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Abstract and Keywords

The paradigm of transnational feminism emerged in response to the economic and social dislocation that has disproportionately exacerbated women's rights violations since the neoliberal restructuring of the global economy in the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter proposes that to have a better understanding of women's rights and justice, contributions from a social justice-oriented psychology that integrates feminist scholarship and empirical findings based on women's grassroots resistance and activism are necessary. It proposes a transnational feminist liberation psychology whereby researchers (1) work from the grassroots by fostering meaningful alliances with others working outside the academy in a joint pursuit of liberation, (2) use methodology that investigates sites of resistance, bringing visibility to a fuller spectrum of women's lived experience, and (3) recognize how dimensions of power and inequality impact research. Given the persistent violations of women's rights globally, it is imperative to understand the psychosocial conditions that lead to justice.

Keywords: transnational feminism, women's human rights, liberation, social justice, critical psychology

Transnational feminism is a specific paradigm that emerged in response to the economic and social dislocation that has disproportionately impacted women since the neoliberal restructuring of the global economy in the 1980s and 1990s (Fernandes, 2013; Grabe, 2010b; Naples & Desai, 2002). It is well documented that under the neoliberal shifts that characterized the 1980s and 1990s—free-trade agreements, structural adjustment of social welfare policies, increased international activity by multinational corporations, and the deregulation of markets—women suffered exacerbated risk for human rights violations (Moghadam, 2005; Naples & Desai, 2002). In the context of understanding women's experience in some of the most marginalized conditions, the term "transnational," rather than "international," is used by scholars and activists in a strategic effort to dissociate from "international" or "global sisterhood" approaches to

women's issues that often ignore a diversity of women's agency in favor of a universal Western notion of feminism (Naples & Desai, 2002).

The 1990s saw the growth of a transnational feminist social movement linked through subregional, regional, and international organizations, activists, and scholars who collaborated on efforts to call attention to women's human rights and the mechanisms through which female subordination is sustained and reproduced (Ferree & Tripp, 2006; Kabeer, 1994). Despite decades now of widespread commitment to draw attention to the prevalence and consequences of women's human rights violations in the context of globalization, issues such as gender-based violence and institutional inequities that threaten women's liberty continue unabated. This chapter aims to establish that in order to have a better understanding of women's rights and justice, contributions from a social-justice oriented psychology that integrates feminist scholarship and empirical findings based on women's grassroots resistance and activism are necessary. The social psychological approach offered in this chapter draws on perspectives informed by women of color and Third World feminisms and feminist liberation psychology in an attempt to lend a new visibility to women's human rights through the perspective of psychology.

Feminist Perspectives and Psychology

Social Structures and Women's Rights Violations

Although problems related to patriarchy have long concerned women and feminists throughout the world, transnational feminism specifically arose during the 1980s out of the interplay between global and local practices influenced by neoliberalism that were denying women's rights, permitting exploitation, and reproducing subjugation (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Naples & Desai, 2002). In response to violations that were becoming increasingly exacerbated in this context, the political mobilization and feminist activity that was emerging reflected diverse modes of resistance, operating from different strategic spaces and subject positions within society (e.g., civil society, engagement with the State, participation in social movements, and academia) to address the range of women's growing concerns (Montenegro, Capdevila, & Sarriera, 2012). The mobilization and collective identity behind transnational feminism, therefore, are not rooted in the notion that women have universal experiences; but rather in a shared criticism of how neoliberal economic policies and governments create structural conditions that limit women's rights in their respective locations (Moghadam, 2005). Given the multiplicity of knowledge and practices that emerged from this perspective, feminist scholars

underscore that there is and must be a diversity of feminism*s*—responsive to the varying needs and concerns of women throughout the world and defined by them for themselves (Sen & Grown, 1987).

