanitary products, and on concerns about the impact of girls' lack of access to these products for their schooling.

These advocacy efforts also led to the establishment, in 2018, of May as 'Menstruation Month' – a month during which the municipality of Viedma now has the responsibility of organising cultural, social and recreational activities about menstruation in order to promote visibility, dialogue and education. The authors highlight the role played by female elected government representatives in the success these feminist organisations had in driving such policy changes. Viedma represents the first case in Argentina of a municipal authority adopting a public policy on menstruation.

The article also provides an overview of menstruation-related legal reform in the following low- and middle-income countries (as well as some high-income countries, such as the US, Canada, Spain and Australia):

- Kenya (2004): first country to exempt sanitary products of taxes.
- Russia (2017): tax-free sanitary products are achieved.
- Botswana (2018): initiative for the government to supply sanitary pads to girls as a measure to avoid school drop-out and absence).

[Crawford, M., Menger, L.M. and Kaufman, M.R. \(2014\) "This is a natural process": managing menstrual stigma in Nepal' \*Culture, Health & Sexuality\* 16\(4\), 426–439.](#)

This paper aims to understand how women in Nepal make sense of the menstrual restrictions they face and the coping mechanisms they employ. It documents and examines the existence of menstrual stigma in Nepal and how these taboos relate to religion in the region, in particular to Nepali Hinduism. As the authors write, when women are menstruating, they are considered 'untouchable' and forbidden to do certain activities, such as enter religious sites, share a bed with a husband, or touch male relatives. The authors describe how the women interviewed felt ill prepared for menstruation, which led to emotional distress, and faced stigmatisation within society.

[Gaybor, J. \(2019\) 'Empowerment, destigmatization and sustainability: the co-construction of reusable menstrual technologies in the context of menstrual activism in Argentina' \*Gender, Technology and Development\* 23\(2\): 111-129.](#)

This article examines how reusable menstrual management technologies (RMMT) – such as the menstrual cup – have become part of the everyday life of users as a result of menstrual activism in Argentina, and how this in turn shapes users' identities. It uses interviews, focus groups and (online and offline) observation to understand how 'technologies and users co-construct each other in the context of an emerging menstrual activism' (p. 111).

The article discusses the achievements of Argentinian feminist movements in sexual, reproductive and health rights (SRHR) since the 2000s. In 2003, for example, the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation was created, which demanded that public health agencies should provide all citizens with free contraceptive methods and free information related to sexually transmitted infections.

When it comes to menstruation, however, Gaybor argues that the benefits of the success of Argentinian feminist organisations in framing menstruation as an SRHR issue are contentious. She claims that SRHR agendas can depoliticise feminist issues – in this case menstruation – by framing them as hygiene-related or 'modernisation' issues. In contrast, menstrual activism is inherently political, Gaybor argues, as it brings discussions of the body, menstrual literacy and taboos around menstruation to the fore. As Gaybor writes:

'Menstrual activists focus on menstrual body care and search for ways to ensure that women experience their menstruation in a healthy way. This includes the production and dissemination of information about the female body and the menstrual cycle in collective spaces and in online platforms. ... [Menstrual activism involves] a process of questioning the stigma behind menstrual practices and narratives; knowledge production and dissemination and the creation of spaces for collective reflection of different ways to approach the experience of menstruation.' (p. 116)

Argentinian menstrual activists also demand education around menstruation and tax exemption for sanitary products.

The author argues that the adoption of the menstrual cup in Argentina is largely the result of menstrual activism, as activists advocated for changes in women's relationship with their bodies. Drawing on Felliti's (2017) research, Gaybor writes:

'The intended use of the cup is not only about managing menstrual bleeding but also about challenging society's menstrual stigma and changing the ways of understanding the relationship between women's menstrual health and femininity ... potentially play[ing a role] in transforming gender identities and in empowering women.' (p. 112)

Gaybor, in fact, finds that women who were involved in menstrual activism and who used menstrual cups saw the cup as a 'tool that enables a better understanding and observation of the body in other ways' (p. 119). She finds that the promotion and adoption of the cup and



reusable pads can disrupt stigma around periods, as it requires women to be more in touch with their own bodies and bleeding. It also requires much more visibility around the household, and her participants described having conversations with 'family and flatmates' to address their 'doubts and curiosities' (p. 120). The participants experienced these conversations as 'intimate and bonding' and as 'breaking the cycle of fear that the secret of using RMMT could be revealed', thereby 'leading to a process of destigmatization' (ibid.).

Gaybor concludes, therefore, that menstrual activism about RMMT promotes 'questioning and reflecting – individually and collectively – on historically normalized practices and narratives of menstruation as well as voicing new ones' (p. 125). In this way, RMMT can become instruments in and of themselves in breaking the silence around menstruation.

[MacLean, K., Hearle, C. and Ruwanpura, K.N. \(2020\) 'Stigma of staining? Negotiating menstrual taboos amongst young women in Kenya' \*Women's Studies International Forum\*, 78: 102290.](#)

This article examines menstrual practices and beliefs in Kenya. The authors argue that perceptions and experiences of menstruation are rooted in material and social inequalities that intersect with sociocultural geographies. They argue that 'patriarchal values' shape menstrual stigma, as these have allowed for constructions of menstrual blood as harmful and polluting.

[Arora, N. \(2017\) 'Menstruation in India: ideology, politics, and capitalism' \*Asian Journal of Women's Studies\* 23\(4\), 528–537.](#)

This article examines the persistence of taboos around menstruation in India, as well as the 'Happy to Bleed' campaign – a movement that challenges the stigmatisation of menstruation in the country. The article shows how online activism can lead to more traditional forms of activism and social movement strategies. In this case, once the online campaign of 'Happy to Bleed' had finished, female activists behind the campaign filed a lawsuit through the Supreme Court of India against the Sabarimala temple's prohibition on women. The article also comments on the backlash women activists often face online. Women coordinating the 'Happy to Bleed' campaign were met with trolls on their Facebook page and reported receiving rape and death threats and hate messages.

[Prasanna, C.K. \(2016\) 'Claiming the public sphere: menstrual taboos and the rising dissent in India' \*Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity\* 30\(3\): 91–95.](#)

This paper explores how activism around menstruation in India has led to legal changes that recognise women's bodily autonomy and condemn bodily gendered discrimination. It highlights how movements and campaigns around menstruation challenge legal norms as well as gendered discourses of purity and pollution, and how they have started a national discussion 'on the rights of women to practise religion in a public place without restrictions'.

The paper highlights the role of specific events as catalysts for political mobilisation. For example, the Sabarimala case – where a temple prohibited women's entry on the basis of menstrual 'pollution' – encouraged mobilisation against menstrual stigma in India. The Indian Young Lawyers Association, based in New Delhi, filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in 2006 to contest the refusal of women's entry to the Sabarimala temple. The decision to deny entry to women to the inner shrine at Haji Ali Dargah Temple in Mumbai and at Shani Shingnapur Temple in Maharashtra re-sparked the movement against menstrual stigma in 2016. In January that year, mass protests occurred, and the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, an organisation run by Muslim women, also filed a PIL in the Mumbai High Court and started a campaign against the temple's decision.

In April 2016, the Mumbai High Court directed the state government 'to ensure that women are not denied entry in temples in the name of their gender identity', thereby ensuring 'women's fundamental right to enter places of worship and the duty of the government to uphold and protect their rights'. Likewise, in the same year, the Supreme Court questioned the Sabarimala temple's breach of constitutional provisions and women's right to equality in forbidding a woman to enter a place because of her gender.

As a side note, the paper also comments on the 'Red Alert: You've got a Napkin' campaign, which was initiated by Indian women after a firm in Kochi strip-searched 40 of its female employees to identify who had left a used sanitary napkin in the bathroom. The campaign involved women mailing used and unused sanitary napkins to the manager of the company. The paper also comments on the backlash faced by women engaged in menstrual activism. For example, members of the Young Lawyers Association received threatening phone calls pressuring them to withdraw the PIL regarding the Sabarimala case.

## Work and labour movements

[Loose, S. and Vasquez, P. \(2017\) CARE and the Latin America domestic workers' movement. CARE International Report.](#)

This paper examines domestic workers' activism in South America over the past decade and the support CARE has provided to this movement.

The domestic workers' movement in South America emerged in 1988 with the foundation of the Confederación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar (Federation of Domestic Workers of Latin America and the Caribbean). The Federation has had a number of successes, especially since the 2000s. For example, since 2011, when the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 'national domestic worker organizations throughout Latin America made it a political priority to ensure the ratification of the Convention within their own countries' (3). At the time of this report, national movements had succeeded in having Convention 189 ratified in Bolivia (2012), Ecuador (2013) and Costa Rica (2014). While the Convention had not been ratified in Brazil at the time of the report, the national movement there has achieved paid maternity leave, 30 days of

paid holiday and a one-hour lunch break for domestic workers (the Convention was subsequently ratified in Brazil in 2018) (ILO, 2018).

The report highlights how the movement has prioritised international and national networking as an advocacy strategy. CARE, as one of the movement's international allies, has supported the domestic workers' network in a number of ways, including by:

'... providing direct financial support for operational and representation expenses (equipment, office rent, travel, stipends, etc.); finding consultants within and outside the organization to support with the creation of communications materials; providing methodological and logistical support for meetings, trainings and workshops; and technical assistance for the development of evaluation tools, grant applications and action plans.' (p. 4)

The movement has also acted as a bridge between domestic workers' organisations and government bodies. Other international linkages involve various NGOs and international NGOs, such as OXFAM, UN Women, Centro de Estudios Ecuatorianos, FOS-Socialist Solidarity and Solidaridad Internacional. These links have been established mostly through the Mesa Regional de Acompañamiento a las Organizaciones de Trabajadoras Remuneradas del Hogar (the Regional Accompaniment Group to Domestic Workers' Organisations). On a national scale, each chapter of the movement has also linked with national women's organisations. The movement also engages in public interventions, such as public awareness campaigns, at a national scale.

[Fish, J.N. \(2006\) 'Engendering democracy: domestic labour and coalition-building in South Africa, \*Journal of Southern African Studies\* 32\(1\): 107-127.](#)

This article discusses the domestic workers' movement in South Africa, arguing that 'although domestic workers comprise one of the largest sectors of working women, their location in private households poses severe obstacles to formalising this particular labour' (p. 107).

It examines the unionisation and coalition-building of domestic workers and argues that their advocacy for labour rights aims 'to restructure the apartheid legacies contained within this institution' (ibid.). In addition, it highlights how alliances with state institutions have allowed the domestic workers' movement to realise 'pivotal social security policy change through the first formal inclusion of the domestic work sector in unemployment insurance' (ibid.).

Domestic workers in South Africa have organised collectively through unionisation since 1977. However, their collective organisation has been more constant and high profile since 2000, when the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers' Union (SADSAWU) was relaunched. The union was reactivated to contest the way in which the newly recognised gender and labour rights in the country's 1994 Constitution were being rendered null in practice because of race, class and (in the case of labour rights) gender discrimination. The paper cautions that gender rights are not equally accessible to different constituencies of women. As the author writes, 'this research challenges the monolithic notion of "gender rights" in South

Africa by illustrating how access to rights is mediated by race and class status, particularly in the case of domestic labour' (p. 114).

SADSAWU has contested the lack of attention to the legal rights of black women and women of colour, who have historically accounted for most of the country's domestic workers. In addition, its demand for legal reforms that guarantee domestic workers' rights challenged the devaluation of female labour and female care work in the domestic sphere, and, more specifically, the devaluation of racialised female labour and racialised female care work in the household.

To achieve its aims, SADSAWU worked with, what Fish calls, 'South Africa's Gender Machinery': the Commission on Gender Equality, the Office on the Status of Women and the Parliamentary Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women. Additionally, Fish documents how SADSAWU framed its work around broad gender equality commitments and how this allowed it to be part of national coalitions, such as the Gender Monitoring and Advocacy Coalition for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (GMAC-UIF), as well as international ones. The relationship with GMAC-UIF was crucial. As Fish writes:

[In GMAC-UIF] domestic workers were afforded a pivotal space to network with other NGOs who were representing their cause [and] SADSAWU's presence as an equal party in the coalition, in turn, informed NGOs about the practical realities of policy decisions in ways otherwise unavailable without the representation of domestic workers' experiences present at the decision-making table.' (p. 124)

Fish notes that, within these coalitions, CEDAW was the international instrument most appealed to. SADSAWU's strategies, therefore, have been to work with state institutions, appeal to broader gender equality commitments, build coalitions with national and international actors, and appeal to international frameworks, such as CEDAW.

SADSAWU has had massive achievements. It has successfully campaigned for the domestic work sector to be included in the national unemployment insurance fund, as well as South Africa's ratification of Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. These victories have been achieved despite the barriers experienced by the movement, including: financial strains caused by the difficulty of collecting union dues where there is no central employer; limited resources, which means that running membership campaigns simultaneously as other union actions has been unfeasible; and the entrenched racial and gender power that surround domestic work, which often results in failures to enforce legislation and accountability measures, to the benefit of employers.

## Abortion movements

[Gutierrez, M.A. \(2019\) 'Feminismos en acción: el debate de la ley de interrupción voluntaria del embarazo' \*Sociales En Debate\* 14.](#)

This article briefly discusses the emergence and trajectory of Argentina's feminist campaign for abortion rights. The campaign, called the Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal Seguro y Gratuito (the National Campaign for the Right to a Legal, Safe and Free Abortion) started in Argentina in 2005. With the slogan of '*educación sexual para decidir, anticonceptivos para no abortar, aborto legal para no morir*' ('sex education to decide, contraceptives to avoid abortion, abortion to prevent death'), the campaign has called for the decriminalisation of abortion nationally and regionally. The campaign holds vigils every Tuesday when Congress meets (called 'Green Tuesdays') in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires.

The article comments on how the movement created the symbol of the green bandana, which is now regionally associated with feminist demands for abortion rights. This symbol has led to the wave of campaigns for abortion throughout South America being referred to as '*Marea Verde*' (the Green Tide).

In 2020, after seven failed attempts, abortion was finally legalised by the Argentinian National Congress. The article highlights how the Argentinian movement has framed the demand for safe abortion as part of a set of interconnected rights, with the campaign also calling for a Law of Integral Sexual Education, women's access to public health systems, and information on sexual and reproductive health. The campaign has relied on the use of both social and scientific arguments, as well as on organising and coordination at the national level.

