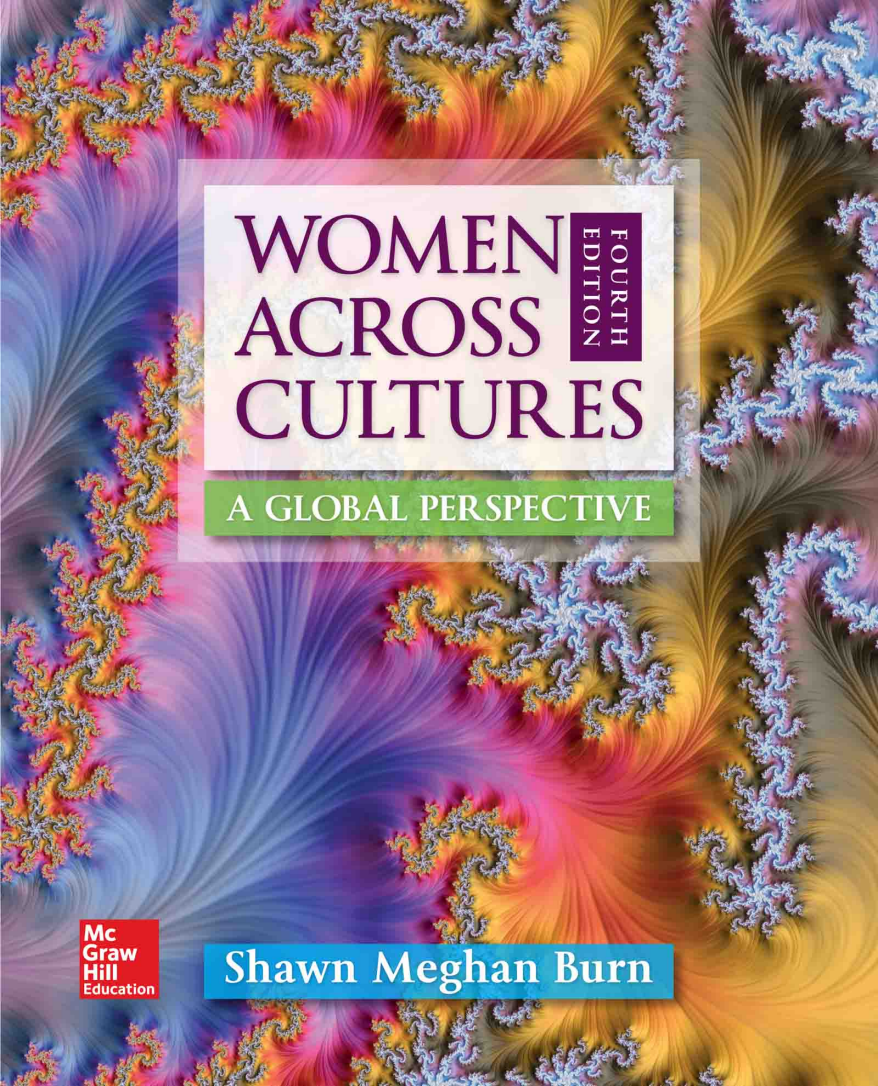
WOMEN ACROSS CULTURES
FOURTH EDITION
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
Shawn Meghan Burn
Mc Graw Hill Education

Women Across Cultures

A Global Perspective

Fourth Edition

Shawn Meghan Burn

California Polytechnic State University

Mc Graw Hill Education

WOMEN ACROSS CULTURES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, FOURTH EDITION

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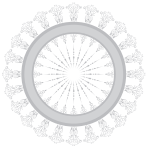
Preface



The cross-cultural study of women's issues and women's movements, the focus of this book, is fascinating and educational. It tells of women and girls' disadvantage relative to boys and men and how that disadvantage arises from the greater male rights and privilege embedded in cultures, institutions, groups, and minds. Unfortunately, this truth can be disturbing at times. But I promise you that this book is also uplifting because it is equally about hope, resilience, and the power of people to fight and right social injustices. Throughout the book are many examples of actions to address women's issues and promote gender equality—ranging from the small grassroots effort addressing local women's issues to the use of international law for improving women's status. And while there is a long way to go, I have seen remarkable progress in the almost 20 years since the first edition of *Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective.*

The global study of women is also about diversity and intersectionality and their importance for understanding the gendered human experience. Gendered discriminations are often heightened by their interaction with other discriminations such as those based on race, class, sexual orientation, age, and gender identity. The experiences and issues of women vary widely based on these and other intersections. Women's experiences as women are also strongly shaped by the particular political, social, and cultural contexts where they live, leading to diversity in women's lives and issues, and in their advocacy and activism. This diversity is true not only in our own country, but also globally. Documenting, studying, and appreciating this variety are hallmarks of global women's and gender studies and one of the major aims of this book.