Because a main tenet of transnational feminism involves critique of how systems of global power exacerbate or sustain gender oppression, a focus on social structures and systems of power in understanding women's rights violations and social justice is crucial. Although identifying structural patterns of inequality has long been the task of political and social theorists, liberation psychologist Martín-Baró (1994) argued that psychologists can and should reframe standard methods to consider that the root causes of oppression lie in the structures and ideologies that underlie inequity. Liberation psychology emerged in the 1970s in Latin America in response to criticisms that conventional psychology has produced theories based on research conducted predominately with white, middle-class, undergraduate men and was therefore failing to generate knowledge that could address social inequalities, in particular those that were experienced in the context of repression and civil war in Latin America. Although critical psychology, in general, also critiques conventional psychology because it fails to consider the way that structural power and related ideologies operate to impact individuals' psychological well-being, liberation psychology attempts to go further by actively addressing oppressive sociopolitical structures. In particular, according to liberation psychology, psychological analysis of oppression should involve a systematic exploration of the links between social and political conditions and psychological patterns, with explicit emphasis on taking action to improve those conditions (Moane, 1999, 2003).

In the 1980s, Julian Rappaport introduced a framework for investigating processes whereby groups, in particular those outside of the mainstream of society, took control over their own lives when he challenged the field of community psychology to adopt empowerment as a guiding concept (Rappaport, 1987). However, early conceptualizations and investigations of empowerment within psychology focused primarily on individual factors, thereby giving limited attention to context and social structures (Perkins, 1995; Riger, 1993). Moreover, many empowerment interventions within community psychology have typically not been designed to transform inequitable social structures, but rather to help "victims" (Prilleltensky, 2008). Similarly, a majority of international development interventions aimed at empowerment utilize a "rescue narrative" by intending to rectify injustices experienced due to "tradition" that women, in particular, are presumably unable to confront without outside help (Alexander, 2005). Despite the intent to improve the social conditions in which people live their lives, these approaches have been limited in demonstrating how those with less structural power take action to improve their own lives and also contribute little to understanding the transformation of social structures that maintain gender inequity.

For nearly half a century, feminists have used the phrase "the personal is political" to recognize that women's psychological functioning reflects structural inequities and imbalanced power relations that are rooted in patriarchy (Hanisch, 1970). Critical social psychologists maintain that power differences and inequities are not simply a political issue, but are also always psychological and crucial to consider when working toward transformative change (Griscom, 1992; Jenkins, 2000; Moane, 1999; Prilleltensky, 2008). Feminist psychologists, in particular, have argued that inequities create an environment that perpetuates women's subordinate status and impairs both their psychological and physical functioning (Glick & Fiske, 1999; Jenkins, 2000; Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). It is not surprising, therefore, that feminist psychologists have for decades asserted that research on the psychology of women should include a discussion of structural and political factors (Crawford & Marecek, 1989; Moane, 1999; Stewart, 1998; Zurbriggen & Capdevila, 2010) and, more specifically, that women's civic, political, social, economic, and cultural rights are integral to psychological health (Lykes, 2000). Indeed, focusing on individual-level investigations when attempting to understand violations of women's rights would decontextualize women from their political and social worlds and render unexamined the structures of patriarchy, racism, classism, and capitalism that intersect to create conditions of risk and vulnerability (Fine, 1989). To date, however, the bulk of mainstream psychology has tended to study women in micro-level investigations that separate them from their social contexts (Griscom, 1992; Pettigrew, 1991; Yoder & Kahn, 1992). For example, despite explicit calls for psychologists to attend to the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality in their investigation of women's lived experience, critical reviews suggest a stunning neglect to social structure in the literature in this area (Lykes & Stewart, 1986; Stewart, Cortina, & Curtin, 2008). A systematic review conducted in 2012 suggests that shockingly few published articles (8% or less), from highly reputable personality journals in psychology, incorporate an analysis of how the social structures of gender, race/ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation impact individual well-being (Cortina, Curtin, & Stewart, 2012).

Despite limited attention to social structures and intersecting aspects of women's identities in mainstream psychology, there has been increasing concern among critical psychologists with the intersectional effects of race/ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexuality on factors such as women's well-being, political attitudes and action, and social identities (Cole, 2009). Although other feminist scholars prior to Crenshaw (e.g., Anzaldua & Moraga, 1984; Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; Hurtado, 1989) have drawn attention to the limitations of centering investigations on only one aspect of women's identities (e.g., gender or race), critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) coined the term *intersectionality* to underscore that multiple aspects of one's social identity can be experienced simultaneously in an additive manner. Since that time, a small but growing scholarship that explicitly details the ways in which disadvantage based on

membership in multiple categories may differentially influence psychosocial processes has been produced by critical psychologists (e.g., Bowleg, 2008; Fine & Sirin, 2007; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Mahalingam, Balan, & Haritatos, 2008; Stewart & McDermott, 2004).

