**EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, Seville 27-29, 2024,**

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**Women, Empowerment and the SDGs: Critical Feminist Perspectives in the Global Economy**

The empowerment of women has become a central discourse in global equality debates that has been heightened by many political events in the Global North: including the Hollywood Sex scandals of Harvey Epstein; and the multiplicities of sexual accusations of Donald Trump. Further, in the Global South women have been experiencing ongoing sexual violence by UN peacekeeping forces for many years; and women bear the brunt of managing poverty, hunger, and forced displacement in everyday conflicts in war zones sch as the Ukraine, Gaza and allied territories. Sadly, the Hollywoodization of sexual violence and female inequalities, was brought to life by celebrity news interests. This was further heightened with the COVID crisis. The global discourse of equality texts and policies (and fake interpretations) are becoming more legitimized, but the evidence suggests that many empowerment and gender SDG targets will not be met.(Kushnir, 2022). The SDGs 2030 were adopted by 144 countries (World Bank, 2016). What is progress in SDG attainment, and what aspects have hindered attainment? We want to draw attention to the rising number of women who are resisting Western models of neoliberal progress and are creating their own pathways for empowerment (Metcalfe, 2019).

**Organizing Sustainability and Transnational Feminist Networks**

Women are on the move. Women are protesting (Metcalfe, 2019). Women activists and feminists in the Global North have achieved many gains for women, for example abortion rights and equal pay (albeit a burning issue currently in the North). However, commentators have argued feminist ideas globally have been influenced by western logics (Spivak, 1988; Lugonesz, 2010; Mohanty, 2013). Womens needs and concerns are not the same. This concern is being challenged given the unique set of economic, social, health, and environmental systems that are relevant for all humanity, epitomised via SDG governance philosophy, what Walby has termed ‘different gender regimes’ (see Walby, 2020 Shire and Walby, 2020; Metcalfe, 2011). These ideas create multiple forms of groups in organizations and politics (Ozkazanc‐Pan,2019), and help shape ‘diverse regimes of inequality’ and how they are managed (Walby, 2020).

Following this logic we would argue that feminism is a ‘travelling theory’ evolving and ‘becoming’ as it crosses many territories (Walby,2020). This requires multi-level, multi-dimensional and intersectional understandings of feminisms (Greer et al, 2022; Spivak, 1988; Shire and Walby, 2020). These areas help us to understand the intersecting dynamics facing women and marginalized group in different place/spacess.

**Reclaiming Identity and Belonging**

Originally post-colonial arguments stressed that the Global North undermined South identities and constructed an ‘other’, that is, the ‘other’ of the West’ (Spivak, 1988). Wilson (2015) claimed that gender and development policies were being hijacked by neoliberal feminisms. More recent work, named neo-coloniality, erases ‘others’ and ‘othering’, and foregrounds identity and spatial location as a ‘belonging place’ see (Mohanty, 2013). These spaces/places are not tainted by western orthodoxy. Rather ideas represent the unravelling of multiple decolonial feminisms (Lugones, 2010; McClaren, 2017). [[1]](#endnote-1)This involves resisting colonial logics of gender and development, and in valuing the decolonization of policy development. Crucially, it also highlights the importance of transnational feminist networking (Mohanty, 2013) in order to communicate anti-capitalist struggles and ideology.

1.What is the progress of gender SDGs

2. In a new era of decoloniality how sustainability is conceptualized

3. What are examples of sustainability strategies? (for example Entrepreneurship and sustainability

4. How have feminist movements evolved to claim rights and freedoms?

4.Who are the stakeholders in managing sustainability and in implementing the SDGs? And what role do they play (government, Transnational/Multinational Corporations)

6. How have women’s organizations supported feminist organizations and supported resistance?

8. What is decolonization, and how has it aided women’s agency and strategies to empower women.

9. Social Movements Islamic feminisms, Latino feminisms, Chinese Feminisms, African Feminism

The stream encourages responses to the challenges, and potential solutions and welcomes empirical and theoretical papers. Papers can address any of these themes and can be empirical or theoretical and based on any country.

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1. This is not to suggest that there have not been travelling knowledges that shape many understandings of the humanities and sciences. Rather, the starting point is not a position of hierarchy between the Global North and Global South. That is, the south define their own histories, logics and organizing ideas. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)