The article also calls attention to other issues/moments that have been key for the Argentinian feminist movement, such as the '*Ni Una Menos*' ('Not one [Woman] Less') movement and the Women's National Strike. The annual protest of '*Ni Una Menos*' aims to bring attention to the violation of women's rights, especially related to gender-based violence, structural adjustment policies and abortion. Alongside highlighting the high levels of violence experienced by Argentinian women, the movement has also promoted female solidarity among Argentinian women (as evident in one of the movement's slogans '*si tocan a una nos tocan a todas*' - 'if they touch one of us, they touch all of us'). The National Women Strikes in 2017 and 2018 called women to go on strike from all forms of paid and unpaid labour to demand a redefinition and reevaluation of 'work' that recognises women's reproductive and care work.

[Spataro, C. \(2018\) "'Marea verde. Lo que el debate nos dejó" Presentación' \*Sociales en Debate\* 14.](#)

In this article, Spataro introduces the content of this special issue of *Sociales en Debate* (of which Gutierrez's article is part), which examines the feminist movement's efforts to legalise abortion in Argentina.

Content included in the issue include:

- An article by Alma, (*'Signo aborto, pronóstico lésbico'*), which examines the movement's use of green bandanas – now associated regionally with the feminist movement and its campaign for the legalisation of abortion – at the 17th Plurinational Encounter at Rosario in 2003. The article highlights how the discourse of pro-abortion feminist efforts has changed – from a focus on abortion as a response to unwanted pregnancy, to a focus on the failure of anti-contraceptive methods and women's rights, to a discourse that speaks of '*personas gestantes*' ('gestating people') – instead of 'women' – who have the right to bodily autonomy. It highlights the intense debates about abortion within the feminist movement in Argentina, and also renders visible the role of LGBTQ+ groups (especially lesbians) in the pro-abortion feminist movement.
- An article by Radi (*'El reloj político de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos'*), examining the intense divisions within feminist movements due to different stances on abortion. This article argues that the change in vocabulary from 'woman' to '*persona gestante*' has not resulted in any real change in the impact of activists' strategies.
- An article by López (*'La Educación Sexual Integral después del debate'*) examining the struggle for the Law of Integral Sexual Education and how it was supported by students themselves.
- An article by *Botta and Teppaz* (*'El 8A: un antes y un después'*) highlights how legal change does not necessarily translate to rights for women. The article uses the example of Argentina's penal code, which allows for abortion in the case of sexual abuse or danger to one's life, and how this was unknown to most medical staff and women until the 2010s.

## Mobilisation against harmful practices

[Briggs, L.A. \(1998\) 'Female circumcision in Nigeria: is it not time for government intervention?' \*Health Care Analysis\* 6\(1\): 14-23.](#)

This article discusses the role of grassroots organisations in contesting female genital cutting in Nigeria in the 1990s. It highlights the work of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (the largest of these groups), which received the 1995 United Nations Population Award in recognition of its work; Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation (the largest women's organisation in Kenya); the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, which used street theatre and other artistic performances to create public discussion around the issue; various women's and human rights organisations that were key in sustaining Egypt's ban on female circumcision in 1995; and other organisations/ groups in Mali, Tanzania, Sudan and Somalia. On legal/policy change, Briggs argues:

'Although legal decrees alone are most unlikely to abolish FGM [female genital mutilation], at least legislative change and advocacy will demonstrate critical government commitment against FGM and create an avenue for legal action.' (p. 19).

[Bootwala, Y. \(2019\) 'A review of female genital cutting \(FGC\) in the Dawoodi Bohra community: Part 2—Bohra culture, FGC practices in Dawoodi Bohras, and pertinent legal cases' \*Current Sexual Health Reports\* 11\(3\): 220–227.](#)

This article discusses the contestation of female genital cutting in the Bohra community by women in two diaspora Bohra communities in India and the United States. Bootwala highlights how these two movements have contributed to raising awareness of a topic that has been taboo in Bohra culture and to providing Bohra women with more knowledge about their bodies. Bootwala also discusses the Dawoodi Bohra Women's Association for Religious Freedom, which formed in response to these movements in support of the practice.

The Dawoodi Bohra community is located mostly in India and Pakistan, and their diasporas, and has long been practising female genital cutting as an important rite of passage for young women. In 2015, a group of Bohra women in the Indian and American diaspora started two advocacy movements against the practice of female genital cutting in the Bohra community – 'Sahiyo' based in the USA and 'We Speak Out' based in India.

Among the strategies of the Indian movement has been the publication of a study titled *The clitoral hood: a contested site* (Anantnarayan, 2018), and a PIL, filed in 2018 (not resolved at the time of this article's publication). Yet, as Bootwala argues, the movement has yet to develop strategies that contest the gendered notions of honour, family responsibility, dignity and sexual decency that are interwoven with female genital cutting.

In passing, the article highlights the important role individuals within state institutions can play in creating change. In this case, India's Supreme Court Chief Justice Dipak Misra is mentioned, who during his term decriminalised homosexuality, allowed women to enter a key temple during their menstrual cycle, decriminalised adultery, and promoted women's freedom of choice in reproduction.

[Winterbottom, A., Koomen, J. and Burford, G. \(2009\) 'Female genital cutting: cultural rights and rites of defiance in northern Tanzania' \*African Studies Review\*, 52\(1\): 47–71.](#)

This article examines campaigns against female genital cutting of Maasai women in Tanzania. It argues that campaigns against female genital cutting that use educational, health, legal and human rights-based approaches can be ineffective or even counterproductive. This is because they tend to position female genital cutting as a 'backward' and cultural practice, which can 'reify and re-inscribe the practice as central to Maasai cultural identity' (p. 47). The article suggests that, rather than understanding the practice as lacking historical context and perspective, intervention programmes need to address it as a deeply historical practice that changes throughout contexts and time. Such programmes, the authors argue, must engage seriously with local contexts in their specificity, including with 'the complex politics and history of interventions designed to eradicate [the practice]' (Ibid.)

The article notes 'a resurgence of anti-FGC [female genital cutting] campaigns since the 1990s' in Tanzania, as in other countries across the African continent (p. 49). Tanzania, however,

unlike other countries in the region, made female genital cutting an offence prosecutable under the country's criminal code in 1995. It has been prosecutable since 1998 under the Sexual Offence Special Provision Act when it involves girls under the age of 18. The Government – through the Ministry of Health and alliances with various NGOs – has also continued to run awareness and education programmes to eradicate the practice, and in the 2000s, devised a strategic plan to eliminate it by 2015.

Tanzania criminalised female genital cutting as a result of international pressure, particularly from the United States, which criminalised the practice in the same decade. However, the authors argue that criminalisation has only driven the practice underground, with girls being cut at younger ages to avoid detection, and stripping the rite of complexity. Criminalisation has also led to increased surveillance of girls' and women's bodies; girls, for example, may be checked in schools for signs of having been cut.

While the article focuses mostly on NGOs, it touches briefly upon the work of Tanzanian women's associations. For example, it highlights the work of the Tanzanian Media Women's Association, the Legal and Human Rights Centre, and the Tanzanian Women Lawyers Association. At the time of this article's publication, these organisations 'lead a coalition of NGOs working to eradicate FGC through educational and advocacy programs, media campaigns, and research projects' (p. 49). The authors note that these organisations 'often obtain funds for anti-FGC campaigns from foreign governments, foundations, and religious groups', and that they tend to be influenced by international debates on female genital cutting and their donors' position within such debates (Ibid.).

## Violence against women activism

[Herrera Gómez, C. \(2011\) \*La construcción sociocultural del amor romántico\*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos.](#)

In this book, Herrera Gómez, a Spanish activist researcher challenges 'traditional' discourses of love, as well as the gender roles and expectations that sustain these discourses. In doing so, she points out how these three factors render women vulnerable to toxic, abusive and unhealthy relationships. She encourages women to unlearn these discourses, roles and expectations as a way of contesting abusive relationships and violence against women.

[Cagna, P. and Rao, N. \(2016\) 'Feminist mobilisation for policy change on violence against women: insights from Asia' \*Gender & Development\* 24\(2\): 277-290.](#)

This paper examines how women's movements in China, India and Indonesia have influenced processes of legal reform related to violence against women and girls. Cagna and Rao examine why certain claims related to gender-based violence have succeeded while others have not. They use the approval of the Domestic Violence Law (2015) in China, the amendment of the sections on sexual assault in the Indian Criminal Law (2013) and the approval of the Law on Domestic Violence no. 23 (2004) in Indonesia as indicative case studies.



In analysing the three case studies, the paper argues that gender norms can be contested effectively through gender-based violence legislation. It argues that gender-based violence policy can: (1) question ideas about the public and the private, disrupting the ‘sovereignty’ of the private sphere, and in some cases the restriction of women’s mobility to that sphere; (2) question power relations within the private sphere; (3) question norms about the family and sexuality at the core of patriarchy and heteronormativity; and (4) foster public debates around gender norms (as in the case of Indonesia, where the demand to expand gender-based violence laws to the public sphere sparked a debate about women’s place in Indonesian society).

**Table 2: How women’s movements have influenced legal reforms on violence against women in China, India and Indonesia**

	<b>China</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>
Overview of the legal reform	The Government approved the Domestic Violence Law in 2015, after 20 years of pressure from a coalition of feminist actors, including the All China Women’s Federation (ACWF), the Anti-Domestic Violence Network (ADVN) and various international organisations. The law recognises gender-based violence as a nationwide problem instead of a local one (Hunan and other provinces had already passed laws against gender-based violence since 2000). Women’s organisations were also successful in making sure that the Domestic Violence Law includes married and unmarried couples, and unrelated cohabitants (i.e. foster families and domestic workers).	The 2013 Amendment Act to the Indian Criminal Law was the outcome of a long negotiation, dating back to the 1970s and involving various women’s organisations and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) groups. The amendment expanded the definitions of rape and gender violence to include stalking and acid attacks.	Feminist activists negotiated for almost 10 years with religious leaders, human rights organisations, pro-feminist men’s groups, members of parliament and policy-makers to pass the Domestic Violence Law no. 23/2004. The law’s definition of domestic violence included psychological, physical, sexual and economic abuse. It established measures for the protection and assistance of victims.

Alliance-building between feminist organisations	The ACWF, the ADVN and a few international organisations worked in coalition. Well-known activists played a crucial role in building these alliances.	A coalition of women's and/or feminist organisations was formed.	A coalition of feminist organisations worked together as the Advocacy Network to Eradicate Domestic Violence (JANKGA PKTP), formed in 1997. This coalition was crucial to the movement's success.
Alliances with other civil society actors	The coalition built alliances with human rights organisations and obtained financial support from international organisations.	Women's organisations built coalitions with the LGBTI and children's rights movements. They also received support from international organisations (although this was less evident than in other countries because of the long history of women's movements in India against gender-based violence).	The network built wide-ranging alliances with human rights organisations, pro-feminist men organisations and religious leaders. It also obtained financial support from international organisations.
Alliances with political state actors	Part of the coalition was affiliated to the Communist Party (ACWF, for example). This gave the network some strategic advantage in placing gender-based violence on the public agenda. The coalition also worked on cultivating personal relationships with politicians and bureaucrats.	The Indian National Commission for Women played a key role in the passing of the Amendment Act. It started negotiating the change in 2010 and submitted a draft bill to the Indian Parliament.	The network built alliances with some political parties. It also collaborated with the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women in 2002-2003 on a series of activities to gain the support of members of parliament members (such as setting up an information desk on gender-based violence in Parliament and lobbying female parliamentarians).
Alliances with lawyers and/or scholars	The coalition collaborated with scholars to produce rigorous evidence on	Lawyers were key actors in placing the issue on the public agenda. Their role dates back to 1978, when lawyers sent an	Feminist lawyers within the network played a crucial role in drafting the first version of the bill that was submitted

	the impact of domestic violence in the country.	open letter to the Indian Supreme Court protesting the release of the policemen accused of raping a young girl. The letter later became the manifesto of the nationwide movement against gender-based violence.	to the National Commission on Violence Against Women in 2002.
Use of international frameworks	The coalition pressured the state through appeals to CEDAW.	N/A	The coalition pressured the state through appeals to CEDAW.
Use of broadcast and/or social media	The coalition cooperated with the China Central Television Movie Channel to disseminate TV campaigns against gender-based violence.	N/A	N/A
Vernacularisation of demands (i.e. the adaption of demands to local contexts for compatibility)	The coalition framed gender-based violence as a threat to the family and social harmony, and, therefore, as being in the realm and interests of the Chinese state.	N/A	Muslim feminist women within the network used the Quranic principle of <i>sakinah</i> – an honest and peaceful family – to argue for the importance of a national law against gender-based violence.
Lobbying religious institutions	N/A	N/A	Some members of the network were already members of the religious organisation Fatayat-NU7, which meant they ‘were able to advocate for the urgency of a law against domestic violence, overcoming the scepticism of male religious leaders’.
Positioning key members within state institutions	N/A	N/A	The renowned activist Tumbu Saraswati was elected to Parliament. Her double role ‘enabled

			her to voice the claims of the JANKGA PKTP within the Parliament’.
Challenges	How to navigate different approaches of different members of the feminist network. For example, while the ACWF is close to the Chinese Communist Party, the ADVN is comprised of autonomous organisations that often oppose the party.	How to navigate the different ideologies of the women’s organisations within the coalition, as well as how to navigate differences of caste, class, location and religion between women. In an attempt to address the latter, in the 1970s and 1980s, the women’s movement organised national consultations to agree its demands.	How to navigate different interests of diverse constituencies of women (i.e. Indonesian women’s groups had to bargain with religious women’s organisations).
Limitations	The law did not include sexual violence or violence within same-sex couples. As Cagna and Rao argue, [t]he exclusion of these claims excuses and normalises the forms of violence that are not under the purview of the law’ (p. 282 citing Merry 2011).	The Indian Parliament rejected the most progressive recommendations for reforming the laws on sexual assault proposed by the Justice Verma Commission. The resulting law therefore neglected demands to criminalise marital rape (called for since the late 1970s) and claims to include gender-neutral language for victims and perpetrators of sexual offences.	The commission faced significant resistance from members of parliament, which influenced the adoption of a limited definition of ‘family’, thereby excluding unregistered marriages and other forms of cohabitation from the law. Resistance in Parliament also succeeded in blocking demands to create a law against sexual violence outside the private sphere, as this ‘opened up a controversial debate on women’s morality and autonomy’ (p. 281 citing Eddyono et al. 2016).