As important as the growing use of intersectional approaches to the study of gender and power within psychology has been, many of the initial investigations reflect a largely Western bias. Because transnational and "Third World" feminists[1] suggest that women's experience in the Global South is also inextricably linked to the systemic inequities of *global* power (e.g., colonialism, globalization; Bose, 2012; Lugones, 2010; Narayan, 1997; Sen & Grown, 1987), taking a *transnationally intersectional* approach to the study of women's human rights worldwide is becoming increasingly important (Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Mahalingam et al., 2008). For example, social locations that determine experiences of marginalization are different for a working class woman from the United States than they are for a working class woman living in a country with a "free" trade agreement with the United States such that products of her (exploited) labor (e.g., textiles) can cross borders freely, but she cannot.

Approaches from within psychology that are aimed at understanding how the "personal is political" need to take into account the perspectives offered by women of Color and Third World feminisms which argue that gender oppression also operates through unfavorable social systems such as global power that exacerbate or maintain violations of women's human rights (Crenshaw, 1989; Lugones, 2007; Sen & Grown, 1987). Taking a critical view of how the structural inequities linked to globalization perpetuate the subordination of women will require that feminist psychologists expand their investigations to include macro-level variables that reflect women's marginalized positions (Moane, 1999).

The Potential for a Feminist Liberation Psychology in the Transnational Feminism Paradigm

Among critical feminist scholars across disciplines, there has been growing interest in the relationship between neoliberal transformations and an oppositional consciousness that develops among individuals in subordinated positions (Sandoval, 2000). Sandoval (2000) suggests that oppositional consciousness develops when those engaged from the grassroots are positioned to identify, develop, control, and marshal the knowledge necessary to create social change. Similarly, Mohanty (2003a) states that

> … [I]n the crafting of oppositional selves and identities, decolonization coupled with emancipatory collective practice leads to a rethinking of patriarchal,

heterosexual, colonial, racial, and capitalist legacies in the project of feminism and, thus, toward envisioning democracy and democratic collective practice such that issues of sexual politics in governance are fundamental to thinking through questions of resistance anchored in the daily lives of women. (p. 8)

In writing about methodologies of the oppressed that can expose resistance, Sandoval (2000) proposed a "science of oppositional ideology" that would allow for the investigation of new citizen subjects engaged in resisting structures of social domination.

Because liberation psychology has become an increasingly utilized approach to understanding how individuals develop critical perspectives that get directed toward social change, the discipline of psychology has the potential to be the social "science" of oppositional ideology proposed by Sandoval (Burton & Kagan, 2005; Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 2003; 2010). Brazilian social theorist Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of *conscientización* is central to a liberation psychology paradigm and refers to a process in which those working to create bottom-up social change participate in an iterative, ideological process whereby analysis and action develop together in a limited situation. In Freire's understanding of liberation, he argues that individuals are most likely to change their own circumstances by simultaneously working to challenge the social structures that disadvantage them (Brodsky et al., 2012; Moane, 2003). Among the first steps in this process is the development of critical understandings of how adverse social conditions undermine well-being (Prilleltensky, 2008). These critical understandings are used to problematize one's social conditions, a process that results in deideologizing, or reconstructing understandings of one's lived experience based on rejecting dominant ideologies that justify social oppression (Montero, 1994, 2009). Problematizing injustice may begin a process of conscious mobilization leading to transformations in understandings of certain phenomena (Montero, 2009). As critical psychological processes, *conscientización* and problematization may facilitate "oppositional ideology" and action that can address conditions leading to injustice and violations. In these ways, liberation psychology may be well-positioned to examine how "citizen subjects" engage in resisting social structures of domination.

In the context of large systems of global inequality, liberation psychology may also be well-suited to the "science of oppositional ideology" because it recognizes that "limit-situations," or circumstances that constrain people's lives, are also places where possibilities begin (Martín-Baró, 1994; Montero, 2009). Through awareness and dialogue of limited situations, a broader analysis gives rise to conditions of action. Specifically, as awareness of context-specific patterns that limit life circumstances (i.e., situations whereby power differentials are a result of structural rather than individual factors) develops, possibilities for action are explored and further awareness develops in a

cyclical process (Moane, 2010). In this way, resistance to oppressive structures is not the end goal of political struggle, but rather its beginning—an emergent behavior that moves towards justice and liberation. Decolonial theorist María Lugones (2010) defines resistance as the tension between "subjectification (the forming of the subject) and active subjectivity, that minimal sense of agency required, without appeal to the maximal sense of agency of the modern subject" (p. 746). An overemphasis in traditional psychology on topics such as empowerment and agency may preclude an optimal understanding of how processes such as *conscientización* and problematization can help to understand the social conditions in which people live their lives and the practices or interventions that transform the social and psychological patterns associated with oppression.