I have many hopes for this fourth edition of *Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective.* I hope my readers find the global study of women as captivating and inspiring as I do. I hope that after reading the book they not only better understand how the world works but that they also feel compelled to do their part for gender equality. I hope that readers will be struck by the scope of gender injustice but equally struck by the scope of women's resistance and the possibilities for change. I hope that the book helps readers better understand and appreciate feminism, diversity, and intersectionality, as they are so often caricatured, ridiculed, and negatively stereotyped. I hope that the book reflects and honors internationally oriented women's and gender studies scholarship and the many women's movements actors and organizations that advocate and serve women.

Pedagogy

There is a lot of information in the book from a variety of fields. As a long-time teacher and writer, I am sensitive to students' concerns about how to read and master textbook content. I strive to create a reader-friendly experience. To this end, I have included a number of pedagogical elements. Headings alert readers to upcoming content. Important terms and concepts appear in boldface in the text and appear in a glossary at the end of the book. To liven up and illustrate the often technical and factual textual material, many examples, thought-provoking quotes, and bits of women's history appear in the margins. Figures graphically depict text concepts to help students pull out key themes. Each chapter includes boxed examples of feminist thought and action from all over the world, including activist profiles of individuals and groups. Study questions are listed at the conclusion of each chapter. Students may use these to make sure they understand the major points of the chapter and to structure the study of text material. Discussion questions and activities follow the study questions. These are intended to stimulate critical and creative thinking and discussion. Instructors may use these as assignments or for class discussion. The book's chapters are organized by issues rather than by country or region, but an appendix provides an overall sense of women's status on a country-by-country basis using economic, educational, and health indicators. Students can use this information as the basis for country or regional reports on the status of women. This information may be enhanced by use of the end-of-chapter informational and activist organization websites.

Changes from the Third Edition

This fourth edition of *Women Across Cultures* is a major overhaul of the third edition. All chapters were revised based on current trends and scholarship, and all include updated discussion questions, activities, figures, boxes, websites, and examples. All received statistical updates. The study of global women and women's issues is dynamic and things change, so I re-researched every chapter to include current and reliable statistics, news, and scholarship and to make sure chapters reflected current thinking on the book's topics. Chapters were rewritten to further promote reader engagement and to enhance comprehension and retention. A list of glossary terms and concepts from the chapter now appears right before the study questions. The growth of religious fundamentalisms and their effects on women led to greater coverage of this topic throughout the book. Since the last edition, social media is increasingly used as an activist tool, and this is now seen throughout the book. Chapter 11 (on transnational women's movements and women's rights as human rights) was eliminated, and the material folded into the other chapters. All chapters now include issue-relevant human rights agreements and transnational feminist action.

As far as other changes from the third to the fourth edition:

- Chapter 1, "Introduction to Global Women's Studies," was expanded slightly to better explain the conceptual frames seen throughout the book, and now

includes glossary terms and concepts as well as study questions and questions for discussion. Menstrual management is used to illustrate similarities between women and girls cross-culturally, and how intersectionality and context lead to differences.