Source: Cagna and Rao (2016)

As shown in Table 2, the paper sketches the strategies that proved successful in each country. In all three countries, alliance-building among women’s organisations was key to their success. Cagna and Rao argue that this is because alliances between women’s organisations ‘strengthened the voice and the presence of the women’s movement’ in each country. In

addition, all case studies show the importance of creating wider societal support through alliance-building with different groups and organisations. How women's movements frame their demands is therefore key, as these need to be compatible with other social justice goals. In Indonesia, for example, 'Muslim feminist women used the Quranic principle of the *sakinah* family – honest and peaceful family – to convince their leaders of the need to mobilise for a national law'. In contrast, Indian women's organisations 'framed their claims against sexual assault based on women's bodily integrity and autonomy ... [which might] explain why the Indian movement was less supported by religious organisations' (p. 285 citing Menon, 2014). However, the authors caution that this 'vernacularization' of claims might constrain or limit the change brought about by women's movements.

Furthermore, the case studies show the importance of alliances with political actors, and/or the use of a country's 'gender machinery' as channels for women's claims. The inclusion of lawyers and scholars in women's movements also proved to be a successful strategy in all three cases, as these actors can use the technical language of the State. Lastly, the case studies show how receiving support from international organisations (NGOs, development agencies, private funds or international organisations) can help women's organisations 'discover new forms of organising and mobilising, ways of framing their claims, and approaches to violence against women' (p. 287). However, Cagna and Rao argue that it is vital for women's movements to be aware of the specificity of their context if they are to be successful.

The paper's discussion of the limitations of the legal changes highlights the significant role played by negotiation in determining outcomes. First, this is because women's movements are not homogeneous entities and are segmented along lines of class, sexual identity, caste, religion, ethnicity and location. As a result, women's movements and coalitions negotiate among themselves which causes to push forward at a given point in time. This internal negotiation may imply a tension between ideal and pragmatic approaches to gender norm change, as movements may be more successful in pushing forward claims that are less divisive among different women's constituencies as well as less controversial to society in general – leaving the more controversial claims 'for the next struggle'.

As the authors note, for example, law reforms that contest gender norms about the family and sexuality at the core of patriarchy and heteronormativity are likely to be controversial. In contrast, gender-based violence has proven to be a unifying cause for different constituencies of women, allowing for the emergence of strong feminist networks and/or coalitions. Second, even when women's movements are successful in achieving their demands, the end-product is most likely to be the result of negotiation with other actors.

The paper also highlights factors that may help or constrain women's ability to place their demands on the state's agenda. The existence of a democratic regime, for instance, creates a receptive context for women's claims. Cagna and Rao argue that this is particularly clear in the case of Indonesia, where women's demands rose up the public agenda following the transition to democracy in the 1990s. Male over-representation in parliamentary constituencies can certainly be a constraining factor. However, more significant are the gender norms that maintain a dichotomy between the public and private spheres, as well as discourses of honour,

shame and blame – all of which constrain the possibilities of progressive legal change. The authors argue that these norms, for example, have made it difficult to legislate against marital rape, as it asks 'the state to legislate against men's privilege within the family' (p. 283), while discourses of honour and shame entrench violence against women in the private sphere.

Lastly, the article calls attention to the importance of key events as catalysts for political action. In India, the rape cases of Mathura and Rameeza Bee (in the 1970s) and the rape of a female student on a bus in New Delhi (in 2012) triggered women's mobilisation. In Indonesia, sexual violence against women of Chinese ethnicity during the 1988 riots placed the issue of gender-based violence firmly on the public agenda, leading to the creation of the National Commission on Violence Against Women.

[Dunckel Graglia, A. \(2016\) 'Finding mobility: women negotiating fear and violence in Mexico City's public transit system' \*Gender, Place & Culture\*, 23\(5\): 624–640.](#)

This article provides an example of how gender-sensitive policies and change can be driven by actors other than social movements. Dunckel Graglia discusses the ways Mexican women 'cope with violence and harassment on public transportation' in Mexico City, noting how 'gender-based violence in Mexico City's public transportation limits women's mobility and reinforces gender inequality' (p. 624). The article highlights the impact of state interventions (in this case, the introduction of women-only transportation) and how these can spur change and political action. In Mexico City, Dunckel Graglia argues, women-only transportation has emerged as 'a place to create a rights-based movement' (ibid.).

[Htun, M, and Weldon, S.L. \(2012\) 'The civic origins of progressive policy change: combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975–2005' \*American Political Science Review\* 106\(3\): 548–569.](#)

This paper uses a unique dataset of social movements and policies that address gender-based violence in 70 countries over 40 years. It argues that the presence of a feminist movement – rather than the presence of women in government, progressive governments, national wealth or international instruments – is the key factor in explaining why policies against gender-based violence exist in some countries and not others.

In accordance with the vast literature that highlights the impact of social movements for the advancement of progressive legal change, the article points to the crucial role women's movements play in securing legal reforms and policies that advance gender equality. As Htun and Weldon argue:

'Feminist movements are the primary drivers of change because they articulate social group perspectives, disseminate new ideas and frames to the broader public, and demand institutional changes that recognize these meanings ...[They demand] the creation of new institutions to encode their ideas and to advance feminist interests.' (p. 552).

The paper also makes a solid case as to how legislation and policies on gender-based violence (mandating, for example, services for survivors, programmes for vulnerable women, gender-sensitive trained personnel and/or violence prevention programmes) challenges gender norms. As the authors write:

'The issue of [violence against women] is one that challenges, rather than reinforces or works within, established gender roles in most places... In contrast with more 'maternalist' issues such as maternity leave or childcare, for which women can advocate without deviating too far from traditional gender scripts, addressing [violence against women] requires challenging male privilege in sexual matters and social norms of male domination more generally. (p. 553 citing Gelb and Palley 1996; Htun and Weldon 2010; Weldon 2011; Brush 2003; Elman 1996; MacKinnon 1989).'

This includes challenging 'cultural norms [and individual beliefs] endorsing male dominance; female economic dependency; patterns of conflict resolution emphasizing violence, toughness, and honor; and male authority in the family' (p. 549). Violence against women policy and/or legal change can, therefore, effect change, as it transforms the particular normative and social order maintained by previous policies and legal frameworks that upheld patriarchal cultural gender norms, and that made 'women vulnerable to violence and others more likely to abuse them with the expectation of impunity' (ibid.).

In analysing the importance of feminist movements for progressive social change, the paper highlights three key factors. First, the authors call attention to the importance of international events (such as the UN World Conferences on Women in the 1970s-1990s) and international regimes (coined in documents such as CEDAW, the Inter-American Convention on Violence Against Women in 1994 and the Southern African Women's Charter) as facilitators of change. This is because both of these mechanisms 'offer normative leverage to national civil society organizations' which has enabled domestic women's movements to apply a 'boomerang tactic' – that is, to highlight the gap between the international obligations of the state and its actions at a national level. These instruments have also provided crucial resources for women's political mobilisation at a domestic level. CEDAW, for example, creates important information that women's movements can use to lobby for policies on violence against women, as it mandates governments to produce an official yearly report on gender-based violence and also asks civil society to produce a shadow report. However, the authors argue that the significance of these events and instruments is always conditional on the presence of domestic women's organisations that 'vernacularise' norms (Merry and Levitt, 2009) and monitor the enforcement of legal and/or policy changes.

Second, the authors stress the importance of autonomy if feminist movements are to produce change. They define an autonomous feminist movement as:

'... a form of women's mobilization that is devoted to promoting women's status and wellbeing independently of political parties and other associations that do not have the status of women as their main concern.' (p. 553)

Autonomy is necessary for women's movements, the authors argue, so that 'women need not struggle to get sex equality and women's empowerment recognized as priorities' (ibid.).

Third, the authors call attention to some of the most common strategies feminist movements use to produce legal and/or policy change. These include: shaping public and government agendas; protesting and/or creating public disruptions; lobbying government officials; contesting cultural beliefs of practices; filing international lawsuits; using international meetings as platforms for 'naming and shaming'; and disseminating information.

[Miguel-Lorenzo, X. \(2010\) 'CIDEM's femicide archive and the process of gendered legal change in Bolivia' \*Journal of Legal Anthropology\* 4\(1\): 23-45.](#)

This article discusses violence against women in Bolivia and examines the role of organisations such as the Centro de Información y Desarrollo de la Mujer (CIDEM) in creating change. The article argues that CIDEM has been vital in raising awareness in civil society, in influencing law reforms and in creating pressure for the prosecution of gender-based violence crimes. This is because CIDEM has been monitoring femicides, and, therefore, has a vigilant role that complements that of the state and customary institutions.

Besides offering 'integral psycho-socio-legal support services' (p. 24) to women who have experienced violence, CIDEM has also been documenting femicides and the government's response since its creation in 1983. The research and archival work it has carried out, through a project called Observatorio Manuela, has been vital in its efforts to raise social awareness, influence law reforms and campaign for crimes involving violence against women to be prosecuted. As well as producing information, the organisation was also embedded in feminist networks, which allowed the centre to work with grassroots assemblies, the Defensoria del Pueblo (a state-funded ombudsman), international cooperation agencies and other feminist organisations. CIDEM ran a national campaign (2008-2013) to criminalise femicide, which culminated in 2013 with the reform of Law 348 in the Bolivia's Penal Code and its inclusion of femicide in Articles 83 and 84. The centre also ran various campaigns, such as '*Campaña por el Derecho a la Education*' ('Campaign for the Right to Education'), '*Alianzas*' ('Alliances') and '*Campaña Bolivia ¡Ya! Libre de Violencia*' ('Bolivia Free Now of Gender-Based Violence').

As the paper highlights, the work of CIDEM emphasises the importance of having and/or producing gender-sensitive data, and particularly data on gender-based violence, if legal or policy reform is to be pursued. It also highlights the importance of monitoring law enforcement, as legal and policy reform often fails to accomplish transformative goals on its own. CIDEM's work shows that the existence of legal frameworks is not effective on its own and that organisations need to continue their monitoring work.



[Baig, R.B. \(2016\) 'The power to change: Muslim women's rights movement and the resistance towards gender-based violence' \*China Journal of Social Work\* 9\(3\), 200-217.](#)

This article examines the experiences of migrant Muslim women (mostly from Pakistan and Indonesia) in Hong Kong. It argues that women may have new opportunities when they migrate, as host countries may have different gender norms to those of their countries of origin. However, Baig identifies barriers that may prevent migrant women from using these opportunities, including a desire to keep strong ties with families back home, fears of being 'sent back' if they denounce gender-based violence, and cultural beliefs related to family honour, among others. The article argues that migrant Muslim women in Hong Kong have become more aware of their gendered experiences and have started to work with Islamic faith-based organisations to disseminate the idea of women's rights in Muslim communities.

The article provides a brief overview of Islamic feminist activism in the region. In Indonesia, for example, well-educated and prominent women who are educated in Islamic teaching have formed progressive women's rights groups in the country. These groups aim to promote gender equality through the reinterpretation of Islam and by integrating women's rights in Islam. In Malaysia, the Sisters in Islam group has been crucial. It works to ground the principle of gender equality "through its "Qur'anic roots"" as well as to motivate women to take political action.

In discussing the work of migrant Muslim women in Hong Kong, the article calls attention to several dynamics. First, it highlights the vernacularisation of feminist gender norms. In this case, Muslim women in Hong Kong have grounded their rejection of violence against women, and their claim to end it, within Islamic principles.

Second, the article highlights two prominent strategies used by Muslim women's organisations: (1) the creation of transnational networks (such as Women Living Under Muslim Laws and Musawah) as a way to strengthen the movement and enrich religious debates; and (2) the inclusion of religious leaders in gender-sensitive readings (a strategy that can be seen as sustaining patriarchal power structures).

The article also draws attention to some of the barriers that Muslim women's rights activists in Hong Kong face, including: (1) the difficulties women's rights groups have in reaching migrant communities; (2) the priorities of women's groups being more needs-based than rights-based, such as is the case with the Hong Kong Association Concerning Sexual Violence against Women and the Hong Kong Islamic Youth Association; (3) a lack of feminist Islamic groups, as reinterpreting Islam for gender equality requires deep knowledge of the text; and (4) the ethnic diversity within the constituency of Muslim women, which may atomise the efforts of migrant women.

[Moffett, H. \(2006\) "These women, they force us to rape them': rape as narrative of social control in post-apartheid South Africa' \*Journal of Southern African Studies\*, 32\(1\), 129-144.](#)

This article discusses the high rates of gender-based violence in South Africa, particularly against black women, and argues that this is a form of patriarchal racial control. As a side note, the paper also comments on the role of women's organisations during the development of South Africa's Constitution, and their importance in creating legal/policy change that can contribute to gender justice. Yet, Moffett argues, while the South African women's movement worked hard 'to position women on centre stage at the moment of transition to democracy' (p. 143), it 'arguably failed to deconstruct the multiple overlapping and entrenched forms of patriarchy that had flourished under apartheid' (ibid.).

[Britton, H. \(2006\) 'Organising against gender violence in South Africa' \*Journal of Southern African Studies\*, 32\(1\), 145-163.](#)

This article examines how women's organisations against gender-based violence in South Africa are adapting in the context of political change. As apartheid ended, the nature of the relationship between women's organisations and government institutions changed from one of opposition to one of collaboration. In this context, there has been a growing institutionalisation and also NGO-isation of the South African women's movement, as women's organisations have become the primary 'contract agents' for the government to implement its gender equality initiatives. Britton argues that these trends have created an important challenge for women's organisations on how to maintain autonomy 'rather than become "technocratic handmaidens"' (p. 145).

The government controls most of the available funds for the eradication and prevention of gender-based violence, which leaves women's organisations 'vulnerable' to state agendas. The government allocates these funds to organisations with the capacity to implement legislation and/or policy, such as legal counselling, medical services, psychological therapy, community programmes, rehabilitation services, economic empowerment programmes, one-stop crisis centres and shelters.

The funding provided by international institutions has also made this relationship of economic dependency between women's organisations and the South African state more acute. This is because international funding is often short-term and sensationalist – that is, it looks to support 'new and exciting projects rather than ongoing programmes'. As a consequence, Britton argues 'organisations constantly have to re-invent themselves in order to attract the attention of international donors' (p. 157). As one of Britton's interviewees remarks:

'International funding is drying up. . . they don't realise that without the core services, how is your organisation going to run. They are only interested in sexy projects, like the date rape one is sexy, but not a shelter [for battered women]. Without the core services, without the finances, we can't keep the sexy projects going' (ibid.)

Britton also argues that international funding processes require women's organisations to compete against each other, thereby potentially undermining the chance for a broad-based women's movement to form, and harming the potential for smaller groups to thrive.

