

**Globalities, Genders and Sexualities:
Genealogies and Contemporary Intersections**

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Sonia Corrêa and Richard Parker¹

This chapter aims to chart the intersections between gender, sexualities and globalization. Through a brief genealogical exercise, it explores the crossroads of shifting inequalities, identities, and the novel geopolitics of gender and sexualities. As noted by Boelstorff, (2012) combining the words “gender” and “sexuality” results in a daunting exercise of articulating two enormous concept metaphors that have been and continue to be subject to multiple and divergent lines of theorizing and interpretation. Locating these two constructs in historical and contemporary debates on globalization makes the analysis an even more complex task. Given the impossibility of covering these vast universes consistently in only a few pages, the reflections that follow are limited and modest in light of the massive amount of literature available on each of these domains. The narratives that follow should thus be read as fragmentary notes aimed at illustrating much wider and vast trajectories. They are not to be read as teleological accounts.

Globalization, sexuality and gender are fields in which questions of terminology are not exactly trivial. The use of the term “globalization” has been subject to critiques since its use exploded in the 1990s. Yet it is also not the only concept used to address the increasing interconnectedness and shifts across the world system. The French word *mondialization*, in addition to transnationalization, globalism and globality are all used as alternatives by those who

¹ Laura Rebecca Murray revised this chapter to improve the English of a non-native speaker and in doing this task has made insightful suggestions to improve the flow and content of the text. Magaly Pazello processed the vast and highly heterogeneous bibliographic references with her usual competence and patience. This chapter would not be completed without their generous support.

wish to distance themselves from the overwhelming use of globalization as a cliché aimed at explaining all without meaning much (see Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999). These terms also distinguish present transnational planetary flows and interconnectivity from the phenomena described in the past under the classical term “internationalization.”

All these various English terms will be used in the text. Globalization will be applied primarily as a reference to the dominant debates, transnationalization to denote long term and current exchange flows and processes, and globalism or globality, to portray the landscape as a whole. The plural forms, globalisms and globalities, will be used when appropriate as a reminder that that descriptions and interpretations of past and present transnational flows are always tied to the locations, histories, races, ethnicities, class, bodies, genders and sexualities and religiosities of those who speak.

Gender and sexuality, as used in the chapter, denote both inscriptions in bodies, subjectivity, desires and the effects or products of discourses, norms and practices that operate in the sites where bodies, subjectivities, and desires meet economics, religion, politics and other forms of social relationality. “Sex” is sometimes used to distinguish the biological dimension of sexualities from sexualities as cultural constructs. Theorists and researchers in the fields of gender and sexuality have, since the 1970s, been zigzagging between a view that uncritically collapses gender and sexuality – as in the mainstream gender and development analyses (see page 26)--, one that conceptualizes sexuality as a separate domain (Sedgwick, 1990; Rubin, 1984; Foucault, 1978), and a more synthetic understanding of sexuality and gender as both distinct and complexly interrelated (Corrêa, Parker and Petchesky, 2008; Jackson, 2007).

In the chapter, both terms are used and, whenever appropriate, they are also pluralized – genders and sexualities – to signify instability and variability. The two words are kept separate

not because these realms are to be sharply distinguished, but because they remain isolated in dominant discourses and careful or momentary distinctions are still needed to explore hierarchies, such as the persistent supremacy of reproductive heterosexual sex over other expressions of sexuality. Judith Butler's (2004) observation, later also shared by Peter Jackson (2007), "that sexual and gender relations, although in no sense causally linked, are structurally linked in important ways" (Butler, 2004, p. 259) is also to be kept in mind in our use of gender/s and sexuality/ies.

Another observation concerns the collapsing of sexual and gender identity categories into one alphabet soup: LGBT, LGBTI, or LGBTQ. The use of this acronym, while often inevitable, is also unsatisfactory, because we live in times when political agendas of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and gender/queer groups are not so easily unified in any practical or ideological sense (Corrêa, Petchesky and Parker, 2008). Moreover, the acronym tends to obscure the exuberant explosion of identities and expressions that today challenge the classical boundaries of "gender" and "sex" and do not coincide with "gay," "lesbian" and "heterosexual" exclusively defined in terms of sexual object of choice (Currah, Juang, and Minter, 2006). Lastly, intersections with race, class and ethnicity are also to be born in mind as they are inescapably imbricated in the constitution of the Eurocentric world system, currently portrayed as the "global space."

"Globalization": searching for the long cycles

In 1962, Marshal McLuhan, the Canadian specialist in communications, coined the image of the global village that projected the image of an intensely interconnected world and, in many ways,

anticipated the effects of the Internet.² Concomitantly, academic investigations on world systems began and the term *mondialisation* began circulating in French academic circles (Held et al., 1999). During the Cold War period (1945-1991) various forms of transnational interconnectedness existed in both the capitalist and the socialist worlds.³ Yet the fall of the Berlin wall (1989) and the demise of Soviet Union (1991) provoked hurried affirmations about unprecedented global exchanges and connectivity, the superiority of Western models and, in the process, managed to erase a sense of history (Friedman, 1999; Huntington, 1996; Fukuyama, 1992).⁴

Critical analyses of global transformations contest these simplified narratives and invest in re-capturing longer cycles of economic and cultural processes of transnationalization (Wallerstein, 1999; Arrighi, Ahmad, and Shih, 1997; Derrida, 1994; Said, 1993).⁵ Economic historians constantly note early examples of these processes occurring at the time when the Iberian caravels started sailing the Atlantic. For example, the extensive area that the Europeans named “Orient,” was actually composed by various large economically integrated areas or

² Le Monde Diplomatique used the word *mondialisation* in the early 1960s. McLuhan’s landmark book of 1962 was, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The making the typographic man* (University of Toronto Press), but he further explored the idea of “global village” in *The Medium is the Message*, published in 1968.

³ Harrod (1969) studies showed how Eurodollar economic transactions circulating across boundaries in the Western world were already quite intense and based on a loose platform of telephones and telex machines placed in a number of key financial centers. Wallerstein (1999) underlines that the socialist world was also internally connected through economic and information exchanges.

⁴ Thomas Friedman (1999) defined globalization as the international system that replaced the Cold War, a rather tautological definition in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 1999, pages 7-8.

⁵ One inspiring example is Jacques Derrida’s book, *Specters of Marx* published in 1993. Firstly because it glaringly names Marx in its title, in a moment when Marxism was deemed dead, but also because the sober meditation it develops recaptures specters or traces of past political and economic struggles for justice that would inevitably keep haunting the transition underway. Another important reference is Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), published the same year that explores other angles of the post-colonial condition crafted by the author in his earlier book *Orientalism* (1978). The research and analyses on world systems and its long cycles performed and disseminated by the Fernand Braudel Center of the Binghamton University, in particular Immanuel Wallerstein, are also of note (Wallerstein 1999). These various authors have been a vital source of inspiration for this chapter.

ecumenes.⁶ In Africa, a number of kingdoms were spread across the continent's West coast and in the Americas, the Aztec and Inca empires had also extended their influences over large areas.

The colonial enterprise implied control over the economic networks established by these ecumenes, extensive exploitation of raw materials and trade in human beings and that allowed for rapid capital accumulation in Europe (Guimarães, 2000; Wallerstein, 1999; Arrighi et al., 1997). As capitalism consolidated and the colonial enterprise expanded, Europe itself went through deep political shifts, culminating in the 17th and 18th century revolutions that reflected the expanding political hegemony of the capitalist bourgeoisie over the old established dominant classes and the Catholic Church. The modern nation state was born, and structured as a social contract between (supposed) equals who, in the processes of becoming citizens, abdicated their liberty (sovereignty) in exchange of internal peace protection. Its juridical architecture was based on the secular principle that all persons are equally able to reason and therefore entitled to rights (Schama, 2004; Cox, 1959).

The contradictions were glaring. The promise of equality was incongruent with slavery and with the perennial capitalist recreation of economic inequalities and the colonial asymmetry between cultures and human beings (Hobsbawn, 1996). The social contract was patriarchal and androcentric, sharply restricting women's access to citizenship (Pateman, 1988). The so-called "modern transition" also implied the establishment of a totally new apparatus of administration informed by new scientific disciplines, such as demography, biomedicine, criminology and economics. This machinery was concerned with large-scale problems, such as size, racial differentiation, and the quality of populations – as exemplified by Malthus' concerns with high

⁶ In words of the historian Fernand Braudel: "Islam, overlooking the Indian Ocean from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and controlling the endless chain of trade routes stretching across from Asia to Africa; the state formations of the Indian sub-continent, whose influence extended throughout the Indian Ocean, and China, a great territorial power and also a powerful maritime force" (Braudel, 1984, p. 484, quoted by Arrighi et al., 1997).

fertility among the poor and the “scientific” concept of race. It deployed new forms of disciplining in the realms of crime and punishment, mental dysfunctions, household and personal hygiene, gender and reproduction, and sexual conduct. These apparatuses were both informed by and projected a biological vision of human beings, configuring what Foucault termed as biopower and biopolitics (Rose, 2007; Foucault, 1978; Weeks, 1985).

By the late 19th century, biopolitics and biopower were at the center of the world system, independent nation-states were established across the American continent and the colonial enterprise continued in other territories, gaining strength as a full-blown imperialist endeavor to feed the voracity of industrial European capitalism. By the early 20th century, the colonial metropolis controlled 80 percent of world territories (Said, 1993) and the US, which 120 years earlier was a colony, was itself engaged in territorial expansionism.⁷

Colonization, genders and sexuality: haunting genealogies

Race, gender and sexuality were, since the early days of the Eurocentric expansion, intensively described and discussed in colonial records (Vainfas, 2010; Parker, 2009; Najmabadi, 2005; Stoler, 1997).⁸ Colonization was a predominantly male endeavor and European colonizers, as other conquerors in other moments of history, resorted to sexual violence as a means and symbol

⁷ In 1884, when practically all of continental America was independent, European powers sat in Berlin to divide amongst themselves the African continent. By 1900, the United States had occupied part of Mexico, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, these later invasions occurring in the context of a brief war with Spain that also derived into a more tights a direct influence of the US on Cuban affairs.

⁸ Parker (2009) retraces how the description of the first Portuguese record of Brazilian people by Pero Vaz Caminha, emphasizing the beauty and nudity of women, was systematically repeated by other commentators and Brazilian intellectuals until the 20th century. Najmabadi (2005) cites the comments of British traveller Thomas Herbert, who visited Iran in the early 17th century and wrote diatribes against *Paederasts*. As for the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions, sexual deviance and Judaism was their main target in the colonies. In the first Inquisitorial visit to Brazil in 1591, a Portuguese woman named Felipa de Souza was accused of *sodomia feminarum*, judged and condemned to asylum in Angola (Vainfas, 2010).

of supremacy. Sexual power was and remains a loaded metaphor of the imperial domination: the penetration, silencing a possession of the Other (Said, 1978). Post 17th century reconfigurations altered and strengthened the links between gender, sexual and race taxonomies and the macro logics of economic and social regulation, both in Europe and the colonies.

In metropolitan societies it meant homogenizing national identities and the stabilization of social asymmetries generated by capitalism: educational rules, urban cleansing and early forms of labor discipline and parameters measure social normalcy (Menand, 2001).⁹ The scientific notion of race then crafted modernized ancient anti-Semitic ideologies and contributed to the artificial collapsing of race and national identity. The scientific discourse on female biological difference bound women to motherhood, private life and justified their exclusion from public affairs. Juridical and medical categories pathologized the figure of the “inverted” male (the homosexual), which was placed in opposition to the virile and disciplined manhood of the bourgeois and the colonizer (Laqueur, 1990).

The colonial implications of these re-configurations can be illustrated by the tragic story of Sartjie Bartman, the Khoi woman transported to Europe in the early 19th century. Bartman was exposed nude in public fairs, but was also studied scientifically by French academics as a perfect specimen of the hyper-sexualized black female (Fausto-Sterling, 1995; Gilman, 1985; Gould, 1985). Another lineage to retraced regards Darwin’s theories on sexed reproduction and evolution of the species (Darwin, 1871, 1859).¹⁰ Darwin’s books, as it is well known, triggered many controversies and inspired new scientific endeavors, including the invention of a new “science of sex”. The first sexology contested repressive religious doctrines on sexual behavior

⁹ One striking example is the work developed by Adolph Quetelet, the Belgium mathematicians who inspired by Laplace celestial mechanics, invested in the statistical study of the laws governing human and social behavior, through the investigation of crime rates and body measures, amongst other topics. In his book *Sur L’Homme* published in 1833 where he affirmed that the “average men is in a nation what the center of gravity is in a planet” (quoted by Menand, 2001, p. 188).

¹⁰ *The Origin of Species*, 1859; *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 1871.

and searched for convincing data to argue against the criminalization of same sex relations and in support of sexual freedom (Corrêa, Parker, and Petchesky, 2008; Bozon and Leridon, 1996; Weeks, 1985, 2000).¹¹

But the new science has also legitimated the modern idea of the human universal sexual instinct, explaining all desires, behaviors and identities, at all times and everywhere. The sexual categories and taxonomies it defined generated a hierarchy of sexual identities and practices, placing reproductive heterosexual behavior at its top, or say it differently scientifically consecrating cultural and juridical heteronormativity (Rubin, 1984).¹² It also overlapped, in dangerous ways, with eugenics whose central concern was the degeneracy of the white race and that uncontrolled reproduction of the poor, deemed to be dangerous classes, other races, criminals and the unfit.¹³

The colonial ramifications of biopower and biopolitics were vast and complex, and the colonial strategies and structures were extremely diverse as we also the contexts and resistances encountered by colonizers. The examples that are offered here are very limited and should be read as limited illustrative vignettes.¹⁴ In Latin America, for example, throughout the 19th century

¹¹ The legacies of these studies were remarkable: the Freudian sexual drive, the invention of homosexuality (Ulrichs and Hirshfeld) and the variability of sexual desires and practices of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (Krafft-Ebing 1939 [orig. 1886]; see, also, Corrêa et al., 2008).

