TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST DATA VISUALIZATION MAPPING OF ARTISTS’ RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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**Problem Statement: Feminist Mapping of Art to Reveal Contextual Complexities of Violence Against Women**

The purpose of this participatory feminist mapping of 10 to 20 artists’ narratives is to gain insights into the cultural and political contextual complexities of violence against women (VAW). Further, the study will present localized nuances of VAW to contribute to building coalitions toward recognition, reparation, and prevention of VAW. Coalitions refer to bringing “diverse constituencies together in the temporary pursuit of shared specific goals” (Lyshaug, 2006, p. 78). Moreover, “images and gestures can function in coalitional ways” (Zein & Taylor, 2018, p. 115). Drawing from the works of artists around the world, I will use a mapping platform to collaboratively construct an artistic coalition to combat VAW, bringing artists and their artworks in conversation with one another. My research question is: How can mapping artists’ narratives and their artworks support transnational feminist coalitional building from insights into diverse cultural and political systemic roots of VAW?

Drawing upon intersectional feminist perspectives of gender-based violence (GBV), which encompass and are often used interchangeably with VAW, this study rejects the biological determinism of sexualities and, therefore, refuses to pathologize women for their circumstances (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Affecting women disproportionately, GBV is a means of social control and domination within patriarchal systems, manifesting in a multitude of ways, including “sexual, physical, and emotional violence and neglect or deprivation” as well as economic harm or threats of violence within both public and private spheres (Mittal & Singh, 2020, p. 2; The UN Refugee Agency). Denying the manifestation of GBV as inherent human behavior, feminist perspectives shift emphasis away from the individual victim towards an analysis of contributing societal forces (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This approach stands in contrast to many studies of GBV in the arts (Christensen, 2018) that center trauma-based approaches, emphasizing aspects of disempowerment through the examination of the physical, social, and psychological effects of trauma (American Psychiatric Association,
2000; Escueta & Butterwick, 2012). Though trauma-based approaches are critical to self-healing and aiding in issues such as “anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, self-blaming and difficulty with adjustment” (Centers for Disease Control, 2014; Christensen, 2018; Najdowski & Ullman, 2009; Rees et al., 2011; World Health Organization, 2010), such approaches often neglect structural or systemic issues that can lead to deeper comprehension of the causality and origins of violence. Without structural and systemic change, the bitter consequences of VAW exist within a perpetual cycle of mending and repairing. By recognizing issues related to VAW that reside within society itself, researchers and activists can develop understanding, holding the potential to transform society through changing attitudes, policies, and laws.

In this study, I will use the term VAW, rather than GBV to narrow the scope of the project, shifting the emphasis to those who identify as women. The United Nations (1993) defines violence against women as an “act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (p. 2). This definition includes gaslighting, an abusive psychological manipulation that leads individuals to question their realities (Davis & Ernest, 2019). According to the Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM) (2017), “evolving definitions of GBV” have caused a movement away from a “specific focus on women and girls,” resulting in a “lack of theoretical rigor, as well as the failure to address the broad range of violence that affects males and LGBTQI groups (p. 1). In addition, the use of the broad term of GBV limits the ability to understand the social changes necessary to understand the needs for social change in the lives of women and girls and can serve to “flatten the gender hierarchy between males and females” (COFEM, 2017, p. 5).
Feminist Data Visualization Mapping

I draw from Catherine D’Ignacio, assistant professor of Urban Science and Planning and director of the Data + Feminism Lab at MIT, and Lauren F. Klein’s, an associate professor English and Quantitative Theory and Methods and director of the Digital Humanities Lab at Emory University, (2015) core principles of feminist data visualization to “rethink binaries” and “embrace pluralism” by presenting multiple perspectives of VAW, dislocating hierarchies of knowledge through valuation of each artist. Data visualizations are the strategic use of data to make knowledge observable, revealing possibilities for change or innovation (D’Ignazio & Bhargava, 2020). Feminist perspectives on data visualization recognize the inequities of over and underrepresentation and scrutinize where data is derived, acknowledging that the vast majority of data is produced and distributed by privileged men (D’Ignacio & Klein, 2020).

I will utilize feminist mapping to visualize a transnational coalition of artists from a group of diverse artists working toward a common goal, to end VAW (Mohanty, 2003). Looking at artists from a range of cultures and geographic locations, I use the term diverse to represent the wide range of situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) or understanding based on identity and place that shapes experiences and interpretation of VAW. For the purpose of this study, coalition refers to local and transnational networks that “build partnerships and alliances so that transformations in any terrain of structural conditions strengthen the possibilities and options for further transformations” (Ackerly, 2021, p. 2, 2001, 2008, 2018). Most importantly, coalitions work “in concert without ignoring or suppressing the politically significant differences that divide them (Lyshaug, 2006, p. 78). As defined by Mohanty (2003), solidarity formed through coalition building highlights the efforts of diverse groups to work together for a common cause. This definition of coalitions rejects the idea of “singular subjectivity” in which a group “single-mindedly” organizes around “one dimension of
identity in order to act” and instead recognizes diverse and layered aspects of experience (Fowlkes, 1997, p. 106). For my study’s purpose, it is unnecessary that artists formally recognize themselves as part of a coalition, despite working towards a common goal to end VAW. However, it is the intention of this study to provide a foundation for the construction of networks and conversations,

