

REVIEW

***Gendered Lives: Global Issues*, edited by Nadine T. Fernandez and Katie Nelson**

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<https://genderedlives.americananthro.org/>

Karoline Guelke
University of Victoria
guelke@uvic.ca

Gendered Lives: Global Issues, edited by Nadine T. Fernandez and Katie Nelson, provides a great addition to open access teaching materials for courses related to gender. In their analyses of gender, anthropological textbooks have generally highlighted cultural influences in different parts of the world, while gender studies texts have focused on societies of the Global North and the intersectional aspects within these. Advertised as “a gender studies textbook that takes an anthropological approach,” *Gendered Lives: Global Issues* successfully combines these perspectives and provides engaging examples of how globalization and intersectionality play out in people’s lives. I have been teaching gender-related classes in both anthropology and gender studies and can highly recommend this text for both. Selected chapters would also make excellent additions for classes in other disciplines.

The book is structured into sections that cover select world regions: South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Global North. Cultural regions are not treated as isolated and discrete but are examined in terms of their connections through forces of colonialism and globalization. This important approach is clearly outlined at the start of the text and consistently followed in the different chapters. A general introductory chapter outlines key concepts related to gender and anthropology; it is accessibly written and enlivened by images and video links. The cross-cultural examples of different gender roles, such as Indigenous Two-Spirit people or Albanian *burrnesha*, women adopting male gender roles, provide excellent illustrations of third genders and cultural diversity. However, I wish for a more nuanced discussion of the concept of gender, as the definition given does not clearly differentiate between a person’s internal gender identity and cultural gender roles and expectations. Chapter 2 provides a nice concise overview of the four waves of feminism, colonialism, globalization, and intersectionality, though a bit more detail on the shifts of thinking in feminist theory would have been good to include.

Each section starts with a useful introduction that outlines key points of the region’s history, culture, and gender roles, as well as the profile of an organization or individual activist working towards justice and gender equality. The choice of portraying local people

effecting positive changes in their own communities or regions serves as a good counterpoint to the common focus on help provided by the Global North. The section discussing the Global North appears deliberately placed last, thus presenting it on equal footing with the other world regions. The section's introduction includes a critical examination of categories such as the West, the Third World, developed countries, and the Global South and the historical and social factors that shaped these distinctions. This important discussion would be helpful to find earlier in the text, though of course instructors can cover points in the order they see fit.

The individual chapters consist of contributions from diverse authors and include useful features for teaching such as key points listed at the start of each chapter, highlighted key terms with definitions, discussion questions, and a list of resources at the end. The chapters cover a range of common topics in gender studies, allowing instructors to easily find relevant additions for their classes. A real strength of the book can be found in the often unusual perspectives and connections which effectively challenge assumptions undergraduate students may have. For example, chapter 5 focuses on the hijras in India, a standard example of a third gender in anthropology. However, Ina Goel's examination of how kinship, caste, and social hierarchies play out in hijra communities adds interesting complexities to the subject. Chapter 6, by Alba Castellsagué and Silvia Carrasco, problematizes the concepts of empowerment and development by analyzing rural Nepali women's moves to urban areas and salaried work. In chapter 11, S. Ashley Kistler illustrates how greater engagement in global capitalism does not necessarily cause a move away from tradition. Q'eqchi' Maya women, who engage in online marketing of herbal supplements, rarely gain much financially but benefit in other ways: the work brings them greater independence from restrictive gender norms, an increase in social connections, and an alignment with ancestral Indigenous values based on traditional foods and hard work. Online communication is also the subject of chapter 16, in which Susan W. Tratner examines how American middle-class women perform motherhood online. Interestingly, in this context many traditional gender roles are reinforced rather than challenged. Chapter 17 provides a nuanced portrayal of male sex workers in Canada, a good counterpoint to the general emphasis on women in discussions of the subject. Nathan Dawthorne describes how sex workers negotiate the complexities of heteronormativity, stigma, and emotional labor, and the section on men as rape victims is particularly thought-provoking. The chapters are almost all accessibly written and present interesting perspectives on diverse issues; unlike other gender-focused texts, they also give significant weight to the discussion of masculinities.

The authors' engagement with the concept of toxic masculinity is somewhat limited considering the widespread misunderstanding of and backlash against this term. Many people understand the term as indicating that *all* of masculinity is toxic; this was also an issue in the backlash against the new guidelines put forth by the American Psychological Association mentioned by the authors. Students would clearly benefit from a more in-depth discussion of the idea of toxic masculinity in the classroom. While having to reduce

complex topics to short treatments is unavoidable in a textbook, the notion of “honor killings” mentioned in the introduction to the South Asia section is another topic that might require further explanation and contextualization.

Gendered Lives: Global Issues is conveniently available in multiple formats; it can be read online, downloaded as a pdf, or purchased as a printed copy, providing flexibility for both instructors and students. The online version is easy to navigate through the content menu. Instructors can also request a test bank at the book’s webpage. The thoughtful and consistent focus on globalization and intersectionality helps students see gender in the context of global connections and challenges them to consider different perspectives. I look forward to using this text in my teaching and to seeing further editions that explore different regions and themes.