- Chapter 2, "Women's Lower Status and Power," includes expanded coverage of son preference and gender-biased sex selection, sexual objectification, child marriage, and violence against women and girls.
- Changes to Chapter 3, "Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights," include new approaches to eliminating female genital cutting/mutilation. The section on the agents that control women's reproductive choice and health was lengthened.
- Chapter 4, "Women's Sexuality and Sexual Rights," now includes a discussion of sexual double standards and the control of women's sexuality. Other topics new to Chapter 4 (or expanded from the third edition) are SOGI-related discrimination and rights (SOGI stands for sexual orientation and gender identity), transgender women and transphobia, bisexual women and biphobia, and queer theory.
- Chapter 5, "Women's Work," incorporates new perspectives on women's unpaid care labor and women as entrepreneurs. Discussion of the motherhood wage gap was added to the section on the gender pay gap, and the sections on solutions to the gender wage gap, sexual harassment, and the glass ceiling were expanded.
- Chapter 6, "Women, Development, and Environmental Sustainability," explains in more detail why women in low-income countries spend more time on unpaid work than other women and how this impacts women and their families. Gender and climate change receives some added coverage. The chapter also reflects current scholarship on both microlending and gender mainstreaming and features expanded coverage of gender, environmental sustainability, and climate change. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (new in 2015) are also a focus.
- Chapter 7, "Women and Globalization," includes an improved discussion of neoliberal economic policies and their effects on women and explains how the effects of globalization on women are influenced by intersectionality and context. The positive effects of globalization on women's organizing are also considered. More detail on women's work in global supply chains is provided, and the discussion of migrant domestic workers now includes global care chains. A more detailed discussion of women and girls' labor in the global sex trade is provided.
- Chapter 8, "Women and Religion," includes greater coverage of fundamentalist religions and their impact on women. The discussion of feminist hermeneutics is expanded in comparison to the previous edition.
- Chapter 9, "Women and Politics," includes more details on gender differences in voting and on the symbolic and practical importance of women in formal politics. More attention is given to the role of gender stereotypes and how these

affect women in politics, including the addition of a section on women political executives and gender stereotypes. There is expanded coverage of gender quotas and non-electoral system strategies as ways of increasing women's representation in formal politics. A relatively new area of study, violence against women in politics, was added. In the discussion of women world leaders, women heads of state and women as heads of government are more clearly delineated, and the section reworked to reflect changes in how women come to hold these positions.

- Chapter 10, "Women's Movements," now begins with a clear definition of women's movements, the ways they differ, and the distinction between feminist movements and other women's movements. The topic of transnational feminist movements and networks, covered in the last edition in Chapter 11, now appears in Chapter 10.
- The Appendix, "Statistical Indicators of Women's Status by Country," now includes a country's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index from the World Economic Forum. This index uses benchmarks of national gender gaps on economic, political, education, and health criteria to rank countries on gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunity. The score may range from 1 (complete equality/parity between women and men) to 0 (complete inequality/imparity between women and men). Additional resources for student research are also provided in the Appendix introduction.

Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to my late colleague and global women's and gender studies mentor, Patrice Engle. Patrice was a shining example of the scholar-activist, and she literally saved lives through her work on maternal and child health. She left us far too soon. I must also thank all those who are working to bring about women's equality and all the great scholars (and journalists) whose work appears on the pages here—these are my heroes, and I feel I have been in the presence of greatness by reading their work and studying their efforts.

Writing a book is a time-consuming endeavor. It is also something that few of us can do without support. That includes the practical support provided by undergraduate senior psychology student Madelyne Spivek, who gathered the material for the Appendix (bless her for her passion for global women's issues and her attention to detail). I am also grateful to the reviewers who provided thoughtful feedback for this fourth edition, and I hope that they feel their suggestions were honored. These instructor-reviewers were Teri Ann Bengiveno, Beauty Bragg, Kelliann Flores, Stacy Keltner, Ellen Taylor, Mandy Webster, and Michele Wilson.

Thanks also to Francesca King and Ryan Warczynski (my editors at McGraw-Hill), Kimberly Beauchamp (my editor at MPS North America), and the team at MPS Limited.

Authors also benefit from emotional support, so an extra-big thank you to my husband, the always supportive and entertaining Gene Courter, and my son, the brilliant and talented artist Kane Lynch. I so appreciate their support of me, my writing, and their support for gender equality and feminism. And to my sister, Kevyn Burn, and my other women friends, thank you for the support, the fun, and the sisterhood.