In addition to the challenges created by international funding, Britton argues that the changing focus of the women's movement from an issue-centred one to a broad-based one puts further pressure on thin resources. This is because broad-based women's advocacy understands violence against women as intricately linked to structural issues (such as poverty, property rights, education and employment) and, therefore, expands its activism to much wider and more complex areas. She names a few examples of women's organisations working against gender-based violence that evolved from only giving legal advice to survivors to running programmes on HIV/AIDS awareness, gardening, recycling, arts and crafts, skills training, economic self-sufficiency/independence and health education.

Within this context, Britton argues, women's organisations' autonomy may become compromised. This is not only because the main funding body – i.e. the government – can shape or influence the agendas of women's organisations, but also because it puts them in a contradictory position as both allies and monitors of the State. Working with government organisations may also present further challenges. It may, for example, pull personnel away from women's groups to the government, leaving women's organisations weaker or with no leadership. It also fuels a trend of NGO-isation, in which women's groups are incentivised to become organisations or NGOs in order to become 'more attractive to funders'. In doing so, they risk 'losing the radical edge of their agendas and ... sacrificing the possibility of strong and even militant resistance' (p. 163).

Britton also calls attention to some of the characteristics of activism against gender-based violence. First, her discussion highlights how this violence is one of the issues that can act as a bridge between different feminist and/or women's groups. In the case of South Africa, 'grassroots organisations, coalitions and government-civil society initiatives have joined in the campaign to end violence against women' (p. 151).

Second, Britton highlights how legal change needs to be followed by advocacy for its implementation. She argues this shift in focus can be seen in general in the South African women's movement: 'while the focus of the women's movement from 1994 to 1999 was on getting women into office and writing progressive legislation, since 1999 the agenda has shifted to policy implementation' (ibid).

Lastly, Britton discusses the experience of women's organisations in South Africa working with (or without) men. She documents how this has become a contentious issue between feminist organisations, and how funding conditions requiring men's involvement have stretched the resources and capacities of women's organisations. This is because working with men usually requires a completely different set of training and programmes. Britton also argues that the tendency of donors to fund programmes where men are involved can re-inscribe the marginalisation of women and be a form of re-victimisation.

[Bennett, J. \(2007\) "Free Zones"—South African feminist engagement with gender-based violence in the 20 years of Agenda's life' \*Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity\* 21\(72\): 50-60.](#)

This article briefly discusses how the debate around gender-based violence has evolved in South Africa for the past 20 years. It refers to important legal changes propelled by women's rights groups in South Africa, such as the Code of Good Practice on Sexual Harassment (1997) the Domestic Violence Act (1998), the Sexual Offences Bill, as well as numerous past and present legal challenges demanding justice for women victims and survivors of gender-based violence and 'intensive scrutiny of policing and court procedures'.

The article also draws attention to barriers to gender norm change, including: (1) poverty and insecurity, which may make women feel politically powerless and, therefore, deter them from political action; and (2) the existence of customary laws that may compete or be in tension with reformed legal frameworks. Bennett argues, therefore, that changes in legal frameworks may not always impact all women.

[Britton, H. and Shook, L. \(2014\) "I need to hurt you more": Namibia's fight to end gender-based violence' \*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society\* 40\(1\): 153-175.](#)

This article examines how legislative change differed from social change in relation to gender dynamics and gender inequality in Namibia after its transition to democracy in 1990. Despite the advancement of women's equality in the public sphere and the creation of important legal frameworks that recognise and protect women's rights, the country has seen a significant increase in violence against women since 1990. In order to understand this discrepancy, Britton and Shook examine parliamentary debates around rape law. They argue:

[These debates] illuminate diverse attitudes toward gender violence which can be conceived as competing gender scripts that signify movement beyond past silences about rape while also reflecting continuities in assumptions about rape that impede contemporary struggles to end gender violence. (p. 155)

The paper examines the process through which the domestic women's movement succeeded in creating the country's rape law, formally known as Namibia's Combating Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000). In fact, Namibian women's advocacy for legal change to combat gender-based violence provides a case study of a movement that prioritised legal change as its preferred strategy. The outcome is, in Britton and Shook's words:

'... one of the world's most progressive rape laws because of its expansive definition of rape, its lack of gender-specific identifiers for victims and perpetrators, its detailed description of coercive circumstances, its limitations on the use of the survivor's sexual history in criminal trials, and its prohibition of marital rape.' (p. 154, citing Thomas, 2011).

The article highlights the importance of historical context in the case of Namibia. The early years of the 1990s, when the country transitioned to democracy, led to 'the reconstitution of civil society organizations and an expansion of international organizations' (p. 153) that created 'a moment ripe for progressive social change and legislative transformation' (ibid). The transition to democracy also meant that Namibian politicians, as others in the region, wished to demonstrate their legitimacy and approached gender legislation as an opportunity to obtain a good international reputation. The timing was also significant: Britton and Shook note that international campaigns against gender-based violence against influenced the Namibian women's movement, and that 'while working to ensure that the law was a domestic creation, legal experts drafting the Namibian legislation had the benefit of knowing which types of legislation had proven successful internationally' (p.162 citing LAC 2006).

In contrast, prior to the democratic transition, gender claims tended to be 'subordinated to the struggle for national liberation' (p. 154), with 'Namibian women ... asked to put their quest for recognition and equality second to the independence struggle' (ibid.).

Britton and Shook also comment on how conflict affects women. By entering male-dominated domains, they may be exposed to violence, and they may condone such violence as a result of existing narratives of nationalism, loyalty, the greater good and patriotism. As the authors write, women may see themselves as 'voluntarily assuming an obligation to armed struggle that supersedes everyday concerns about bodily integrity' (p. 167).

The paper also highlights how violence against women can in itself be a response to the growing influence of feminist and/or women's movements and to the increased economic and political status of women:

'Another view widely held in the country and discussed in many of the interviews in our study is that gender violence is fuelled by a backlash against women, related to the progress some women have made in elected office, the public sector, and business. Violence becomes symbolic: while not targeting any specific group of women, men who feel threatened and disenfranchised in the new dispensation are lashing out against the women in their own lives – violently putting women back in their place. (p. 154)'

The authors note, however, that increasing levels of violence against women may not only be a backlash against women's advancement, but also a response to the ways in which economic structures make it more difficult for men to fulfil their perceived gender roles and responsibilities (such as providing for their families).

The paper also comments on the barriers to changing gender norms through legal and/or policy reforms. First, it argues that the process of creating legal definitions for experiences of violence can be counterproductive. In the case of Namibia, for example, this can be seen in the use of the term 'degrees of rape', which suggests that there are some experiences that are more real and valid than others. Second, the fact that legal and/or policy instruments can be interpreted differently by various actors creates discordance in the ways in which the law is implemented. Third, it argues that 'the successful implementation of the law requires that patriarchal beliefs about sexual violence be changed' (p. 172); if these beliefs are not

challenged, 'progressive definitions in the act will not be enforced' (ibid.). For this reason, Britton and Shook argue that legal change needs to be paired with dialogue 'to dispel myths about rape and to change gender scripts that normalize gender inequalities (ibid.).

[Serafini, P. \(2020\) "A rapist in your path": transnational feminist protest and why \(and how\) performance matters' \*European Journal of Cultural Studies\* 23\(2\): 290-295.](#)

This paper examines the performance of '*Un violador en tu camino*' ('A rapist in your path'), created by Chilean feminist collective Las Tesis. A video of the performance – which entails choreographed movement and lyrics performed collectively by a group of women in a public space – went viral on social media shortly after its creation in 2019. The video has been hugely successful in raising awareness about gender-based violence, and more specifically rape. The lyrics highlights the quotidian nature of the possibility of gender-based violence experienced by most women, as well as 'the structural nature of gender violence in society more broadly' (p. 290). The article focuses on what has made the performance central to feminist protests against gender-based violence in recent years. Serafini argues that the power of the performance lies in its involvement of participants and its 'sharp denunciation of violence' (p. 294). The article also documents how the performance inspired the creation of a feminist political party in Chile, *Partido Alternativo Feminista*, which sought to participate in the country's 2020 referendum.

Serafini also discusses the increasing use of art by feminist movements as a strategy to challenge violence against women. As she argues, art can be 'a medium for social and political action and activism' (p. 293) because of its nature 'as a social creative practice' (ibid. Citing Serafini, 2008). She highlights two advantages of using art as a feminist strategy. First, it can be easily adapted to local contexts, as '*Un violador en tu camino*' has been. The performance has been adopted, for example, in France, India and Turkey, and has, therefore, been translated to various languages. In the United States, the performance has sometime included the lyrics in both English and Spanish. The lyrics have also been changed by women's movements in different countries, so that the performance reflects their particular context more accurately. Second, art can transmit complex feminist theories in a simple and accessible way. This can be seen in the case of *Las Tesis*, which builds upon Rita Segato's (2003, 2016) theory of violence.

The paper highlights, therefore, the potential of artistic activism to challenge gender norms. This is because it can 'allow participants to feel empowered as political subjects' (p. 294). It argues that '*Un Violador en tu Camino*', for example, drives change because it demarcates feminist spaces of political action in public spaces and enacts 'a series of values such as sorority and (transnational) solidarity, horizontality, [and] collectivity' (ibid.).

[Küçükalioglu, E.G. \(2018\) 'Framing gender-based violence in Turkey' \*Les Cahiers Du CEDREF\*, 22, 128-157.](#)

This paper examines gender-based violence in Turkey and how it has been contested by the feminist movement in the country. In addition, the paper also examines the politics of

successive Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments and how the party has contributed to the re-entrenchment of patriarchal values in Turkish society.

The paper highlights how feminist campaigns against gender-based violence in Turkey have sought to contest the normalisation of violence and its conception as a private matter. It traces the feminist movement in Turkey to the 1970s and 1980s, attributing the introduction of ‘violence’ into the country’s political agenda to the movement. Some of the main achievements of the movement have been the public and government recognition of gender-based violence as a problem; the opening of shelters for survivors of violence; the politicisation of gender-based violence beyond ‘wife battering’ to street harassment for example; the abolishment of article 438 of the Penal Code, which allowed for a reduced sentence for those who raped sex workers; the contestation of virginity tests; the creation of the General Directorate for the Status and Problems of Women; and the passing of the 1998 Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320. Table 3 provides more details on each of these accomplishments.

**Table 3: Milestones on gender-based violence in Turkey**

<p><b>The opening of shelters for survivors</b></p>	<p>‘In 1990, the first women’s shelter, the Purple Roof Women’s Shelter Foundation was established in Istanbul by a group of feminist women with the aim of struggling against violence in the family and supporting women subjected to violence. This was the first concrete institutional step towards fighting violence against women. It was followed by the establishment of a second organisation in 1991, the Women’s Solidarity Foundation. Several other shelters as well as women’s counsel centres were opened in different cities with the aim of protecting victims and raising awareness on gender-based violence.’</p>
<p><b>The politicisation of gender-based violence beyond wife battering</b></p>	<p>‘The “Campaign against battering” was followed by others conducted against gender-based violence. “Our Bodies are Ours, Say No to Sexual Harassment”, in November 1989 in İstanbul, for example, was organised to call attention to sexual harassment. With this campaign, women attempted to question and uncover the sexist norms and morality that prevailed in their society. It used the slogan “we demand back the streets and the nights”, indicating women’s wish to claim public spaces free of harassment. In the “Purple Needle Campaign”, another feminist activity, feminists sold needles with purple ribbons tied onto them to women on the streets, to “ward off” men who make unwelcome sexual advances.’</p>
<p><b>The abolishment of Article 438 of the Penal Code</b></p>	<p>‘For the annulment of the law, women orchestrated a number of activities in order to keep the issue in the public agenda. In 1990, in the “All Women against Article 438” campaign, the discriminatory distinction between “chaste” and “unchaste” women was protested against, spotlighted by the theme “No Rape is Justified”. The struggle to have this article revoked on the grounds that it violated the principle of equality guaranteed in the Constitution (Article 10)</p>

	succeeded and the Constitutional Court abolished Article 438 of the Turkish Penal Code in 1992.'
<b>Contesting virginity tests</b>	'Virginity tests ... came to the attention of the public in 1992 when two young women, in two different cities in Turkey, committed suicide because they were asked to undergo "virginity tests"... women's groups came together and started a campaign that they called, "No to Virginity Tests! This is my Body!":'
<b>Approval of a domestic violence law</b>	'On January 1998, as a result of women's activities against gender-based violence, the Turkish Parliament approved the first-ever law on domestic violence entitled "the Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320". This law can be considered significant because with it, what was considered a private matter until then became "public" for the first time.' Moreover, in 2005 the Parliamentary Commission on Prevention of and Measures to Combat Violence against Women and Children, and Custom and Honour Crimes was created in the Turkish Parliament in order to research gender-based violence and honour killings; in 2007 the National Action Plan for Combatting Violence Against Women 2007-2010 was created, and in 2012 a new law against gender-based violence was passed, which called for the establishment of Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres 'to act as shelters for victims, to design and implement programs on violence prevention, and to collect and analyse data on preventive cautionary imprisonment and sentences'.
<b>Signature of the Istanbul Convention</b>	Women's organisations also played a key role in the signing of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention), despite the opposition of Turkey's Minister of Education.

The paper also calls attention to other factors that have contributed to the impact women's organisations have had in contesting gender-based violence in Turkey. These include:

1. Media: 'Hürriyet, a very influential Turkish newspaper, for example, launched the campaign "No to Domestic Violence" in October 2004 in partnership with the Contemporary Education Foundation, CNN Turk and İstanbul Governorate Human Rights Department (later with the support of [the United Nations Population Fund]) with the aim of taking a public stance against domestic violence in the society and initiating social change.'
2. International treaties: 'When CEDAW was approved in 1985 by the United Nations, a signature campaign started and, the ["Women's Petition" for the implementation of CEDAW was the first mass action of the 1980s. Even though its ratification was initiated by state elites, the commitment to prepare and present periodic reports to the Committee and to establish mechanisms for the improvement of women's status in the country is owed much to women's movements' efforts in Turkey.' Küçükalioglu argues



that international treaties are not only important legal documents, but also key for norm regimes. She emphasises the importance of CEDAW for the reform of the Family Law.

3. EU accession process: The process, which sets gender equality targets, has led to important legal reforms since the 2000s – specifically in the Turkish Penal Code, Civil Code and Labour Code – that have signified a new paradigm in the conception of women as bearers of individual, sexual and bodily rights.

The article also argues, however, that the legal instruments that the women’s movement has achieved in Turkey do not necessarily signify a radical change in gender norms. This is because Turkish law has not recognised women as equals; rather, it has recognised gender-based violence as a problem that affects the well-being of a family.