¹² Rubin (1984) describes how 'sex hierarchy' operates, at least in Western societies, in ways that overlap but also distinct from the "gender hierarchy." At one end of this continuum we find a "good," "natural," or "normal" sexuality that is reproductive, monogamous, marital, non-commercial, and heterosexual and recognized as acceptable by medical, religious, and political power, the conventional gender orders that subordinate women, if not in all in many domains of life. At the other end, at the bottom of the sex hierarchy, lie other sexual practices defined as "evil," "unnatural," or "abnormal" sexual practices. In her own words: "Bad sex may be homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, or commercial. It may be masturbatory or take place at orgies, may be casual, may cross-generational lines, and may take place in 'public', or at least in the bushes or the baths. It may involve the use of pornography sex toys or unusual roles" (p. 282).

¹³ The father of eugenics was Francis Galton, a cousin of Darwin who is credited with creating key statistical concepts such as "correlation" and "regression towards the mean." He was especially known for his studies of gifted individuals and for applying statistical methods to analyze human differences. In 1883, Galton coined the term "eugenics" from the Greek root meaning "noble in heredity" to describe the study of "the agencies under social control that may improve or impair racial qualities"

¹⁴ Among other noticeable differences, Iberian colonization was Catholic and imposed Roman written juridical systems on their territories. French was also based in the Roman written law, gave space to Catholic missionaries

newly independent states were deeply concerned with “population” in terms of territorial occupation, racial triage and miscegenation, urban reforms, formation of modernized labor forces (Pecheny & de la Dehesa, 2011). Eugenics was diffused through various both in the US and Latin American societies, influencing debates around national identity, race and miscegenation but also many other domains, including gender and sexuality (Menand, 2001; Stepan, 1991).¹⁵ While a number of Latin American countries abolished sodomy criminal laws fairly early,¹⁶ dissenting sexual conducts, such as prostitution and homosexuality, were still punished as infringements of the moral public order (Figari, 2007; Pereira, 2005; Carrara, 1996). It is also worth noting that between the late 19th and early 20th century, as in US and Europe, the problem of “white sexual slavery” had great political appeal, in countries Brazil and Argentina, who were systematic visited by advocates of state regulation of prostitution and anti-traffickers campaigners (Rago, 1990).

In the vast territories that continued under colonial rule, concepts and practices regarding racialization, gendering and disciplining sexuality were also instrumental to the imperial modernization of colonial administration. In Asia and the Pacific concubinage began to be seen as dangerous because it blurred racial divides and resulted in race degeneration (Stoler, 1997). Restrictions to marriage were lifted and the presence of white women increased, sharpening racial divisions and spatial segregation and triggering loaded discourses around the uncontrolled

but was mostly secular in its tenets. The British empire’s juridical system was based on the common law and was fundamentally protestant. These legacies are still palpable today.

¹⁵ Louis Agassiz, the German biologist, before becoming a Harvard professor, in the 1850s, encountered the craniologist Samuel George Morton, who was studying a vast collection of skulls from different ethnic origins to prove the superiority of the white race and became an advocate of scientific polygenism. In his later writing, Agassiz affirmed that black and white people belonged to different species. He made a scientific trip to Brazil in 1865-1886, which left imprints in the domestic discussions about racial superiority. Brazilian eugenicists, however, were also influenced by other sources, such as the writings and opinions of Count Gobineau, who for one year was the French Ambassador to Pedro II Court. In Brazil, the eugenic influence, has not led to racial segregation, but remained palpable in the ideology of whitening that runs beneath self-congratulatory discourses around miscegenation, or racial democracy, that became hegemonic in Brazil after the 1920s (Freire, 1966).

¹⁶ Brazil (1830), Mexico (1872), Guatemala (1872) Argentina (1886).

sexual drives of colonized males, or the so called black peril. This can be illustrated by the literary accounts and official reports of the 1857 Great Rebellion in India that repeatedly mention the rape and mutilation of white women, even though no official rape records have never been found (Metcalf, 1964).

Right after the rebellion, in 1861, the British Empire adopted a Penal Code whose reform included a number of relevant definitions in relation to sexuality, as age of consent and the criminalization of unnatural sexual acts between males under article 377 (Agnes, 2011; Kirby, 2011; Ramasubban, 2007). The Penal Code was synchronically applied in Britain and India and rapidly transported to other colonies, with this transposition strongly indicating that the regulation of “sex,” including the criminal repression of male homosexuality, at both the center and the periphery of the Empire, was instrumental for colonial control in times of unrest (Sanders, 2009).¹⁷ This criminal prescription – which remains intact in most places where it was introduced during colonial times – is a tangible trace of the Eurocentric colonization of other sexualities (ILGA, 2012; Corrêa et al., 2008).¹⁸

Western heteronormativity, however, was not always imposed through the rule of law. Najmabdi (2005) analyzes how heterosexuality became normative in late 19th century Iran through the dissection of iconography and exchanges between the two cultures. Differently from the West, in Iran homoeroticism was not typed as sexual deviance. Rather homoerotic desires and practices were re-signified as an imperfect form of desire deriving from social separation

¹⁷ Sander’s (2009) analysis is particularly insightful as it retraces the origins of the sodomy prescription to Henry VIII attacks against the Catholic Church when the sodomy law was used mainly against friars. He also recaptures how Lord Macaulay, the main British administrator of India was central to the adoption of the new code in 1861 and examines the paradox of post-colonial nation states that have kept the code and article intact, quite often with the same number 377 (or 77).

¹⁸ Check the ILGA website for detailed information on countries where colonial inherited sodomy laws are still on place at www.ilga.org. It is also worth noting the colonization has also left on place other criminal laws, such as in relation to abortion or prostitutions, which also remain on place.

between men and women.¹⁹ Homosexuality was not criminalized or pathologized, but stigmatized as a practice that men (and eventually women) did in a marginal period of their lives. It was implied that if women became available to men, homosexual practices would disappear.

As colonization continued into the 20th century, the transplantation and capillarity of Western modalities of disciplining and regulation continued in the most varied domains: public health, in particular venereology, criminology, pedagogy, demography.²⁰ Pausterian microbial theory emphasized the biological equivalence of all human beings, de-stabilized notions of racial inferiority. But new states and colonial territories became living laboratories. In many African settings, biomedical interventions were Africans' most feared experience of colonialism (Nguyen 2010).

This multifaceted and continuous deployment of modern disciplinary discourses and norms, it should be always reminded, has systematically met resistance and dissent. In Europe and the Americas, as insightfully grasped by Marx and Engels, in the Communist Manifesto (1848) capitalism was exploitative and created inequalities but also torn old hierarchies and the veils of bourgeois or religious morality.²¹ In the colonial territories strategies to resist colonial control and disciplining has also mushroomed in cultural, religious and political forms, including

¹⁹ The study is fascinating in its subtle and fine analysis of religious imageries embedded in erotic meanings. Many of these images, from the Sufi tradition, depict the idealized image of a male beloved as a path to divinity. But the author also examines another stream of iconography portraying the complex relations of desire; power and abjections at work in mythical stories involving an old Muslim devotee and a Christian maiden.

²⁰ Scott Long's analysis (2004) of the procedures adopted by Egyptian medical examiners to prove the homosexuality of men arrested during the 2001 Queen Boat episode is one striking example of a classical Western 19th biomedical intervention in criminology that remains on place unmodified in a Islamic state. It should be reminded that, not by accident, during the 2011 Egyptian political revolution the armed forces have subjected young women to virginity tests, that also belong to long tradition of coercion and disciplining through body examination by state agents.

²¹ The referential text of the Manifesto on this matter reads as follows: "The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left no other nexus between people than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment. It has drowned out the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation... The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation into a mere money relation." (page 3)

through hybridization. Dispersed, conflictive, and traversed by many paradoxes, these ideational forces, cultural trends and political struggles, constitutive of the 19th century political and geopolitical landscape, would also continue to unfold into the short and extreme 20th century, when the grips of biopolitics and biopower would reach extreme levels.

The short and extreme 20th century²²

Hobsbawm's (1994) analysis sets the beginning of the 20th century at the end of the First World War (1914-1917), coinciding with the 1917 Russian revolution that set the early pillars of what would later become the bi-polar world order. The post war saw the rapid ascension of Nazi-Fascism in Europe, through the garnering of post-war resentments and popular support around the ideologies of racial supremacy (Arendt, 1967). The reach of Fascist ideologies extended far beyond the European boundaries.²³ But its ideas and practices were also influenced by ideas coming from the other side of the Atlantic, or to be more precise, from American streams of eugenics.²⁴

Despite somber shadows, these were also times of political stirring. Anti-racist movements began to materialize, particularly in the USA, women's equality demands gained

²² This subtitle is inspired by Eric Hobsbawm's book *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (1994) that sets 1914 and 1991 as the temporal limits of the 20th century and emphasizes the extreme ideological forces and clashes determining the world system dynamics during this time period.

²³ In India during the 20s and 1930s, German constructed Aryanism influenced Indian high casts and intellectual political elites and the organizational model of Italian Fascism also inspired the Hindutva Sanghats (armed collectives) (Sabrang and The South Asian Citizens Web, 2003). Also in those years, middle class groups in various Latin American countries also formed Fascist collectives. In the case of Brazil, these groups known as Integralistas combined notions of racial superiority combined with peculiar national cultural, in particular indigenous symbols by there acculturating Fascism (Araújo, 1988).

²⁴ Dr. Harry Sharpe from the Indiana State Reformatory who the invented vasectomy performed experiments with inmates, a practice that later expanded to prisons and mental health hospitals. The crusades to sterilize "mental defectives" and others deemed "unfit," led by eugenicists Harry Laughlin and Madison Grant in the 1920s and 1930s, inspired Nazis sterilization programs. The Third Reich's Sterilization Law was based on the provision drafted by Laughlin for the state of Virginia.

further legitimacy and visibility, including beyond metropolitan boundaries. In terms of sexual dissent, one key reference of this period is German SexPol movement, led by Wilhelm Reich (Reich, 1962). Concurrently, anti-capitalist unrests were frequent at the center of the world system and anti-colonial struggles gained strength, especially in Asia, but also in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. By the mid 1930s, however, the shade had prevailed and the world swiftly ran towards another lethal war. Hannah Arendt (1967) in her sharp meditation on the origins and effects of 20th century totalitarianisms retraces their linkages to 19th century imperialism, but also to biopower and biopolitics, underlines that these regimes serialized coercion, aimed the eradication of “difference” and made resource to naturalized conception of laws: the laws of biology and of history.

When the war ended, in 1945, the world order had been reshaped. The world system was now structured around a sharp division of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.²⁵ Soviet ideological influence was achieved through propaganda and political arguments against exploitation that resonated deeply in settings affected by capitalist and colonial inequalities. The US hegemony was not exclusively construed around old premises of civilizing superiority, but based on the dissemination of life styles and the overarching ideology of North American “predestination” (Said, 1993). A second wave of decolonization started, beginning with the Philippines (1946) and India (1947) independences and followed by the stabilization of the Chinese revolution (1949). De-colonization swept through Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Africa up to the late 1970s when Portuguese colonies in Africa became independent.

²⁵ Wallerstein (1999) describes the three clauses of the Yalta agreement as follows: (1) the world was divided into a US zone and a Soviet zone, and the boundaries between these zones were defined as the lines where their respective troops were located in 1945; (2) the Soviet zone could pursue a mercantilist policy collectively, machinery, but the U.S. was not expected to contribute to its economic reconstruction; (3) both sides were free to engage in hostile rhetoric and located conflicts, whose function was to consolidate the political control of the US and the USSR over each zone.

Twentieth century independence struggles were slow and violent and post independence reconstruction was difficult, in many cases because political autonomy did not translate into economic sovereignty.²⁶ In parallel, anti-imperialist unrest mushroomed in all continents.²⁷ The post Second World War years also witnessed the creation, in 1945, of the interstate system of international governance comprising the United Nations and Bretton Woods institution. The political governance capacity of this system has since been impaired by geopolitics, but it played a key role in de-colonization and its architecture continues to influence norms and policies related to the transnationalization of genders and sexualities.

The bi-polar order implied insecurity, strict political surveillance. Massive industrialization homogenized labor forces, making emerge nuclear families centered on reproduction, care, and consumption and fueling conservatism. Male virility and motherhood were hailed and sexual dissent was highly stigmatized.²⁸ But the so-called Golden Thirty years of prosperity also meant social change, urbanization and economic growth calling women back into modernized labor markets (Therborn, 2004). Scientific and technological advancements impacted on social relations and modes of living (Appadurai, 1996).

²⁶ Most of these conflicts evolved out of divisive strategies previously used by colonial powers. The lack of economic and financial resources to sustain national economies immediately became a central theme of de-colonized states and UN debates. By the late 1950's the multilateral system of development assistance had already shifted its focus from post-war re-construction to the finance of the postcolonial world.

²⁷ This list includes the socialist regimes in Cuba (1959), Chile (1970-1973), Nicaragua (1979) and El Salvador (1980), rural guerrilla movements in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, and urban armed and non-armed resistance to dictatorship in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, as well as unrests in Mexico. It also encompass the ANC struggle against the Apartheid regime, the early days of the Iranian revolution, the Palestinian struggle for independence, guerilla movements against Marcos in the Philippines, Maoist uprisings in India and Nepal.

²⁸ Sodomy laws remained on place and abortion illegal throughout Western Europe. In West Germany, the Nazi anti-homosexuality criminal laws were not reformed. In the USA, when the Congress Committee on Un-American Activities was active, thousands of homosexual public servants were fired on the basis that their preference made them easily prone to communist spies' blackmail (Johnson, 2007). In 1954, Alfred Kinsey's research on sexuality was defunded after he published findings on issues such as masturbation, homosexuality, adultery and inter-generational sex (Bullogh, 1985). In the socialist world, women's labor was praised as revolutionary, but homosexuality and prostitution were, quite often, portrayed as effects of capitalism and bourgeois decadence.