Women Across Cultures

A Global Perspective

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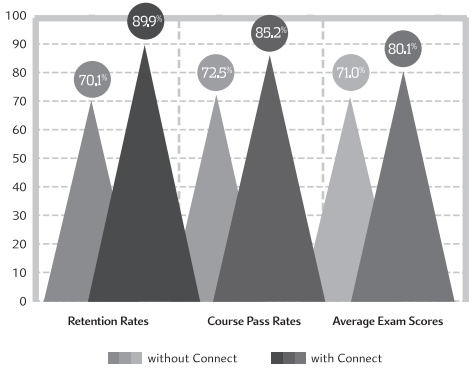

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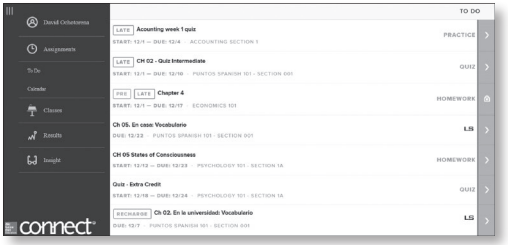

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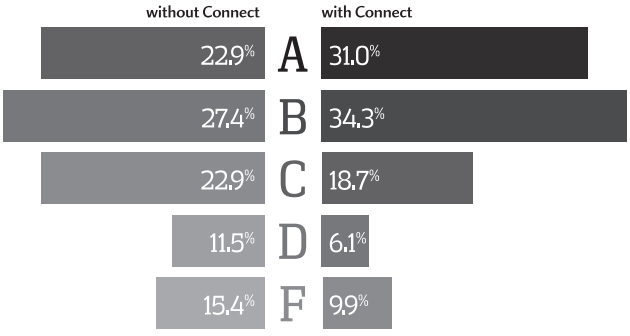

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1 Introduction to Global Women's Studies

We must be courageous in speaking out about the issues that concern us; we must not bend under the weight of spurious arguments invoking culture or traditional values. No value worth the name supports the oppression and enslavement of women.

—Dr. Nafis Sadik, Fourth World Women's Conference, 1995

The global study of women emphasizes how women's issues and activism are similar cross-culturally, yet different due to contextual and intersectional factors. ©Richard Ross/Getty Images

This global women's and gender studies book is about women's issues and gender equality cross-culturally. The study of global women documents women's status worldwide. A key area of focus is the understanding of **gender inequality**, the disadvantage of girls and women relative to boys and men. Unfortunately, gender inequality is still extensive with enormous implications for women and girls everywhere. Global women's and gender studies links gender inequality to cultural practices that are embedded in social, economic, political, and legal systems and describes how these are targets of change. Considerations of diversity, and the intersections between gender and other variables such as region, race, class, and sexual orientation, are essential to global women's studies. Global women's and gender studies is interdisciplinary and draws on research and theory from psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, religion, political science, medicine, public health, public policy, history, philosophy, and law.

The global study of women is rich and rewarding because it requires learning about different customs, religions, and forms of government and provides insights into women's diverse lives. Studying women's lives in other cultures also inspires a profound appreciation for women. The great strength possessed by women, and what they accomplish despite their customary lower status and power, are truly amazing. That said, the cross-cultural study of women is at times very difficult, shocking, and disturbing. You may be horrified, surprised, depressed, and angered at some of the gender-based abuses that continue today—in your own country as well as others. You might find that the material triggers a personal gender journey as you focus a gender lens on your own life and culture. The saying, "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you mad" (and I would add, sometimes sad), applies to the subject matter of this book. Fortunately, the bad news is tempered by courageous stories of activism and resistance, and evidence of hopeful progress. This is not just a tale of the victimization of women and girls. On the contrary, it is a tale of empowerment, activism, and change.

To provide you with a finer sense of what global women's studies is about, here are four key themes that characterize the field. These themes are illustrated throughout the book.

"The feminist movement challenges the very root of patriarchy, the idea that one person can be humanly superior to others and entitled to superiority over them."
Marilyn French

"Man was not made a tyrant by nature, but had been made tyrannical by the power which had, by general consent, been conferred upon him; she merely wished that woman might be entitled to equal rights, and acknowledged as the equal of man, not his superior."
Lucretia Mott, speaking at the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, 1848

Theme 1: Global Women's and Gender Studies Sees Gender Inequality as a Historical, Sociocultural Phenomenon

It is hard to understand why girls and women are so disadvantaged economically, politically, legally, and socially relative to boys and men. Why, despite women's respected role as the bearers of children and caregivers, and their many cultural, historical, and economic contributions, are they often treated as second-class citizens? Why is gender equality so hard to achieve? Global women's and gender studies scholars typically answer these questions with materialist and sociocultural explanations.