Feminist mapping, according to art education scholars Karen Keifer-Boyd and Deborah Smith-Shank (2012), disrupts patriarchal approaches to mapmaking through the use of nonlinear and nonhierarchical methods to “re-write the world in nonexploitive terms” (Pavlovskaya & St. Martin, 2007, p. 584). Feminist scholars Alexander and Mohanty (2010) advocate for using transnational cartographic frameworks to highlight histories of colonization and to question inherent hierarchies rooted in place. Illuminating the work of local artists within the context of transnational movements against VAW, such as #MeToo, this study brings artistic works from multiple geographic locations in conversation with one another, revealing relationships across difference. Emphasizing localized expressions of activism against VAW, feminist mapping can shed light on nuances embedded in place. Examples of feminist mapping activism can be seen in works such as Sawad Brooks and Beth Stryker's (1996) “Radar Web,” which captures the reports of the U.S. military’s “violation against Okinawan women, land, and ecosystem” in Japan utilizing a web Internet designed to resemble butterflies trapped in a radar system associated with the US military nicknamed “elephant cage” (Cheang, 1996, para. 3).

When addressing violence against women transnationally, communicatory issues arise regarding how activists and researchers define various manifestations of violence in particular contexts. Global organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), attempt to remedy a lack of cross-cultural understanding by working with a team of experts to create viable linguistic definitions.
However, the notion of cultural contingency or fluctuation of ideas between cultures, and even the same culture, suggests that universal language to describe violence against women may not be adequate or even possible (Mason et al., 2008). However, the concept of a common language can be applied to global movements against VAW, which utilize hashtags to signify diverse experiences, while advocating for social change to stop VAW. Prioritizing a resistance to Eurocentric worldviews, this study seeks to conceptualize transnational feminist movements against VAW in a manner that illuminates cultural, political, and intersectional differences.

**Intersectional Transnational Feminist Perspectives**

Historically associated with notions of a “global sisterhood,” or an alliance based on sexual identity, global feminist movements are often critiqued for their neglect of the complexity of power structures that shape individual’s lives (Herr, 2014, p. 2). Jayati Lal, a Ph.D. in sociology and associate professor of Women’s. Gender and Sexuality Studies at Wake Forest University, suggests recasting global feminisms to aid in understanding the interactions and spread of systems and beliefs across borders and terrains (Lal et al., 2010). This study will utilize both transnational and intersectional feminisms to inspire coalition-building between artists and their works across geographical borders. I stress the use of the term *feminisms* rather than the singular *feminism* to emphasize women’s movements are not monolithic. In my study, I include participation and responses from those who may not identify as feminist. While looking at exclusively local feminisms based on the assumption of “ahistorical difference,” scholars purport a largely false vision of “autonomous feminisms” (Lal et al., 2010, p. 16). In contrast, my study highlights how artists work transnationally in the context of global VAW movements, examining how multiplicities of voices join in artistic dialogue.
Drawing from Sylvanna Falcon, a Ph.D. in sociology and associate professor of Latin American and Latino/a studies, my research combines intersectional and transnational discourses to create a “contextualized intersectionality,” which recognizes “intersectionality within transnational organizing spaces,” such as in activist frameworks (2015, p. 7). Particularly, intersectional and transnational frameworks are beneficial for developing coalitions across borders and questioning how VAW affects women of various geographies differently (Vanner, 2019). In this study, I will utilize transnational feminism, or feminism without borders (Mohanty, 2003), to consider coalitions comprised of individual artists working against VAW, blurring the lines between local and global frameworks and recognizing their ability to influence each other directly. Utilizing the theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), which highlights the criticality of social categories’ interconnectivity, such as gender, race, and class, this study will explore diversity of VAW across identities, which are linked to availability of resources such as access to education, healthcare, and social services relative to systems of oppression. Intersectionality recognizes that oppressions are “not additive” but rather, “interactive and mutually constructed” (Olesen, 2018, p. 158; Acker, 2008; Andersen, 2005; Collins, 2009; Hancock, 2007; Shields., 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Particularly, intersectionality recognizes that “women’s multiple social identities” and systems of oppression can serve as ways to understand and stop VAW (Damant et al., 2008, p.131). Therefore, when looking at VAW transnationally, it is critical to not only consider the politics of location, but the politics of identities within certain areas, and recognition of how they may change or shift with the crossing of borders. Through analysis of artists narratives and artworks, I will examine the role of intersectional identities in the manifestation of violence.

**Background to the Study: Violence Against Women in Art History**
Pervasive throughout human history, violence against women (VAW) traverses geographic and cultural boundaries, weaving in and out of the divergent realities of class, race, nationality, and ethnicity. Prevalent throughout art history, violations of women dominate canonical imagery, glorifying the masculine force of “heroic” rape and extolling the perpetrators of sexual crimes. Such force appears in examples, such as Poussin's allegorical “Rape of the Sabines” (1637-1638), exhibited at The Louvre in Paris, in which the artist depicts the brutal abduction of the Sabine women at a Roman feast, a violent act perpetrated to compensate for the shortage of women to ensure growth and prosperity of the Roman nation (Guillaume, n.d.). Nothing short of patriotic and heroic, the “Rape of the Sabines” lauds the Sabine women themselves as mothers of the first Roman citizens (Wolfthal, 1999). From this perspective, women were not victims of terrible violence and abduction, but rather, rape was seen as a crime upon male relatives or guardians, denying women their personhood and authority over their own bodies (Wolfthal, 1999). The exaltation of violent acts against women is prominent throughout art historical texts. Notably, the frequently used Janson's survey art history text contains nine rape scenes, of which the authoritative text classifies eight scenes as heroic, in which the aggressor resembles a God or valiant character (Wolfthal, 1999).