In the USA, which was at center of these transformations, as early as 1955, the civil rights movement began openly challenging the segregationist legacies of slavery. Contestations of gender and sexual orders have also emerged because it became easier be being single, increased possibilities for anonymity and the related personal freedoms this facilitated. The pill and other contraceptive technologies delinked reproduction and sexuality, allowing for the organization of sexual life around the erotic and emotional attraction to one's own sex. This is also a moment when sexual markets begin to take form, as expressed by the launching of the Playboy magazine (Preciado, 2010; Bernstein, 1997; D'Emilio, 1997).²⁹

By 1960s, bipolar geopolitical tensions peaked with the Cuba missile crisis and the Vietnam War and a powerful swell of political and cultural unrest traversed the nervous nodes of the world system. In 1968, the United States' civil rights movement was at its height when Martin Luther King was assassinated. The protests against the Vietnam War multiplied in gigantic demonstrations all around the country. Student rebellions and workers' strikes flared across Europe, with Paris at their center. Protests also sparked in Japan and in various Latin American countries, where demonstrations targeted US friendly dictatorships. In the socialist world itself, the Prague Spring called for democratic reforms before being crushed by the Soviet army.

The 1968 revolution contested US hegemony and lifestyles, US-friendly dictatorships, communist authoritarianism and the social homogenizing effects of European welfare states (Wallerstein, 1999). It also widely disclosed and contested the causes and effects of dominant

²⁹ Preciado in her sweeping theorizing on the forces at work in the US society connects the invention of the pill to Playboy but also to the subsequent oil crisis and their effects on the automobile industry and the Fordist mode of production. She observes that from there on estrogen would become the most widely used drug molecule in the entire history and that new lines of sexuality research began, such as medical studies of to discover the biological cause of homosexuality, the optimal age for surgical intervention to "fix" intersex children, the growing popularity of plastic surgery, the invention of barbiturates and antidepressants.

gender and sexuality orders, inaugurating sexual politics as we know it today.³⁰ These rebellions preceded and inspired legal reforms – in relation to gender equality, abortion and contraception and homosexuality – and the epistemological shifts that, a few years later, gave birth to contemporary sexuality theorizing that challenged the normalizing effects of positivist and naturalist tenets of 19th century sex science.³¹

This climate of sexual contestations sharply contrasted, however, with the concomitant deployment of discourses and policy proposals around the “world population crisis.” In 1968, while massive demonstrations encircled the Pentagon with people shouting “make love not war,” a book titled *The Population Bomb* (Erich and Erlich, 1968) was published. Its Cold War rhetoric triggered fantasies about Third World country high fertility rates provoking starvation and fueling communist upheavals. The antecedents of the 20th century population crisis debate are complex and must be retraced back to the continuing expansion of statistical and quantitative research and its many overlaps with Malthusian concerns and eugenics (Corrêa et al., 2008; Greenhalgh, 1996).³²

³⁰ While the tangible effects of this “sexual revolution” were mostly felt in more Westernized societies, the imaginations it propelled – through the mass media and circuits of left wing politics and hippie counter-culture – reached far beyond these boundaries. This is exemplified by images and lemmas of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles – such as the Che Guevara poster or the black fist of the American civil rights movement – or those related to the sexual revolutions, as s the photos of Woodstock or John Lennon and Yoko Ono naked on a bed, that would be used by McLuhan in his analysis of the global village.

³¹ In the USA, as early as 1973, Gagnon and Simon (1973) started moving away from the previous conception of “sex” towards a new approach privileging the meanings sexual act for the actor. From 1974 to 1975, feminists in the USA further developed the concept of “gender” and criticized naturalistic assumptions about male and female subjectivities, social roles, and sexual behavior (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Rubin 1975). During these same years, interactionist sociology argued that as sexual life is embedded social contexts and cannot be fully grasped unless other social and personal relations are taken into account. A short while later, Michel Foucault (1978 [orig. 1976]) illuminated the placement of “sex” as a pivot in the webs of power that pervade discourses, norms, and practices and that produce hierarchies, exclusions, and stigma in modern societies.

³² The early connections between demographic and eugenics created embarrassment to the field and the name of International Union for the Study of Population (IUSSP) was changed in 1946. However demography would gain a relevant place in the post war international governance, as a sector of development assistance program. In 1952, the French demographer Albert Sauvy divided the globe into three zones: the First World comprising Western countries, the Second World roughly corresponding to the socialist world (not yet including China), and the Third World pertaining to all other territories, most under colonial rules. His data showed that fertility rates were declining in Western and socialist countries, but remained high the Third World. His findings enhanced new lines of research,

While not all actors engaged in the population debate advocated coercive measures of fertility control, ideological panic prevailed and the debate took flagrant colonial, racist and, quite often, eugenic turns.³³ Third World countries inevitably reacted and, in 1974, at the first UN sponsored Conference on Population, in Bucharest, they cohesively called for “development as the best contraceptive.” (Corrêa, 1994). The population debate revolved around fertility rates but never mentioned sexual intercourse. The worldwide dissemination of pills, through family planning programs and market outlets, further hormonized women’s bodies, accentuating the gender binary established in the 19th century science of sex (Preciado, 2010). Third World states positions against population control combined anticolonial stances with religious, patriarchal, nationalistic visions on gender and “sex.”

From the late 1970s onwards, these politically intricate knots and paradoxes began to be critically de-constructed through debates around gender equality reproductive autonomy and sexual freedom in Europe and the USA, but also in the context of democratizing processes at work in Southern countries particularly Latin America, the Philippines, South Africa, but also in United Nations debates (de la Dehesa, 2007; Garcia-Moreno and Claro, 1994; Corrêa, 1994; Dixon-Miller, 1992; Petchesky, 1990).³⁴

but also captured the imagination of ideologues concerned with population growth in post colonial territories. A number of demographic centers and non-profit institutions were established during this period in Europe and the USA and less than twenty years later the constitution of this institutional web culminated with the establishment of the UN Population Fund for Population Activities, in 1969.

³³ In revising historical demographic trends in Europe, scholars concluded that as social conditions improved, mortality rates declined, resulting in population increases, but later on, fertility levels adjusted and growth stabilized. Demographic transition theory was framed as establishing that fertility rates decline in contexts of economic growth and social development. Subsequent studies, however, concluded that Third World fertility was decreasing at a very slow pace and warned that this rhythm could compromise State savings and capital formation and this ended fueling the population crisis panic.

³⁴ The three UN sponsored World Women’s Conferences in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) and the adoption of CEDAW in 1979. But academic and civil society cross-boundary connections have also flourished in the period, such as DAWN (1984), AWID (1982), the Women’s Reproductive Rights Global Network (1984).

In 1984, the first International Reproductive Rights Conference took place in Amsterdam, sponsored by the International Campaign on Abortion, Sterilization and Contraception. The meeting gathered feminists from all over the world reaching a strong around the concept of reproductive rights as “women’s right to decide whether, when and how to have children – regardless of nationality, class, race, age, religion, disability, sexuality or marital status--in the social, economic and political conditions that make such decisions possible” (Corrêa, 1997).³⁵

By then the AIDS epidemics had already erupted in the West or more Westernized locations, infected persons who were at first identified as being primarily gay men and soon after, prostitutes (Brier, 2009). These groups were portrayed as vectors of a lethal venereal disease in a strongly reminiscence of 19th century discourses and public health interventions. Subsequently, the African origin of the virus was established, generalized epidemics were recognized in various sub-Saharan African countries, and the transnational circuits of HIV transmission had started to be investigated. In the late 1980s, HIV and AIDS were recognized as a global public health crisis affecting sexual dissenters everywhere but also poor people living in postcolonial contexts. Neither the sexuality dimensions of the epidemic nor its dramatic geopolitical features could be erased (Garcia and Parker, 2006).

Incipient but vibrant transnational circuits of intellectual and political connectivity around gender equality and sexuality related matters were, therefore, established long before national boundaries were traversed by the fluxes of what became known as “globalization.” But as these threads of connectivity evolved and expanded, the conditions of the world system drastically

³⁵ Amsterdam inaugurated a series of international meetings that would refine and expand the reproductive health and rights agenda. The next WGNRR conference held in San Jose, Costa Rica (1987) started an international campaign on maternal mortality, taking the first steps towards the creation of the Latin American Campaign for the Decriminalization of Abortion. In 1988, in Rio, a global feminist meeting was organized preceding the Tietze Symposium on Reproductive Health in the Third World, organized by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). The next WGNRR Women’s Health Conference was held in Manila in 1990, when it was proposed that international feminist reproductive rights was mature enough to conceptualize a feminist population policy.

changed. In the mid-1960s industrial overproduction in the West triggered a major economic contraction, which was followed by the 1973 oil crisis and the external debts crisis of Southern countries. The continuing economic stagnation opened the space for liberal economic thinkers – who for a long time had criticized welfare state models established after 1945 – to gain policy hegemony (Hayek, 2007). By the early 1980s, neo-liberal economic frames had been adopted by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations (USA and UK) and absorbed by multi-lateral financial institutions, that started imposing structural adjustment programs (SAPs) on Southern countries, requiring cuts in public spending, privatization, and trade liberalization. (Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005; Stiglitz, 2002; Rodrik, 2000).

Ten years later, the ongoing Western economic crisis and the political bottlenecks of the Soviet System had eroded the pillars of the bipolarity.³⁶ Asian countries, including China, were becoming the motor houses of capitalism. The Soviet Union Glasnot and Perestroika reforms had not delivered the projected outcomes and the Soviets abandoned Afghanistan, they had invaded in 1979, to the US-funded Muhajedin militias. In June of 1989, in Tiananmen Square army tanks crushed a wave of democratic stirrings in China, a few months later the Berlin wall fell and in less than two years the Soviet Union had come apart:

“The tensile strength of the Yalta agreements came undone, as much because of U.S. as because of Soviet weakness. Neither the U.S. nor Gorbachev wanted the arrangements to come apart. But the long stagnation in the world-economy had

³⁶ As summarized by Wallerstein, the “debt crisis” affected the economy of Latin America and Africa and Eastern European countries that had borrowed from financial institutions, as Poland. The USA was implementing a “military Keynesianism” that was also heavily dependent on borrowing. Large corporations used the stock exchange to capitalize on a large scale when no real investments were made on the productive machinery. Under the new neo-liberal rules, re-engineering enterprises were “downsized,” labor rights protections and benefits were cut off and unemployment reached high levels. Large sectors of the US middle class were forced towards the lower end of the economy.

undone them. And Humpty Dumpty could not be put together again.”

(Wallerstein, 1999, p. 5)

Globalities: what is unprecedented?

In 1997, the feminist economist Gita Sen (1997) identified a maze of structural forces that, in her view, could be considered unprecedented: the exponential breakthroughs in science and particularly in the domains of biotechnology, microelectronics and information; the unleashing of market forces that, among other effects, geometrically expanded the power of multinational corporations; the growing dispersion of production processes across the globe and its impact on the division, mobility, structure and composition of labor; the intensity of and lack of control over financial capital flows; the scalar contours of globalized subterranean economies, in particular drugs and arms production and trafficking that were also linked to economic liberalization (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006).

These economic and technological re-configurations were accompanied by demographic transformations. Mortality rates kept decreasing with positive effects on life expectancy and fertility declined faster than predicted in a large number of Southern countries.³⁷ The combination between gains in mortality and the population inertia resulted in a large percentage

³⁷ Life expectancy gains have been made since the early 1990s, but great discrepancies persist. The Human Development Report 2011 estimates an average of 75-80 years in Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and even Barbados and Chile, while in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries and Afghanistan life expectancy remains below 50. With respect to growth rates, Europe, Japan and the post-Soviet zones experienced further decreases, and many countries have reached below replacement fertility levels. But rapid declines have also occurred South of the Equator. Fertility decreases in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and parts of India are explained by stringent fertility control policies. But this was not the case in Latin America where, for instance, Brazilian declines were as vertiginous as Chinese decreases in the absence of a population control policy. Demographic transition has also continued, albeit in a lower pace in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world (UNFPA, 2010, 2000, 1990).

of young people in the overall world population.³⁸ Another remarkable feature of 21st century demographics is the intensification and multi-directionality of international migration flows. Since the 1990s, entirely novel diasporas of hope, despair, and even terror have emerged as millions of people have been on the move in search of economic opportunities, more personal freedom and in an effort to flee violence (Appadurai, 1996).

These forces, trends and paradoxes have been extensively analyzed by a large number of authors whose interpretations of their meanings and directions diverge. In the early 1990s, the so called *hyperglobalizers* projected an entirely new world configured by the expansion of a single world consumer market, continuing technological revolutions, transnationalization of production, gradual effacement of nation- states and complete individualization of all cultures (Fukuyama, 1992). In contrast, the so called *skeptics* reviewed historical data on trade, labor and finances to conclude that economic interconnectedness was not really unprecedented, and that rather than weaker in economic terms, many states had become key economic global players. Skeptics also argued that the future economic order would be less global than organized around few regional hubs, as it is in fact occurring today (Hirst and Thompson, 1996).³⁹ A third stream, named by Held et al. (1999) as the *transformationalists*, applied a multi-disciplinary lens to examine the structural transnational shifts of our times, taking into account economic forces but also exploring other critical processes evolving beyond, beneath and around economic change

³⁸ The phenomenon of sex ratio differentials, or imbalances between the number of men and women, is not new. Yet, since the 1990s, this subject has become one key topic at the intersections between population and gender studies. In places like China, India, Vietnam and South Korea, the overlapping between the culture of son preference, lower fertility rates and sex-selective abortions have resulted in great imbalances between male and females at early ages (the missing girls). In other contexts, such as Brazil, male mortality due to violence has created sharp sex-ratio imbalances in the age range between 20 and 30 (the missing black young males). As in many places women survive men, today the composition of the population over 65 is predominantly female.