Geraldine Moane was among the first scholars to articulate a *feminist* liberation psychology that takes into account both the effects of globalization and international human rights discourse, as well activism surrounding women's issues, when linking women's well-being to structures of power (Moane, 1999). Feminist liberation psychology, in particular, attends to the specificities of context and the social conditions or limit-situations that are embedded in global structures of gender inequality and interrogates structural power differences at local, national, and transnational levels (Lykes & Moane, 2009). Although work in this area is in its nascent stages, in a groundbreaking special issue of *Feminism & Psychology*, Lykes and Moane (2009) sought to identify researchers who were interfacing feminist psychology with the work of feminist social movements to focus on liberatory processes in their investigations. Many of the articles in the special issue emphasize systems of global inequality and the role of structurally embedded power differences in the limited situations in which many women experience their lives (e.g., Crosby, 2009; Madrigal & Tejeda, 2009). Two investigations, in particular, examined processes linked to *concientización* and gender-based violence and found that, although their agency remained constrained by their limit-situations, women's narratives reflected critical awareness of how everyday struggles were shaped by structures of power (Pakistan: Chaudhry & Bertram, 2009; India: White & Rastogi, 2009). For example, White and Rastogi (2009) demonstrated the critical role of group consciousness surrounding gender discrimination in resisting injustice and working toward liberation among a group of vigilante women in rural India (i.e., the Gulabi Gang). In another investigation included in the special issue, Oliveira, Neves, Nogueira and Koning (2009) demonstrated how problematizing traditional gender ideology influenced a process of *conscientización* that was necessary to contribute to collective social change in the women's movement in Portugal.

Although empirical investigations in this area remain sparse, more recent investigation among a group of Afghan women mobilized within a revolutionary organization (i.e., the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan; RAWA) found that processes

involving conscious awareness, intention, and action were all important in maintaining a sense of community that could lead to changes in women's well-being over time (Brodsky et al., 2012). Similarly, other scholars have used feminist liberatory frameworks to demonstrate that self-mobilized groups of women in Nicaragua and Tanzania are problematizing and resisting traditional gender arrangements, thereby renegotiating structural and relational injustices that transform their receipt of violence (Grabe, Dutt, & Dworkin, 2014). Emphasizing the role of women's *conscientización* and resistance in social justice highlights the importance of psychological processes in the development of strategies for action that suit local capacities and interests.

Another key element of (feminist) liberation psychology is that of praxis, which has been used to suggest that psychologists should be critical of working with professionals and experts in positions of power and work, instead, alongside the people (Martín-Baró, 1994). Because the transnationalization of feminisms requires local knowledge and experience in order to establish commonalities upon which alliances and relations may be built, this approach is particularly important in transnational feminist psychology (Montenegro et al., 2012). The Global Feminisms Project (GFP), began in 2002, serves as an example of transnational feminist psychology by bridging scholar-activism through partnerships with several women's movements throughout the world with the aim of increasing knowledge surrounding feminist activism. The GFP is a collaborative transnational project that conducts, examines, and archives interviews with women involved in feminist activism, social movements, and women's studies departments in China, India, Poland, Nicaragua, and the United States. By documenting individual life stories of women involved in feminist activism in various locations throughout the world, the GFP records a diversity of feminisms defined by women for themselves and in response to needs in their respective locations. Because an underlying goal of activist research is a reconfiguration of knowledge production that shifts power and control into the hands of the oppressed or marginalized (Fals-Borda, 1985; Sandoval, 2000), local women in each of the five countries developed a list of the interviewees, which, in effect, also allowed them to showcase the issues that best represented women's concerns in their respective locations. The GFP is housed at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan, but the interviews are archived at the GFP website[2] as an open-resource for future feminist pedagogy and research. Initial publications from the GFP archive have centered local knowledge and experience to better understand the conditions that have made it possible for women to resist the inequitable social structures in which their lives are greatly influenced (Grabe & Dutt, 2015; McGuire, Stewart, & Curtin, 2010).