Though Western Art History often lionizes VAW, many artists have retorted through creative resistance. Such responses against VAW were particularly visible in the 1960s and 1970s, amidst the background of the resurgent feminist movement. Challenging the illustrious narratives of rape that dominated textbooks and museums, artists used their work as a vehicle to resist sexual violence, foster awareness of the problem, and promote social change. Artists such as “Yoko Ono, Suzanne Lacy, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, and Naima Ramos-Chapman” questioned the violence directed at women's bodies (Cohen, 2020, para. 3). For example, in Yoko Ono's “Cut Piece” (1964), Ono invited audience members to cut off
pieces of her clothing with scissors, giving the participant the option of revealing the female body through a destructive act (Phaidon, 2015). In the 1980s, artists such as Faith Ringgold addressed VAW from racialized perspectives, contextualizing violence within chronicles of subjugation and persecution. In her “Slave Rape Story Quilt” (1984), Ringgold depicts VAW complicated by histories of racial oppression, revealing legacies of injustices to illuminate intersectional experiences. However, such artwork's audience was limited to those who visited shows, exhibitions, and galleries, restricting exposure to the privileged minority, restricting artists' ability to challenge hegemonic culture on an expansive scale.

Often recognized for the potential to evade the physical constraints of the gendered body, the Internet, and digital technologies offered a hopeful refuge for artists and academics combatting VAW in the 1990s (Sollfrank, 1998). Particularly, cyberfeminists utilized the Internet to form “real and virtual coalitions,” joining together in solidarity to combat the violence of women's omission from technological spaces (Von Oldenburg & Reiche, 2001, p. 17). For example, the First Cyberfeminist International, held in Kassel, Germany, in September of 1997, created safe spaces for those who identify as women to conduct research, experiment, design, and innovate, including a cyberfeminist server, mailing lists, and in-person gatherings (Sollfrank, 1997). Exploring the fluidity of identity in online landscapes, cyberfeminists designed innovative platforms with nonhierarchical domains, opposing patriarchal systems of control (Fernandez & Wilding, 2002). However, such utopian perspectives were limited in their recognition of difference and failed to predict the violence that women experience within online environments.

**Context of the Study: Artist Activists in the Digital Realm**

While violence against women, ranging from harassment to phone apps used for stalking, is proliferated through digital technologies, the Internet provides a locality to foster solidarity, collective identity and connect women across the continents (Stephan, 2013; Suzor
et al., 2019). Lauded as a new source of empowerment and resistance, digital media such as Facebook and Instagram serve as platforms for feminist activism (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Turley & Fisher, 2018). Gaining a broad audience through thousands of viewers, many artists use online platforms to engage in social activism. A “new frontier” for women's rights advocates, discussions on social media join women globally, providing them with a “new space to speak up and be heard” through hashtags such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, #OrangeTheWorld, #YesAllWomen, #SayHerName, and #WhyIStayed (UN Women, 2019).

The massive engagement with the #MeToo movement is exemplified through Erin Gallagher's (2017) data visualization of #MeToo, visually revealing the MeToo movement's sheer magnitude, highlighting the flows of information and areas where the message of solidarity against sexual abuse and harassment is dispersed (Cascone, 2017). Encompassing the globe, Gallagher's visualization serves as a reminder of human interconnectivity online. Through the examination of the #MeToo movement, scholars can see a range of unique responses to VAW that pertain to intersectional identities, identities, and geographies.

Initiated by activist Tarana Burke in 2006, the #MeToo movement started within the United States to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual violence that many women endure in silence, struggling with private pain (Sigurdardottir & Halldorsdottir, 2021). Rising to the forefront in response to a twitter hashtag by actress Alyssa Milano, the movement gained steam under the sexual assault accusations faced by Harvey Weinstein (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018). Artists responded to the activist discourse worldwide, socially engaging in critical conversations through visual imagery and performance, frequently accessible through social media platforms. For example, in Los Angeles, California, Claire Salvo (2018-2019) created a stippling portrait series, documenting the stories of survivors of sexual assault in her “ME: WE” series (clairesalvo.com). In Karachi, Pakistan, young playwright Elsa Sajjad
wrote and produced a play based on the silent but widespread issue of sexual harassment, often seen as socially acceptable (Vistro, 2017).

Although the collective language of hashtag activism, such as #MeToo activates violence’s “speakability,” through its resounding presence on a global stage, it reveals truths while concealing culturally specific complexities, ignoring local histories and layers of oppression that lie beneath the surface (Throsby & Alexander, 2008, p. 1). Artists' works can help elaborate on the intricacies of VAW through visual narrative, embedding localized nuances in their imagery. Such nuances are present in the work of Ram Devineni, Vikas K. Menon, and Dan Goldman in the Indian comic, “Priya's Shakti,” which utilizes Hindu mythologies to combat rape, and its resulting social stigmas, such as shame and victim-blaming (Priya’s Shakti, 2014). As feminist thought moves away from monolithic perspectives of VAW (Crenshaw, 1989; Mohanty, 1984, 2003), artistic responses can provide insight into local distinctions in VAW, such as histories, cultures, and politics to illuminate “micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 223).