³⁹ Retrospectively, the projections made by the *skeptics* seems to have better predicted the directions of economic trends, as exemplified by the emergence of regional power houses – Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa (BRICS). Past twenty years, Francis Fukuyama himself appears to have revised his own thoughts into the same direction. In a recent interview about the emergence of Brazil he said that states and other political institutions were key factors to enhance economic growth: Retrieved Jan. 20, 2012, from <http://zelmar.blogspot.com/2011/09/francis-fukuyama-entrevista.html>.

(Castells, 2010, 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009, 2006; Held and Moore, 2007; Baumann, 2004; Roseneau; 1997; Appadurai, 1996; Giddens, 1990).⁴⁰

The vast literature produced by this stream of research and theorizing, while not necessarily convergent, emphasizes the historical, contingent characteristics of global transformations and pays a greater amount of attention to cultural and political dimensions (Amar, 2011; Castells, 2010; Held and Moore, 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Appadurai, 1996). The term culture is used here with overlapping connotations. It denotes the classical definitions of differences across human groups in terms “ethnicity,” language, kinship, religiosities, and local identities in addition to the permanent re-invention of personal and group affiliations in non-traditional terms. As noted by critical epistemologies, the scientific mindsets and practices discussed here have influenced culture for as long as they’ve been determined by it due to their power to frame, name, classify, construct, and resist cultural realities (Castells, 2010; Held and Moore, 2007).

The authors who explore the cultural dimensions of global transformations tend to devote a great amount of attention to gender and sexuality, not as lateral aspects of current world conditions, but rather as nodal dimensions of the contemporary landscape (Castells, 2010; Therborn, 2004; Held and Moore, 2007; Appadurai, 1996). These lines of research and thinking have great affinity with the theoretical and investigative works developed by feminists and sexuality researchers and theorists that focus on dimensions of gender and sexuality that are imbricated with global transformations (Aggleton, Boyce, Moore, and Parker, 2012; Bedford,

⁴⁰ Held, Goldblatt, McGrew and Perraton (1999) note that the transformationalists’ frames emphasize “a dynamic and open-ended conception of where globalization might be leading, or the kind of world order, which it might prefigure... they [do not] seek to evaluate the present in relation to some single, fixed ideal-type ‘globalized world’, whether a global market or a global civilization. Rather, transformationalist accounts emphasize globalization as a long-term historical process which is inscribed with contradictions and which is significantly shaped by conjunctural factors” (p. 9).

2010a; Parker, 2009; Corrêa et al., 2008; Puar 2007, 2002; Kim-Puri, 2005; Binnie, 2004; Corrêa and Parker, 2004; Plummer, 2003; Connell, 2002; Altman, 2001; Weeks, 2003).

The transformationalist analytic lens is compellingly illustrated by Appadurai's frame (2002) defining unleashed globalized economic and technological forces at work today as *financescapes* and *technoscapes*, or channels of forces that deepen the impacts of markets and technologies on life worlds while also making social boundaries between nations more porous and transforming, but also recreating, patterns of inequality within and across countries. His frame also includes *mediascapes* to capture novel informational and communicational fluxes that are rapidly altering symbolic and political representation, in particular the Internet, and the complex and contradictory transnationalization of political vocabularies (*ideoscapes*). These fluxes both determine and are crossed by the effects of *ethnoscapes* or "identity machines," a concept crafted by Leve (2011) to capture the multifarious processes through which "cultures" are being re-invented and mobilized for political and other objectives.

"Identity machines" capture memories, histories, experiences, ideologies, religious faiths, and novel imaginations. They are assembled in the processes through which nation-states are reconfigured and also propelled by market forces and dogmatic religious discourses. They are embedded in the fracturing of national identities and the processes through which communitarian and individual identities are reinvented along racial, ethnic and religious lines (Castells, 2010; Held and Moore, 2007; Appadurai, 1996; Siapno, 2011). Recreated primordialisms and identities are at the origin of fierce and violent resistance to globalities and Western dominance. Western societies, however, are not exempt from its the seduction, as illustrated by strong anti-migration arguments in Europe or, most compellingly, the mimicking of 18th century American colonies that is being happily performed by the Tea Party on global screens.

Cultural identities and practices are also being transformed into products that circulate in global markets of consumption, and States themselves are now re-creating national cultures and identities to be better placed on the chessboard of globalized neo-liberal economic games (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009; Harvey, 2005). The so-called return of the religious is also part of the same landscapes. On the one hand, it is leading towards greater religious plurality and intense spiritual diasporas.⁴¹ On the other, religious dogmatisms are systematically mobilizing new forms of social and cultural identification through the systematic re-construction of “traditions” (Armstrong, 2000; Derrida, 1998; Casanova, 1994). Identities are also at the center of local, national and transnational political battles around entitlements, rights, equality and freedom claims, as sharply exemplified by contemporary gender and sexuality politics (Weeks, 2012; Collins and Talcott, 2011; Thoresen, 2009; Corrêa et al., 2008; Puar, 2007).

To draw on Castells’ (2010) theoretical frame, sexual politics is crossed by the contradictory flows of legitimizing identities, resistance identities and project identities. Today as in the past, gender and sexual “fixed” molds continue to be deployed by juridical norms, religious doctrines and powerful biopolitical devices. The dominant political and cultural discourses surrounding gender, sexual and body differences and plasticity continues to mobilize resistance to and contestation of normalization, exclusion and violence. However, the rumor of “sexual rights,” broadly speaking, has already moved beyond resistance to prosper in the discursive and institutional spaces where gender and sexual norms and laws are produced at local, national and global levels. This transition, however, is not without risks (Corrêa, 2006).

⁴¹ Societies that were religiously homogeneous are now, under the impact of migration, pluralized, as for example Gulf Islamic countries where more than fifty percent of the population is made up of migrants from other religious traditions. The intense diaspora of Eastern spiritual practices but also of Afro-Latino religious practices is also to be mentioned.

With these broad shifting landscapes in the background, the subsequent pages will explore several intersections between globalities, genders and sexualities. The goal is not to exhaust all of the dimensions implied at each of these crossroads, but rather to chart the signs of inequalities, hybridities, disjunctions and resistance that characterize intensified transnationalization of gender and sexual experiences, identities, positions and politics. As Boelstorff (2012) argues, it is always wise to recall that globalisms, genders and sexualities denote both empirical realities and the narratives that give them meaning. What follows is just one among many other possible narratives.

Economicscapes, gender and sexualities: inequalities and disjunctions

The *economicscapes* resulting from global transformations present two striking features; the first is the broad and deep penetration of markets into public domains and life worlds and the second concerns paradoxical patterns through which inequalities have been both reduced and recreated. The global economy has experienced growth since 1991, despite unevenness across regions and occasional ups and downs – the 2008 financial crisis being the deepest and longest. While a significant number of countries entered the circle of so called, “advanced economies,” economic growth has also been accompanied by significant increases in income inequality, the concentration of wealth, and a widening of the gap between the combined group of richest and middle income nations and poorest countries (United Nations, 2005). Social and economic disparities have also increased between and within countries, including countries that sustained a

relatively balanced pattern of internal income distribution, north and south of the Equator (Krugman, 2007; United Nations, 2005).⁴²

Global inequalities are still expressed in the wealth gaps between OECD and Southern countries, the concentration of the large transnational corporations in Western countries and high internal levels of concentration of wealth in many Southern countries, including emergent power houses in the world economy.⁴³ Economic studies of globalisms, however, have detected unprecedented dispersion of wealth and income disparities which now appear distributed across stratified tiers comprising old and new elites, middles classes, formal and informal laborers and the entirely dispossessed. Studies highlight how these inequalities and disparities cut across national boundaries and are easily altered under the impact of systemic instabilities (Munk, 2004; Hoogvelt, 2001; Held et al., 1999). In post-colonial locations today, pockets of extreme wealth are easily found, while classical Southern patterns of exclusion and poverty have also mushroomed across the North (Balibar and Swenson, 2003; Sassen, 2001).

Feminist and sexuality researchers and theorists constantly emphasize that a critical, examination of global and internal distribution of wealth alone does not fully account for the patterns of exclusion, stigma, discrimination and violence that determine gendered and sexualized oppression. They also argue that analytical lenses exclusively focused on gender and sexuality as cultural constructs may not fully grasp the effects of economic and social inequality

⁴² In global terms, since the 1980s, share of the richest 10 percent of the world's population has increased from 51.6 to 53.4, which is not so significant but patterns of distribution became much more skewed within regions, with the hubs countries concentrating investments, growth and wealth and most principally within countries. See footnote 2.

⁴³ Post 2008, economic inequality has become one of the most debated issues in the US and the impact of the crisis in Europe is also flagrant in terms of creating new patterns of inequality. Brazil and South Africa have been historically unequal societies whose internal economic discrepancies are deeply traversed by race. Brazil experienced exponential growth rates in the 1970s and was frequently described as a bad example of growth without distribution. In the 2000s, the country's internal inequality was reduced, but wealth disparities remain glaring. Increases in inequality have also been remarkable in post-Soviet Russia, and China and India where great disparities exist between rural and urban areas.

(Cornwall and Jolly, 2006; Parker, 2002; Altman, 2001; Fraser, 1997).⁴⁴ Measuring inequalities in these realms of social life thus requires quantitative indicators of economics to be combined with the lenses of intersectionality (Petchesky, 2012; Viveros, 2012; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1994).⁴⁵ However this articulation is easier said than done.

Tracking global economic inequalities is in itself a complex task. Further complications arise when the multidimensional aspects of inequality are taken into account, even in cases when the non-economic variables are relatively easy to measure as in the case of health, education and nutrition indicators (United Nations, 2005). Intersectional analyses adds to the complexity as it requires more than selecting and combining indicators of inequality. Such analysis demands qualitative studies that examine how historicity, institutions and cultures also produce inequities and cannot be examined at the rarified level of globalities.⁴⁶

Global data may illuminate some key aspects of intersected inequities but it often does not charter the depth and intricacies of these differentials. This deficit is illustrated by gender frames designed to capture economic inequalities that have gained enormous legitimacy since the 1990s and are now incorporated by all major global governance institutions, state machineries and, private entities such as the World Economic Forum, the *Financial Times*, *Fortune* and *The*

⁴⁴ Parker's extensive research and analysis on the HIV epidemic constantly emphasizes that structural violence in terms of class, age, race and ethnicity must be analyzed with gender disparities to better capture contextual factors of vulnerability. Altman (2001), in assessing sexualities and global trends, proposes four structural clusters to be examined to better grasp the intersections of economic inequality and culturally constructed hierarchies: the economic, the cultural, the political (with emphasis on state regulation), and the epistemological. His analytical scheme is inspired by Fraser's (1997) conceptual frame that aims at articulating the realms of recognition (identities and difference) and of redistribution (resources and power).

⁴⁵ Crafted by Black North American feminists to interrogate conventional gender analysis and the lack of attention to race in mainstream feminist discourses, intersectionality is now extensively used in sexuality and post-colonial studies.

⁴⁶ In her analyses of how intersections impact on inequities and exclusions in the Colombian context, Viveros (2012) remarks that: "In some situations, gender creates class, and in others, racial relationships may be used to 'gender' women and men. To say that these relations are equivalent, or coextensive, implies that each one places its mark on another in a reciprocal manner." (p. 224)

Economist (World Bank, 2012, 2001; World Economic Forum; 2009; UNDP, 1995).⁴⁷ The vast amount of data produced by these institutions portrays remarkable transformations of labor markets and women's contribution to national economies.⁴⁸ It also, however, makes evident the glacial pace of cultural change required to recast gender norms and systems of practices.

These deep and resistant cultural layers are reflected in global indicators in terms of gender wage gaps, higher levels of female unemployment, the entrenched gender division of reproductive labor and the extremely scarce number of women in high decision-making positions in transnational companies (Bedford, 2010a; Connell and Wood, 2005; Connell, 2002).⁴⁹ As noted by Connell and Wood (2005), the ridiculously low percentage of female CEOs running the largest transnational corporations (less than 5 percent) makes blatant the androcentrism of global capitalism and contradicts the conventional view of markets as rational and neutral systems for the allocation of resources.

Global data, however, only captures the tip of the iceberg in terms of the gender inequalities characterizing the globalized market-economy. For some time, feminist researchers have criticized the global measures for merely comparing women and men as homogeneous

⁴⁷ It is, in fact, quite remarkable how a radical concept crafted by feminist thinkers in the height of the epistemological and political turbulence of the 1970s has so rapidly been mainstreamed. In this process, the United Nations Conferences of the 1990s (see footnote 63) were definitely key turning points. The concept was included for the time in an intergovernmental document in the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994). In 1995, right before the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing), when the first gendered Human Development Report, which included an adjusted index to assess how gender differentials altered the Human Development Index, was launched. The World Bank launched its own report *Engendering Development* in 2001 and then in 2006, the World Economic Forum launched its Gender Gap Report.

⁴⁸ The World Bank Gender e-map informs that the percentage of women in the labor force has steadily increased since the 1980s. In OECD countries, for instance, since 1970, the proportion of women of working age who have paid jobs has risen from 48% to 64%. Estimates have also been made that eliminating the remaining gap between male and female employment rates could boost GDP in America by a total of 9 percent, in Europe by 13 percent and in Japan by as much as 16 percent.