In the first publication from the GFP, McGuire et al. (2010) compared narratives among four women—one each from China, India, Poland, and the United States—to examine the

processes by which women came to identify as political activists. The authors found that all four women, despite being active in different historical and cultural contexts, described a critical consciousness surrounding perceptions of their "difference" and expressed an understanding that political experiences based on these differences were personally relevant. The authors also found that critical awareness, coupled with the influence of political leaders or organizations, facilitated the development of new skills and commitments to contribute to social change aimed at justice for women.

In a second study from the GFP archives, Grabe and Dutt (2015) used narratives from women in Nicaragua to conduct a thematic narrative analysis examining the experience of 13 key leaders in the *Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres* (Autonomous Women's Movement). The authors investigated how "oppositional ideologies," or counter narratives, held by women in the *Movimiento* have played a significant role in creating a more expansive and inclusive notion of human rights that has fueled a strategic political agenda aimed at improving women's lived experience. The authors found that feminist activists within the *Movimiento* developed a sense of action through problematizing political oppression, thereby developing a narrative that countered dominant ideology by being inclusive of women's rights.

In summary, an emerging body of literature from within feminist liberation psychology has drawn on women's experience to better understand the psychological processes involved in transforming the mechanisms associated with oppression and taking action to bring about change. Because self-mobilized groups of women across the world employ a complex understanding of the interaction between local and global impacts on women's human rights, feminist psychologists interested in global social change need to work alongside women and build alliances that center local knowledge.

The Way Forward: A Social Justice Psychology

A rich body of investigation has emerged in the past decade from within the discipline of sociology to document that women in communities all over the world are experiencing the negative effects of globalization and are using a transnational political stage to press for social, economic, and political justice (Moghadam, 2005; Naples & Desai, 2002). However, less well-documented are the patterns in society associated with oppression which are relevant for understanding the psychosocial processes that lead to social change. Engaged feminist psychologists need to document the diverse ways women in different parts of the world creatively resist and confront the challenges posed by the

global economic and political changes associated with globalization (Naples & Desai, 2002).

Although feminist liberation investigations of resistance are still in early stages, the existing work reviewed demonstrates that women engaged in change from diverse local contexts across the globe are not mere victims in processes of globalization. Rather, they have worked actively to resist oppression and promote women's well-being. Continued research in feminist liberation psychology can shed light on the diverse experiences of women engaging in resistance and help to understand the role of psychological processes in more effectively challenging the broader structures of power that sustain inequalities.

Transnational feminist scholar Leela Fernandes suggests that despite the interest in transnational feminism moving away from stereotypical views of non-Western women, a narrow focus now exists in much interdisciplinary scholarship that has created a binary of marginalized women from the Global South and elite scholars (Fernandes, 2013). This West/rest dichotomy shields from scrutiny the cultural roots of gender inequality that are played out in women's lives everywhere and calls into question the implications of a "transnational" feminist approach to the feminist production of knowledge. To safeguard against the risk of feminist liberation psychologists further legitimizing structures of domination when conducting transnational investigations, it is imperative that researchers take a scholar-activist approach by employing methodology in the aim of social justice.

In *Activist Scholarship: Antiracism, Feminisms, and Social Change*, Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey (2009) define activist scholarship as "the production of knowledge and pedagogical practices through active engagements with, and in the service of, progressive social movements" (p. 3). In this manner, scholar-activist approaches are models of active engagement between the academy and movements for social justice. Key questions surrounding this engagement involve: How does one produce scholarship that aims to empower subordinated groups and challenge existing power relations? And, how does emancipatory knowledge emerge from a synergy between community mobilization and scholarship? This chapter will conclude with three main suggestions for feminist researchers interested in transnational scholarship that examines the psychosocial mechanisms linked to women's well-being: (1) work from the grassroots, (2) employ methodology that can raise local women's perspectives and voices, and (3) recognize power imbalances between academics and research partners and seek to empower women working from the margins.