Current trends in feminism, such as post-cyber feminism, suggest the need to combat marginalized narratives' absence and erasures through intersectional approaches (Walsh, 2017). Notably, the aims of post-cyber feminists emphasize inclusivity and multiplicity of voices, emphasizing solidarity through the co-construction of knowledge (Hester, 2016). Artists participating from a broad range of geographical locations offer opportunities to better understand VAW, bringing diverse perspectives that can situate knowledges and are readily available all over the world through digital technologies. For example, the works of installation artist Elina Chauvet (2009-present), featuring hundreds of red shoes to represent the abundance of femicides or gender-based homicides, are accessible via Instagram (@elinachauvet). As demonstrated in Chauvet's work, the ability to view unique artistic responses to VAW aids in the understanding of localized nuances of the problem. For
instance, Chauvet's shoes tell the story of violence against women in Mexico that “denies women equal access to public spaces and opportunities” (Lettieri, 2017, para. 2). Such practice opens a world of possibility for considering how artists work transnationally in solidarity with artists to build coalitions across difference.

**Methodology: Feminist Data Visualization Mapping Participatory Action Arts-based Research**

Drawing from the work of art education scholars Wanda B. Knight and Karen Keifer-Boyd (2019) at the Seneca Falls Dialogue workshop, this study utilizes “collective strategies” to map artists working transnationally against VAW (p. 7). Using an online mapping program, I will plot the locations of art selected for this study to visualize a coalition as intersectional entanglement of different experiences and approaches to working against VAW. Knight and Keifer-Boyd (2019) re-envision intersectionality as a form of entanglements of “social identities and circumstances that hampers one’s ability to escape, disengage or act at will: [in which] systemic changes [are] needed to address societal barriers” (p. 1). This notion of entanglements references the “relationship between material bodies and ideological standpoints” that interweave through “social, political and economic inequities” in both “complex and nuanced” ways (p. 1). Using participatory action arts-based research involving qualitative analysis of artist interviews, I will co-create a feminist map to bring to light intersectional relationships with VAW across geographies. Through the data visualization of artistic practice combatting VAW, I will work with artists to collaboratively build and explore the potential of coalitions with recognition of difference. Central to this research is meticulous attention to “representation, voice, and text to avoid replication of the researcher’ and hidden or not-so-hidden oppressions” rather than emphasize the narratives of participants (Olesen, 2018, p. 163).
When looking at data on a large scale, feminist scholars, such as Donna Haraway (1988), question the hegemonic masculine tradition or “god trick” of “seeing everywhere from nowhere” (p. 576). Calling for “embodied accounts of truth,” Haraway (1988) urges scholars to draw from the power of storytelling and positionality, rejecting notions of single transcendent truths (p. 578). In this study, I will use arts-based participatory action research methods, a form of participatory inquiry structured around creating social change (Kunt, 2020; Hutzel, 2014; Seppälä, Sarantou, & Miettinen, 2021). According to Zeynep Kunt (2020), a scholar in communications at Beykoz University, arts-based methods of participatory action research involve “community through giving access to the worlds of participants” (p. 87). Participatory action research is unique in its manner of “knowledge production by positioning ‘dialogue’ and ‘participation’ in the centre” (Kunt, 2020, p. 87).

Giving participants power over the study, my research will involve participants throughout all my research stages, developing “relationships and mutual understanding” (Kunt, 2020, p. 88; Sjöberg, 2018) and reducing the risks of misrepresentation of local contexts. Challenging conventional modes of academic knowledge-making, participatory research calls for “horizontal and democratic research practice,” which is particularly useful to decolonize thinking and to “question dominant narratives and relationships” (Seppälä, Sarantou, & Miettinen, 2021, p. 3). Because only partial knowledge can claim objectivity (Haraway, 1988), this study elevates artists’ socio-political context-specific knowledge, lived-experience, and ethics working against VAW rather than emphasizing the researcher’s situated knowledge and values.

Drawing from D’Ignazio and Klein (2020), I will plot data for co-liberation to map a movement of visual solidarity against VAW. D’Ignazio and Klein (2020) describe co-liberation as a design process people from both “dominant and minoritized groups work together to free themselves from oppressive systems” (p. 140). Specifically, data for co-
liberation is created for the purpose of building “community and solidarity and shared understanding around a civic issue” (D'Ignazio & Klein, p. 145). Data for co-liberation can be used on a large scale to emphasize community-based and complex information through participation of multiple actors, creating a plurality of voices. Most importantly, data for co-liberation can value local knowledges; while broad perspectives aid in the formation of relationships across geographies. For example, the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice (n.d.), which created as a response to a critique on overemphasis of case studies over the creation of global linkages, works collaboratively with “activists, civil society organizations, and social movements” to record ecological conflict around the world with respect to local community experiences (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020, p. 146). In this study, I will use data for co-liberation to break false binaries of big data and little data (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020), working on a global scale while simultaneously developing more specific community data to identify local nuances of VAW in the context of feminist movements against larger movements against VAW, such as #MeToo.

**Data Collection from Art, Documents, and Interviews**

Although extensive population-based surveys can offer valuable information about VAW, as well as follow trends and explore risk factors, “more in-depth qualitative research provides a means for obtaining greater insights into the settings and contexts in which violence occurs” (WHO, 2001, p. 6). According to Irving Seidman (2019), professor of qualitative research and secondary teacher education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, interviews offer a way for individuals to recount narratives and “make sense of their experience” (p. 8). Drawing from Seidman (2019), I will use artist interviews to gain understanding of situated knowledges of VAW, recognizing the value of participant accounts of violence provide partial perspectives (Haraway, 1988). These interviews challenge
paternalistic viewpoints of monolithic women’s experiences, emphasizing contextual nuances (Mohanty, 2003).