Materialist explanations for gender inequality view the oppression of women as a social, historical, but alterable phenomenon (Khan, 2006). Family and

"To look for origins is, in the end, to think that we are something other than the product of our history and our present social world, and more particularly, that our gender systems are primordial, transhistorical, and essentially unchanging in their roots."
Michelle Rosaldo

"The oppression of women in any society is in its turn a statement of an economic structure built on land ownership, systems of inheritance and parenthood, and the patriarchal family as an inbuilt social unit."
Nawal El Saadawi

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695) was a brilliant Mexican poet and intellectual. To avoid marriage and to continue her self-education, Juana entered a Catholic convent. When told by a bishop to give up her writing, she spiritedly defended the right of women to engage in intellectual pursuits, saying in a 1681 letter, "Who has forbidden women to engage in private and individual studies? Have they not as rational a mind as men do?" Ultimately, she lost her battle and was forced to give up her writing and her books.

social institutions that arose out of material forces such as the ownership of private property led to men's dominance and women's subordination and these materialist forces maintain gender inequality. For example, many societies and cultures are structured such that women are economically dependent on men, and this makes it difficult for them to leave situations of abuse. The idea that gender inequality is embedded in family, cultural, economic and political social structures is sometimes referred to as **patriarchy,** and social systems that serve men's dominance over women are referred to as **patriarchal**. Materialist theorists, such as historian Gerda Lerner (1986), trace the development of patriarchy to the Neolithic period when agriculture developed and the labor of children was needed to increase production and further surpluses. At that point women came to be viewed as commodities—resources to be acquired, traded, and controlled.

Like materialist explanations, **social constructivist** and **sociocultural explanations** emphasize how gendered power relations are socially constructed. These explanations also assume that gender is *dynamic*—active and changing rather than permanently fixed. Sociocultural perspectives on gender inequality also explain *how* gender relations became embedded in culture and are passed on socially. The sociocultural approach also distinguishes between **sex**, which refers to inborn biological differences between girls/women and boys/men relating to reproduction and sex organs, and **gender**, which refers to the socially constructed roles, behavior, activities, and attributes a given society considers appropriate for girls/women and boys/men.

The sociocultural approach does not deny the relevance of differences in the bodies of girls/women and boys/men. Indeed, these differences create unique issues and inequalities for girls/women. For example, menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing impact the lives of girls and women in important ways. Many girls worldwide lack access to safe and clean ways to manage their periods and experience educational disadvantage because they miss weeks of school, or drop out altogether. Where affordable contraception is scarce, women face unplanned pregnancies, which may lead to unsafe or expensive abortion. When women give birth without the presence of skilled medical professionals, they can experience lifelong disability resulting from obstetric fistula. Employment absences due to pregnancy and childbirth often affect women's salaries and career progression.

Some anthropologists and historians see gender inequality as originating in biological differences between women and men. Think about it this way. At one time, all cultures lacked reliable birth control and had no infant formula or convenient ways to manage menstruation. This, along with men's greater size and strength, made some types of work more suitable for women since they spent much of their adult lives pregnant, nursing, and menstruating. Women's work became concentrated in the **private sphere** or domestic domain of the home, and men performed the labor in the **public sphere** outside the home because they were not constrained by child care (Sanday, 1974). In other words, a gendered division of labor arose, and women ended up doing the work that was compatible with the unavoidable female life course of bearing and nursing children (Chafetz, 1990; Lerner, 1986). Once societies based on money evolved, men's labor appeared to have more value because it was more likely to be used in exchange for money

or goods. Money-based economies also increased women's dependence on men because women's ability to make money was limited given their responsibilities in the private sphere. Men's dominance in the public sphere led to them having greater property rights and economic and political power, which they then used to further consolidate their power over women. Political and economic systems were constructed based on these traditional gender-role arrangements.