⁴⁹ Gender wage gaps vary, on average, between 10 to 40 percent across countries. Lower salaries are explained because women work less hours per week to be in charge of household responsibilities. The gendered division of labor in the family also explains higher female levels of unemployment. In the *Fortune* listing of 2011, women directed just twelve of the 500 top transnational companies and the number of women in boards of trustees though higher is not significant. The *Financial Times* blog, *Women at the Top*, used the term, "glacial" to describe the pace to achieve gender equity at that decision making level of the most powerful institutions of the world.

groups and obliterating intra-gender differentials in terms of class, race and location (Bergeron, 2006; Connell, 2002). Moreover, gender synthetic indexes usually select and combine economic and social variables that tend to automatically equate the higher GDP and educational levels of Western countries to gender equality (Bedford, 2010b). Commenting on the 2010 Global Gender Report, Bedford (2010b) appraises the construction of its synthetic gender index for avoiding this bias through the measuring of gaps in access as opposed to gap in resources or opportunities.⁵⁰ Yet she also problematizes the emphasis given to equality between women and men in detriment of an empowerment approach and the absence of a finer analysis of intra gender inequalities connected to race, location, age, and ableism.⁵¹

Global institutions producing and analyzing gender data on economics and development have been open to feminist critiques and made efforts to expand the scope of data collected.⁵² Despite these efforts, however, global reports on gender and economics, including the Global Gender Gap, continue to entirely erase sexuality.

Mainstream gender and economic thinking is primarily about smart economics – women’s talents are to be harnessed by global markets and policies that emphasize equal partnerships between men and women in the workplace and households (Bedford, 2010). In its discursive contexts sexuality is equated with biological sex and absorbed into the prevailing binary and heteronormative conceptions of gender (Bedford, 2010b; Cornwall, Jolly and Corrêa, 2008;

⁵⁰ Consequently, South Africa, the Philippines and Lesotho rank higher than the UK; wherein they, plus Trinidad/Tobago and Sri Lanka, rank higher than Australia; and wherein they, plus Ecuador, Mongolia, Angola, Mozambique, Costa Rica, the Bahamas, and Cuba, rank higher than the USA, which is a very provocative outcome in terms of turning upside down that conventional North-South binary.

⁵¹ In Bedford’s view the restriction of a narrow gender equality frames is that they may lead to the equal sharing of pathetically inadequate resources, without tackling factors related to broader notions of gender justice, such as redistribution of wealth, deficits in service provision, low wages, bad working conditions, racism, and communitarian violence.

⁵² Synthetic gender indexes now include health and educational variables, but also cultural dimensions of gender inequality, such as gender based violence – including female genital mutilation – and the finding of surveys and focal groups discussion on gender norms (World Bank, 2001; World Economic Forum, 2011). Some reports also dedicate greater attention to intra-gender inequities amongst women (World Bank, 2012).

Camargo and Mattos, 2007, Ilkarakkan and Jolly, 2007). This construction is embedded in liberal economic theories modeled around markets, households and individuals.

Heteronormative gender frameworks inevitably occlude or create exclusions and inequalities by making it virtually impossible for non - conforming sexualities to find a place in the discourses and policy debates on gender, economics, inequality and household structures. As observed by Halberstam (2011), new family arrangements involving gender variant partners in queer relationships are rapidly changing the household sex/gender structure and presenting challenges in terms of recognizing the variety of households and domestic relations. As she says, the “inventiveness of human connection instead of singling out one form of relation (coupledom, marriage) over all others” (p. 315).⁵³ Mainstream gender frameworks also relegate the economics of sexuality to the outer circles of underground markets of prostitution and human traffic, thereby reproducing 19th century disjunctions between private and public women (Coalition Against Trafficking, 2012; Kara, 2010; UNODC, 2010, 2000; Augustín, 2007; Blanchette and Silva, n/d).

The vast universes of transactional sex and prostitution are also critical sites to look for intersections between markets, gender, sexualities and global and local inequalities. The worlds of commercial sex, or *sexcapes* to use an Appadurai’s image, have complex histories and are characterized by great cultural variability (Pereira, 2005; de Zalduondo, 1999; Walkowitz, 1992; Rago, 1990). They have also undergone unprecedented transformations under the impact of intensified migration flows, urbanization and their circulation in *mediascapes*. Sex trade has become increasingly transnational and local sex markets have become highly heterogenous

⁵³ Halberstam also notes that dominant heterosexuality may also be drastically affected by demographic change. For example, heterosexual women in the US and Latin America face a unique historical shortage of male partners and she warns that, “female desire cannot orient itself exclusively around bio-males” (p. 317)

(Boyce and Gordon, 2011; Kotisaran, 2011; Robinson & Yeh, 2011; Padilla, 2007; Aggleton, 1999; Truong, 1990).⁵⁴

One interesting aspect to be noted however, is that, historically, criminalization of sex work does not follow schematic center-periphery or North-South lines. Person can not sell in most states in the US and various European countries, where Sweden criminalizes clients (in the name of gender equality), the same applies to a wide range of post-colonial settings, while, in most of Latin America the exploitation of sex work is a crime but not sex work itself. The legal cartography and the cultures of sex work being so heterogeneous, it is critical to interrogate the imposition of Western categories of prostitution on other cultural modalities of sexual exchange for money. It also contests the viral images of prostitution and trafficking centered of victimization, sexual predation, capital accumulation and the silencing of voices of those directly engaged in the trade that pervade global rhetoric on the subject (Ray, 2012; Jeffreys, 2011; Kelly, 2008; Wardlow, 2006).⁵⁵ These studies also reveal how transnational flows reify, but also re-shuffle and recreating inequalities in very complex ways.

Recent research on sex tourism and sexual markets in Brazil shows, for example, that as in many other contemporary *sexcapes*, sex tourism is no longer limited to white US or European heterosexual male citizens searching for Brazilian black women – now it also includes a growing number of black Americans and female and gay foreigners (Blanchette, 2011; Mitchell, 2011;

⁵⁴ The transnationalization and differentiation of sex work markets is exemplified, among other by Mahdavi (2011) book on migration and sex work in Dubai. She describes how these markets are globalized, as both those who offer and those who pay for services are mostly foreigners (as more than 70 percent of Dubai population are migrants) and highly segmented. They encompass the high end services provided by independent Iranian call girls, who operate collectively in wealthy areas, the services offered in middle class bars by South Asian and South East Asians and the African streetwalkers providing services to poorer migrants (see Kotisaran, 2012).

⁵⁵ The North American, ex-sex worker and activist Audacia Ray synthesizes part of these critiques when she recognizes the heterogeneity of the sex industry and that people may enter into the industry by choice, circumstance and coercion. This is one of the reasons why it is vital that sex workers themselves have a voice in the debate.

Piscitelli, 2011, 2010).⁵⁶ These ethnographies also map how money, cultural differences, gender and sexual constructs intertwine in ways that make it difficult to track inequalities through linear correlations made in the past, assuming that foreign equals more money and more money equals power.

Female tourists who initiate sexual affairs with Brazilian males in a position of economic and cultural superiority and decide to stay in the country may find themselves caught in the typical gender asymmetries of local culture, in some cases even experiencing violence (Piscitelli, 2010). Brazilian sex workers generally perceive foreigners as being less overpowering and dominant than nationals. A study conducted in Rio with female sex workers found that foreigners tend to be evaluated as “good” or “bad” gringos based on if they pay high fees, bargain for lower prices, give gifts and other additional benefits. Foreigners that have visited the country many times or have become expatriates quite often become “bad gringos,” because through acculturation they learn the bad local habits such as how to negotiate lower fares or even to become bossy or violent as typical Brazilian males (Blanchette, 2011).

Lastly, these lines of investigation also show that the sex trade does not revolve exclusively around money. The relationship between heterosexual men and women with locals who provide sexual services or engage in transactional sex seeking social mobility rarely remains restricted to sexual exchanges. These relationships often involve affection, the establishment of connections with friendship circles, the provision of financial support to the families of partners

⁵⁶ Similar trends can also be found in the Caribbean, Asian countries like Thailand and the Philippines, and in Africa. Yet it is interesting to look more closely at Brazil because in the last few decades, the country became a key destiny for sex tourism, while being as well the origin of important migratory flows related to sex industry in Europe, and the US and bordering countries. Brazil has also been insistently portrayed as a primary origin of trafficked persons for sexual purposes (Blanchette, forthcoming). Furthermore, as Brazil moves towards becoming an emerging global power, strong signs have surfaced that a recasting of the national image is underway that, eventually aims at erasing the Brazilian cultural markers of sexual hubris or liberality as to project a re-constructed image of respectability, which will also be aligned with the internal expansion of religious dogmatisms (Amar, 2009).

and the development of stable relationships, which configure new and unusual modalities of kinship (Mitchell, 2012; Piscitelli, 2010).⁵⁷

However, it has become increasingly difficult to make visible and intelligible the complexities, nuances, intricacies and instabilities of unequal and less unequal relations at work in globalized *sexscapes* – where market forces encounter sexual cultures and practices, labor conditions and embedded social relations. Globalized *sexscapes* are now almost entirely enveloped by the overwhelming production and circulation of discourses deployed by feminist organizations, dogmatic religious voices, law enforcement agencies and multilateral organizations which persistently collapse prostitution, trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and equate prostitution with slavery (Kempadoo, 2005; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Blanchette & Silva, n/d).⁵⁸

One typical example is Sidhart Kara's book, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (2010) whose content and figures spread rapidly and transformed the author into the new hero of the global fight against contemporary "sexual slavery."⁵⁹ Laura Agustín (2012) recently reviewed the book and it is worth transcribing a long excerpt of her article as it sharply grasps the deep distortions contaminating the narratives on the global economics of "sex":

“[Kara] claims that “sex slaves” are the best earners for masters because they are sold “literally thousands of times before they are replaced”... Would he do this if another

⁵⁷ These patterns converge with Dowsett's (2000) insight on how sexual exchanges that appear to be instrumental may unfold into permanent and supportive social connections, or in his own words, “the sexual construction of sociability”. This elaboration emerged from ethnographic research on *beat sex* among gay men in Australia. He critically interrogates the dominant narratives of quick sex between males as instrumental and devoid of affection and relationality, showing that in fact these relations also involve the creation of support and friendship networks.

⁵⁸ Jordan and Burke (2011) searched for reliable sources behind global data circulating on human trafficking and conclude that no substantial empirical evidence exists to sustain these figures, rather they get picked up and rapidly reproduced by an immense web of actors and become “a reality.”

⁵⁹ Laura Murray, who generously revised this paper, has insightfully observed that Mr. Kara prior to becoming the new hero of the fight against contemporary “sexual slavery” was an investment banker at Merrill Lynch, a circumstance that implies an unexpected and unexplored overlapping between *financescapes* and *sexscapes*.

service were involved, like hairdressing? If a salon owner buys a slave to be a hairdresser who then sees many customers and produces money for her owner, would Kara say the hairdresser is sold thousands of times? Or would he see that her labor is sold, albeit unjustly? Questions to be asked about both cases would include: Is money earned credited toward the payment of a debt? Does the worker enjoy free time? Does the worker accept the character of the work but want more autonomy, different working conditions, or a bigger percentage of money earned? In the case of sex businesses, workplaces are sometimes more comfortable and cleaner than in other available jobs, workers may feel safer locked in than on the streets, and they may like wearing pretty clothes, dancing, being admired. By reducing the entire world of his informants to the minutes of sex, Kara misses the big picture, whether we call it political economy, culture, or simply everyday life.” (pp. 1)

Today, as in the 19th century, when “sexual slavery” also triggered sequential waves of moral panic (Irwin, 1996; Walkowitz, 1992), it is worth recalling that in a capitalist economy, all of us, except the very wealthy or the totally excluded, take money for the use of our body, selling muscles, brains, emotions and creativity (Nussbaum, 1999; Engels, 1884). Exploitation, inequalities and vulnerabilities that characterize transactional sex and the sex industry, cannot be delinked from conditions affecting millions of laborers and migrants in disorganized capitalism (Kotiswaran, 2011; Agustín, 2008; Kempadoo, 2005). Those directly engaged in the sex industry predominantly perceive what they do as labor and call for de-criminalization and the proper regulation of sex industry (Sahni and Sankar, 2011; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998), and beneath the language of smart economics, informality, poor working conditions, low wage levels, high levels of exploitation, including sexual harassment in the work place, remain

problems systematically experienced by the large majority of female workers currently engaged in the globalized economy.

Sexuality and geopolitics: paths, gains and minefields

The world order that emerged after 1991 was re-organized around US hegemony, but spaces have also opened up for North-South rifts in terms of economic and power inequalities to gain visibility and start to be systematically debated. Optimistic prospects of global disarmament raised expectations in terms of increased investments in development assistance and debates on the politics of global development were revived (UNDP, 1990). A sequence of multilateral and regional trade agreements negotiated through recently formed regional and global economic mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization materialized and mirrored the pull of market forces. Multilateral debates, however, have also spread beyond the economic front, as exemplified by a sequence of United Nations' conferences on social dimensions of development and human rights. In these negotiations, human rights principles and frameworks were re-conceptualized and new policy definitions were adopted in relation to population, gender equality, racial discrimination, human rights approaches to HIV/AIDS and sexuality itself.⁶⁰

While human rights discourses gained strength, security concerns began to become dislocated from their conventional placement (state security) towards humanitarian issues

⁶⁰ In 1993, at the International Human Rights Conference of Vienna, the deep rift between civil and political rights and social and economic rights legitimized the contested indivisibility of human rights and women's human rights. That same year, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights was established. Vienna was preceded by the Children' Summit (1989) and followed by the Rio Summit on Environment (1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Fourth Conference on Women's, (Beijing, 1995), the International Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related forms on Intolerance (Durban, 2001). In 2005, the UN General Assembly approved the creation of the Human Rights Council, whose status equivalent to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), that became the most relevant global arena for gender and sexuality related human rights.

including food and hunger, epidemics (such as HIV/AIDS), and human security *tout court* (UNDP, 1994).⁶¹ Yet after 9/11, global imperial power logic was restored. The US bypassed multilateral rules, invaded Afghanistan and Iraq and began systematically infringing on human rights. It imposed US Christian morality worldwide through HIV funding and other means, while at the same time using the language of democracy and women's human rights to justify war. (Corrêa et al., 2008; Eisenstein, 2004). Dominant geopolitical discourses were recast in blatant neo - colonial and racialized formulas such as West vs. Islam. The 2000s also saw the expansion of military expenditures in a large number of countries, adoption of stringent measures of surveillance and inevitable nationalist revivals.⁶² Signs of the USA (or Western) decline started to be spelled out beyond academic circles, in particular after the 2008 financial crisis, and the new potential global powers – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – fully emerged under acronym BRICS.⁶³

The implications of this cycle on gender, sexuality and globalization are not at all trivial. As previously seen, gender and sexuality have been deeply imbricated in colonization and post-colonial geopolitics. From the 1980s on, gender, reproductive rights and even sexuality, as related to HIV/AIDS, became transnational issues in activism, research and policy critiques. In the 1990s, “sex” and gender erupted in UN negotiations, provoking innumerable controversies. Entirely new conditions presided over the continued geo-politicization of these issues and the power logics and knots linking governance, “sex” and gender in the past were openly contested.