For example, ‘the Law on the Protection of Family ... made spousal abuse illegal but as its name reveals, it aimed at protecting the harmony of the family... rather than women and girls who are subjected to violence’. As such, women’s well-being is promoted, but only in relation to their role within the family as mothers and wives (and, therefore, as a means to secure the well-being of the family). Küçükalioglu also argues that the protection of women remains tied to notions of purity and chastity. In addition, the impact of legal reform can be reduced by the political context. In the case of Turkey, Küçükalioglu emphasises how party politics can be barriers to gender norm change. She argues that the AKP, and more specifically the government of Erdogan, has promoted patriarchal values through a religious discourse and one that appeals to tradition.

[Anyidoho, N.A., Crawford, G. and Medie, P.A. \(2021\) ‘The role of women’s movements in the implementation of gender-based violence laws’ \*Politics & Gender\* 17\(3\): 427–453.](#)

This paper examines Ghana’s Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) to explore the challenges that movements face in the policy implementation process. It looks at the impact that the coalition’s strategies, infrastructure and framing have had on policy implementation, and at the impact of the political context and support of allies.

The DVC is a national collective of women’s rights organisations. Its role was key in the adoption of Ghana’s Domestic Violence Act in 2007 (Act 732). For its implementation, however, the Act needed a set of ancillary laws and bodies, which have been slowly developing since 2007. These additional tools and processes include: the Legislative Instrument, a National Policy and Plan of Action, the Domestic Violence Management Board, the Victims of Domestic Violence Support Fund, and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of Ghana’s Police Service.

The DVC’s origins go back to a campaign against killings of women in Accra between 1997 and 2001. Women’s groups formed a loose coalition called Sisters’ Keepers to demand change from the government. The coalition was formalised in 2003, consisting of 45 organisations, including the Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (Netright), Abantu for Development, the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (or Gender Centre), LAWA-Ghana and

Women in Law and Development in Africa. At its peak, the DVC had about 100 organisational and individual members, a steering committee and a secretariat in Accra. In order to achieve the passing of the Domestic Violence Bill, the coalition engaged in public education campaigns and trainings, media campaigns, protests and strategic parliamentary lobbying.

In examining the challenge of translating policy/legal reform into its successful implementation, the authors are careful to argue that, while implementation should be the sole responsibility of the government, social movements can play an important role. Ghana's coalition used strategies of participation, cooperation (through funding, capacity building and disseminating information) and lobbying to achieve the law's implementation. Participation involved working in coalition with the State, while cooperation and lobbying meant working to support or to confront the State.

The paper also examines why women's movements may have less impact on implementation processes than on legal/policy reform. This can be the result of fatigue; an ageing membership and lack of recruitment of younger members to the movement; difficulties in sustaining participation and momentum (including fragmentation as members return to their own activities); lack of funds (and higher costs for implementation than advocacy); difficulties in sustaining the necessary voluntary effort for long-term policy implementation; less clear framing of goals; transcendence of the initial 'raison d'être' of the coalition; and a the new mandate that lacks appeal. However, the DVC's leadership was highly aware that their struggle did not finish with the ratification of the bill and that they would need to remain active and possibly engage in different strategies. The authors endorse this view and suggest that advocacy for legal reform and advocacy for implementation are different, the former involving an 'action-reaction model' and the latter an 'access-influence influence' (p. 431).

[Walsh, S. \(2009\) 'Engendering justice: constructing institutions to address violence against women' \*Studies in Social Justice\* 2\(1\), 48-66.](#)

This article argues that 'developing countries' are more likely to create and maintain the specialised institutions needed for gender equality:

'... when domestic and international political and legal frameworks make the state more vulnerable to women's demands, and when civil society coordinates with the state and/or international organizations to take advantage of this political opportunity.'  
(p. 49)

It argues that this coordination creates pressure and brings resources that would be difficult to access otherwise. Walsh argues:

'This inter-institutional coordination is necessary [for example] for building and maintaining new state institutions and programs that help to monitor the implementation of laws, develop public policies, provide services for victims, and improve responsiveness of the justice system.'  
(p. 49)

To develop this argument, Walsh examines the creation of the National Coordinator for the Prevention of Intrafamilial Violence and Violence Against Women (CONAPREVI) in Guatemala and female police stations in Nicaragua. These cases are studied as examples of institutions or programmes initiated by the local women's movements that have later become institutionalised through international funding.

CONAPREVI, for example, was initiated by local NGOs to address violence against women and only approved as a formal office of the Guatemalan state in 2000. Moreover, Walsh argues that once such programmes or organisations have been institutionalised and acquired international linkages, they can effectively engage in leverage politics – that is, they have the 'ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence' (p. 58). For example, CONAPREVI appealed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to pressure the Guatemalan government to increase its responsiveness to gender-based violence.

As a side note, the paper also discusses the limitations and possibilities of change through legal and/or policy change. While gender-based violence is penalised in Guatemala under the 1996 Intrafamilial Violence Law, the rates of violence against women in the country have remained one of the highest in the region. Yet, Walsh argues that laws can be useful mechanisms for women's and/or feminist organisations to push change further in later stages, such as through demanding further policy and/or institutional change. The paper also emphasises the importance of legal and/or policy change driven by feminist organisations that do 'the work on the ground' and, therefore, notice women's lack of legal resources to demand justice.

[Burgess, G.L. \(2012\) 'When the personal becomes political: using legal reform to combat violence against women in Ethiopia' \*Gender, Place & Culture\* 19\(2\): 153–174.](#)

This article examines the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association's (EWLA) activism against gender-based violence. EWLA, Ethiopia's first civil society organisation, was founded in 1995 'to defend women's rights through the legal system, to raise public awareness about the plight of women, and to lobby for reforms to promote gender equality' (p. 160). More specifically, EWLA has been key in 'campaigning for legal reform to secure women's rights and address violence against women' in the country. Its work aims to address the impact poverty and gender inequalities have on people's capacities to use the formal legal system and thus their capacities to protect their own rights. As a result, 'the work of EWLA has been very important in facilitating women's access to the formal legal system and over 20,000 women a year use EWLA's legal aid service' (p. 155). Its work focuses on three main areas: research and law reform advocacy, legal aid services and public education.

Burgess finds that the work of the EWLA has been crucial to the creation of gender-based violence laws in Ethiopia. However, the association's advocacy and work has encountered significant barriers – particularly when it comes to the implementation of legal frameworks on gender-based violence. One of the most important barriers is the increasing degree of authoritarianism in Ethiopian state politics (with authoritarian governments interpreting the

women's movement as a political threat) and of the plurality of Ethiopia's legal system. The paper, therefore, highlights the limitation of a law-based strategy for gender norm change in the country. However, it also identifies international mechanisms (such as CEDAW) as crucial instruments in pushing for legal change and its implementation.

[Chiriboga Mosquera, C. \(2018\). 'La tipificación del femicidio en el Ecuador: un trabajo de los movimientos sociales de mujeres y feministas en el Ecuador'. Master's thesis, Universidad San Francisco de Quito.](#)

This thesis examines the role of women's organisations in the classification of the crime of 'femicide' in the Código Integral Penal del Ecuador (Integral Penal Code of Ecuador). It highlights the role that producing new information can play in feminist mobilisation. Following a national survey carried out by three government institutions (the Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Género, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos and the Ministerio del Interior), which indicated that one in four women in Ecuador had experienced gender-based violence, two women (Lilia Rodríguez and Susana Valarezo) started to archive news reports on femicides and conduct interviews. Their efforts were also aided by the work of the Comisión Ecuemenica de Derechos Humanos, which submitted a shadow report on gender-based violence in Ecuador to the UN. The information archived and compiled has provided a crucial basis for the feminist movement against gender-based violence in Ecuador.

The thesis also highlights the role of CEDAW as a tool for feminist movements, arguing that it was a key instrument used by the movement in Ecuador to acquire leverage against the state, as well as to demand accountability from government institutions and authorities. Chiriboga Mosquera also argues that the murders of three young women in 2012 became catalysts for the cause, as these events accelerated the discussion and gave momentum to women's advocacy against gender-based violence. As this momentum grew, the movement was also aided by a few congresswomen who championed the cause. As such, the case also calls attention to the role of women within government institutions.

As the thesis documents, the legal reform to include the crime of femicide in Ecuador's penal code has not decreased the level of violence against women in the country. It thereby provides an example of how women's organisations have to continue to protest and lobby even after achieving legal and/or policy reform – but now for its proper implementation (for example, for authorities to categorise a femicide as such). Chiriboga Mosquera argues that, in addition to driving legal change, the feminist movement has also succeeded in raising public awareness about the topic.

[Kelland, L. \(2016\) 'A call to arms: the centrality of feminist consciousness-raising speak-outs to the recovery of rape survivors' \*Hypatia\* 31\(4\): 730–745.](#)

This article examines the challenges faced by survivors of sexual violence. These include:

'... the absence of adequate language with which to understand, articulate, and explain their experiences; narrative disruptions at the personal, interpersonal, and social levels; hermeneutical injustice; and canonical narratives. (p. 730)

Kelland argues for the revival of feminist consciousness-raising speak-outs to help sexual violence survivors face these challenges. The article shows how women's movements against gender-based violence are also effecting change (in addition to legislative changes) by providing a narrative and vocabulary that makes sense of women's experience of violence. In other words, feminist movements may be promoting gender norm change by addressing the injustices women face which are otherwise obscured from social view or understanding.

[de Lange, N., Mitchell, C. and Bhana, D. \(2012\) 'Voices of women teachers about gender inequalities and gender-based violence in rural South Africa' \*Gender and Education\* 24\(5\): 499-514.](#)

This article examines the relationship between HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence in South Africa. The authors argue that gender-based violence 'is fuelling the spread of the [HIV/AIDS] epidemic', with 'girls and women who are often unable to negotiate safe sex' being particularly vulnerable. As they write:

'The face of the AIDS epidemic is a gendered one coming out of male dominance, power and gender inequalities ... [T]he "successful" performance of masculinity' depends on [men's] ability to control their female partners, and this in turn places women at risk, even when there is no violence in the relationship. Thus, there are social and cultural forces that shape men's behaviour, while women's vulnerability is exacerbated by their economic, psychological and social dependence on men. (p. 501, quoting Dunkle and Jewkes, 2007: 173).'

Therefore, as Dunkle and Jewkes argue (and as quoted in the article), tackling HIV/AIDS requires an 'active transformation of underlying gender norms that legitimate male power, male control, male violence and men's sexual risk taking' (ibid.).

[Sharma, B.R. and Gupta, M. \(2004\) 'Gender based violence in India: a never-ending phenomenon' \*Journal of International Women's Studies\* 6\(1\): 114-123.](#)

This paper discusses gender-based violence in India, and, more specifically, the factors that increase women's vulnerability to violence. As Sharma and Gupta argue:

'Religion, customs, age-old prejudices, etc. have put Indian women in a subservient and exploitable position in many domains of life. Low rates of participation in education, lack of economic independence, value biases operating against them ... have resulted in the women being dependent on men folk and other institutions of authority like the family, neighbourhood and the society.' (p. 114)

The article also highlights the insufficient but necessary character of legal/political reform for ending violence against women. As the authors write:

'Despite the enactment of laws, formulation of reformative legal processes, provision of legal aid to the needy, extensive use of the provision of Public Interest Litigation, conduct of Family Courts, Women/Family 70 counselling centers etc., women in India have a long way to go in concretizing their Constitutional Goals into reality.' (ibid.)

[Reingardiene, J. \(2003\) 'Dilemmas in private/public discourse: contexts for gender-based violence against women in Lithuania' \*Journal of Baltic Studies\* 34\(3\): 354–368.](#)

This article argues that 'public and private are ideologically determined as well as socially constructed categories reflected in the activities ascribed to women and men, images of femininity and masculinity, gender relationships and the existing normative order' (p. 354). In the case of Lithuania, the article argues, post-Soviet change also implied a shift in the meaning of private and public spaces, and, therefore, in gender roles and identities. Reingardiene writes:

'The way gender was organized under socialism figures importantly in all aspects of family interaction and organization during the last decade of democratization. The way gender equality was legislated served to reinforce the significance of gender difference even while ostensibly undermining it. The discussion of the retraditionalisation process, including gender naturalization and family 'privatization', discloses its implications for gender relations, family life, and gender-based violence within it. (p. 354)

The article provides a case study demonstrating that processes of democratisation do not lead inherently to gender equality, but can instead lead to processes of gender 'retraditionalisation'. In addition, by emphasising the close relationship between socialism and gender roles and relations, the article also highlights the important role political regimes play in shaping the possibilities of gender norm change.

[Medarić, Z. \(2011\) 'Domestic violence against women in Slovenia: a public problem?' \*Revija Za Socijalnu Politiku\* 1\(1\), 25–45.](#)

This article examines violence against women in Slovenia and the degree to which it is recognised as a public and political issue. Medarić finds that there are dual views on violence against women in the country:

'On one hand, the public in Slovenia is aware of the problem of violence against women and it recognizes, discusses and defines it as a social problem and responsibility, while on the other hand it displays a relatively high level of tolerance for certain forms of violence and the belief that domestic violence is a private matter.' (p. 25)

The article argues that ‘the public (at least in part) thus often reproduces stereotypical beliefs and myths about violence against women within the family and does not recognize it as a broader social problem’ (ibid.).

The article highlights the role of the feminist movement – which emerged in the 1980s through women’s organisations providing services for women experiencing violence – in achieving public recognition of gender-based violence in Slovenia. The women’s movement raised awareness among the public, campaigned for and participated in policy formation, and promoted preventive actions ‘exposing the gendered nature of domestic violence against women’ (p. 30).

More specifically, the article highlights the role of feminist organisations in the passing of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (which came into force in 2008) and the Resolution of the National Programme of Domestic Violence Prevention 2009–2014. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act is one of the most important achievements of the movement. Medarić describes it as having a ‘high symbolic value, as it merges previously dispersed regulations, and provides a more systemic and integrated regulation of family violence’ (p. 29). Other legal victories of the movement include the approval of restraining orders (in 1998) and the modification of the Penal Code (in 1999), which gave the court the authority to remove a perpetrator from their family residence.

[Abirafeh, L. \(2009\) ‘Activism to counter gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS: overcoming obstacles to movement building in Papua New Guinea’ \*Development\*, 52\(2\): 233–238.](#)

This article examines the experiences of the Papua New Guinean delegation at the Association for Women’s Rights in Development Forum. The delegation was made up of six women from various sectors – donor, government, civil society and community. The article discusses how progress towards gender equality has been hindered by the increased spread of HIV and AIDS in Papua New Guinea. In doing so it echoes literature on South Africa that highlights HIV/AIDS as a complicating factor in struggles against gender-based violence and, more generally, as a barrier to gender equality (de Lange et al., 2012; see entry in this section). In the case of Papua New Guinea, Abirafeh argues that gender roles:

‘... put women at great risk because of expectations of masculinity that include rituals such as “lainaps” (gang rapes), unequal power in marriage and sexual relations, and increasing female poverty. Increased poverty worsens already high rates of sexual violence, thereby increasing the spread of AIDS (p. 234).’