Working from the Grassroots

Although a large body of scholarship now exists documenting women's rights violations throughout the world, much of it is replete with text that focuses on "international" phenomena (i.e., "non-US" based; Powell, 2005). This is reflected in widely used examples of women's rights violations that are known to occur predominately outside of the United States (e.g., veiling, female genital cutting, trafficked women for involuntary prostitution). Similarly, overarching trends in international feminist research have begun to give systematic attention to issues linked to globalization that have greater visibility within some neoliberal contexts (e.g., analysis of export processing zones, impact of micro-credit aid on women, global labor and sex tourism; Fernandes, 2013). Use of these widely studied examples often reflects how various countries or cultures are positioned in terms of their power in relation to the West, as well as what scholars in Western nations consider important topics of investigation. In this manner, Western scholarship that focuses on women's rights can create a powerful dichotomy whereby the West evaluates women's well-being in the rest of the world based on an agenda that the women under investigation may not have set (Powell, 2005).

Similarly, mainstream ideas behind human rights are based on Western beliefs that the locus of rights is in autonomous individuals, who are free of historical and social conditions (such as gender oppression; Lykes, 2001). Thus, when discussed by scholars and practitioners, "universal" human rights are often taken to mean rights defined by the West. Holding and/or imposing standards based on Western definitions may be seen as another example of colonial domination and an imposition on people who are capable of determining their own definitions of rights and justice (Phillips, 2002). Another consequence of conflating human rights with Western values is that even when universal categories are introduced by women who live and work within the country in question, the women are commonly accused of pandering to a Western political agenda (Narayan, 1997; Nussbaum, 2000; Tripp, 2002). This reaction fails to recognize that women are capable of mobilizing around their own rights without Western influence and discredits numerous movements organized around gendered justice across the globe.

One consideration for feminist liberation psychologists to make in order to confront the pitfalls of Western agendas is in asking how, as scholar-activists, they might collaborate with women outside the academy who are setting their own agendas. Traditionally, when academic/community partnerships have been employed in psychology, the structure of the relationship encourages instrumentalist involvements whereby communities, and the individuals within them, are positioned as extractable data sources, rather than true partners in collective social change efforts. However, the goal of social justice scholarship is to foster meaningful alliances with others working outside of the academy

in a joint pursuit of liberation (Prilleltensky, 2008). As such, feminist researchers working from the perspective of liberation psychology do not determine an agenda for working with marginalized women, but rather work in collaboration with community partners by engaging in "political listening," thereby challenging subject/researcher power imbalances that determine the knower and expert (Shayne, 2014).

As a mode of scholarship, social justice scholarship entails movement and intellectual exchange between academic and activist spaces, privileging the knowledge that emerges from the grassroots in that it creates new possibilities for the production of emancipatory knowledge. As such, several authors suggest that researchers not work with elite organizations but rather prioritize grassroots social change agents who are mobilized within social movements (e.g., Cooke, 2004). The aim in scholar-activist partnerships, therefore, is to develop a synergistic relationship whereby the activists develop their own agendas, research questions, or strategies for action and the psychologist, as suggested by Martín-Baró (1994), uses the discipline in the service of social justice by focusing on the oppressive reality of social structures.

Methodology Privileging Marginalized Women's Perspectives

Feminist liberation psychology calls for methodology that produces innovative work investigating sites of resistance that bring visibility to a fuller spectrum of women's lived experience. Mohanty (2003b) argued that understanding struggles of justice must involve illuminating "third-world women's" engagement with feminism and resistance to oppressive regimes in relation to states and histories of imperialism. To best understand processes of resistance, social justice research should privilege the standpoint of women, which can be conceived of as a transformative exploration of women's experiences of resistance to oppression (Maddison & Shaw, 2007).

To date, feminist psychologists have used varying methodologies to access marginalized women's voices and produce scholarship linked to social change in the context of global structural inequities that exacerbate violations of women's rights. For example, some have used participatory action research as a methodology (Lykes & Crosby, 2014) to facilitate engaged and collaborative research for transformational feminist praxis among Mayan women in rural Guatemala (Williams & Lykes, 2003). Others have used *testimonio*, a type of oral history that is an explicitly political narrative that describes and resists oppression, to privilege an activist standpoint (Chase, 2003) and bring into focus a range of undocumented activity that has taken place within social movements in China, India, Nicaragua, Poland, and the United States (Grabe, 2014; Grabe & Dutt, 2015; McGuire et al., 2010; Stewart, Lal, & McGuire, 2011). Still others have used a critical communicative methodology (Gómez, Racionero, & Sordé, 2010) whereby an egalitarian dialogue