⁶¹ This policy trend is now conceptualized as securitization by research stream that articulate constructivist approaches to classical frames used in international relations theory (Vieira, 2007; Balzacq, 2005)

⁶² Extreme nationalist politics are at work in the post Soviet World. But as noted by Castells (2010), during the 2000s, the election of leftwing political leaders in Latin America has also implied the renewal of nationalist rhetoric and of state interventions in the economy. Xenophobia has intensified in Northern societies but also in many other unexpected contexts.

⁶³ The “unpredicted” democratic 2011 Arab revolutions sharply contested hegemonic views on the political backwardness of Islamic societies and cultures, while also shedding additional light on the resilience of authoritarianism and the entrenchment of state violence.

The voices of many of those directly affected by global norms and policies began to be heard and the presence of non-conforming genders and sexual subjects became visible in global policy arenas, starting with feminists, then expanding to HIV/AIDS, LGBT, and sex worker rights activists.

States also started to gradually align with these agendas because they reflected consistent domestic social change. Yet concurrently, in the global controversies surrounding gender, sexuality and rights evolving since the 1990s, conservative actors systematically used human rights language to oppose the de-stabilization of gender and sexuality orders (Lemaitre, 2012; Mujica, 2007; Siegel, 2009).⁶⁴ Despite the harsh controversies triggered by these negotiations, by the end of the 1990s, negotiations in the UN forum delivered new normative definitions of gender equality, women's human rights, and non-discrimination, including in relation to HIV/AIDS and the concept of sexual rights (Corrêa et al., 2008; Girard, 2007; Corrêa and Parker, 2004; Petchesky, 2003).⁶⁵ Global debates for citizenship rights claims in relation to gender and sexuality had been stirring in diverse national contexts since the 1960s, yet the outcome of the UN deliberations broke boundaries, re-conceptualized human rights as universal, and brought the debates back to local levels to support or trigger new demands. This circuit is one sharp example that normative boundaries of nation-states had become more porous while

⁶⁴ The main sources of this re-thinking are the Vatican and groups engaged in the elaboration of Catholic Constitutionalism. Lemaitre's (2012) description of Catholic Constitutionalism in Latin America reads as follows: "In the last decade Catholic constitutionalism has spread across the Americas... Its advocates are not the clergy but rather the faithful lay; they are lawyers, mostly well-heeled, educated white men, who advance constitutional and human rights arguments before legislatures and courts. They defend what the Church calls the "non-negotiable issues: the criminalization of abortion, and the limitation of marriage rights to heterosexual couples. These lawyers however, either in expensive suits or in high heels, do not cite scriptures nor do they refer to Encyclical letters. Instead, they insist on a universal natural law available to human reason, without the recourse to faith or revelation." Among other organizations, Catholic Constitutionalism is connected with the US based Population Institute, Human Life International and the NGO C-Fam created in 1997 to monitor UN negotiations.

⁶⁵ Human rights treaty bodies started to more systematically review violations perpetrated by states in relation to gender and sexuality. Specific cases have also be brought to the attention to these bodies, resulting in ground breaking decisions and recommendations, such as the conclusion of the Toonen vs. Australia case, when the Committee on Humans Rights concluded that the sodomy law on place in the state of Tasmania infringed the treaty.

international jurisdictions expanded and political claims crossed national borders in ways that unbundled conventional ties between sovereignty, territoriality and state power (Roseneau, 1997; Sassen, 1996).

To return to Appadurai's (1996) conceptual frame, the vocabulary of gender and sexuality rights became detached from the relatively coherent national and cultural public spheres and started flowing through transnational *ideoscapes*. Gender and sexuality *ideoscapes* carried with them systematic critiques of the masculinist, imperialist, ethnocentric, legalistic and individualist imprints of hegemonic human rights frames (Corrêa and Petchesky, 2010; Corrêa, Parker and Petchesky, 2008). They also followed significant, but paradoxical, paths with respect to identity. On the one hand, they have resorted to the language of minorities and coalesced and gained political legitimacy through the mobilization of identities as women, gays, lesbians, transgender, people living with HIV and sex workers. On the other hand, political and conceptual fissures have also opened up through the destabilization of sexual identities.

A landmark point in these trajectories was the emergence of the concept of the "sexual rights of women" in the final document of the IV World Conference of Women in Beijing (1995).⁶⁶ The original text was rapidly "de-gendered" and re-interpreted as all persons having the right to exercise their sexuality free from coercion, discrimination and violence (Sharma, 2006; Hunt, 2004; Saiz, 2004; Fried and Landsberg-Lewis, 2000). Another relevant initiative to be looked at more closely is the one leading to the 2007 launch of the Yogyakarta Principles for the Application of International Human Rights Law to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Its trajectory also illuminates how transnational circulations between national and global levels and

⁶⁶ The first part of the Paragraph 96 of the Beijing Platform of Action reads as follows: "The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence" (Platform of Action, 1995).

vice-versa and has inaugurated a novel thread in terms of framing human rights language in relation to sexual subjects.

Part of the history of the Yogyakarta Principles can be traced back to Brazil, where, the struggle for gender and sexuality rights spanned the democratization processes in the 1980s in ways that led to a number of legal and policy reforms in the country. Building on this experience and its reputation for defending sexual rights in the UN context, in 2003, Brazil presented a resolution addressing sexual orientation rights violations at the now extinct UN Commission on Human Rights (An Activist's Guide to the Yogyakarta Principles, 2010; Sanders, 2009; O'Flaherty and Fisher, 2008).⁶⁷ The adoption of the resolution, however, was deterred by a geopolitical deadlock involving both Northern and Southern states, in particular Islamic countries (Pazello, 2005; Girard, 2007).⁶⁸ This unexpected retreat led sexuality rights activists and human rights experts to elaborate a human rights charter for sexual orientation and gender identity in an effort to circumvent the political obstacles faced in intergovernmental organizations.

The charter was finalized in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and was launched in 2007 at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The document used human rights language consecrated in conventions and treaties (right to life, equal treatment under the law, non discrimination, education, health, freedom of expression and association, family formation, housing) and applied

⁶⁷ The Brazilian initiative seems to have taken some international actors by surprise. Yet for those who followed the 1990 UN negotiations it was quite evident the Resolution built upon a series of Brazil's previous positions in relation to HIV/AIDS, abortion, gender equality and sexual rights, including the failed effort to approve language on discrimination and sexual orientation in documents coming out of the 2001 Durban Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

⁶⁸ The Brazilian resolution was heavily criticized and amended by the Organization of the Islamic Conference that had become a new global actor (for additional information check Sheikh, 2003). It also did not please the Holy See or the USA, then under the Bush, although these two actors have not openly manifested against it. As described by Girard (2007), there were also tensions between Brazil and the European Union and other Southern countries that could have supported Brazil. In 2004, Brazil retreated from re-presenting the resolution under pressure from Islamic countries that threatened to boycott a planned Latin American-Arab countries Trade Summit planned for the end of the same year.

it to unjustified violations triggered by the sexual orientation and gender identity of persons and groups (An Activist's Guide to the Yogyakarta Principles, 2010; Sanders, 2008). Unlike other human rights instruments, the Yogyakarta Principles never mention women, men or any other specific sexual or gender identity. The document focuses on situations in which non-conforming gender or sexual expression or conduct of any person or group is the cause of violation of human rights. It interrogates the gender binary (male and female), sexual dysmorphism (heterosexual and homosexual) and minority vocabularies usually embedded in human rights language (Petchesky, 2008; Cabral, 2006).⁶⁹ This deliberate avoidance of the binary and conventional identity-based rights claim has been interpreted by some authors as frames addressing queering human rights language (Talcott and Collins, 2011; Thoresen, 2009).

Since 2007, international and regional human rights bodies, as well as interstate groups, have extensively quoted the Yogyakarta Principles. In March of 2012, the first panel on human rights violations related to sexual orientation and gender identity was held at the UN Human Rights Council. This panel would not have happened if it were not for the Principles and the global advocacy it inspired (OHCHR, 2011).⁷⁰ National judiciaries and legislative bodies have also been inspired by the Principles, as in the case of the Delhi High Court ruling that Article 377 of the Indian Penal code, which criminalized homosexuality, was unconstitutional (Ettelbrick and Trabucco, 2010)⁷¹ and the gender identity law in Argentina, that in April 2012 was heading

⁶⁹ Cabral (2006) remarks that ideas of sexual citizenship, or sexual rights as human rights, still “work on a standard conception of corporality” that contains an unexamined cultural assumption of ‘dimorphic, binary sexual difference as a value. Subjects of rights’ are still understood to be male and female (or homosexual and heterosexual). Petchesky (2008) critically examined the problems of “minority rights.”

⁷⁰ In 2011, a resolution proposed by South Africa and approved in the 16th Session of the Human Rights Council, called for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to perform research on violations related to sexual orientation and gender identity. On March 7th, 2012, a panel was held by the Council to present the research findings. (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A.HRC.19.41).

⁷¹ The court’s decision states: “The [Yogyakarta] principles are intended as a coherent and comprehensive identification of the obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

towards final approval by the Argentinean Senate and if approved, would permit individuals to change their gender on government documents (Cabral, 2012).⁷² Through primarily voluntary initiatives, the Yogyakarta Principles was also translated into twenty idioms, many of them local languages, and transformed into public educational materials to be used in specific cultural contexts globally (An Activist's Guide to the Yogyakarta Principles, 2010).⁷³ The Principles were, therefore, much more rapidly known and used by local constituencies than any official UN human rights documents, perhaps because its content and language spoke directly to the hearts and minds of people and remained open to the vernacular (An Activist's Guide to the Yogyakarta Principles; Thoresen, 2009).

The non-binding nature of the Principles has raised concerns since they were launched, as some argue that they lack the authoritative grip of other international human rights law (Brown, 2010). But it can also be argued instead that the spread, incorporation and re-interpretation of the Principles by persons and groups facing violations at local levels is crucial because, as noted by Collins and Talcott (2011), it stimulates conversations that repeatedly re-invent human rights through cultural change and collective organizing as opposed to solely through the state or transnational bodies. Or, to use Amartya Sen's vision, recaptured by Robison (2012), this non-authoritative path may open spaces for states and societies to use the law "to expand the life choices and human capacity of their people" (p. 5).

⁷² In his analyses of the Argentinean debate, the trans activists Mauro Cabral says: "In approved, Argentina will have a Gender Identity Law that is as close as possible to the Yogyakarta Principles, which have been used as the foundation of the law. This means that the law will be an example of a real and concrete possibility to realize, in this world and now, the contents of the Principles." (p. 1)

⁷³ The Principles were initially translated into the six official human rights languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Local and regional organizations, and a few governments, have translated it into: Catalan, Dutch, Basque, Bahasa/Indonesian, Filipino/Tagalog, German, Hungarian, Japanese (popular and legal translations), Lithuanian, Portuguese, Sinhala, Tamil, and Thai. Various videos on the Principles are easily found in the Internet including in animation, cartoons and booklets have been produced and in 2010, *the Activist Guide for Using the Yogyakarta Principles* has been launched in English and Spanish. See www.ypinaction.org.

The potentiality of the Principles to expand possibilities rather than impose regulations is, in fact, a counterpoint to “authoritative” human rights interventions around gender and sexuality that have proliferated since the late 1990s. In 1998, an arrest was attempted of the Zimbabwean president Mugabe for violating LGBT rights during a visit in London.⁷⁴ Since then, a sequence of what Epprecht (2012) calls “Gay International” human rights interventions have occurred, including in relation to Iran. The Salvationist ideology and imposition of Western sexual categories on other cultures characteristic these interventions have been extensively criticized (Epprecht, 2012; Long, 2009; Massad, 2002).⁷⁵

The same distortions are identified in relation to the global politics of women’s human rights, particularly in the case of the Islamic world. Mikdashi (2011), observes that a large number of laws and norms that oppress women and sexual dissidents in the Middle East are not Islamic, but rather derive from the Napoleonic code imposed in the early 19th century – an aspect never made visible in global campaigns on gender troubles in the region. Imam (2005), in her analysis of the cases of two Nigerian women condemned to death by stoning by a Shari’a court, remarks that in these contexts, advocacy require activists to engage with both local

⁷⁴ UK based organization were accusing Mugabe of persecuting gays and the episode triggered a string of reaction across Africa and was criticized even by Zimbabwean LGBT activists living in the country (Epprecht, 2008). In 2005, another global campaign was launched in relation to the capital sentence applied to two young men in Iran in 2005. In Scott Long’s view, there was never evidence that they were gay but a flare of international panic flourished, coinciding with Ahmadinejad’s election and the regular U.S. and Israeli military threats against Iran, which was widely European Islamophobes.