Abirafeh also documents the strategies used by the women’s rights movement in Papua New Guinea, which include: creating international linkages through non-governmental and/or intergovernmental platforms; creating linkages across sectors (donor, government, civil society and community); working with the government; and working with men to promote behavioural change.

The article highlights the insufficiency of legal reform: while Papua New Guinea has signed and ratified CEDAW (1991) and the Beijing Declaration (1995), rates of gender-based violence remained high at the time of the article's writing.

[Infantes Abril, N. \(2019\) "Ni Una Menos": a women's social movement contesting gender-based violence in Arequipa, Peru. Master's thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.](#)

This thesis examines the 'Ni Una Menos' movement in Arequipa, Peru. It argues that the movement practised two forms of activism: (1) a form of 'traditional' activism that focused 'on raising awareness and challenging *machista* sociocultural structures through media, public campaigns and education' (p.v), and (2) a 'quiet' or 'everyday' activism that 'focused on providing support and advocacy for victims of GBV, and a commitment to empathy, care and justice' (ibid.). In addition, it highlights the crucial role played by social media and connections to local organisations for both forms of activism.

Infantes Abril provides an overview of feminist movements in South America. She traces the movements back to the 1970s and describes them as spaces mostly for 'white middle-class women, who shared left political ideas' (p. 27). She argues that feminist movements have historically relied on regional platforms and networks (such as the Latin American and Caribbean Encounters and the Latin American and Caribbean Network Against Domestic Violence) and have historically been concerned with gender-based violence. She also highlights that, while South American feminist movements have been concerned with producing legal and/or policy change, they have also aimed to change the cultural beliefs that shape and normalise gender inequality.

The thesis documents the movement of 'Ni Una Menos' as emerging in Argentina in 2015, in response to the femicide of Chiara Perez, a 14-year-old girl. In Peru, the movement emerged only a few months later, in 2016, 'with the spontaneous organisation of the first march against [gender-based violence] on social media, spreading to different cities in Peru, including Arequipa, Cuzco, Ica, Trujillo, Puno, Tacna, and Tumbes' (p. 59). Infantes Abril argues that, as in the case of Argentina, where the newspaper *La Nación* played a crucial role, 'media coverage of high-profile cases of domestic violence involving Arlette Contreras and Lady Guillen inspired the movement and called the attention of Peruvian society' (p. 59).

The thesis discusses the formation of 'Ni Una Menos' in Arequipa in more detail, describing how the initial meeting was composed of 25 women who formed commissions and delegated tasks for the organisation of their upcoming march. Once the protest had taken place, the group decided to continue working on different campaigns. It focused on establishing links with local government and non-governmental organisations working on violence against women. As a consequence, Ni Una Menos Arequipa succeeded in being part of 'the provincial network established by national law to prevent, sanction and to eradicate violence against women in Arequipa' (p. 70). This network included 'municipalities, law enforcement, public health services, the courts, women's emergency centres, non-governmental institutions and civil



society organisations' (p. 71). Infantes Abril notes that the movement later withdrew from some of these networks, but does not elaborate on the reasons behind this decision.

Through expanding its activities, the movement's objectives became twofold: (1) 'to provide support to victims of [gender-based violence], through mechanisms generated by members of [Ni Una Menos] in association with other institutions' (p. 65), and (2) 'to raise awareness and provide information about the problems of [gender-based violence], gender inequalities and their impacts on the Peruvian society, including men' (ibid.). To meet these objectives, the movement has used a number of strategies, including marches and protests, street interventions, media presence, campaigns in educational institutions and support for victims of gender-based violence. As the thesis highlights, all but the last of these strategies are targeted towards the movement's second objective. Infantes Abril argues that these strategies have allowed the movement to self-mediate, monitor the State and connect with survivors of violence.

Membership, at the time of writing, was open to anyone except for official members of any political party. At the time of the research, all members were women, although activities sought to engage men. Over time, as documented in the thesis, the movement split into two groups, as intersectional differences between members made it difficult to agree on strategies and priorities.

Finally, the thesis discusses some supporting and limiting factors for the movement. It argues that the fact that Ni Una Menos Arequipa is a movement rather than an institution has made it more effective in pursuing justice (in comparison to NGOs), and that being part of a regional movement was helpful in recruiting members. Yet, the movement has faced significant barriers, such as a lack of funding, an inability to move beyond issues related to gender-based violence and struggles with sustainability over time.

[Martins, F. \(2020\) 'Feminist criminology and technopolitics: new frames for gender-based violence in Brazil' \*Oñati Socio-Legal Series\* 10\(1\): 10-37.](#)

This article examines feminist social media campaigns to explore the new meaning of justice promoted by feminist movements in Brazil, analysing the hashtags '#ChegaDeFiuFiu' ('#NoMoreCatcalling'), '#MeuPrimeiroAssedio' ('#MyFirstHarrassment'), '#MeuAmigoSecreto' ('#MySecretFriend') and '#EleNao' ('#NotHim'). Martins argues that hashtags have been key instruments for the criminalisation of sexual harassment, for 'the creation and promotion of tools that help women in case of violence', and for the production of 'cartographies and audiovisual resources that generated collective campaigns to confront harassment practices in public spaces, such as buses, subways and workspaces' (p. 145).

[Medie, P.A. \(2013\) 'Fighting gender-based violence: the women's movement and the enforcement of rape law in Liberia' \*African Affairs\* 112\(448\): 377-397.](#)

This article examines women's movements in post-conflict Liberia and their activism surrounding the implementation of rape legislation, drawing its findings from 150 interviews conducted between 2010 and 2011 with women's rights advocates, police officers, bureaucrats, staff of international organizations (Ios), and victims of violence in two Liberian counties. It theorises the relationship between women's activism and the enforcement of rape law by police officers, arguing that 'the range of strategies adopted by the Liberian women's movement' has 'contributed to an increased referral of rape cases to court' (p. 377). Medie argues that this impact was facilitated by a relatively open political environment and political and material support from international organisations, concluding that 'this demonstrates the capacity of civil society organizations in Africa's more open and internationally connected states to influence policy at the implementation stage' (ibid.).

The paper highlights how the passage of gender-based violence legislation does not guarantee its implementation, as is the case in many African states – and argues, therefore, that these should be seen as separate struggles. Medie suggests that lack of implementation is more acute in post-conflict states, due to a lack of organisational capacity and institutional weakness. In the case of post-war Liberia, where civil war ended in 2003, the lack of implementation is in part due to the role of police officers. As Medie writes, 'a large proportion of reported cases [of gender-based violence] never advance to the courts' because 'police officers withdraw these cases from the police station, sometimes upon the request of complainants' (p. 378).

The article argues that women's organisations in Liberia – working 'sometimes independently, but mostly in collaboration with the state and [international organisations]' (ibid.) – have focused their struggle against gender-based violence on three areas of change: legal and policy frameworks; institutional and programmatic changes; and education and awareness-raising.

In terms of laws and policies, the paper highlights how the Liberian women's movement created women's rights policy documents, including the 2006 Gender Based Violence National Action Plan, and lobbied for the amendment of the rape law in 2004. In fact, it was one of Liberia's main women organisations, the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL), which 'identified the absence of a comprehensive rape law as an impediment to providing justice to victims and to deterring the crime, and began to work with other NGOs, [international organisations], and the state towards strengthening the existing law' (p. 388). The amended rape law 'significantly enhanced the pre-existing statute on rape in the penal code, broadening the categories of acts that are included in the legal definition of rape, categorizing some forms of rapes as first-degree felonies, and mandating harsher punishment for those found guilty' (ibid.).

Medie also highlights, however, the significant barrier posed by the Liberian government's lack of institutional capacity and resources to attend to all criminal cases post-war. This led to murder and treason cases being prioritised over cases of gender-based violence.

In terms of institutional changes, the paper documents how the women's movement successfully lobbied for the creation of the National Gender Based Violence Taskforce (2006) which is now in charge of elaborating action plans and policies and evaluating current programmes. It is also in charge of Criminal Court E, which deals exclusively with cases of sexual violence, and of a Sexual and Gender Based Violence Crimes Unit (both set up in 2009). Medie argues that the creation of the Taskforce has been crucial for increasing political pressure on implementing agencies, such as the police.

In relation to education and awareness-raising, the paper mentions the 2007 Anti-Rape Campaign. Organisations also regularly organise community workshops, community theatre and radio programmes to raise awareness about gender-based violence and to educate the public about women's rights. Organisations have also trained journalists on rape reporting and police officers on how to deal with sexual assault and abuse cases.

Medie argues that action in all three spheres was crucial to the Liberian women's movement success in pushing for the implementation of the rape law. The author highlights the movement's work to establish links with state actors (convincing government officials to see policy reform as an action that would benefit them) and coalitions with international organisations (that could provide significant political and financial support) as key to its success. However, the article also notes the 'severe financial constraints' and dependency on donors that organisations face. As Medie writes:

'This has enabled donors to set the agenda of some organizations. Donors have been overwhelmingly focused on sexual violence, leading one staff of an international NGO to comment that donors' attention to sexual violence has created a situation in which women's NGOs are 'blinded' by rape and mostly ignore other prevalent forms of GBV such as domestic violence.' (p. 391)

Theoretically, the paper adds to current implementation analysis models that highlight four categories of factors that explain the decisions and behaviour of policy implementers (such as police officers): political control, organisational control, individual-level characteristics and external pressures. To these categories, Medie adds the influence of social movements, highlighting how different factors – such as a movement's organisational characteristics, the mobilisation strategies used, the policy issue area, the characteristics of implementing agencies, and the political environment – all impact on the level of influence a social movement can have on policy implementation.

[Szablewska, N. and Jurasz, O. \(2019\) 'Sexual and gender-based violence: the case for transformative justice in Cambodia' \*Global Change, Peace & Security\* 31\(3\): 263–282.](#)

This article argues for a wider notion of justice, and transitional justice, in post-conflict settings. It argues that democratisation processes need to include gender equality, and that levels of gender-based violence should, therefore, be taken as an indicator of post-conflict

justice. The paper calls for an understanding of transitional justice, as Szablewska and Jurasz write, that is:

'focused 'on transforming psychosocial, socioeconomic and political power relations in society as a means to attaining human rights for women and building a sustainable peace. Post-conflict peace-building, thus, needs to be seen as a 'change process based on relationship building', rather than simply a political or legal matter. Placing social relations at the centre of transformative justice efforts involves a more comprehensive examination of the different types of violations taking place across time: before, during and after conflict.' (p. 271)

They argue that 'transitional justice processes [can] create opportunities to revisit and address the deep-seated inequalities affecting women and men alike in a much wider context' (p. 274). Szablewska and Jurasz also stress the importance of attending to gender-based violence in post-conflict settings, as conflicts usually normalise violence – including gender-based violence.

The paper's argument for including gender in the conceptualisation of post-conflict justice is based on the knowledge that women's position tends to grow more unequal during conflict. The paper also argues that gender-based violence during conflict tends to be prosecuted only slowly and insufficiently through transitional justice processes – and is usually prosecuted only by international criminal prosecutions (for example, in the case of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court).

This lack of prosecution at the domestic level has been notable in the case of Cambodia, where the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), set up to prosecute serious crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge regime, 'has been largely influenced by the common belief that the conflict in Cambodia did not involve the commission of sexual and gender-based crimes' (p. 267) This belief has been contradicted by recent findings that document the subjection of both men and women to 'sexual assaults, forced nudity and sexual enslavement; the exchange of sex for food or medicine by starving victims; sexual violence against ethnic minorities; and sexual mutilation, gang and mass rapes, and rapes of male victims' (p. 273) as well as forced group marriages. In 2013, the CEDAW Committee documented this 'disappointing record of the ECCC in relation to the prosecution of gender-based crimes' (p. 267).

The paper argues that a number of factors contribute to the lack of domestic prosecution and accountability for gender-based violence crimes during periods of conflict, including: a 'lack of adequate fora for women's testimonies and stories to be heard and acknowledged' (p. 269); a lack of data on gender-based violence crimes, the failure of tribunals 'to produce a narrative of wartime atrocities that reflect women's experiences' (ibid.); gender stereotypes during transitional justice processes, such as beliefs in the existence of different types of violence for different categories of people; a lack of legal frameworks for gender-based violence in post-conflict settings; corruption of police forces; and existing gender norms around honour and shame that stigmatise victims/survivors. In this sense, the paper highlights the complexity of

addressing gender-based violence. As Szablewska and Jurasz point out, this requires dismantling:

'... the (traditional) concept of masculinity contributing to violence and oppression or the perceived dominance of men over women[, ] ... changing the social norms relating to the acceptability of violence and the subordination of women, including ending impunity for those who commit sexual crimes, as well as addressing underlying and consequential poverty and economic inequality. (p. 278)

They write, therefore, that 'changing constructions of femininity and masculinity, and the ascribed gender roles and consequential gender stereotyping, is not an easy task in any society, let alone one emerging from a conflict' (p. 279).

Yet, in the case of Cambodia, some factors are pushing towards increasing gender equality in processes of transitional justice. These include Cambodia's ratification of CEDAW (in 1992) and the creation of the institutions it required, such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Cambodian National Council for Women, as well as the ongoing efforts by civil society organisations that have been shifting attitudes towards sexual violence.

[Ramisetty, A. and Muriu, M. \(2013\) "When does the end begin?" Addressing gender-based violence in post-conflict societies: case studies from Zimbabwe and El Salvador' \*Gender & Development\* 21\(3\): 489-503.](#)

This article analyses gender-based violence in post-conflict periods in Zimbabwe and El Salvador and the efforts of Oxfam to ameliorate it. The authors highlight the way in which gender-based violence remains an entrenched issue in post-conflict settings, and how, despite women's participation during conflict (in Zimbabwe's case, for example), gender concerns are seen as divisive and secondary, with women excluded from later nation-building processes. As the authors explain:

'Underlying this is the strong and persistent belief that women's social roles pertain to the domestic, and not public, realm. In the post-conflict era, women who have been active in regime change in their countries are assumed to return to the home and family, to be represented at household level by husbands and male relatives, and in government by male politicians.' (p. 493)

The article also elaborates on the relationship between legal and/or policy reform and gender norm change, arguing that legal frameworks 'enact and demonstrate' the principle of gender equality. It also shows how legal and/or policy reforms may be the preferred avenue for gender norm change in post-conflict settings. In Zimbabwe, for example, the National Referendum process in 2000 gave women's organisations an opportunity to promote legal change, while in El Salvador, women's coalitions played a significant role in bringing about the Law Against Intra Family Violence and Penal Code in 2010, which is the first comprehensive law against gender-based violence in the country.