In this study, I will interview artists who address VAW in their work, conducting interviews over Zoom or through a survey form (at the artist’s request). I will use the audio transcription feature of Zoom interviews, along with edit corrections to the automated transcription, for analysis of the interview data. I will utilize Seidman’s (2019) interview strategies to gain insight into the contextual nuances of violence in relation to the artist’s works (See Appendix A).

I will conduct semi-structured interviews with participants with open-ended questions. Appendix A is a draft of interview questions. Research participants will be asked which interview methods they prefer (Zoom or via survey on a secure system, such as Red Cap). I will conduct a second interview and observation via Zoom with each participant following the development of an interactive map (See Appendix B). During the second interview, I will ask participants about their encounters with the map and observe the manner in which they navigate the visualization. Particularly, I will ask participants to discuss their own work in relation to other pieces, which will be linked through the map. The identity of the participant will be revealed or concealed within the study at personal request.

The study will conclude with a focus group. According to Kamberelis et al. (2018), “focus groups range from being highly scripted to wildly dialogic” (p. 692). I will provide five guiding questions (see Appendix C) to initiate dialogue and guide conversation. Through the use of a group setting, participants can explore their artwork in relation to other artists. Notably, focus groups provide opportunities for participants and researchers to work collectively, minimalizing structures of power and opening a platform to “interrogate the conditions of their lives to promote transformation” (Kamberelis et al., 2018, p. 694). Within
the constructed group, participants can develop social dynamics, provide feedback, make connections, and build relationships that can yield coalition building.

In order to gain insight into the particular nuances of VAW in relation to place, I will also collect digital images of the art addressing VAW created by the artists interviewed. According to Alice Arnold, professor of art education, the arts can serve to illustrate the realities of the human condition. I will collect images of their art directly from the artists (Arnold et al., 2005). For the purpose of this study, I will seek art that responds to cultural or political conditions related to VAW. I will search for art using social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Through Internet searches, I will also look for artists referenced within news publications about artists responding to VAW. For example, the cover of the augmented reality comic book, *Priya’s Shakti* considers the cultural nuances of rape in India through the use of Hindu mythology (see Figure 1). In another example, young playwright, Elsa Sajjad illustrates her observations regarding Pakistani social dynamics through a series of mini narratives, entitled #MeToo, such as familial response to sexual harassment (see Figure 2). I will acquire and document artists’ permission with an Institute Review Board (IRB) approved consent form to include their art within my research analysis, writing, and digital map.
Figure 1. Priya’s Shakti Cover of a digital and print comic is by Priya’s Shakti (2014). On the cover of Priya’s Shakti, rape survivor, Priya sits alongside a tiger. Behind her, sits the Goddess Pavarti, who inspires Priya to break her silence. Courtesy of Ram Devineni.

Figure 6. A performance, titled #MeToo, written and directed by E. Sajjad (2018, January 10-11) is a BlankPage Productions at the American Cultural Centre (PACC) in Karachi, Pakistan. Courtesy of Elsa Sajjad. In this scene, Shanze comes home after being sexually harassed. Mehek Aunty is overwhelmed and upset and Shanze’s father slut shames her and blames her mother for raising her to be shameless before exiting the
scene. When Shanze’s sister, Marium tries to defend her, she is slapped by her mother, Mrs. Baig. From Left to Right: Mehek Aunty, Shanze Baig, Marium Baig and Mrs. Baig.

Selection of Participants

In order to study artistic responses about VAW transnationally, I will focus on locating artists from across various regions of the world. For this study's purpose, I will include artists whose work addresses VAW and are active from the years 2014 to 2021, during the rise, height, and aftermath of the #MeToo movement. All artists included in this study will be self-designated as artists and will be inclusive of artists of a variety of mediums, such as comics, drawing, photography, performance, and film. This study will not be limited to female artists. Notably, male artists, such as Ram Devineni, Dan Goldman, and Vikas K. Menon of “Priya’s Shakti” (2014) augmented reality comic, also continue to make strides toward gender justice, with high visibility in regions where more negative societal connotations historically accompany feminism and feminist movements. All artists will be above the age of 18. Artists may or may not identify themselves as feminist or working towards a feminist cause. Artists selected to participate in this study reflect on VAW within their cultural contexts, rather than utilizing art practice exclusively for personal therapeutic purposes.

Potential research participants will be located and contacted through email or social media accounts, such as Facebook or Instagram. All of the artists included in this study must create artwork that clearly depicts or responds to VAW. However, artists do not need to be directly associated with feminist movements, such as #MeToo. Artists included in this study must speak English, or one of the following languages in which I, and my IRB approved research team of translators, will translate to English from Urdu, Spanish, Hindi, Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, or Chinese.
Feminist Data Visualization Mapping Analysis

Using artist interviews, observations, and their artworks, I will perform a layered analysis (Keifer-Boyd, 2014a). Within my analysis, I will make constant use of self-reflexivity. According to Virginia Olesen (2018), a professor emerita of social behavioral sciences at the University of California San Francisco, “reflexivity demands steady, uncomfortable assessment about the interpersonal and interstitial knowledge-demanding aspects of qualitative research” (p. 160). In the context of my study, I will continuously reflect upon how my background and experiences impact my interpretation of the data. In the first layer of analysis, initial coding will address research questions by looking for local cultural or political nuances in the artists' statements. Using visual emergent coding strategies, I will develop a key to the codes such as provided in maps.

In the second layer of analysis, I will combine “discovery writing,” or thinking about the research question in conjunction with the data (Keifer-Boyd, 2014a, p. 249). I will engage in discovery mapping, visualizing information provided within artists interviews and artworks through the use of color-coded pins.