⁷⁵ Epprecht (2008) remarks that “gay” human rights interventions in Africa disregard both present contexts and the transnational processes through which “African heterosexuality” was reiterated by colonial discourses, institutional practices, legal frames, missionary work, and anthropological research. He traces Western constructs of African heterosexuality in early voyagers discourses, Christian missionaries, 20th century anthropologists, colonial strategies and institutions and analyzed how these constructs crystallized in post-colonial apparatuses and societies. These compelling analyses reveal how Western imageries and theories about African sexuality constitute a striking manifestation of “othering” and imbricate with the re-configuration of Western sexuality itself.

cultures and international human rights discourses, without “privileging neither local nor international as automatically superior, and thus being able to criticize both” (p. 56).⁷⁶

These human rights interventions, constructed around a single axis and specific identities and insensitive to local contexts and voices, are now mirrored by Northern based religious zealots. Active in a number of contexts, but particularly common in Africa, these groups aim at recreating Western Christian traditions in an effort to preserve gender and sexuality orders. The most well-known case is Uganda, where interventions of American pastors contributed to escalating levels of homophobic violence in recent years, culminating with the murder of David Kato in January 2011.⁷⁷ Analyzing the Trinidad Tobago landscape, Robison (2012) observes that: “The comfort and foreign appeal of fundamentalism, whose goal is to narrow gender and restrict sexuality, are a balm against powerlessness and alienation in a small, stratified society grappling with uncertainty in a world of violence, climate change and globalization.” (p. 5).

However, as human rights discourses continue to be enmeshed in the webs of American exceptionalism, Islamophobia and securitization – or gets further infiltrated by novel tensions related to geopolitical shifts – the room for nuanced, situated and locally articulated human rights interventions keeps shrinking. Rather, sexuality and human rights are now squarely put in the geopolitical arena (Abbas, 2012). In the early 2000s, the Bush administration resorted to women’s human rights to justify war and intensively promoted moral views on sexuality

⁷⁶ In the early 2000s, five women accused of zina (adultery) were condemned in Northern Nigerian states by Shari’a courts. Two cases became globally known under the impact of continuous viral Internet campaigns: Saffya Tungal – Tudu and Amina Laval. Capital penalty was suspended after a sequence of lawsuits and appeals, including through the Shari’a system itself, and advocacy work in which Imam was personally involved.

⁷⁷ The US based pastor Scott Lively who frequently visited Uganda is currently being sued in the US by the Ugandan LGBTQ organization Freedom and Roaming in Uganda with the support of the Center for Constitutional Justice, for hate and violence incitement (Goodstein, 2012).

(Eisenstein, 2004; Girard, 2004).⁷⁸ In many Southern countries – many of which happily accepted USAID money with all its restrictions – gender equality and sexual rights were resisted as Western imports, both nationally and in global arenas (Corrêa et al., 2008; Epprecht, 2008). Today, however, a large number of states in the North and the South declare themselves to be LGBT-rights friendly.⁷⁹

Public declarations and diplomatic positions expressed by these states many times are consistent with the LGBT rights domestic reforms achieved after long-standing and difficult struggles. As such, they are to be highly appraised, even in cases when they may be at odds with sexual rights and other types of violations that remain unchecked at domestic levels.⁸⁰ The new scenario, however, is also about classical “real politics.” Some states for example are supporting gender equality and LGBT rights to project an image of modernity and democracy. Others do so to diversify consumer markets and the tourist industry (UNTWO and IGLTA, 2012; A Paper Bird, 2011).⁸¹ Lastly, there those states openly engaged in *pinkwashing*, or the deliberate use of good LGBT records in favor of nationalistic and geopolitical objectives.

⁷⁸ This was done through policy guidelines regarding the gag rule on abortion funds for foreign organizations, abstinence only and fidelity programs to prevent HIV and the “prostitution loyalty oath” that required foreign organizations receiving US funds to publicly declare that they do not support the legalization of sex work. The “abortion gag rule” was defined in an administrative ordinance in January 2001, while definitions concerning HIV prevention and prostitution were enshrined in two 2003 pieces of legislation: the HIV/AIDS Global Act that defined the guidelines of the PEPFAR the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA).

⁷⁹ In December 2010, more than 60 members states signed a declaration presented to the General Assembly calling for the decriminalization of same sex relations.

⁸⁰ One example is Cuba where Raul Castro’s daughter Mariela became a champion of LGBT rights, while flagrant human rights violations persist. In other cases, LGBT friendly positions are at odds with stances assumed by these same states in relation to other dimensions of sexuality rights, such as abortion and sex work. In 2007, the Nicaraguan Penal Code reform abolished the crime of sodomy and struck down access to therapeutic abortion. In Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, recent legal reforms and court decisions in relation to LGBT rights contrasts with political obstacles faced in relation to abortion reform. Prostitution is criminalized in f LGBT friendly countries, as the US or Sweden. In Argentina, after same-sex marriage was approved, a presidential decree prohibited advertisements of sexual services.

⁸¹ Paper Bird quotes Stephen G. Miler, founder of the right-wing *Independent Gay Forum*, affirming that corporations invest in the LGBTQ markets because these persons have buying power and appraise free markets as a way to sweep away the inefficiency and irrationality of states. The UNTWO/IGLTA recently launched report features three BRIC countries as the novel gay and lesbian destinations to be explored: Brazil, India and South Africa.

Israel is a case in point. For some years now, it has systematically sold itself as the only LGBT-friendly country in the Middle East, thereby obscuring brutalities of the Palestine occupation and feeding gendered and sexualized Islamophobia globally, particularly in the USA. Israel *pinkwashing* strategies also manifest through systematic critiques of Iranian laws, cultural norms and state repression. The facile and ideologically contaminated opposition between “gay-friendly Israel” and “gay-hating Iran” occludes more than it reveals and is used to strategically fuel bellicose desires amongst Islamophobic sectors in the US and elsewhere.⁸²

But Israel is not alone in this game. Mikdashi (2011), commenting on the recent US announcement of its strong global commitment to be LGBTQ rights, observes that this proclamation should not be seen in isolation but placed against the back drop of Guantanamo, drones, and extra judicial executions. As analyzed by the Italian LGBTQ group Facciamo, in Western Europe, “‘sexual democracy’ has [also] become a ‘justification of power regimes, as it is hailed as a distinguished mark of Western superiority, in ways that interweave with imperialist and nationalistic discourses that legitimize this supposed superiority’” (Facciamo, 2011, page 1). The note refers to European states resorting to aid conditionality to protect LGBT rights in Africa.

An example of the complex, post-colonial power relations circulating around discourses of sexual rights occurred in 2009 when two Malawian men were condemned to fourteen years of prison, after their wedding ceremony became public. Germany, the UK, Norway and Sweden threatened the government with suspension of aid. The couple was granted pardon, but the UK

⁸² As this chapter was being revised the Western media announced the execution of a gay man in Iran. The headlines in the Jerusalem Post read as follows: “Leading ayatollah says homosexuals worse than dogs and pigs; gay activists says actions remove Iran from community of civilized nations” (check at <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=267868>), which however and fortunately, as commented by Scott Long in a private communication, was not picked up by the global mainstream media suggesting that we may be “emerging from that long period in which nothing in Iran mattered to the international LGBT community unless there were dead gay bodies involved.”

and Germany withdrew aid anyway, alleging other reasons. The state blamed LGBTQ organizations and homophobia levels have inevitably increased (Anguita, 2012; Canning, 2011). Then, at the Commonwealth Meeting of Heads of State, in October 2011, the UK Prime Minister announced measures of aid conditionality to punish countries that criminalize homosexuality, which is rather ironic given that these laws are a legacy of the British Empire.⁸³

African organizations rapidly reacted issuing a strong statement in which they argued that the withdrawal of aid would cause a rift between LGBT organizations and other social movements and provoke homophobic reactions.⁸⁴ In her analysis of the episode, Abbas (2012) revisits the neo-colonial foundations of aid to Africa recalling that African countries pay more in debt servicing than what they receive from donor countries and multilateral financial institutions.⁸⁵ She also underlines the racist undertones of aid conditionality: “the ‘barbaric’ and ‘uncivilized’ ‘cultures’ and ‘traditions’ of the Black and Brown peoples of the world who have not yet been civilized enough to tolerate gay and lesbian people.” (p. 3)⁸⁶ Aid conditionality interventions are primarily aimed at Africa because the continent remains highly dependent on development assistance. However, as noted by Paper Bird (2011) this is changing because Chinese development funding is becoming more relevant than Western aid. As such, tying

⁸³ The Commonwealth has a specific mechanism in place to deal with human rights violations, which was bypassed by Cameron’s proposal. His speech also singled out Ghana and Nigeria provoking immediate reactions. In Nigeria, the Senate approved a bill criminalizing same sex marriage that had been contested since 2006. The bill also prohibits public expression of affection between two persons of the same sex and even the public defense of LGBTQ rights (Anguita, 2012).

⁸⁴ See <http://www.wgnrr.org/news/statement-african-social-justice-activists-threats-british-government-%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%C5%93cut-aid%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%C2%9D-african-countries>.

⁸⁵ Her data informs that while Africa receives less than \$13 billion in aid annually, it spends \$15 billion annually on debt repayments. For every dollar that an African country receives in grants, it pays \$13 in interest on debt.

⁸⁶ Abbas recognized that are different modalities of economic external pressure and that the external pressure may be considered in specific circumstances, as exemplified by the 1980s boycott against the apartheid regime, which was negotiated with those struggling against the regime. She also stresses that the growing authoritarianism and populism of African political regimes make them entirely gloss over LGBTQ rights when they are flagged from outside the continent.

bilateral aid to LGBT rights may not work anymore because African governments can now access aid with no strings attached from China.⁸⁷

The contemporary geopolitical landscape as it intertwines with gender and sexuality politics sharply illustrates the paradoxes of the global *ideoscapes* through which classical vocabulary of politics, rights, equality, freedom, representation, is now flowing (Appadurai, 1996). The same words, including consecrated human rights terminology, may have very different meanings and interpretations, depending on who is articulating them, from where and for what. If the cacophony of gender and sexuality political language, including the vocabulary of human rights, is one facet of the current geopolitical landscape, the other is that states and state actors are now openly engaged in gender and sexuality political games.

The other facet of this puzzling landscape is the politics of identity in all of its multifarious manifestations. In geopolitical terms, identity politics is now inevitably imbricated with the effects of what Puar (2007) conceptualized as homonationalism, an ideology affirming that the experience and politics of LGBTQ persons and communities, regardless of location, racial, ethnic or social positionality, are determined by directionality of their love and desire, which constitutes stable and encompassing identities from where one speaks and makes political claims, including over and above the voices of others. These are identities that speak as “nations” and sometimes, in the name of “nations” (Petchesky, n/d). In a recent commentary on conditions prevailing in Israel and Palestine occupied territories, Puar (2012) pungently describes how this ideological flow translates into lived realities:

⁸⁷ In the last few years, expectations have been raised that development aid provided by the BRICs – in particular Brazil – could be both stringless and more sensitive to sexual and reproductive rights (Anguita, 2011). Further research is needed on the subject. In relation to Brazil specifically, the internal policy climate – now strongly influenced by religious dogmatic forces – and the priority focus of the foreign policy on economic growth suggests that this will not be case, even though Brazil can definitely be considered an LGBTQ-friendly country in global arenas.

“Golden handcuffs essentially limit the resistance of gay Israeli...The trade off of freedom for suppression is even more complex for Palestinians living in Israel. But what of the queer Palestinians living under occupation? If Israel is so convinced of the grandeur of gay Tel Aviv, perhaps it should make it possible for queer Palestinians to actually reach this beacon of modernity and freedom?” (p. 1)

These conjunctures are to be connected with ideas developed in the previous section since, as insightfully noted by Petchesky (forthcoming), nowhere an intersectional perspective is so relevant and urgent than in the conceptual and political responses to aid conditionality and other forms of interventionism attached to violations of sexual and gender rights abuses.

Identities: between machineries and kaleidoscopes – a postscript

“Identity” is a polysemic word. It denotes the sense of oneself, of pertaining to a group, to a community, to a class, to a religion, to a nation. In the realms of gender and sexuality, it implies embodiment, subjectivity, interiority, emotions and desires, in addition to the effects of cultures, religious norms, post-colonial orders, state and market centered processes of disciplining and regulation that generate sameness and differences. As noted by Boellstorff (2012), there are no *a priori* universal domains of gender and sexuality but meanings of gender and sexuality that link bodies and experiences to relational contexts. One leitmotif of past and contemporary debates on culture and identities is the sweeping and negative impact of Western homogenization.

Accentuated by global transformations and historical and contemporary processes, genders and sexualities remain key sources of othering, targets of “civilizing interventions,” and more

recently preferred objects of research conducted by US or Europe based scholars and institutions (Tamale, 2011).

While colonial and post-colonial dominance cannot be circumvented, as noted by various interpreters of globalities, transculturality, and hybridization are also part of the complex processes of identities' creation (Castells, 2010; Held and Moore, 2007; Tomlinson, 1999; Appadurai, 1996). This line of work converges with research and thinking underway in the field of gender and sexuality that also emphasizes circulation, hybridization and the re-creation of identities, subjectivities and resistances to assimilation in ways do not reproduce simplified binaries such as tradition/modern, local/global, imported/ indigenous (Aggleton et al., 2012; Parker, Aggleton, and Barbosa, 2009; Jackson, 2007; Parker and Aggleton, 2007; Puar, 2007, 2002; Collins, 2005; Morgan and Wieringa, 2005; Manalansan, 2003; Altman, 2001; Gagnon & Parker, 1995; Yanagisako and Delaney, 1995; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; among many others). Altman (2001) frames the question in terms of an intense "global" re-distribution of difference, and Corboz (2006), commenting on how globalization and sexualities intersect emphasizes the relevance of language, translation, naming and categories, noting that the transplantation of words – such as gay, lesbian, or even queer – does not necessarily imply that they have the same meaning in all contexts.