between the researcher and leaders of grassroots women's organizations was viewed as central to conducting research that contributed to transforming social contexts and improving the lives of women in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Tanzania (Grabe, 2010a, 2012; Grabe et al., 2014; Brodsky, 2009; Brodsky et al., 2012). Although these methods vary in approach and design, they share in common taking the experience of marginalized groups as a starting point for building knowledge. Transnational feminist methodologies must involve complicating the binary between academic and activist by moving beyond the divide to use knowledge in a transformative way, and in doing so advocate for justice (Shayne, 2014).

Recognizing Power Imbalances between Academics and Research Partners

Although critical psychologists underscore that power is critical to resisting oppression and attaining liberation, it is also recognized that psychologists can, wittingly or unwittingly, use their power to study power (Prilleltensky, 2008). Thus, in transnational feminist research it is important to caution against an idealized vision of collaborative or anti-oppressive research, recognizing that even research with emancipatory intentions is inevitably troubled by unequal power relations (Sudbury & Okazawa-Rey, 2009). Reaffirming the grassroots as a site from which we partner and work to establish knowledge and understanding can help safeguard against selecting and focusing on topics and issues (e.g., micro-credit, genital cutting) that continue to receive sustained attention and support from the West but are often not high priorities in local communities (Hodgson, 2011). Nevertheless, as scholars in partnership with local women, it is also important for the dimensions of power and inequality in terms of access to resources to be discussed and addressed throughout each stage of research—question formulation, design, and dissemination. Regardless of the preferred label, the commonality in social justice scholarship lies in the starting point that theoretical insights, research questions, methodology, reflection, and advocacy are inseparable parts of scholar-activist partnerships.

Conclusion

It is now well-recognized that processes of globalization and neoliberalization have led to a range of negative consequences that have a disproportionate effect on women. In seeking to rectify this injustice, efforts need to be driven by the voices of those who experience the harshest consequences of inequity with approaches that center on

methods that represent women's own resistance. Although psychologists tend to focus on individual-level analyses, abstracted from multilayered, social and cultural contexts, this chapter shifted attention to the systemic or structural dimensions that determine women's subordinate status and create contexts from which women resist. Future empirical investigations in this area should be focused on investigating the links between structural determinants of power and women's risk with an aim toward changing the structure of inequity, rather than the women it impacts. For example, in any given number of exploitative experiences that have been exacerbated by globalization (e.g., sex trafficking, violence), efforts should be made to link women's structural power (e.g., earning potential, control over resources) to psychological processes (e.g., autonomy) that may determine well-being (e.g., self-esteem, freedom from violence). The findings from such programs of research should be aimed at influencing social change, rather than used to implement Band-Aid interventions. In other words, rather than providing interventions or shelter for women who have been trafficked or beaten, findings from a transnational feminist liberation framework should target the structural conditions in which such behaviors exist. Given the persistence of violations of women's rights globally, it is imperative to understand the psychosocial conditions in which structural inequalities and human rights violations are sustained as well as the manner in which processes such as *conscientización* and problematization can contribute to conditions that lead to justice.

Scholarship conducted from a feminist liberation psychology approach has the potential to be innovative and path-breaking because it introduces the concepts and discourse of a discipline (psychology) into an arena from which it has been absent (transnational feminism), simultaneously pushing the boundaries of the discipline and filling an important intellectual space in the analysis of key international human rights issues. Because macro-level contexts increasingly involve structural and political factors informed by global policies related to women's human rights violations, work of this nature that focuses on how the personal is political has taken on a new degree of urgency.

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Notes:

[1] Despite the cautioned use of the term "Third World" (Mohanty, 1984), women writing from the perspective of the "Third World" or Global South often position themselves as "Third World feminists" to highlight the need for post-colonial and transnational analyses of women's lives in a manner that reclaims use of "Third World." As used in this chapter, the terms Global South (and Western) are not meant as geographical references but are used instead to reflect the socio-economic and political divide between wealthy, "developed" countries, known collectively as the West, and the poorer countries that are exploited in processes of globalization. These terms are meant to circumvent the implied inferiority that "Third World" invokes.

[2] http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem/

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