Drawing on Cockburn (2004), Ramisetty and Muriu argue that gender-based violence should be approached both during conflict and peace, and, moreover, that 'conflict' and 'peace' should not be approached as separate isolated concepts, but rather as related states linked through a 'continuum of violence'.

[Adomako Ampofo, A. \(2008\) 'Collective activism: the Domestic Violence Bill becoming law in Ghana' \*African and Asian Studies\*, 7\(4\), 395–421.](#)

This article examines the passage of legislation against domestic violence in Ghana and the role of the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation in this process. It provides a timeline from the moment when gender-based violence emerged as a political concern until legislation against it was achieved (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Milestones on gender-based violence in Ghana**

<b>1997</b>	Gender-based violence emerges as a topic on the public agenda after a nationwide study on the rates and trends of violence against women. The study was conducted by a group of NGOs, led by the Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre.
<b>1998–1999</b>	LAWA (a group of female lawyers) begins a conversation about the possibility of national legislation against violence against women. They work with the Georgetown University International Human Rights Law Clinic and present various draft proposals.
<b>1999</b>	The process is picked up by the International Federation of Women Lawyers, FIDA Ghana, and efforts are made to push a bill in Parliament.
<b>2000</b>	Sisters' Keepers emerges as a coalition of women's organisations in response to a wave of the killing of women.
<b>2002</b>	The release of a Gender Study Centre report on violence against women and research by the Law Reform Commission creates momentum for a possible bill.
<b>2003</b>	The National Domestic Violence Coalition is created. A National Strategic Planning Workshop on the Domestic Violence Bill is held. It is organised by Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment, the Gender Violence Survivors Support Network, Action Aid-Ghana and the UN Gender Systems programme for Promoting Gender Equality in Ghana. The bill is also subjected to a nationwide consultation on the grounds that its provisions have important implications for family life.
<b>2004</b>	More than 100 individuals and organisations sign up as members of the coalition. The bill also goes through a wider national consultation and a revision process.
<b>2007</b>	The Domestic Violence Act is passed in Parliament on 21 February, after more than six years of advocacy.

As Adomako Ampofo writes, the bill achieved by the coalition sought:

'... to offer a holistic and effective legal framework for addressing domestic violence in Ghana; provide broad redress for cases of domestic violence, sanctions on perpetrators and protective remedies for victims; and to improve Ghana's compliance with its legal obligations under international human rights standards. The Bill contained provisions criminalising various acts of violence – physical; sexual (within or outside of marriage) and between a wide variety of individuals in a domestic relationship including family and non-family members such as house-helpers, and people who do not physically live together; economic and psychological abuse; intimidation; and harassment. It contained unique provisions for protection orders, psychological and rehabilitative services for victims or perpetrators, and processes for alternative dispute resolution and the promotion of reconciliation.' (p. 413)

The coalition also succeeded in pushing for a provision against marital rape – an issue that proved to be 'the greatest bone of contention for the government' (ibid.) and that was omitted from previous drafts. As a result of the coalition's advocacy, the Act includes an article stating that 'the use of violence in the domestic setting is not justified on the basis of consent' (p. 416), although the law does not repeal the penal article that sanctions the use of force in marriage.

The article highlights the strategies used by the coalition to bring about legal change. These include: moving from opposition to cooperation with the state during different periods; engaging in coalition forming; meeting with parliamentarians and lobbying members of parliament; producing and disseminating knowledge (including the national consultation process); working with (international) universities; street protests; educational campaigns; and the use of broadcast media. Adomako Ampofo also mentions men's engagement in the coalition (but only in passing).

The article also draws attention to some of the barriers that the movement faced, including: difficulties in transforming attitudes about domestic violence and marital rape as a result of beliefs associated with marriage; a lack of institutional capacity; and sexist beliefs that render women's accusations vulnerable to dismissal.

[Albertyn, C. \(2003\) 'Contesting democracy: HIV/AIDS and the achievement of gender equality in South Africa' \*Feminist Studies\* 29\(3\): 595-615.](#)

This article examines gender inequality in South Africa through the lens of HIV, arguing that gender inequality has played a crucial role in the growth of the epidemic in the country. The article highlights how gender intersects with sexual, cultural and economic inequality to render different groups of women unequally vulnerable to the epidemic.

Albertyn argues that HIV/AIDS has a strong gendered impact. This is because HIV-positive women may divert resources to care for male relatives, as well as be socially chastised. Even HIV-negative women might see their resources diminish, as they may lose access to them in the case of their husband's death. The paper also argues that women may be particularly

vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of their economic dependence (which may lead some to resort to sex work), a lack of autonomy over their own bodies (which means they may have little say in sexual relations and may not be able to protect themselves), high levels of sexual violence and beliefs equating masculinity with men's sexual activity (which encourages men to have numerous sexual partners, thereby increasing the risk of contracting the disease).

The paper also shows the limits of legal reform as an avenue for gender norm change. It highlights how, despite the fact that the South African Constitution positioned gender equality as one of its central pillars, gender-based violence, poverty and HIV rates for women had all increased three years after its creation. Albertyn suggests that this was the result of a continuity of patriarchal norms and values, alongside a lack of state resources and capacity, a lack of political will, and the type of economic policy implemented. She states, therefore:

[P]olitics can no longer be located solely in a traditional understanding of the public sphere as the state, where much has been won. The social and cultural domains must be subject to political struggles so that gender equality and women's autonomy can be validated as core political and social values.' (p. 606)

As a side note, the paper also discusses the political and legal gains women made in South Africa in the 1990s. Albertyn argues that gender equality's prominence within the South African Constitution led to an increase in women's advocacy on reproductive rights, family and marriage law, customary law, violence and economic dependence, as well as policies on land, healthcare, water, housing and more. One of the changes women's activists achieved was the recognition of equality between wife and husband within customary law.

[Pis Diez, N. \(2019\) 'La marea verde/violeta, lo popular y el contexto' \*Libertas\* 19\(02\): 342-361.](#)

This paper examines the feminist movement in Argentina since the 1990s, including its expansion since 2015 with the creation of the 'Ni Una Menos' ('Not One [Woman] Less') campaign. Pis Diez traces the emergence of the 'Ni Una Menos' movement to a banner at a women's protest on 3 June 2015, held in response to the murder of Chiara Páez. The slogan soon spurred national mobilisations throughout Argentina – in more than 80 cities – and regionally, in Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, among other countries. In Argentina, 300,000 people have taken part in marches against gender-based violence under the banner of 'Ni Una Menos'. Pis Diez places the slogan of 'Ni Una Menos' on a historical continuum with that of 'Ni Una Muerta Mas' ('Not One More Dead Woman'), which originated in Mexico (in a poem by Susana Chavez, who was later herself a victim of femicide) to denounce the wave of femicides that took place in the 1990s in the northern regions of the country.

After the first march, a related document contributed to the introduction of the term of *feminicidio* (femicide) in Argentina, and demanded nine concrete actions from the Argentinian State to eradicate gender-based violence in the country. Since then, the 'Ni Una Menos' slogan has also been used in other feminist struggles. Activists in Argentina, for example, used the



slogan in 2018 to campaign for the approval of the Ley de Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo (the Law of Voluntary Pregnancy Interruption) – a law that was finally approved in 2020.

Lastly, the paper argues that the 'Ni Una Menos' movement builds on Argentina's pre-existing feminist movement. This movement can be said to have become institutionalised with the Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres (National Women's Meetings), which have occurred annually since 1985. Pis Diez also mentions other feminist campaigns that are taking place in Argentina, such as the 'Campaña por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito' (the Campaign for the Right to a Legal, Safe and Free Abortion), created in 2005, the 'Frente Nacional por la Ley de Identidad de Género' (the National Front for a Gender Identity Law), created in 2010, and the 'Paro Nacional de Mujeres' (the National Women's Strike), created in 2016.

[Sagot, M. \(2008\) 'Los límites de las reformas: violencia contra las mujeres y políticas públicas en América Latina' Revista de Ciencias Sociales 2\(120\).](#)

This article analyses the gender-based violence prevention policies adopted by South American countries in the last two decades. It analyses the influence of the feminist movement in this process and in the re-conceptualisation of violence against women. It also comments on the effectiveness of such legal measures.

Sagot situates the origins of mobilisations against gender-based violence in South America in the 1980s, when the UN World Conferences on Women and the creation of CEDAW functioned as important catalysts for political action. By 1985, various countries, including Peru and Argentina, had already created Women's Delegations to the UN, and by the 1990s, there were strong national feminist coalitions (composed of individuals, feminist organisations and NGOs) in almost all South American countries.

Among the successes Sagot attributes to the South American women's movements are: the 1988 reform of Brazil's constitution, which placed responsibility on the state to create preventive and punitive mechanisms to address gender-based violence; the 1993 declaration of the Pan American Health Organisation, which framed violence against women as a public health problem; and the 1994 approval of the Interamerican Convention for the Prevention, Sanction and Eradication of Violence Against Women (also known as the Convención de Belém do Pará) by the Organization of American States, which was later ratified by all country members (with the exception of the United States).

Sagot highlights the transformation of South America from a region where only one country had legislation against gender-based violence in the early 1980s to one where most countries had either passed new laws or reformed previous laws to address the issue by the mid-2000s. Furthermore, she points out how some countries, such as Mexico, have even included the right to a life free of violence in their constitutions, and how feminist movements have succeeded in changing the classification of sexual violence – from crimes against honour and good traditions, to crimes against integrity or sexual freedom (although some penal codes still frame sexual violence as related to women's decency, and pardon the aggressor if marriage is contracted, including those in Brazil, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay). In discussing the legal

successes of the regional feminist movement(s), the paper emphasises how legal reform strategies are based on an assumption that government policy can influence and re-shape existing power relations.

Sagot also argues that one of the most important contributions of the regional feminist movement is a gendered reading of violence against women (which sees such violence as supported by a system of male privilege and dominance, i.e. patriarchy), and a socioeconomic reading (which attributes gender-based violence to economic marginalisation). In this sense, Sagot contends that the feminist movement in South America has contributed a more thorough understanding of violence, which moves away from its narrow definition as physical harm.

Lastly, the paper comments on the barriers to gender norm change, such as the assistance-based character of state responses to gender-based violence; a lack of funding; a lack of capacity of policies and programmes to address and incorporate intersectionality into responses; and a lack of political will to enact necessary protections.

[Prieto-Carrón, M., Thompson, M. and Macdonald, M. \(2007\) 'No more killings! Women respond to femicides in Central America' \*Gender & Development\* 15\(1\): 25-40.](#)

This paper looks at violence against women in Mexico and Central America, specifically femicides. It argues that the murder of women is linked to gender discrimination, poverty and men's 'backlash' against women.

The term femicide arose out of experiences of violence against women in the North of Mexico in 1993, when the bodies of raped and murdered women who had been working in the textile industry along the Mexico/US border began to appear on waste ground outside the city of Tijuana. Activists started to use the term to call attention to the gender-based rationale for the murder of these women.

The authors argue that increased levels of gender-based violence are, in part, a form of backlash against gender equality: 'against women who are empowered, for instance by wage employment, and have moved away from traditional female roles' (p. 26). This is indicated by the fact that femicides began to occur against Mexican women who 'stepped outside the 'safe' domestic sphere to earn an independent living' through their wage employment at *maquilas*. The authors argue that femicides can, therefore, be understood as a form of violence that aims to provoke fear in women and halt their independence.

The paper also calls attention to the barriers to addressing gender-based violence in Mexico and Central America. In particular, they call attention to the biases of public institutions that 'ignore, discount, belittle, cover up, and collude with the perpetrators of femicide, creating an enabling environment for its growth' (p. 31), corruption, the lack of effective reporting mechanisms and women's fear of reporting.

Lastly, the paper highlights three strategies that have been used by women's movements in the region:

1. *Organising at a regional level:* A continent-wide campaign, coordinated by the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Network against Domestic and Sexual Violence, has been taking place since 2001. Regional forums, such as the *Red Feminista Centroamericana contra la Violencia hacia la Mujer* (the Central American Feminist Network against Violence against Women) are organised regularly to bring together domestic women's organisations.
2. *Grassroots-level organising:* Many women's organisations in the region offer support to survivors and families of victims. These services include helplines, counselling, legal counselling and psychological therapy. Some organisations also work on the prevention of gender-based violence, working with women, girls and young men.
3. *Research and advocacy:* For example, in 2005, the Red Feminista set up a research group to monitor gender-based violence rates and responses in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, to generate information that could be used to create public awareness and pressure for policy and/or legal change.

## Specific actors and contexts

### Men's participation in feminist/women's movements

[Linder, C. and Johnson, R.C. \(2015\) 'Exploring the complexities of men as allies in feminist movements' \*Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis\* 4\(1\).](#)

This article examines the experiences of eight feminist activists in the United States, exploring their perspectives on working with men.

The paper finds that there are two main modes of male engagement in feminist struggles. The first is the 'bystander model', in which feminist organisations include men as participants in their programmes. As Linder and Johnson write, 'bystander intervention programs, which emerged in the 1990s, target men as allies in addressing sexual violence'. They argue that, while these programmes can raise awareness around gender-based violence, they 'may cause additional harm in the violence prevention movement by reinforcing patriarchal and chivalrous notions of women's need for protection' (p. 2 citing Bridges, 2010; Flood, 2002; Katz, 2006). Citing Casey and Smith (2010), they also stress that men's involvement can reproduce 'uncritical praise and acceptance for men who identify themselves as feminist allies' (p. 3).

The second model is that of the 'feminist ally', in which men participate in gender awareness activities to show support. While this model emphasises cooperation and solidarity, as with the bystander model, it runs the risk of replicating sexist roles of rescuer/rescued as well as of entrenching male privilege by fostering uncritical praise for men's engagement.

Men-only spaces can be added as a third model of men's engagement in feminist struggles. This mode of engagement usually refers to men who are interested in creating:

'a space to freely process their understanding of their masculinity without burdening women with the role of helping to process the guilt and shame associated with understanding male privilege.' (p. 25)

As the paper notes, this might be a way in which men can add to feminist struggles without running the risk of co-opting feminist spaces and of creating additional labour for women. However, as the authors note, male-only spaces 'may prove problematic because there are no women-identified people in the space to provide accountability for the work' (ibid). As such, 'although this is an important and on-going process in which male allies should engage, it is not the same as violence prevention work' (ibid).