In the third layer, I will exercise reflexivity to query how the theoretical frameworks interact within the data analysis (Keifer-Boyd, 2014b). Transnational lenses offer ways to view digital feminist alliances across geographic spaces, recognizing localized nuances. In particular, reflexivity will allow me to prepare for the follow-up interviews. Reflexivity is critical to recognizing and acknowledging my role and influence as a researcher to consider my personal biases impacting analysis of the data in the first two layers of analysis.

In the fourth layer, I will identify patterns within the themes. I will visually map the patterns identified utilizing cartographic techniques, such as creating color-coded pins to highlight patterns and connections and to visualize relationships between artists situated in
different contexts. For example, in a pilot study conducted in the fall of 2018, I mapped themes that emerged in artists’ works related to the #MeToo movement (see Figure 3). I compared how artists approached similar issues within different cultural or political contexts using colored pins through a mapping methodology. In my study, the use of this methodology can help reveal patterns in VAW to reveal commonalities as well as differences. Mapping can also reveal issues that might interfere with data, such as government censorship and anti-Western sentiments regarding feminist movements. By illuminating relationships, I hope to aid in the construction of coalitions across borders and contribute to discussions regarding the limitations and ability of language to define VAW.

![Figure 3. #MeToo Artistic Responses is a digital map that was constructed in a pilot study in 2018 using iMapBuilder. The map was used to plot artistic responses to the #MeToo movement using common themes such as rape and sexual assault, gender-related harassment, opposition to the patriarchy, domestic violence, women as a collective force, objectification of women, and femicide, as well as track #MeToo related news stories.

The fifth layer of analysis will include a focus group for the creation of dialogue between the artist participants. Drawing from Holland et al. (1998), Kamberelis et al. (2018) describe the concept of “figured worlds” as “culturally constructed, socially produced” spaces in which individuals can “figure out’ who they are in relation to others” (p. 692). Kamberelis et al. (2018) propose five figured worlds for focus group research. Drawing from “Figured
World 5,” I will analyze the dialogue within the focus group to consider how “individuals and collectives” can negotiate worlds through artistic agency (Kamerelis et al., 2018, p. 707).

During the study, data will remain private, and access will be restricted to participants and the principal investigator. At the conclusion of the study, the mapping of the coalition will be made publically accessible to share with educators, artists, and activists.

**Researcher’s Role in the Study**

Drawing from Crenshaw’s (1989) theory of intersectionality as well as Haraway’s (1988) situated knowledges, I acknowledge my positionality as a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman from the Northeastern United States. Due to my position of privilege and membership within a dominant group, I recognize my personal limitations as a researcher in constructing knowledge of diverse identities and fully comprehending the lived experiences of some oppressive forces. However, my complexity of experiences as the mother of a half-Pakistani daughter, and within Pakistani and Indian communities within the United States contribute a knowledge and understanding of transnational entanglements.

In this study, I draw from my experiences within a domestic violence support group at the Women’s Resource Center of State College, Pennsylvania, now called Centre Safe, from 2017 to 2020. Meeting in secrecy, a collective of women across race, ethnicity, and class met to share stories, strategize how to escape violent relationships, maintain custody of their children, safeguard little ones from abusive partners, and help to guide each other amidst the chaos that accompanies the urgency of life altering decision-making. Financial constraints trapped many mothers, unable to support their families without an additional salary. Other women feared that leaving their partner would mean that he would be alone with the children without her protection. Women in international relationships rest the fate of their babies on the Hague Convention, an agreement to return children abducted by parents expeditiously.
The stories of the women, each different, demonstrated complex entanglements which have inspired this research.

Using participatory action research methodologies (Hutzel, 2014; Kunt, 2020), I will invite research participants to co-construct knowledge in transnational visual narratives, creating an artistic coalition against VAW. Therefore, I will involve participants throughout the research process to ensure information is conveyed accurately according to their knowledge and perspectives. I will utilize the artworks and interviews of participants to create a geographical map that is a visualization of participants’ perspectives of VAW. Throughout my analysis, I will refer directly back to artist interviews and confirm the accuracy of interpretations of information through follow-up interviews.

**Ethical Implications**

Utilizing the International Review Board's (IRB) practices of informed consent, I will invite artists to participate in this study via email, and participation will be entirely voluntary. Participants will give their verbal informed consent to participate in the study within the zoom interview or submit a signed document to answer the interview questions in written form. I will avoid asking leading questions that could affect the work's validity, negating the participant's perspectives on their experiences (Seidman, 2019). Given that the artist's work addresses VAW, I will be sensitive to artists' personal experiences and privacy. It is unethical to request subjects to disclose their own painful experience in VAW, which may also put the research participant at risk (World Health Organization, 2001). Specifically, I will not include questions that directly ask about the artist's personal lived experiences VAW (See Appendix A for interview questions). Terkel describes the cautious navigation of sensitive topics in a 2008 interview as a “gentle exploration” (Grimes, 2008, p. B9). However, a “gentle exploration” does not refer to the avoidance of “difficult areas that come up in the process”
and asking if the participant can expand more deeply on what they describe (Seidman, 2019, p. 149). A “gentle exploration” refers to a careful choice in the language of questioning to allow the participant to reveal or conceal information to their comfort level (Seidman, 2019, p. 149). As a PAR study, it is particularly important to eliminate the hierarchy between researcher and participant as we co-construct knowledge (Seidman, 2019). Through collaborative development of research, I will exercise cultural sensitivity and understanding towards the participant.