The sociocultural approach explains the mechanisms by which we learn to "do gender." Once a gendered division of labor arose and women and men had different roles (**gender roles**), people then constructed **gender stereotypes** (beliefs about the qualities of each gender) and **gender norms** (social rules regarding what is appropriate for each gender to do) that supported these divisions. These were passed on culturally through **gender socialization** (the process by which societal beliefs and expectations about gender are instilled in us). Parents, peers, myths, literature, media, religion, and so on, teach children what is expected of them based on their gender in order to prepare them for adulthood and help them get along in society. Conformity to gender norms and gender roles is maintained by granting social status and approval to conformers and by ostracizing violators. A desire for social approval and fear of social rejection are partly why people choose gender conformity and may not rebel against gender-unequal cultural practices.

There is also a reciprocal relationship between gender stereotypes and gender roles—in other words, gender stereotypes lead to gendered roles but gendered roles also lead to gender stereotypes. This idea comes from social psychology's **social roles theory** (Eagly, 1987). People develop gender stereotypes about women and men from seeing them in different (gendered) roles, because we assume that if men and women are doing different things it must be because they are truly different. For example, if there are few women in leadership positions, people assume this is because women aren't suited for leadership.

According to social roles theory, once people develop gender stereotypes, these beliefs operate as expectations regarding appropriate roles for people from those groups—in this way gender stereotypes lead to gender roles. For example, if stereotypes suggest men are more suitable for leadership because they are more assertive and dominant than women (a gender stereotype), then men are more likely to be groomed and hired for leadership roles. These processes appear to operate in all cultures and explain how gender is socially constructed and maintained. Social roles theory maintains that because gender is socially constructed, it is dynamic and can be changed if gender stereotypes or gender roles change. For example, the stereotype that women aren't suitable for leadership roles is eroded when people see more women in leadership roles. Conversely, as this stereotype wanes, the number of women in leadership roles increases.

Cross-cultural and temporal (across time) variations in women's treatment testify to the large part culture plays in gender inequality. In many parts of the world, gender roles have changed rapidly, and as Rosenthal and Rubin (1982, p. 711) once said, these changes have occurred "faster than the gene can travel." Also, anthropological evidence tells us that gender inequality hasn't always been so. For example, today's anthropologists generally agree that in the foraging societies of early history, which covered much more time than the 120,000 years or so

"Female subordination runs so deep that it is still viewed as inevitable or natural rather than as a politically constructed reality maintained by patriarchal interests, ideology, and institutions."
Charlotte Bunch

"Men and women live on a stage, on which they act out their assigned roles, equal in importance. The play cannot go on without both performers. Neither of them 'contributes' more or less to the whole; neither is marginal or dispensable. But the stage set is conceived, painted, and defined by men. Men have written the play, have directed the show... assigned themselves the most interesting, heroic parts."
Gerda Lerner

from the Neolithic to the present, the genders were probably complementary and of equal importance (Ehrenberg, 1989). Even today there are some cultures with egalitarian gender relations (Bonvillian, 2001). Gender-egalitarian cultures were also common to hunter-gatherer and horticultural societies prior to colonization (Sanday, 1981), and there is some evidence from ancient times of matriarchies, societies in which women had greater power than men (cf. Bachofen, 1967; Diner, 1975; Gimbutas, 1991; Gross, 1996).

As you will see throughout the book, there is good evidence that gender inequality is in fact socially constructed and embedded in our legal, economic, political, and cultural practices. Our hope for change lies in our transformation of these human-created systems, beliefs, and practices.

Christine de Pizan (approximately 1365–1430), a Frenchwoman, was the most successful female writer of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, in her 1405 book *The City of Ladies*, she became one of the first to argue in writing against women's inferiority.

Theme 2: Global Women's and Gender Studies Is About Activism and Empowerment

Although global women's and gender studies seeks a scholarly understanding of gender inequality cross-culturally, this is not an end in itself; the hope is that this will serve change towards gender equality and contribute to women's **empowerment** (their ability to advocate for their rights and have decision-making power in their public and private lives). The task of global women's studies is a positive one rather than a negative one. It is less about women as victims and more about what women (and their male allies) do to solve the unique problems faced by women due to their gender. It will quickly become apparent to you that wherever women's rights are violated, there are women that resist and rally for change, even in the face of social rejection and physical danger. Global women's studies illustrates that gender equality activism is not exclusively the domain of Western women. In fact, there is a long history of struggle for women's equality in the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. You will read about these efforts worldwide to increase the status of women throughout the book. Box 1.1 provides an example from Afghanistan.

