

POL361 Gender and Politics – Topic 5: From Empire to Decolonial Feminism

Part One – Discussion (in pairs)

Reading: R.W. Connell (2005) 'Globalization, Imperialism, and Masculinities,' in Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R.W. Connell (Eds.) *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. SAGE Publications, pp. 71-89.

Connell tells us that, when it comes to the formation of masculinity, there are two contexts to consider: local gender orders and transnational arenas. While research has focused on “a particular milieu or moment,” it is essential to attend to powerful processes of cultural change that produced global society, such as imperialism and globalisation – processes that were, from the start, gendered. Connell, therefore, asks us to consider the two links that constitute the global gender order:

- The interaction between existing gender orders
- The creation of new spaces and arenas (beyond individual countries and region)

What does a focus on imperialism (and the creation of global markets) reveal about the formation and reconstruction of masculinities (masculine embodiments, ideologies, and institutions) in the local gender order and transnational arenas? Think of examples where possible.

Part Two – Group discussion

You had to choose ONE of the following three readings:

- Chandra T. Mohanty (1988) Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review* 30, pp.61-88.
- María Lugones (2010) Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia* 25(4), pp. 742-759.
- Françoise Vergès (2021) “Taking Sides: Decolonial Feminism” in *A Decolonial Feminism*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 4-42.

N.B. All three authors centre the resisters, the lived experience of the colonized. Furthermore, in the writing of Lugones and Vergès, analysis leads to practice/activism.

Reflecting on your chosen reading, answer the following questions (and be prepared to report back to class):

1. What is the author's main argument?
2. How is imperialism defined? Carefully consider the terms chosen, e.g. imperialism, colonialism, colonisation, coloniality.
3. What key concepts/notions does the author use in the development of their argument?
4. How is Decolonial Feminism practiced?

Part Three – Plenary discussion

Connell repeatedly asks us to consider how the broader historical context has informed the construction of masculinities (and also mentions women's active role in shaping masculinities). Mohanty, Lugones and Vergès call for decolonising gender and feminism, with Lugones and Vergès offering us new ways of conceptualising resistance and resistant subjectivities.

- What links the pieces together?
- What idea(s) do you find the most powerful? Why?
- What leaves you 'unconvinced'?