To address ethical implications of research involving VAW, I refer to the World Health (2001) publication, “Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women.” Although my study will not be limited to domestic violence, this publication sets a foundation for considering how to protect participants involved in studies that address VAW. According to the WHO (2001), the topic of VAW requires the researcher to take special care of the research participant's confidentiality. For this reason, the artists involved in this study may choose to remain anonymous. To ensure participants’ safety, all interviews will take place in a private setting, providing the research participants the opportunity to reschedule the meeting should complications in the circumstances arise (World Health Organization, 2001, p. 12). It is also essential to change the topic or end the interview if interrupted by other household members (World Health Organization, 2001). Research participants may choose to terminate the interview at any time. I will save interviews on an external hard drive and store them in a locked cabinet. The names of participants that choose to remain anonymous will be replaced with coding to preserve their privacy.

Reflexivity within this study is critical to acknowledge that “both participants and researchers produce interpretations that are ‘the data’” (Olesen. 2018, p.160; Diaz, 2002). Therefore, it is important to constantly acknowledge how the backgrounds of both the
researchers and participants may shape the analysis. Most importantly, reflexivity is necessary to ensure that stereotypes of ethnic groups, races, or social classes are not created or supported (Olesen, 2018). Most notably, participatory action research seeks to remedy misrepresentation of participant voices through participation of subjects throughout the research process (Olesen, 2018; Skeggs, 1994).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

For the purpose of this study, I will interview 10-20 participants to provide diversity of responses and artworks for analysis. Due to the fact that I will be working remotely, this research will only include artists locatable via social media or email, therefore, omitting artists that do not have Internet access. It is important to note that while this project aims to expose nuances of VAW across difference, the capabilities of a broad study cannot produce the intricate detail and understanding as those working on a smaller scale. This study will be limited linguistically, due to my knowledge of languages, and access to translators. I plan to utilize my skills in Spanish and Urdu, as well as the translation services of graduate student peers, including Hindi, Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian, and Turkish, as needed.

As with many global projects (Lal et al., 2010), the limited scale of this study will not be inclusive of artists from all geographic regions whose art is about VAW. In addition, it is critical to acknowledge that some information gets lost through translation or cultural understanding. Despite the use of a participatory action methodology, my analysis is drawn from interpretations of the artworks and artist interviews, which is influenced by my own life, culture, experiences, and knowledge, and will be acknowledged in the presentation of my dissertation.
Significance of the Study: Building Coalitions

While scholars have discussed artistic practice in the #MeToo era (Diderich, 2019), as well as artistic works in relation to VAW (Lodhia, 2020), scholars have not engaged in qualitative feminist mapping of artistic responses to VAW with consideration of local cultural perspectives in a relational global cartography. By visibly mapping artistic responses to VAW in relationship to the global movement against VAW, this study will develop data for co-liberation, highlighting local artist participation while creating a sense of solidarity, bringing independent artists and artworks together through feminist mapping in cross-cultural conversations (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020). The presentation of the relationships between the artists and their works provides opportunities to create global connections to work together in solidarity. In addition, looking at VAW transnationally invites researchers to consider localized nuances of VAW, laying the groundwork to continue to build the map, as well as future coalition building. Additionally, my study will contribute to art education data visualization initiatives by the National Art Education Association Research Commission.¹

This study also serves as a foundation on which to construct art education curricula to address VAW. According to Shari Savage (2018), relevant “social issues, activism, and concerns about voices not heard” often surface in the field of art education (p. 75). Underscoring the lack of agency of women and girls, the #MeToo movement emphasizes the need for a platform for women’s issues and concerns (Savage, 2018). Most notably, the #MeToo movement points out the suppression of girls' and women's speech and acknowledges that blame involving VAW frequently shifts to the victim. This study provides a promising route to empowerment for women and girls through art activism, revealing the

¹ The National Art Education Association (NAEA) Research Commission formed the Data Visualization Working Group in 2011 to encourage the use of data visualization in research to support curricula and professional developing, teaching, among other purposes. See https://www.arteducators.org/research/articles/240-naea-research-commission-data-visualization-working-group
potential of social media to engage in cultural conversations regarding the complex nuances of VAW.

According to Arnold et al. (2005), “the arts can create the time, the support, and the permission to reflect on difficult themes throughout the world” (p. 23). Merging critical dialogue with art processes, students and educators can work together to develop deeper understandings of violent events through empathy and compassion. Engaging in the study of violence in art education provides a platform for student voices, yielding a catalyst for social change by inviting students to question personal and collective roles in preventing violence (Arnold et al., 2005).
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Appendix A

Interview Questions: Zoom Interview
Time: 30-45 minutes

Interview 1:

Hi, thank you for participating in this interview. I discovered your artwork online when looking at how artists have responded globally to violence against women (VAW). I am going to read a script describing the research study. Following the reading of the script, you can choose whether or not you would like to participate in this study through verbal consent.