Boelstorff (2005) thinks in terms of "points of dispersion" and uses the notion of dubbing to examine the incorporation of the terms gay and lesbian in Indonesia. He argues that while the use of the terms can be interpreted as "domination," it does not imply "determination" because cultural and personal space is left open for contextual meanings to be enacted. In Jackson's (2007) analysis, the presence of contemporary Western categories in Thai gender and sexual cultures is undeniable, yet he argues that these classifications are always selectively appropriated

and absorbed into pre-existing local meanings, identities and practices. A vast number of studies on African sexuality explore how the inexistence of words to name certain identities, practices or desires does not mean that they do not exist (Tamale, 2010; Eppretch, 2007; Morgan and Wieringa, 2005), a conclusion that converges with Williams (2012) analysis in Peruvian popular communities, where the term lesbian does not fit into the realities of same sex relation amongst women. Concerning diasporas, Manalansan (2003) analyses how Filipino gay men living in conditions marked by various forms of exclusion based on class, racial, ethnic and economic disparities in the US develop strategies to resist cultural assimilation and enhance cosmopolitan inclusion through the use of a vernacular language.

The literature on transculturation, hybridities and instabilities in relation to sexual identities is, as observed by Corboz (2006), highly concentrated in the experience of persons of non-conforming sexualities. It is important, however, to remember that expressions of femininity and masculinity have also always varied across history and cultures, and that today they are also traversed and altered by transnational fluxes. These processes are exemplified by the emergence of metrosexual masculinities and other gender disruptive modes of dressing and behavior adopted by youngsters of both sexes in diverse contexts, which more than often put these persons at risk.⁸⁸ Yet perhaps what is most important to note in this context of analysis is that the hybridity, instability and transcultural features emphasized in anthropological analyses of gender and sexual variability sharply contrast with the tendency towards the fixation of identities on the basis of desires, practices, and anatomies that prevail in the ideoscapes of sexual politics.

This tendency, as mentioned before, is blatantly illustrated by various expressions of homonationalism, albeit not exclusively. The appeal of identity is also pervasive across

⁸⁸ One recent episode of tragic violation of human rights related to sexuality was the brutal murder of emo male youngsters in Iraq. Check at A Paper Bird comment at: <http://paper-bird.net/2012/03/09/graphic-pictures-from-iraqs-anti-emo-killing-campaign/>

feminisms of which many streams inscribe and crystalize women's difference on body parts instead of conceiving femininities and masculinities as unstable, plastic and floating categories (Bento, 2012; Halberstam, 2011; Butler, 1990, 1994).⁸⁹ And, as noted by Blackwell (cited in Corboz, 2006), even the novel language of transnational queer may be translated as a new code for a common unified identity of Western origin. The appeal of stable identities is not peculiar, however, from gender and sexuality ideoscapes. In line with many other authors, Leve (2011) considers the contemporary identity machine to be intrinsically linked to the structural logic of political liberalism (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009, 2001; Greenhouse, 2009; Postero, 2006) and describes this political engine as follows:

“Materialized in the heavily promoted values, discourses, and institutions associated with neoliberal democracy and development, the identity machine produces not only the classes and categories of social personhood that structure public recognition of social collectivities but, indeed, the very ontology of “identity” itself.” (p. 415).

Consequently, citizens become intelligible to state machineries when they are able to appear as their “innermost essence,” or who they “really” are. The same logic is at work in human rights language, frames and strategies that emphasize civil and political rights in detriment of the social and relational dimension of rights (Corrêa and Petchesky, 2010) or inscribe identities under the overarching umbrella of minorities (Petchesky, 2008).⁹⁰ The appeal of “essential identities” is therefore pervasive in all sites where rights are claimed. Gil

⁸⁹ In Halberstam' (2011) analysis: the suspicious and paranoid feminists.

⁹⁰ In a conceptual note on sexual minorities, Petchesky et al (2012) remind that the concept of minority is a direct legacy from 18th century social contract framing of religious freedom and the tolerance and minority subjects have always, even when extended certain privileges were always treated with condescension and exceptionalism that is distinct from equal treatment. Moreover the hierarchical ordering of local and indigenous populations into “majority” and “minority” groups has been also a classical divisive Western colonial and imperial strategy, intensively used by the British, but that has also been recently applied in US treatment of Sunnis, Shi'a and Kurds in Iraq.

Hernández (2009) analyzes how in Colombia, a government of differences is at work that responds to and organizes gender and sexuality rights claims within almost the same logic used in the 19th century to govern “populations” or “races” (whites, black, diverse indigenous communities, mestizos).

The identity machine is also intensively at work in transnational ideoscapes. As insightfully grasped by the Latin American network, MULABI, sexual orientation and gender identity, used as descriptors of variance in the Yogyakarta Principles, have also become essentialized: sexual orientation as a synonym of gays and lesbians and gender identity is automatically equated with transgender. This fixation of the terms implies that a heterosexual person, a *travesti* or a trans man does not have a “sexual orientation,” or that a “lesbian,” or a “gay,” or who might feel sexually attracted to others, of whatever gender, does not have a “gender identity”. As observed by Halberstam (2011):

“Sexuality is a potent vector for the governing structures of contemporary society and all too many mainstream LGBT embrace models of political emancipation that depend upon extending the reach of state power and they fail to recognize that state power folds violence and the legal protection from violence back upon each other.” (p. 316).

Nevertheless, contemporary politics of identity with all of its complexities, minefields, and perversions has unequivocally opened up paths for social justice, respect and protection of personal autonomy and against discrimination – gains that cannot be totally ignored. In the lectures preceding the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (2003) suggested that, perhaps, the return to rights organized on the basis of sovereignty was the only possible resource to be used by sexual dissenters against the effects of power anchored in scientific knowledge. While he was not convinced it would be an effective escape from the tight grips of disciplinary devices, this has

definitely been one main roads taken by sexual politics. Today, the resource to body and identity rights claims is intense, widespread and critical not just in classical political terms, but also in relation to the effects of other powerful identity engines operating in contemporary landscapes.

Fundamental principles of equality, autonomy, plurality, and bodily integrity cannot be abandoned when the various dimensions and experiences covered under the overarching umbrella of sexual rights are at the center of dogmatic revivals across religious traditions. These forces target gender and sexual plurality, reproductive autonomy (in particular abortion rights), access to sexuality information and education and transporting sex work from the margins of criminalization to the center of labor rights debates. Principles of autonomy, respect for plurality and equal treatment are necessary to contest, for instance, the unshakable heteronormative Vatican vision on gender,⁹¹ as expressed in the *Letter to the bishops of the catholic church on the collaboration of men and women in the church and in the world* (Vatican, 2004), which excluded the possibility of sexual variability and set fixed parameters for family structures and reproduction:

“The obscuring of the difference or duality of the sexes has enormous consequences on a variety of levels. This theory of the human person, intended to promote prospects for equality of women through liberation from bio- logical determinism, has in reality inspired ideologies which, for example, call into question the family, in its natural two-parent

⁹¹ It is worth noting that this vision is not peculiarly Christian but characteristic of dogmatic religious views on sex and gender, as illustrated by the opinion of the Egyptian Islamic female scholar Ezzat (2002): “The non-discriminatory, sex-neutral category that includes provisions, which reject a conceptualization of women as a separate group and rather reflect on men and women as entitled to equal treatment. The idea here is that biological differences should not be a basis for the social and political allocation of benefits and burdens within a society. ... With the ‘coming out’ of the lesbian and gay movements and the powerful theorization on lesbian epistemology, many women became intimidated, nay, confused. Within the same line of thinking, in the last (secular) analysis, one should not define the family according to some fixed, biased, pre-modern measures! The classical family structure, according to gay and lesbian discourse, is to be renegotiated; a new form and understanding of ‘a family’ must be given.” (P. 1). Similar examples can be identified in dogmatic Hindu and Buddhist positions on gender and sexuality matters.

structure of mother and father, and make homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent, in a new model of polymorphous sexuality.” (Page 1)

Furthermore, contemporary debates around gender and sexuality cannot evade the vast domains of secular biopolitics or the scientific regulation of life itself that, since the 1970s, has experienced a scalar expansion. Today, biomedical research discourses and interventions have been furthered captured by economic forces and penetrated deep into the fabrics of social regulation and human bodies. Rose (2007) crafted the concept of biological citizenship to describe such political battles and social organizing at play in the interstices between the juridical order and biopolitical disciplining.

These unrests mostly encompass processes and battles concerning gender and sexuality in relation to contraception, abortion and reproductive technologies. The contours and implications of reproductive technologies are much more complex today than in the past, as exemplified by globalized flows of embryos and surrogacy and the intricacies between abortion and stem cell research and debates (Points, 2009; Castilhos, 2007). But biological citizens’ battles are also underway in relation to biomedical definitions on sex and gender. Examples include the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization, the Diagnostics and Statistics of Mental Health Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (Global Action for Trans* Equality. 2012; International Trans Depathologization Network, 2012) and political debates surrounding categories and therapeutic practices triggered by the HIV/AIDS epidemics as in the case of MSM (men who have sex with men) or the politics of disclosure (Nguyen, 2010; Gosine, 2006).⁹²

⁹² Gosine (2006) analyzes how MSM language has mimicked Orientalist strategies of collapsing cultural differences between non-Western (and non-white) collapsing under the same category a wide variety of bodies and experiences: *Kothis* in Bangladesh, *ibbi* in Senegal, ‘*yan daudu*’ in Nigeria, African-American and Latino men ‘on the down low’ in the USA, and *hijra* in India are collectively tagged ‘MSM’ despite the striking differences and inequalities

At these various crossroads, the resource to rights, while indispensable, is never an easy path out of constraints and dilemmas posed by biopolitical grips. The human rights epistemologies themselves are caught in some of the same naturalizing traps that pertaining to biopolitical devices of disciplining. This is sharply illustrated by the questions faced by intersex activists drawing on human rights resources. Their core epistemology maintains an unexamined cultural assumption about corporeality, or as Cabral (2006) notes, of “dimorphic, binary sexual difference as a value.” Subjects of rights are still understood to be male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, and within the limitations of fit or unfit:

“On the one hand, the human rights discourse appears as a privileged instrument to which intersex children’s claims for decisional autonomy and personal integrity might be addressed. On the other hand, for as long as sexed humanity remains caged in a standard assumed to be valuable and desirable tout court, human rights humanism will be insufficient (in the best of cases) or an argumentative trap (in the worst), able to justify what intersex activism and political theory condemn as inhuman forms of humanization.”

(p. 7)

These complex conjunctures require constantly re-thinking the internal and outer limits of citizenship and human rights language to invoke, as suggested by Cabral (2006), “a radicalized humanism” or “a post-humanism” that would be able to challenge the regulatory ideals we have learned to call “nature,” while at the same time not erasing difference and variation. The questions that arise around gender and sexual identities in contemporary political and biopolitical battles imply delicately balancing between the indispensability and insufficiency of human rights

amongst these ‘identities’. Nguyen’s (2010) fine research on the impacts of the HIV/AIDS industry in West Africa tracks how the US model of disclosure and self-identification as an HIV positive person imbricates with money flows and donor driven agendas in ways that led to the emergence of “therapeutic citizens” in a context experiencing a dramatic absence of political citizenship in its full sense.

(Derrida, in Borradori, 2003). As in all the other realms where identity claims are proliferating, contemporary landscapes of gender and sexual politics requires naming and honoring difference to contest homogenizing and normalizing.

As we have underlined in the book *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights* (Corrêa et al., 2008), sexual and gender subjects, outcasts and outlaws are not a unified or consistent group. Sexual politics and life worlds are inhabited by “queers,” transgenders, “tranny boys,” “female guys,” intersex persons, and so many other self-named sexual subjects whose experiences and expressions dissolve traditional gender and sexual binaries. Heterosexual women may seek to avoid legitimizing gender orders and traditional definitions of their sexual servicing and reproductive roles imposed by states or religious dogmatic forces. Sex workers may wish to work with dignity, respect, and access to social and health services. Young people may seek private space for sexual experience and pleasure, with a variety of partners or even just one. Men may like to express their masculinity in ways that diverge from dominant norms. Marginalized gender and sexual subjects are a messy lot who continue to live and die in an unjust and hostile world. Their conditions, on the one hand, constantly reminds us of the limits of rights’ frames to address and redress violations that occur in states of exceptionality, such as zones controlled by non-state actors, prisons, refugee camps, and areas ravaged by civil strives triggered by the recreation of primordialisms and identities. But on the other hand, these same conditions do not make possible to entirely abandon the horizon of rights and universality as promises of redressing.

Gender and sexual politics, in their complex intersections with conditions prevailing under globalisms, are caught by the nefarious effects of contemporary identity machines in terms of self-containment, undue homogenizing across inequality and difference and inevitable

fragmentation. But perhaps it is not excessive to also suggest that gender and sexual politics are in a better place than other political formations that revolve around identity to interrogate the persistent essentialization of politics broadly speaking and distance itself from these effects. This is so because these are political realms linked to and informed by epistemologies that systematically question the distortive and exclusionary effects of naming and crystalizing identities, or as Judith Butler has written: “When we say ‘we’ we do nothing more than designate this as very problematic. We do not solve it. And perhaps it is, and ought to be, insoluble” (Butler, 2004, p. 24).

Hannah Arendt (1998), in *The Human Condition* explores the Latin term *quid* – which in a different connotation of *qui* also denotes “who” – to critically elaborate on the political meaning of the appearance of subjects in public spheres. In her view, the “quid” reflects “otherness” thriving in the life world and nourishes plurality as a non-negotiable foundation of politics. However, in Arendt’s thought, the otherness of “quid,” although expressing difference, is not ontologically anchored in bodies and their differences (such as racial differences). In her meditations, the non-negotiable appearance of the “quid” is coupled with a systematic effort to track the traces of our common humanity that underlies “difference.” Arendt’s conception implies a subtle dialectic between the visibility of “difference” and the erasure of ontologies that might inspire possibilities for deflecting the risks of gender and sexual politics from taking a similar narrow path as identity politics.

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