"The women we honor today teach us three very important lessons: One, that as women, we must stand up for ourselves. The second, as women we must stand up for each other. And finally, as women we must stand up for justice for all."
Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States at the International Women of Courage Awards, which honored women from Afghanistan, Guatemala, Iraq, Malaysia, Niger, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Yemen who have stood up for women and human rights.

Global women's and gender studies is a feminist endeavor and conceives of feminism as a commitment to changing the structures that keep women lower in status and power (Sen & Grown, 1987). That said, not all gender equality activists and organizations addressing women's issues identify as feminist (see Chapter 10). Also, despite general agreement that feminism is about social transformation and acting for gender equality, the truth is that feminist ideologies, identities, issues, strategies, and actions vary considerably. A truly **global feminism** recognizes this diversity and acknowledges diverse meanings of feminism, each responsive to the needs and issues of women in different regions, societies, and times. As you'll see later in this chapter (and throughout the book), acknowledging and appreciating this diversity is a key part of global women's studies.

"I'm a little grayer than I was eight years ago, but this is what a feminist looks like."
U.S. President Barack Obama speaking in spring 2016

Despite what some people say, we do not yet live in a post-feminist world where gender equality renders feminism obsolete. If you are not yet convinced of this, the next chapter highlights some important women's issues and gender disparities that will likely persuade you that there is still much to be done to achieve

Sixty percent of American women and thirty percent of American men self-identify as feminist.
Washington Post/Kaiser Foundation Survey

BOX 1.1 *Activist Profile: The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)*

RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, began in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1977 as an independent political/social organization of Afghan women fighting for human rights and for social justice. Its mission was to give voice to the silenced women of Afghanistan. After the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, RAWA became directly involved in the war of resistance. Many RAWA activists were imprisoned and tortured. One of RAWA's founders, the beloved Meena, was assassinated in 1987.

Once the fundamentalist Islamist Taliban overthrew the Soviets in 1992, the focus of RAWA's political struggle became human and women's rights. RAWA drew international attention to the oppression of women under the Taliban and ran secret schools to educate girls (educating girls is forbidden by the Taliban). War and political struggle continue in Afghanistan, where RAWA provides assistance to women victims of war and draws international attention to the gendered oppression of Afghan women and girls. Over a million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan. RAWA runs orphanages, schools, literacy programs, a hospital, and mobile health teams in refugee camps. For more information on RAWA, go to www.rawa.org.

gender equality, even in your own country, and despite notable progress. Box 1.2 talks about how feminism is often negatively stereotyped and misunderstood by those that seek to reduce its transformative power.

Global women's and gender studies emphasize the important role of **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** and other collective action as agents of women's empowerment and equality. Governments can enact and enforce policies and laws that promote gender equality and address women's issues (a topic of this book), but they don't usually do this without sustained pressure from women's activism. Even once laws are in place, more action is usually needed to ensure their implementation and enforcement, and to educate women so they may exercise their rights. Much of the work of transforming women's legal and human rights into reality is done by women's nongovernmental organizations. For example, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) notes that laws to protect women's property rights now exist in most countries, and owning property is often a woman's ticket out of poverty. But many women don't know how to exercise their property rights. ICRW works with other NGOs to help women assert their legal rights to assets and property.

NGOs range from small, local grassroots organizations to large international organizations, including **WINGOs (women's international nongovernmental organizations)** and **GRSOs (women's grassroots support organizations)**. The activities of NGOs are varied. They include advocating for legal, societal, and cultural change to bring about gender equality. Some NGOs foster women's knowledge of their legal and human rights and empower women to advocate for themselves. Many NGOs provide services, resources, and programs to serve women's

BOX 1.2 *The "F" Word*

Are you hesitant to call yourself a feminist even though you believe in equal pay for equal work, gender equality in education, that sexual violence is a problem, that child marriage should be ended, that women should be able to control the number and spacing of their children, and that we need family-friendly employment policies? These are some of the things feminism is about. But because feminism is about challenging the privilege of some people relative to others, and because it's about transforming some long-held and cherished cultural practices and beliefs, efforts to discredit feminists and feminism abound. Type "anti-feminist" into a search engine and you'll find memes, quotes and even a "Men's Movement" suggesting that feminists are unattractive, whiny hypocritical manufacturers of self-imposed victimhood who discriminate against men. Given such stereotypes, it can take courage to identify as feminist.