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

- The purpose of this study to understand how artists are responding violence against women through visual and theatre arts within their particular cultural contexts.
- All subjects involved in this study will be asked to participate in two interviews. In the first interview, subjects will be asked to answer 12 interview questions using Zoom. In the second interview, subjects will answer 7 interview questions using Zoom. All Zoom calls will be recorded unless requested by the subject. All subjects may choose whether they would like to use the video function in the interview or use sound only. Subjects may participate using a secure survey form upon request.
- Records of interviews and research notes will be stored on an external hard drive.
- The subjects first and last name, and email address will be stored with interview records. By verbally consenting to participate in this study, the subject is agreeing to be quoted within research and future publications using their name. Participants may remain anonymous if they choose to do so.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you should contact Lauren Stetz at 814-883-4352 or Dr. Karen Keifer-Boyd at 814-863-7312. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at 814-865-1775.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

To provide verbal consent, tell the researcher your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the research.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and your artwork?
2. What inspired this artwork?
3. Can you please discuss who and/or what has influenced your art such as other artists, art education, and/or mentors?
4. How has your work has changed over the years?
5. How would you describe the content, subject matter, intent, purpose, and/or goals of your art?
6. How does your art address, convey, disguise, and/or avoid cultural, political, place-based, and/or personal issues important to you?
7. Do you face any challenges in the creation of your artwork? If so, can you describe these challenges?
8. Does your artwork serve to educate others?
9. Where is your work exhibited?
10. Do you face any challenges in exhibiting your artwork?
11. Has the #MeToo movement or other VAW movements influenced your artwork?
12. Is the #MeToo movement or other VAW movements discussed in your country? If so, has the movement altered conditions for women and/or artists and, if so, how?
Appendix B

Interview Questions: Zoom Interview
Time: 45 minutes
Interview 2:

Hi, thank you for participating in this interview. I discovered your artwork online when looking at how artists have responded globally to violence against women (VAW). I am going to read a script describing the research study. Following the reading of the script, you can choose whether or not you would like to participate in this study through verbal consent.

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

- The purpose of this study to understand how artists are responding to violence against women through visual and theatre arts within their particular cultural contexts.
- All subjects involved in this study will be asked to participate in two interviews. In the first interview, subjects will be asked to answer 12 interview questions using Zoom. In the second interview, subjects will answer 7 interview questions using Zoom. All Zoom calls will be recorded unless requested by the subject. All subjects may choose whether they would like to use the video function in the interview or use sound only. Subjects may participate using a secure survey form upon request.
- Records of interviews and research notes will be stored on an external hard drive.
- The subjects first and last name, and email address will be stored with interview records. By verbally consenting to participate in this study, the subject is agreeing to be quoted within research and future publications using their name. Participants may remain anonymous if they choose to do so.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you should contact Lauren Stetz at 814-883-4352 or Dr. Karen Keifer-Boyd at 814-863-7312. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at 814-865-1775.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

To provide verbal consent, tell me, the researcher, your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the research.

Interview Questions:

1. Please go to this link and take as much time as you would like to look at the site, clicking the colored pins, and reading the text and looking at the art. Locate yourself and your artwork on the map. Please comment or ask questions as you explore the site.
2. What stood out to you as you explored the mapping of art about VAW?
3. What surprised you as you explored the map?
4. Please describe how you perceive your work in the context of the map.
5. What were your initial impressions when you first encountered the map, and your work on the map?
6. What issues or concerns arise for you as you explored the map?
7. What suggestions do you have to improve, change, and/or add to the map?
Appendix C

Interview Questions: Zoom Focus Group
Time: 45 minutes
Interview: 3

Hi, thank you for participating in this focus group of artists whose work addresses violence against women.

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

- The purpose of this study to understand how artists are responding to violence against women through visual and theatre arts within their particular cultural contexts.
- All subjects involved in this study will be asked to participate in three interviews. In the first interview, subjects will be asked to answer 12 interview questions using Zoom. In the second interview, subjects will answer 7 interview questions using Zoom. The third interview is a focus group where subjects will have the opportunity to meet with other participants and to discuss and respond to 5 questions. All Zoom calls will be recorded unless requested by the subject. All subjects may choose whether they would like to use the video function in the interview or use sound only. Subjects may participate using a secure survey form upon request.
- Records of interviews and research notes will be stored on an external hard drive.
- The subjects first and last name, and email address will be stored with interview records. By verbally consenting to participate in this study, the subject is agreeing to be quoted within research and future publications using their name. Participants may remain anonymous if they select to do so.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you should contact Lauren Stetz at 814-883-4352 or Dr. Karen Keifer-Boyd at 814-863-7312. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at 814-865-1775.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

To provide verbal consent, tell me, the researcher, your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the research.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and your artwork?
2. What are your first impressions of the map?
3. What relationships or patterns do you see?
4. Did you notice anything interesting or surprising?
5. Do you find this map useful? Why? What purpose could this map serve? How might it be improved or grow?
Appendix D
Working Outline of Chapters

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Summary

Conclusions

Discussion

Suggestions for Future Research
## Appendix E

**Proposed Time Schedule for Completing the Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lauren</th>
<th>Chair &amp; Committee</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Submit Proposal</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Complete IRB</td>
<td>Proposal Meeting</td>
<td>Contact with research participants (once IRB is approved)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>-Collect Data</td>
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<td>First Interview with research participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-First Interview of research participants</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>-Analysis of Interview Data</td>
<td></td>
<td>Second Interview with research participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Second Interview of research participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Submit Chapters 1-3</td>
<td>Chair reviews ch 1-3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Revision to 1-3 and submit chapters 4-5</td>
<td>Chair reviews ch 4-5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Provide full draft to chair</td>
<td>Chair reviews full draft</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2021</td>
<td>Revise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2022</td>
<td>Provide revise dis to chair for approval to submit to the committee. Prepare job applications</td>
<td>chair reviews revised and polished dis for approval to submit to the committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Revise &amp; provide polished Dissertation. Prepare oral defense presentation</td>
<td>Committee reviews the dissertation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early March</td>
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<td>Oral Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2022</td>
<td>Submit final thesis to Thesis Office</td>
<td>Committee signs off</td>
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