In addition to the problems of re-entrenching gender roles and male privilege, feminist activists also mentioned men's 'enlightened sexism' as a barrier to their inclusion in feminist struggles. Enlightened sexism refers to the ways in which men who have the theoretical and advocacy knowledge of feminism may co-opt the struggle, reproducing gender power relations and re-entrenching male privilege. The latter is a risk because a man's work may be more praised than that of a female activist, and he may gain social capital by virtue of his involvement even though it may entail very little effort or personal change.

The authors mention the benefits some organisations have seen in having men deliver workshops on gender-based violence and how some schools now ask explicitly for male workshop facilitators. While this may be good on one level, it is also an example of how involving men in feminist struggles may reproduce unequal gender dynamics – such as people being more receptive to learning from men, men being perceived as more authoritative, men's work being more valued than women's, and so on. Another problem mentioned by feminist activists was the difficulty of keeping feminist spaces violence-free once men are included.

As the authors note, feminist movements continue to grapple with the problem of how to involve men without falling into the norms that are being targeted for change, as well as how to ensure that spaces remain violence-free (including of micro-aggressions). The authors propose the introduction of accountability as a method of working together, which includes the following tenets for men to follow:

'1) listening to women and valuing their experiences and knowledge; 2) exploring male privilege – understand ways men gain privilege individually and structurally; 3) seeking help for the ways they previously treated women; 4) challenging other men; 5) behaving the same privately as they do publicly; 6) working to ensure cultural responsiveness in all anti-oppression work; 7) taking feminist needs to mainstream organisations; 8) tracking the number of times and length men and white people speak in mixed-gendered or racial groups 9) tracking who gets to make decisions; and 10) asking women for guidance, without putting the burden completely on women to guide their ally work.' (p. 7)

[Burrell, S.R. and Flood, M. \(2019\) 'Which feminism? Dilemmas in profeminist men's praxis to end violence against women' \*Global Social Welfare\* 6\(4\): 231-244.](#)

This paper argues that the diversity within feminist movements complicates the incorporation of men as allies, as different strands of feminism have different views on the role of men and the potential of their engagement.

As Burrell and Flood write, the 'men' being talked about in relation to feminist struggles against gender-based violence include 'male activists, men-focused organisations and other organisations which work with men as part of their violence prevention activities' (p. 232). They propose understanding the 'efforts' of male engagement on a continuum, 'from those in which men themselves are the agents of change (i.e. as activists and educators) to those in which men are the objects or targets of change (as participants in education, the audiences of lobbying efforts and so on)' (ibid.).

The paper traces the historical participation of men in struggles for gender equality, arguing that 'men-focused violence prevention efforts come in part out of a longer history of pro-feminist men's activism' dating back to the 18th and 19th century and women's struggle for the right to vote. However, these efforts can also be traced back to the 1970s, when the first 'antisexist or pro-feminist men's groups' were created in the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The international White Ribbon Campaign is an example of a current feminist-inspired men's movement against gender-based violence.

The paper examines two factors that complicate the involvement of men in feminist struggles. First, the paper highlights the tensions that surround the possibility of men claiming to be 'feminists'. While some feminist movements maintain that this is possible, others argue that feminism aims to liberate women from patriarchal oppression and that while men can support the cause, they cannot themselves be feminists. As alternatives to overcome this issue, some male activists/supporters refer to themselves as feminist allies or as pro-feminists. Second, the paper argues that the separation between feminist studies and studies on masculinity has also had unproductive consequences on political action.

In light of these complexities, the paper advocates for a form of male involvement in which listening to women is fundamental (giving them an epistemic privilege) and in which men act as 'autonomous moral agents, taking the onus for their own personal and social politics, rather than turning all such responsibility over to women' (p. 238, citing Brod 1998).

[Saavedra, P. \(2020\) 'Masculinidades, acción colectiva y feminismo: varones jóvenes de Lima y Santiago frente a las movilizaciones feministas'. Master's thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.](#)

This thesis explores the participation of men in feminist movements in Peru (Lima) and Chile (Santiago). The analysis is based on fieldwork in 2019, exploring the life histories of eight men between the ages of 20 and 45. Their activism was based on participation in men-only spaces – self-convened anti-patriarchal groups, such as Varones Antipatriarcales de Lima (Peru), la

Asamblea Antipatriarcal de Varones de Santiago (Chile) and a group based at the Facultad de Ingeniería de la Universidad de Chile. Through participating in such spaces, men seek to deactivate 'violence from within', be in constant reflection about the ways in which they reproduce violence and find a group with which these reflections can be shared.

Saavedra argues that it is crucial for men to participate in feminist struggles against gender-based violence in this way, as reflecting on and sharing experiences of gender-based violence can dismantle its normalisation and men's complicity. She also emphasises that these groups of men have built an approach based on affection, which allows them to do the necessary emotional work with themselves and other men. This allows them to break the barriers, taboos and traumas imposed by masculinity, as they learn how to be vulnerable, transcend competition and build alternative forms of masculinity.

Saavedra also finds that the family is an important social area that becomes involved in men's efforts – with the father usually the most challenging member to address. This is because they take back some of these conversations to their families and start to challenge micro-aggressions or more overt forms of violence within their families, as well as promote constant processes of reflection.

The thesis finds that these men's groups do not necessarily collaborate or coordinate openly with the feminist movement or feminist organisations in their country. It argues that this is the result of a deep mistrust of men's involvement on the part of feminist organisations. Feminist organisations tend to be wary that men will reproduce violence in feminist spaces, co-opt the struggle and pass on the responsibility of 'educating' them to women. For example, men's involvement in feminist spaces often creates tensions because they are then perceived as 'good guys', which can lead them to easily co-opt praise. Indeed, Saavedra finds that men involved in these groups benefit from a privileged social standing as a result of their involvement in masculinity circles. As a result, their contributions and work tend to be magnified, and they gain increased social capital while women who participate in feminist struggles do not. Saavedra emphasises that this effect is not necessarily men's fault, but rather the response of patriarchy, which finds way to subvert changes in order to keep power relations intact. Because of this, Saavedra argues, it is important to discuss these consequences openly.

In response to these concerns, one of the examined groups had attempted to mirror the work of feminist groups from afar, in order to support their efforts without being in the same spaces and to own their learning processes. The other two groups had found it challenging to work with feminist groups, as they were expected to join, not from a critical position, but rather from one of being unconditional allies. They found the boundary of what was possible in terms of their participation and what was considered to be overstepping to be unclear (the participants here seemed to be afraid of being labelled sexist or patriarchal).

Saavedra also finds that most of these men are unsure about how to carry this activism beyond their 'private lives'. One of the groups had resorted to promoting their work and had made efforts to expand the group. Members of another group were promoting a concept of

‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability’ (*hacerse cargo* in Spanish) and the adoption of mechanisms of (self) vigilance to effect change in themselves.

The thesis concludes that men’s work is crucial for undoing the male complicity that sits at the core of gender-based violence, and one could argue that the way in which these groups already work has begun to create change, as they do not work from a place of conflict or violence but from one of affection.

[Morrell, R. \(2002\) ‘Men, movements, and gender transformation in South Africa’ \*The Journal of Men’s Studies\* 10\(3\): 309–327.](#)

This paper examines how men have responded to changes in gender norms in South Africa. It maps the presence of various men’s movements and categorises them on the basis of how they relate to gender equity. The paper also emphasises the importance of using an intersectional approach, arguing that men’s movements also need to be understood from a racial perspective.

Before mapping the men’s movements in South Africa, the paper offers some definitions for categorisation. First, it defines the ‘men’s movement’ and the ‘new men’s movement’. The men’s movement ‘refers to an organisation or grouping (formal and informal) consciously constituted to appeal to men as gendered subjects’, which is usually ‘reactive, antifeminist, and committed to the restoration of male power’ (p. 314). On the other hand, while the new men’s movement also appeals to men as gendered subjects, it is ‘held to be profeminist and committed to gender justice’ and ‘directed toward developing new male role models that differ sharply from orthodox patriarchal models of men in charge’ (p. 315). Second, the paper presents Messner’s typology of the ‘three “terrains” that can conceptually be used to categorize men’s movements’: anti-feminist backlash, anti-patriarchal politics and racial/sexual identity politics (p. 315).

In mapping the scant movements of men in South Africa, Morrell uses three categories: (1) defending male privilege, (2) striving for gender justice, and (3) responding to a crisis of masculinity (see Messner, M. (1997) *Politics of masculinities: Men in movements*. Thousand Oaks: Sage).

**Table 5: Examples of the three categories of male movements in South Africa**

<b>Defending male privilege</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The South African Association of Men (SAAM), established in 1994, aimed ‘to fight discrimination against men’ and to fight feminism.</li> <li>• The Unmarried Fathers’ Fight (TUFF) worked against ‘unfair’ laws that deny fathers custody of or access to their children.</li> </ul>
<b>Striving for gender justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) reoriented its activities towards men in 1997. It recruited mainly young black working-class men who had themselves been in violent relationships and trained them as counsellors.</li> <li>• The 5 in 6 project began operating in Cape Town in 1993. It offered workshops to men on gender-based violence and skilled personnel to help men talk about gender-based violence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) ran workshops around the country, working with trade unions and voluntary groups of men to promote self-reflection in men. (Most groups in this category work against gender-based violence.)</li> </ul>
<b>Responding to a crisis of masculinity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promise Keepers South Africa, created in 1998, was based on strict Christian principles, arguing for men to 'do their job'.</li> </ul>

Table 5 lists the organisations that Morrell highlights as belonging to each category. It should be noted that while the first and third categories include movements created and run by men with a gendered purpose, some of the examples included in the second category are women's organisations that re-focused their work towards men and in which men were involved only as participants and not as organisers. Morrell also argues that there is little support for men's organisations that strive for gender equality. To illustrate, he highlights two men's marches held against high rape rates, in Pretoria (in 1997) and Durban (1999), noting that while 'thousands were expected ... only a few hundred participated'.

Morrell shows how some men's movements and organisations resist this classification. One example is the South African Men's Forum, which is a male-centred and male-driven initiative to 'restore the soul of the nation' and to address gender-based violence. As Morrell writes:

[While it] shares with the gender justice organisations, a commitment to peace and non-violence ... its all-male character and the patriarchal implications of its programme, on the other hand, give it something in common with organisations protecting male privilege – restoring male authority – and those (like the Promise Keepers) who focus on men and their gender wounds but fail to challenge the distribution of gender power.' (p. 321)

The paper explains the movements in the first and third categories as men's backlash to feminist gender norm change, arguing that 'affirmative action policies, which are slowly giving women greater power, have caused some men to feel threatened' (p. 312). This feeling of threat can then be expressed in two forms of backlash: 'one attempts to limit the gains of women, another produces a counter-argument that boys/men are disadvantaged' (p. 316, citing Lingard B. and Douglas, P. (1999) *Men engaging feminisms: Pro-feminism, backlashes and schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press).

The paper concludes by emphasising the potential of men's movements for feminist gender norm change. It argues that they can create institutions that require men to listen to women, create dialogue and promote 'the breakdown of the solidarity among men which exists across age, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality' that sustains male privilege (p. 323).



## The role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

[Hartmann, L. \(2019\) 'Los my poes af' – the fine line between being radical enough and being too radical' \*Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity\* 33\(2\): 74–83.](#)

In this article, Hartmann explores the fine line women's organisations have to tread between being co-opted when receiving funding from the State versus barely surviving when they are in abeyance of the State. When in abeyance, women's organisations do not engage with the State, because it is viewed as a hostile actor. When women's groups become NGOs (a phenomenon called 'NGO-isation'), they face similar problems, as funders (usually from the Global North) impose conditions on them.

[Ibrahim, Z. and Kuru-Utumpala, J. \(2020\) \*Are VSLA feminist platforms for gender transformation?\* CARE International Report.](#)

This report documents an NGO's intervention to foster village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). It notes some positive impacts experienced by women when participating in social movements. The report highlights how women participating in these groups experienced an increase in their self-esteem, ability to speak up, self-confidence and social recognition. Their participation also led to increased solidarity between women – and, therefore, their ability to contest practices they do not agree with. The report cautions, however, that VLSAs can also be triggers of gender-based violence.

## Fragile and conflict-affected settings

[Di Marco, G. \(2003\) \*Movimientos sociales en la Argentina: asambleas: la Politizacion de la sociedad civil\*. Buenos Aires: Jorge Baudino Ediciones.](#)

This book examines the social movements that originated in Argentina after the 2001 crisis, known as *asambleas barriales* (neighbourhood associations). Di Marco describes how women's participation in these associations gave them voice and decision-making power, and how these spaces enabled them to raise and contest gender issues, such as gender-based violence and abortion rights. In this sense, the authors argue, it was possible for *asambleas barriales* to function as spaces of feminist consciousness raising. However, the discussion also shows that when gender is not addressed explicitly in social movements, gender relations may go unchallenged by some members and can be perceived as of secondary importance. In addition, the participation of women in *asambleas barriales* is an example of women's politicisation that is not based on narratives of motherhood and care, but on social justice ideals.

[Gbowee, L. \(2009\) 'Effecting change through women's activism in Liberia' \*IDS Bulletin\* 40\(2\): 50–53.](#)

This paper provides an example of women's participation in peace movements, focusing on the role of women in 'catalysing and supporting the recent peace process in Liberia and Sierra

Leone' (p. 53). It highlights how women played a key role in the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign and the Accra Peace Talks in 2003, in which seven women's organisations participated, under the name of the Women in Peacebuilding Network.

Gbowee identifies how conflict can motivate women's participation within movements, and how it can also motivate support for wider gender issues. She documents how women's mobilisation for peace encouraged their subsequent mobilisation for women's rights. As she writes, 'over the last few years, women's role in peace and security processes, specifically in Liberia and Sierra Leone, have led to important changes in national laws and policies' (p. 52). This includes, for instance, a successful campaign for a new rape law in Liberia in 2006.

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ALIGN is a digital platform and programme of work that is creating a global community of researchers and thought leaders, all committed to gender justice and equality. It provides new research, insights from practice, and grants for initiatives that increase our understanding of – and work to change – discriminatory gender norms.

Through its vibrant and growing digital platform, and its events and activities, ALIGN aims to ensure that the best of available knowledge and resources have a growing impact on harmful gender norms.

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**ALIGN Programme Office**

ODI  
203 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ  
United Kingdom  
Email: [align@odi.org.uk](mailto:align@odi.org.uk)  
Web: [www.alignplatform.org](http://www.alignplatform.org)

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