All over the world, people call feminists "man-haters," "anti-family," and "lesbian." In some places, people cast suspicion by insisting feminism is a culturally insensitive Western import. In others, it's dismissed as only about the issues of privileged women. Given negative stereotypes of feminism, it's unsurprising that many activists, organizations, and movements working on women's issues don't embrace the feminist label (see Chapter 10).

An American study found women that endorse feminist beliefs often hesitate to describe themselves as feminists because of negative stereotypes of feminists, such as "man-hating" (Anderson, Kanner, & Elsayegh, 2009). Ironically, that study found women that identified as feminists reported lower levels of hostility toward men than did nonfeminists.

Canadian research participants asked to provide adjectives describing feminists most frequently said: man-hating, lesbian, unhygienic, angry, behaves like a man, and unattractive (Bashir et al., 2013). The Canadian researchers also found these negative stereotypes led people to avoid affiliating with feminists and advocating for feminist causes. The researchers explained that people avoid association with stigmatized others so that they don't become targets of prejudice and social rejection. Fortunately, in my experience, once people learn more about gender inequality and feminism, their negative and inaccurate views fall away, and they are inspired to act on behalf of gender equality.

economic, health, and safety needs. WINGOs form international coalitions of women's NGOs to represent the interests of women and girls in intergovernmental agreements and policies. Websites of gender equality and women's issues NGOs are provided at the end of every chapter, beginning with Chapter 2. Also starting with Chapter 2, you will find a feature called "Action Opportunities," so that you can take action on issues that move you. Many of the websites listed at the end of each chapter also provide ways to help.

Theme 3: Global Women's and Gender Studies Takes a Multicultural, Intersectional, Contextualized Approach

The cross-cultural study of women and gender inequality requires a multicultural approach. **Multiculturalism**, or interculturalism, emphasizes helping people to understand, accept, and value the cultural differences between groups, with the

ultimate goal of reaping the benefits of diversity (Ferdman, 1995). The goal is to both celebrate differences and emphasize the dimensions of commonality or inclusion that supersede these differences (Devine, 1995). Although it sounds contradictory, women are both the same and different cross-culturally and intra-culturally (within the same culture, country, or region), and this matters for our global study of women.

The Importance of Similarity

In some ways, women all over the world have a lot in common. Most live in patriarchal societies and cultures with legal, political, economic, and cultural structures that support gender inequality (see Chapter 2). The majority of women everywhere work extremely hard in both paid and unpaid labor, get married to men, structure their lives according to their children's needs, worry about unplanned pregnancies, experience gender discrimination, and are at some risk for gender violence such as rape, sexual assault, or domestic violence. The majority of women live in heteropatriarchal cultures where heterosexuality is expected and where bearing and caring for children are a chief source of status and identity for women. The shared biology of women also gives rise to commonalities such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering that affect women everywhere.

Women's commonalities are an important topic of this book and create connection between diverse women as well as form the basis for **transnational feminist movements** and networks spanning across multiple nations. At the core of these movements is the belief that women are entitled to the same rights as men, regardless of where the women live, and their ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and social class. These movements involve the coming together of feminist NGOs to work across regional or international borders in coalitions and campaigns (Porter, 2007). However, transnational feminisms recognize diversity and acknowledge that there are diverse meanings of feminism, each responsive to the needs and issues of women in different regions, societies, and times. Diversity and difference remain central values in transnational feminisms, values to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances (Mohanty, 2003).

"We…find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously." *Combahee River Collective, a group of Black American feminists*

The Importance of Difference

Although women undoubtedly share certain experiences due to their gender, their experiences as women vary widely depending upon their race, class, ethnicity, social class, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, region, and religion, whether they are refugees, immigrants, or natives, and so on. The interplay of these different social categories is referred to as **intersectionality** (Cole, 2009). Gender is "intersectional" because the way it is enacted and experienced depends on the way it interacts with other social categories and identities. Awareness of intersectionality is critical to an inclusive study of women globally, and global women's studies embodies an intersectional approach to gender.

"I am a black feminist. I recognize that my power as well as my primary oppressions came as a result of my blackness as well as my womanness, and therefore my struggles on both fronts are inseparable." *Audre Lorde*